



Branching Out

The Oxford City Branch Monthly Newsletter

Monday 22nd January 2018

Happy New Year to all!

This is the first edition of 2018, so please keep your articles coming in for 'Branching Out'.

Email me with your news and photos to: paulclucas@hotmail.co.uk.

The next edition will be out on Monday 26th February. (Deadline for copy, 24th February)



Dates for your Diary – 2018

Full details from Ringing Master, Andrew Freer: andrew.freer@gmail.com or tour organizer, Hugh Deam: deamhugh@gmail.com

Saturday 27 th January	Grandsire Triples Practice at Kirtlington (8)	10.00am-11.15am
Monday 12 th February	Morning Outing to Berkshire Downs towers organized by Hugh (See details in Ringing Tours for 2018 section)	
Wednesday 21st February	No Practice at Headington this week as the ringers are going for a late Christmas meal.	
Saturday 24 th February	Grandsire Doubles practice at Cassington (6) 12cwt.	
Saturday 24 th March	Outing to Gloucestershire towers. (See details in Ringing Tours section)	
Monday 2 nd April	Morning Practice at Kirtlington (8) 16cwt	
Monday 9 th April	Colin Taylor's Spring Outing to Warwickshire. (See details in Ringing Tours section)	
Monday 7 th May	Bank Holiday Practice at Chilton (6) 7cwt	10.30am-12noon

If anyone else is interested in organizing a trip in 2018, please contact Hugh or Andrew.

For more details about everything else, please go to the Oxford City Branch website: www.oxfordcitybranch.org.uk

Any articles or photographs for inclusion in 'Branching Out' please email me: paulclucas@hotmail.co.uk

A list of proposed Branch Practices coming up in 2018

Saturday 10 th February:	Kidlington (8) Branch Practice followed by a Finance Meeting	10.30am – 12.00noon
Saturday 17 th March:	Branch Practice tower still to be confirmed	
Saturday 14 th April:	St Giles (8) Branch Practice	10.30am-12.00noon
May:	The Half-Yearly Meeting and Striking Competition has been moved to June as there is a clash with the Guild AGM which has been moved to avoid the Royal Wedding. Coupled with Andrew Freer's wedding, two bank holidays and the Branch Secretary's holiday, June looked the better option.	
Saturday 9 th June:	Headington (8) Branch Practice 10.30am – 12 noon (on the simulator), followed by tea, and the Striking Competition on open bells from 1.00pm onwards.	
Saturday 30 th June:	Branch Outing organised by Andrew Freer - all day. Venues (t.b.c.), but probably Old North Berks Branch towers.	
Saturday 14 th July:	Cowley (6) Branch Practice	5.00pm - 6.30pm
Saturday 11 th August:	Yarnton (6) Branch Practice	5.00pm - 6.30pm
Saturday 8 th September:	Marston (6) Branch Practice	10.30am - 12 noon(tbc)
Saturday 13 th October:	Wheatley (6) Branch Practice	10.30am - 12 noon(tbc)
Saturday 17 th November:	AGM in the afternoon, but still to be confirmed	
Saturday 8 th December:	Iffley (6) Branch Practice	10.30am-12 noon (tbc)

Please remember that all these Branch Practices are open to people of all abilities. You are all welcome! Don't be put off from coming along. We were all learners once! Lindsay Powell

The Ringing Master's Report

Happy New Year!

It all seems a very long time ago now! We made a good start to the year with the Branch Practice at St Mary Magdalen Church in Oxford. This was a rare chance to ring on ten, so I'm glad so many of you took it up.

When ringing on ten, you need to ring slightly slower than on six but closer to the bell in front. The front bells often need to hold at the balance for a moment, but this doesn't feel like hard work because they're so light.

We rang plenty of rounds, called changes and plain hunt. To get used to hunting on nine, we found that an exercise which worked well was to start with rounds on ten and have the front three hunt a few courses, then the front five, the front seven, and front nine.

