

July
2005



Witney and Woodstock Branch Newsletter

Newsletter of the Witney and Woodstock Branch of the Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers

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Master

Guild Festival

Quarter Peals

From your Editor

You'll be pleased to see that I've omitted to include a picture of myself in this issue. If you want it to stay, let me know.

I hope you enjoyed the last issue. I seemed to get some positive feedback. I was a little over zealous with the pictures which caused some problems when trying to e-mail the document. I was delighted with the format on the web-site. In this electronic age this is undoubtedly the best way to circulate. I'm afraid I'm a little more

cynical as to whether towers are circulating this. Please let me know if you did not see a copy in your tower and I will approach your tower correspondent. The spring is the busiest time for the branch. The outing went well. Demelza Smale has provided a report of the day's event later in the issue. Our efforts at the Guild Eight Bell contest at Hanslope were a bit disappointing. Oxford Bob Triples always causes problems. We should be

proud as a branch we enter a team, most other branches don't. Lorna has provided a report on the Branch six bell contest. We all strive to learn new methods and forget the importance of striking. I always think that criticism of a ringers striking is comparable to criticising their driving. I won't mention what my Police driving instructor compared criticising someone's driving to!

Richard White

Forthcoming Events – Please Attend.

**Branch Practices –
7.30pm
Mon 25th July
8 bell practice –
Bampton**

**Thu 11th Aug –
6 bell practice –
Wootton**

**Wed 24th Aug –
8 bell practice –
Clanfield**

**Tues 6th Sep –
6 bell practice –
Combe**

**Tues 27th Sep –
8 bell practice –
Witney**

**Wed 12th Oct –
6 bell practice –
Aston**

**Thu 27th Oct –
8 bell practice –
Woodstock**

**Thu 10th Nov –
6 bell practice –
Ch Hanborough**

**Wed 23rd Nov –
8 bell practice –
South Leigh**

**Thu 1st Dec –
6 bell practice –
Wootton**

**Mon 12th Dec –
8 bell practice –
Bampton**

**Make the most of
these events and
progress!**

Branch Outing *by Demelza Smale*



How Lorna's face may of looked whilst ringing at Lewknor.

"I have to say the highlight was the trifle that Bob brought along!! Mainly because of the fun we had trying to eat it"

At about 8.15am on Saturday morning everyone was in high spirits as they met at Bob's house in Combe. It was not long until we were at our first tower Lewknor, St Margaret. This is a six bell tower with the tenor weighing 14cwt. Currently there is no band ringing these bells but this is not surprising as they do not ring that well as we found out. Lewknor bells have no guides and a very long draft, these two things do not go that well together at the best of times, but when the bells are springy as well it makes them incredibly hard to ring, and I mean hard! All you had to do was take one look at Lorna's face as she rang the treble up and you would know that they were difficult to ring. In my opinion I would choose never to ring these bells again and my mark out of ten will have to be 0. However on the bright side they were an experience. After what was described as a very fun and interesting time we headed of to Watlington, St Leonard. To our relief these bells were a lot nicer than the first. They were a reasonably heavy ring of 8 as the tenor weighed 24-0-8. These were a long draft but not as light and springy as Lewknor. I preferred these. I will give Watlington bells 6 ½ out of 10. Our last tower before lunch was Ewelme, St

Mary. These also had a long draft but were a nice ring of six. At Ewelme we rang some pleasant Grandsire and all in all were very enjoyable. The church, tower and surroundings were also very pleasant with some fascinating and beautiful scenery. At lunch some of us headed over to the Chequers Inn at Berrick Salome and others headed for the picnic benches in the garden. As I was one of those who had the picnic I have to say the highlight was the trifle that Bob brought along!! Mainly because of the fun we had trying to eat it. And that brings me onto our next tower which was Berrick Salome, St Helen. This was another interesting church, which Liz called a gingerbread church. Another comment was that the bells sounded like tin cans, not much of a compliment, but besides from this there were many other good points to this gingerbread church. For example the church was a small one and delightful, the bells were light but reasonably easy to control. The church was one of the most fascinating I have ever seen however it was so nice it would take to long to describe so you will just have to remember it. I gave this church 6 ½ out of ten. Our fifth tower of the day was a short drive down the road to Brightwell Baldwin, St Bartholomew.

