



Reading Branch News

Advent 2018

No. 120

Reading wins ODG 10-bell contest

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24 Nov 2018, the winning band, clockwise, from r: June Saint, June Wells, John Manley, Tom Sherwood, John Wells, Robert Partridge, Jo Knight, James Champion, Colin Newman (C), Doug Beaumont

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* **Tim Hayward is redesigning the branch website**, supported by a sub-committee formed by David Bardwell and Colin Newman.

Reading branch practices

Branch practices are held on the second Saturday of most months, from 10 am to 11.30 am. When the practice takes place at St Giles, Reading, it will be from 10.30 am to 12 noon. Any tower that would like to host a practice should contact the Branch Secretary. The practices are open to all and will aim to cater for all abilities, with a bias towards the local ringers' needs.

See the list sent out by the branch secretary, or the branch website, for the names of the towers where the practices will be held, or contact the Ringing Masters - Bob Partridge or Colin Newman.

Young ringers' practices are usually held on the third Sunday of the month at Shiplake, from 2.30 pm to 4 pm. Sometimes they will be at a different tower or on a different Sunday. All standards of ringing are catered for, from rounds to eight-spliced, and tuition is available (however, this depends on how many ringers and helpers turn up).

Surprise practices usually take place at **Shiplake** on the third Thursday of the month, 8 pm to 9.30 pm. For more information contact Bob Partridge (see above).

Reading wins 2018 ODG 10-bell contest

The Reading branch team won the Oxford Diocesan Guild (ODG) 10-bell competition on Saturday 24 November 2018. It took place at St Nicholas (10 bells, 21-2-1), Newbury. Four other branch teams (from a total of 15 ODG branches) took part. They were: Old North Berks (ONB) and East Berks and South Bucks (EBSB), who tied in second place, Newbury, who came fourth, and Banbury, who came fifth.

The competition judges were John and Hilda Ridley, and the faults for each team were as follows: Reading 17, EBSB 30, ONB 30, Newbury 46, Banbury 92. So, a resounding win for Reading! Many congratulations to the team – see front page for photo.

The judges said that Reading had the slowest pull-off of the day but quickly settled into some very good ringing – slightly slower than the rest of the teams but very consistent and a pleasure to listen to. They rang Plain Bob and Little Bob Royal.

The Reading team had representatives from four towers: Caversham, Reading (St Mary & St Laurence), Shiplake and Tilehurst. Special congratulations to Tom Sherwood, aged 15.

Reading ringers in ODG Youth Team: it wins National Trophy

The eighth Ringing World National Youth Competition (RWNYC) took place in London on Saturday 7 July 2018. Twenty-two teams of young ringers from all over England took part, and in the morning they rang in “qualifier” heats, at three different London churches. The

top two teams from each qualifier then rang in the final at St James, Garlickhythe. The ODG team qualified for the final, and won the Method Ringing Category and the Ringing World Editor's Trophy for Excellence. Sussex Young Ringers came first, winning the Whitechapel Award. There were three young ringers from the Reading Branch in the ODG team, including the conductor, Anna Sherwood – below are excerpts from her report:

Anna Sherwood: The ODG Youth Team comprises young ringers from six branches and we practise every fourth Sunday of the month at different towers across the guild. On the Monday before the competition, we rang a quarter peal of Plain Bob Triples, which proved to be very beneficial...

We were all very pleased to get into the final and approached the test piece as though we had nothing to lose... Several of the band ring at Shiplake, on a regular basis, (one of our monthly practices was also there) and, as Garlickhythe bells are based on Shiplake, there was a sense of familiarity. Our success at Garlickhythe was celebrated by forming a human pyramid for the most imaginative team photo competition!



Back row: Thomas Sherwood 3, Gary Gibson (reserve), Anna Sherwood (C) 7; middle row: Sophie Martin 6, Adam Hird (reserve), Izzy Anderson-Besant 1; front row: Daniel Page 2, Jake Reid 8, Douglas Vale 4 and Josh Ball 5.