Well done to everyone who rang on ten for the first time. Here's hoping it's the first of many. **Andrew Freer**



Ringling Tours in 2018

During 2017, the number of outings and those organising them increased once again, offering the opportunity to ring at towers in thirteen counties. Following our yearly informal get together at Iffley, you will see that 2018 is already full of confirmed opportunities to get out and about and experience the delights of ringing at new towers in neighbouring branches and counties. (Colerne, Wiltshire - March 24th. Shirley, West Midlands - April 9th). There is a mixture of full day outings, morning outings and specific method morning practices. The experimentation with Monday outings last year proved to be a success, so there will be a similar pattern again this year on Mondays during school holidays which means that traffic is generally lighter. Also three of the four Bank Holiday Monday mornings, beginning with Easter Monday at Kirtlington, have been confirmed for general practices.

Saturday 27 th January	Grandsire Triples Practice at Kirtlington (8)	10.00am 11.15am
Monday 12 th February	Trip to Berkshire: Kintbury (8) 12cwt 10.15am: Great Shefford (6) 9cwt 11.45pm; Lunch at The George, Lambourne; Lambourn (8) 2.30pm;	
Saturday 24 th February	Grandsire Doubles Practice at Cassington (6) 12cwt. All welcome!	
Saturday 17 th March	John Hearn's outing to Hampshire. Full details from John Hearn: monzajohn980 at gmail.com	
Saturday 24 th March	David Parkes/Hugh Deam's outing to Gloucestershire. 10.30am Grittleton (6) 14cwt; 11.30am Nettleton (6) 11cwt; 12.45pm lunch. Venue (t.b.c.); 2.15pm Colerne (8) 21cwt; 3.15pm Marshfield (8) 15cwt; 4.15pm Dyrham (6) 13cwt (t.b.c.); 5.15pm Pucklechurch(6) 12cwt;	
Monday 2 nd April	Kirtlington (8) 16cwt A Morning Practice – open to all people of abilities	10.30am-11.45am
Monday 9 th April	Colin Taylor's Outing to North Warwickshire: Shirley (8) 6cwt 1030am; Lapworth (6) 10cwt 12noon; Lunch. Venue (t.b.c.). Packwood (8) 6cwt 2.30pm	
Saturday 21 st April	Bicester Branch Outing to South Oxfordshire: Drayton (8); Milton (8); Marcham (6); Towers t.b.c.	
Monday 7 th May	Bank Holiday Practice at North Leigh (6) 9cwt	10.30am to 11.45am

Please check the details with Hugh Deam before going on one of these trips, as last minute changes can occur. [deamhugh at gmail.com](mailto:deamhugh@gmail.com)

There are still more Outings in 2018 yet to be confirmed, so keep checking the 'Dates for your Diary' in Branching Out!

Christmas Ringing at Marston (6)

The Marston ringers would like to take this opportunity to thank the visitors we had from Headington, Iffley, Wolvercote and St Giles, which ensured we had full bands for all our key services over Christmas. In turn we managed to reciprocate with joining Christmas ringing at



Headington, Cowley, Iffley, Wolvercote and North Hinksey. Christmas Eve was particularly jam-packed, with three evening services to ring for. Our band for the Midnight Service ringing was bolstered by John Bethell, a recent alumnus of the tower, who is at university in Dublin, but who was back in Marston for Christmas. We were also pleased to welcome his mother Bryony to the tower again. A significant amount of the funds for the renovation of our bells two years ago came courtesy of the hospitality and generosity of the Bethell family.

On Wednesday 27th December we rang a seasonally imbued quarter peal, that consisted of St Stephen's, St Wenceslas and St Nicholas. 1260 Doubles 3 methods: Treble. Judy Kirby; 2. Alison T Merryweather-Clarke; 3. Maarit Kivilo; 4. Michael Probert; 5. Hugh Deam (c); Tenor. Colin P Taylor.

On New Year's Eve we rang our 44th and final quarter peal of 2017 for the morning service, with the 1260 primarily consisting of calls from opposing base methods and one of the lesser used Grandsire 240s. There were two significant footnotes, this being Wolvercote's Adrian Gray's first quarter on Marston bells and Jane Hedges 100th quarter peal.