There are six bells in this tower and the tenor weighs 9-0-7. The bells were lovely and by far the best all day!! Bob who is a Combe ringer said that he would have liked to take the bells home. As well as this the church was very interesting and the field at the back of the church was covered in "cute little adorable fluffy bunnies" as Tim and Eve described them. I gave this tower 9 ½ out of 10, a fantastic ending to the day. Or so it should have been! However Steve who had organized this lovely, enjoyable, day out decided to add two more towers onto the end of our day making it an extremely tiring one. And the final two towers added on to the end of our day got 6 and 7 out of ten. These two towers being Chalgrove, St. Mary and Warbrough, St. Laurence. These were both lovely towers to ring at and had wonderful bells. To end this review of the outing I would like to say a big thank you, on behalf of everyone who came on the outing, to Steve. But the person that I think needs an extra thank you is our very own personal bus driver Bob who did an extremely good job of getting everyone from A to B safely, so thank you!

Demelza Smale

A Successful Contest at Alvescot *by Lorna SMALE – (Deputy Ringing Master)*

Branch Striking Competition - what a fantastic turn out!!

A total of 10 teams competed, 6 in the Call Change Section and 4 in the Method. In the call change section 1st was Stonesfield; 2nd Clanfield; 3rd Combe; 4th Aston; 5th Woodstock; 6th North Leigh. In the method

section 1st was Bampton; 2nd Combe; 3rd North Leigh; 4th Woodstock. Congratulations to all who took part and a big thank you from the Branch Committee for making it such a successful event.

Email: lorna.smale@oup.com or
Tel: 01993 869299

CONGRATULATIONS

Stonesfield

Call Change Champs!

Bampton

Method Champions!

Well Done to all who took part.

Did You Know?

The heaviest ring of bells in the world are the twelve bells of Liverpool Cathedral?

The tenor weighs 82cwt. The bells are also the highest and are hung in a radial frame. Hung in the middle of the circle is Great George which weighs a monstrous 295cwt, the second largest bell in the British Isles
The tower has its own lift.

The Cathedral is the largest Anglican Cathedral in the world

“Church bell ringing has a poignant association with the events of World War II”

WWII 60th Anniversary Ringing



This year sees the 60th Anniversary of the end of World War II and the Government decided that the occasion would be marked by a day of Commemoration on Sunday 10 July. Church bell ringing has a poignant association with the events of World War II and it was hoped that as many bells in the country as possible would be rung at 1700 hours. The following towers from our Branch, alongside

thousands of others, rang for this occasion:

Clanfield Bell Ringers

We rang rounds and call-changes at St Stephens at 5pm on Sun 10/7/05. The village was notified of our ringing in our village magazine

Liz Gaertner

Combe Bell Ringers

Combe Bells rang out at 1700. The ringers were Anthony Williamson, Linda Soderberg, Bob Morris, Eve Martingale- Morris (age 11), Timothy Smale (age 11), Demelza Smale (age 13) and Lorna Smale. Rounds and call changes were rung.

Lorna Smale

Standlake Bell Ringers

On a very hot and sunny Sunday afternoon, on July

10th 2005 at 5pm, we were able to take part in the “National celebration in commemoration of the end of World War II”

The team were as follows:- Liz Costar, Marion Harley, Damian and Corinna Payne, Cynthia Harrison and Jane List. We rang rounds, plain hunt and call changes. Our newest ringer Fraser Harley (age 10) also rang in rounds.

Jane List

Stonesfield Bell Ringers

Stonesfield bells rang for the 60th anniversary at 5pm on Sun 10/7/05. The ringers were Rachael Sherlaw-Johnson, Jenny and Simon Haviland, Edward Sherlaw-Johnson

Continued..

**Towers in the Branch
from Clanfield to
Tackley commemorate
the 60th Anniversary of
the end of
World War II**



*“A competent ringer is
instantly welcome in
almost all the 3,000
Towers in England...”*

WWII 60th Anniversary Ringing (continued)

Richard Chancellor, Chris
Byrne. We rang Bob
Doubles and Call
Changes

*Rachael Sherlaw-
Johnson*

North Leigh Bell Ringers

At North Leigh, the
following rang plain hunt
on 4 and Bob Minimus
with a cover and
Grandsire Doubles at 5pm
on July 10th to celebrate
the 60th anniversary of the
end of WW11: Steve
Massie, Alison and Neil

Merryweather-Clarke,
Rachel Reynolds, Carolyn
Woodruff.