Excerpts from Jenny Page's report: This is

a fantastic achievement... [The judges' comments were] "Rang with purpose, good structure and an enthusiastic piece of ringing."

The size of the guild and the travelling involved for the young ringers to get to practices is worth noting - many thanks to parents and tower captains... Once a young ringer is 19, they are too old to take part, so the bands continually change. There were four ringers in this year's team ringing in the competition for the first time. That means we need to say goodbye to ringers, as well. Conductor Anna Sherwood will not be able to compete next year. We wish her well at university and hope to see her return as a judge.

Au Revoir to Anna Sherwood



Anna has been one of Reading Branch's most outstanding young ringers. She began learning to ring at St Michael, Tilehurst, when she was nine, though, as she says, "I didn't really progress until I was a bit bigger". She rang her first peal at St Peter, Drayton, on 25 August 2015, when she was 15: Spliced Surprise Major – and since then her ringing has gone from strength to strength. In May 2016 she was awarded the ODG Young Ringer of the Year Trophy, and in August 2016 she was elected a member of the prestigious Ancient Society of College Youths. She has twice conducted the ODG young ringers' team at the Ringing World National Youth Contests (RWNYC).

In January this year she was one of the talented young ringers who set two new world records: the youngest band to ring a peal on ten bells (Cambridge Surprise Royal at St Paul, Birmingham), on 7 January, and on twelve (Cambridge Surprise Maximus at Melbourne, Derbyshire), on 21 January. On 1 September, at Worcester, they set a third record: the youngest band to ring Bristol Surprise Maximus.

Anna was elected a Reading branch officer - Youth Representative - in February 2016, and was very good at running the Young Ringers' Practices. She stood down from the post this year, because of going to Bristol University to study Maths in September. On 20 October

2018 she was one of the band who rang a peal of Bristol Surprise Major at Bristol Cathedral, before the service for the enthronement of the Rt Rev Vivienne Faull as the 56th Bishop of Bristol. Anna also conducted the quarter peal of Superlative Surprise Major that was rung after the service. Well done, Anna! Bristol University is lucky to have you, and Reading looks forward to seeing you in the vacations.

Congratulations to Daniel on receiving 2018 ODG awards

Daniel Page, aged 15, was awarded the Oxford Diocesan Guild (ODG) Young Ringer of the Year Trophy, and the ODG Gold Award, at the Guild AGM, which took place at Bodicote, Banbury Branch, on 12 May. The ODG Trophy is in memory of Alison Rodrick, a young Bodicote ringer who was killed while cycling a few years ago. Daniel also received a letter from the judges, Robert Newton and Katherine Firman. Excerpts from the letter are given below:



“What a phenomenal year! You have achieved more in 12 months than almost any other ringer might hope for in a lifetime. You have mastered some extremely complex methods and have made the most of every opportunity to take part in a number of impressive performances. To have the Nottingham Eight as your first peal as conductor [at Caversham on 11 February 2018] is unique We are pleased to see you have been able to introduce Beavers to ringing and it must have been exciting to be interviewed about umpiring the long length [in Alderney of 25,056 changes of Bristol Surprise Maximus on 25 October 2017 – a world ringing record]... We are sure that you will continue to develop your ringing skills and involvement in the years to come. Keep it up and enjoy!”

Youngest band to ring Bristol Maximus

In January this year, Anna Sherwood and Daniel Page were two of a band of young ringers who set a new record, as the youngest to ring a peal of Royal and of Maximus. On 1 September, they broke another record, by becoming the youngest band to ring a peal of Bristol Surprise Maximus – at Worcester. Well done, Anna and Daniel!

Tilehurst win Reading Branch Striking Competition 2018

The 2018 Reading Branch Striking Competition took place at St John, Mortimer (six bells – 7-12-16), on Saturday 8 September. The team from St Michael, Tilehurst, came first. This year, only three other teams took part: Goring, who came second; Mortimer, third, and St Mary and St Laurence, fourth.



Anna Sherwood, from the winning Tilehurst team, is presented with the Topper Trophy by judges Patricia and Robert Newton.