1260 Doubles: Treble. Jane Hedges; 2. Ailsa Reid; 3. Judy Kirby; 4. Maarit Kivilo; 5. Hugh Deam (c); Tenor. Adrian Gray St Paul, St Alban, St Miles, St Giles, St Simon's & St Martin's spliced, Kennington, Southrepps, Rushall, St Helen, Grandsire (Pitman's 240)

A difficulty in getting enough ringers and the impracticality of muffling and unmuffling the bells speedily has meant that ringing out the old year and ringing in the new is one of the few traditions in ringing that Marston has forgone since we rang in this millennium. Instead we have rung a mid-morning quarter peal in celebration of the new year since 2001. This year was no exception and we rang a 12 m/v quarter peal.

1260 Doubles 12m/v: Treble. Jane Hedges; 2. Susan King; 3. Judy Kirby; 4. Maarit Kivilo; 5. Hugh Deam (c); Tenor. Anthony Hughes. St Remigius, Eynesbury, St Alban, St Paul, St Simon's & St Martin's spliced, Kennington, Southrepps, All Saints, Rushall, St Helen, Newborough

Hugh Deam



A Branch Practice at Witney (8)

On Saturday 6th January three ringers from the City Branch joined the Witney and Woodstock Branch Practice held at St Mary's, Witney. The morning managed to encompass Stedman, Grandsire, Plain & Little Bob, Plain Hunt and call changes, with fourteen ringers in all attending across the course of the morning.

It was particularly good to meet up again with Charles Smith, formerly of **Cowley** tower and then **Eynsham** tower, who has recently been able to resume ringing some two and a half years after problems with his thumbs.

Hugh Deam

Bells at the Norwegian Whalers' Church, Grytviken, South Georgia by Julie Taylor in Perth W.A.

Following on from John Pusey's interesting photos and article about bells in Ethiopia, here is a short story about a church and its two bells in a very different part of the world.

Grytviken is a settlement on the island of South Georgia, part of a British Overseas Territory in the South Atlantic (South Georgia and the South

Sandwich Islands). South Georgia is perhaps best known for its part in the rescue of the men of the ill-fated *Endurance* expedition.

It was here that Sir Ernest Shackleton and his five companions landed after their epic 800nm small boat journey from Elephant Island in May 1916. It is also where Shackleton is buried; he died unexpectedly in 1922 while on his fourth expedition to Antarctica.

Grytviken is a former Norwegian whaling station, and the only one on the island which is open to visitors. The others are all off limits because of their dangerous state of dilapidation and the presence of hazardous materials.

A lot of work has been done at Grytviken to make the site safe and restore some of the significant structures. The island as a whole is well worth the effort and expense of getting there. The wildlife is amazing.

One of the restoration projects at Grytviken was the Lutheran church. The church is built of timber and was pre-fabricated in Norway, shipped to Grytviken and consecrated on Christmas Day 1913.

There was a pastor in residence intermittently until 1931.

One of the pastors famously observed that: *"the religious life of the whalers left much to be desired"*.



The church is the only building at Grytviken still serving its original purpose; services are occasionally held. The church has seen a few baptisms and marriages but, given its location and the dangerous nature of whaling, it was more often used for funerals. Most of the graves at the cemetery are those of whalers.

The church has two bells. They were cast by O Olsen of Tonsberg, Norway, and first rung (chimed) when the church was consecrated. The inscriptions are in Norwegian and read:

1. Blessed are the dead, who die in the Lord. 2. Awake and pray, make ready, I ring you unto peace.

There is a notice inviting visitors to pull the ropes to ring the bells. As an afterthought, there is second sign printed on orange paper: **"But please ring the bells...GENTLY" !**

Julie Taylor. Editor of 'Look To' Newsletter for WAANZAB

(Thanks to Julie for a very interesting article. If you have a story featuring bells you may have seen in the course of your travels, then please send it to me for inclusion in 'Branching Out'.)

Progress thus far on the 6 Bells at Cuddesdon

The five old bells and the new Whitechapel treble have all now been tuned at White's of Appleton, and the new headstocks completed. The cracked tenor went off to **Soundweld** in Newmarket to be welded, and has been returned to White's, who are now focusing on the manufacture of the wheels, following which will be the reinforcing of the bell frame at **All Saints, Cuddesdon**, and then the bells will be taken there and rehung.

The previous treble, cast at 5cwt. by **John Briant of Hertford** in 1795 which was found to be porous, will not now be melted down for scrap as a donor has come forward to purchase this bell, though its location in Cuddesdon is yet to be determined.