*Alison Merryweather-
Clark*

Tackley Bell Ringers

We rang from 5 till 6 as
requested - not brilliantly,
it has to be said, but the
spirit was willing!

Those present were Bob
Sims (tower captain), Bob
Clow, Jim Howard, Tom
Walmesley, Judy Hewson,
Tina Cook, Barbara
Summers, Ayako Kurioko,

and our new member Ann
who joined the Sunday
ringing for the first time.

Barbara Summers

Woodstock Ringers

Six band members
ascended the tower just
before 5pm. We rang a
Quarter Peal of Plain Bob
Minor (see quarters on
back page)

Richard White

St James', South Leigh *by David SMITH*

I've recently come back
from a few days in
Glastonbury – not the
famous pop festival- but
a lovely site just below
Glastonbury Tor.
However we could see
the Festival site about 2
miles away in the valley,
and we heard them start
up. Distance took away
all the sound but a
dismal thumping. “Dum-
Dum- Dum, Pum- a-
Pum-,Pum” and so on.
Doubtless great if you
had gone there for the
fun, but meaningless at
a distance.

But strangely the sound
of bells doesn't change
with distance. If the
wind is right they are
almost as clear far away
as just down the road. I
love to hear visitors
ringing when I am in my
garden a mile away. The

time I remember best
was one Christmas Eve
in the late 1950's. Some
friends and I had spent
the winter teaching a
new band to ring at
North Leigh. It was a
lovely night and I was
leaning out of my
bedroom window in the
new Yatt Road, (Witney)
and suddenly the wind
brought me the sound of
them ringing for the late
night Service. That was
a thrill indeed!
Our ringing at St James'
has been a lot more
chancy lately. I have had
to cope with two new
hips, and it has been
harder for some of us to
get along. We have not
yet got down as far as
ringing “Three Blind
Mice” although we did
have a good run of “Oh
Come To Church” the

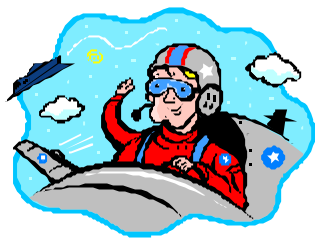
other week. Even
though we are too few,
it is still good fun and a
splendid skill to have.
A competent ringer is
instantly welcome in
almost all the 3,000
Towers in England , or
the 300 in the rest of
the world!
We do not ring in
August because of the
holidays and so on,
(although a peal is
being rung on August
5th) So we intend to
start up again in
September.

David Smith

We wish David well
following his hip
replacements.

Ed

From the Ringing Master – *Steve Goddard*



At this year's AGM I announced I would be happy to continue holding the post of Ringing Master for one more year. The reason being I have decided to retire from the Royal Air Force. This has been accepted and I will be leaving next May. However with all the terminal leave I will be finished by Christmas and I will retire initially to Cornwall. What this

means is that I will not be able to invest as much time in ringing due to resettlement courses and the company getting their pound of flesh. I will therefore manage most branch practices up to Christmas but I am not taking on any extra ringing commitments. The other problem is a replacement. Several people have been approached but to no avail, so I will ask through this newsletter, if there is anybody who would like to do the job or perhaps you know of someone? I have asked the deputy ringing master, but Lorna feels she is more suited to her role as DRM and the

training role which tends to go with it.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all members of the branch and also to the branch reps for their help and support. The last two and a half years have flown by and I also have been fortunate enough to increase my ringing repertoire. I have enjoyed the challenge and I think the branch is relatively strong although we still have some towers with sparse bands as is the norm in a lot of areas. I wish you all well and if you wish to organise some ringing in Cornwall please contact me.

THANKS

STEVE.

**Happy Retirement
from all the
Branch**

Guild Festival 2005 and Branch Anniversary *by Lorna Smale*

This year the Guild Festival was held in the Vale of the White Horse Branch with many towers open for ringing during the day. The main part of the festival was held in Shrivensham, with the (excellent 10) bells available before the Songs of Praise Service. A buffet lunch followed in the Memorial Hall, where we were entertained with some superb music by the St Denys Handbell Ringers.

We were also able to try our hand on the (flower pots) mini ring – Demelza managed to very ably ring two 'bells', whilst many adults struggled with one! Jon (Chamberlain) our Guild Master had even

persuaded a colleague to bring his traction engine along to the event, which hooked up to a trailer and gave rides around the field.

A Youth Striking Competition took place on the front 6 at Shrivensham. This was very relaxed and informal. Unfortunately all the Combe School ringers were away on an outdoor adventure weekend!

However, Demelza was persuaded by Lucy (the Vof WH secretary) to join the Shrivensham team as an honorary member, and also to ring in a scratch band, which came 1st and 2nd respectively, so well done to her and the other young ringers involved. Many thanks to Lucy Laird,

Jon Chamberlain and all the helpers for such a well organized and enjoyable day!

As many of you will now know our Branch was founded in 1902 with the Rev'd C W O Jenkyn as the Honorary Secretary. Roger Barnes has come up with the wonderful idea of producing a book for the 100+3 years. This would include some history, old pictures, a current picture of every team, bell inscriptions, frame details, handbell teams, etc, etc. One way of achieving this would be for a template to be produced

(continued)

**Have you seen
a copy of this
newsletter in
your tower?**

**If not
Why Not!**

Send your articles
to

Richard White
26 Hill Rise,
Woodstock, Oxon
OX201AB
PHONE:
01993 812424

E-MAIL:
zoe_white25@hotmail.com

Branch website
See us at:
www.witneyandwoodstock.org.uk

Quarter Peals

1st May 2005 Combe

1260 April Day
1- Mandy Pullin
2- Brian Curtis
3- Mary Clark-Maxwell
4- Jenny Haviland
5- Lorna Smale ©
6- Anthony Williamson
For Evensong.

5th June 2005 Stonesfield.

1260 Reverse Canterbury
Pleasure Bob Doubles
1- Lindsey Thornton
2- Mary Clark-Maxwell
3- Mark Wastie (1st in
method)
4- Bernard Coggins
5- Lorna Smale ©
6- Mandy Pullin
For Evensong.

26th June 2005 Witney.

1260 Grandsire Triples:
1-Victoria Davey-Wilson
2- Rev'd Ian Cooper
3- Christine Putt
4- Mark Wastie
5- Lorna Smale©
6- Terry Hester
7- Roger Barnes
8- Anthony Williamson.
First QP of triples for 1, 4
and 8. First QP of triples
as Conductor.

3rd July 2005 Combe.

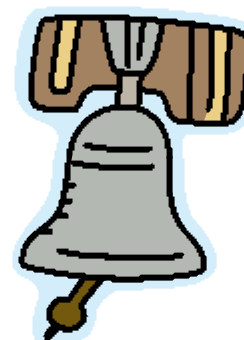
1260 Doubles (660 St
Simon's Bob and 600 St
Martin's Bob):
1-Rachael Sherlaw-
Johnson
2- Roger Barnes
3- Oliver Chaloner
4- Dave Rose
5- Lorna Smale ©
6- Anthony Williamson
For Evensong.

4th July 2005 Woodstock

1260 Doubles, 6 extents
of St Simons, 2 of Plain
Bob and
2½ of Grandsire
1- Zoe White
2- Victoria Davey -Wilson
3- Malcolm Fairbairn
4- Lorna Smale
5- Richard White ©
6- Mary Clark-Maxwell
First St Simons -2
Rung to celebrate the birth
of Joseph Hayle; a
grandchild for Celia and
Canon Roger Humphreys

10th July 2005 Woodstock

1260 Plain Bob Minor
1- Mary Clark-Maxwell
2- Victoria Davey-Wilson
3- Sarah Perrett
4- John Harwood
5- Malcolm Fairbairn
6- Richard White ©
First Minor - 2
Rung to commemorate
the 60th Anniversary of the
end of World War II.



(Continued from p 5)

as an example, and then
for each tower to produce
their own information.

Please can you let me
have your thoughts on
this project, and whether
you might have a tower
representative who could
perhaps help?

Lorna Smale



Quarter Peal Band 10th July 2005 at Woodstock

L to R: Victoria Davey-Wilson, Malcolm
Fairbairn, John Harwood, Sarah Perrett,
Richard White and Mary Clark Maxwell.
(Excellent timer shot, camera perched on
the war memorial by Mr Harwood)

IDEAS FOR
NEWSLETTER
NAME STILL
REQUIRED.

PLEASE FORWARD
ANY IDEAS YOU
HAVE TO ME.

GET YOUR
THINKING CAPS
ON!

Ed