Brian Lowe.



Old North Berks Young Ringers Event at Bladon & Woodstock. Wednesday 3rd January 2018

We were glad that the weather was bright and dry when we met at Bladon at 1.30 pm. Perfect for walking! The increasing trend of schools becoming academies and opting out of the holidays set by the County Council is proving difficult, with several young people having to miss the



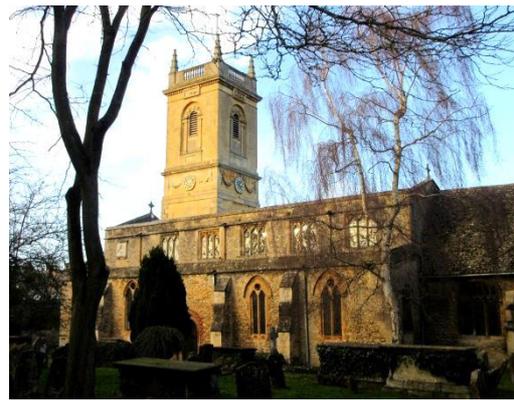
outing and return to school. So I was pleased to find we were quite a crowd with eleven young ringers, two younger siblings and twelve adults. Branches represented among the young ringers were Banbury 1, Oxford City Branch 1, Reading Branch 1 and Old North Berks 8. I was pleased that we had a contingent from Blewbury in the ONB for the first time but sorry



that Reading Branch's representation was reduced from their usual three or four to just one.

After raising the bells at **Bladon (6)** we were able to ring call changes, plain hunt and bob doubles. We also played a game taking turns to throw a die to choose which of a list of changes we pulled off in. And some of the young ringers were given the job of calling stand, new for some of them.

When we finished ringing we organised the young people into four teams, each with an adult. We had prepared a quiz with instructions on how to walk to Woodstock and sent the teams off at intervals. The first few questions were based in



and around Bladon to make sure the young people found out a little about Winston Churchill and his connections to the village. Another question asked what the two men supporting the Woodstock coat of arms were wearing. Loin cloths and

headwear made of oak leaves was the answer. Those men would have been cold that day! Daphne was waiting for us at Woodstock with a lovely spread – chocolate cake, lemon drizzle cake, buttered cheese scones, tea, coffee and fizzy pop. Paul Lucas organised us all for a group photo and also took some informal shots of us in the tower.

Ringing in **Woodstock (8)** included Plain Bob Triples for some, and some games. We played 'Killer' to test ringers' ability to set their bells and 'Twister' where they took turns to tell other ringers to about turn (safely) while ringing. The idea was to see if they could remain in rounds whilst facing the wall. The rounds weren't brilliant but there were a lot of smiles!

The quiz was marked by one of the parents and resulted in such similar scores that all the youngsters and siblings received mini chocolate bars as prizes.

The next ONB young ringer outing will be in the February half term holiday, probably on Wednesday 14th February, (venue yet to be decided). Offers to organise something very gratefully received!

Susan Read – O.N.B. Training Officer,

A Message from Steve Vickars – Tower Captain at Kirtlington (8)

There are a few events coming up involving the **Bicester Branch** where we may need help, or where Oxford City Branch Ringers may like to join in, which you may want to share with others:

- 1) We have a United Benefice Service on **Sunday 28th January** at Kirtlington, ringing at 9.25 am, where we may be a few ringers short. Help would be much appreciated
- 2) We are holding a recruitment afternoon on **Sunday 18th February** at Kirtlington, between 2.00pm and 4.00pm, relating to the Armistice Centenary. Helpers in the form of demonstrators, as well as handling tutors will be also appreciated.
- 3) The Bicester Branch Spring Outing will be on **Saturday 21st April**, from 10.00am - 4.30pm, visiting 5 towers in the Old North Berks district, including **Drayton, Milton, Hanney and Marcham** (counter clockwise ring).

The final tower and lunch venue still to be confirmed. Anyone interested in coming, please let me know.

My mobile number is: 07710-487223 or email or email: steve.vickars@gmail.com ,

If anyone wants to join our active Facebook group, the url is <https://www.facebook.com/groups/492630490929740/>.

I can approve requests to join it. **Steve Vickars**