Tilehurst also won in 2017, when Caversham came second, and in 2016, when Goring came second. As the winners, Tilehurst represented Reading Branch in the ODG 6-bell contest on 6 October, at North Marston in the Central Bucks Branch. They did well, coming fourth out of 11 entries, with 31 faults. High Wycombe came first, with 17 faults, Wallingford second, with 19, and Drayton St Leonard third, with 24.

Bobbie May reports on this year's branch competition: For the first time the competition was held in the morning, at a time which would normally have been reserved for the Branch Practice. Four teams were involved but, unusually, most of the 'big guns' were missing, which might have had something to do with a peal that was taking place at St Laurence in Reading!

The judges were Patricia and Robert Newton from High Wycombe who are no strangers to Reading Branch striking competitions. Robert explained that they marked independently from each other and didn't compare notes until it came to the adding up at the end in case they influenced each other. Fortunately, they put all the teams in the same order. Robert was complimentary about all the ringing and encouraging and Patricia gave out the results, having first put in a plug for the book stall situated in the back of the car!

Ringling Order	Team	Comments	Faults	Placing
1	Goring	A very good start and good ringing with only minor clips and faults. As it settled the nervousness disappeared but seemed to produce a few more blemishes.	39	2 nd
2	Mortimer	Very careful ringing and the ringers seemed to be ringing round each other to avoid faults thus stretching out the rows. Queens' came up perfectly both times.	72	3 rd
3	Tilehurst	This team attacked the bells with the fastest ringing of the morning. This confident ringing barrelled along giving rise to very long passages of very settled ringing with only minor blemishes.	27	1 st
4	St Mary/St Laurence	This was very sedate and there were difficulties with over-all ringing. The second blow of a lead was consistently better than the rest of the row!	98	4 th

Bobbie May took all the photos. The ringers are named right to left:



1st Tilehurst: Jenny Page 1, Eunice Wark 2, Colin Newman (C) 3, Mascot, Anna Sherwood 4, Colin Cairns 5, Tom Sherwood 6.



2nd Goring; Andrea Gilbert 1, Antoinette Jackson 2, Wendy Middleton 3, Robin Middleton 4, William Harwin (C) 5, Josie Irving 6.



3rd Mortimer: Penny Wallace 1, Janet Carless 2, Elaine Perkins 3, Peter MacNaughtan (C) 4, Nick Munson 5, Rex Haigh 6.



4th St Mary/St Laurence: Pam Williams-Jones 1, June Saint 2, Louise Ellis 3, Rose Anne Kimber (C) 4, Steve Bennett 5, Jennifer Ellis 6.

Prince Harry & Megan Markle's wedding day: Reflections of a Principal Ringer at the Curfew Tower, Windsor Castle

Stephen R Smith II reports: Windsor Castle is accustomed to special occasions and the bells to ring out of the Curfew tower for the Garter service, and around 20 other special Royal, religious and Saints' day events throughout the year. As Principal Ringers we turn up and ring as required, although the day we take out of the normal work diary to ring for the Garter service is pretty special. Against the normal routine, the wedding of Prince Harry to Megan Markle was something special in the calendar. As the day approached, I had heard about the potential problems with the trains to Windsor. Fortunately, my daughter Lucy was home and gave me a lift into Windsor, and I cycled the last part to get to the Castle.



Equipped with a standard pass and the special purple wrist band, I was waved through the Henry VIII gate. The atmosphere in Windsor was fantastic. Everyone was hyped and looking great and beautiful. The weather was awesome. All the ringers had congregated (there were actually 10 of us) and we decided to have a warm up touch of Grandsire Triples (the 'standard' method for the Curfew Tower):

For those of you who haven't had the pleasure of ringing at the Castle, one reason for mainly ringing Grandsire is that the bells are really quite challenging, with varying degrees of odd-struckness and, to add to the challenge, they are also anti-clockwise (I find the anti-clockwise clock in the tower totally impossible to comprehend!). However, they can be rung well and can sound fantastic, so the reward is there if you are prepared to work at it.

As the big moment approached, we had some, what seemed to me, fairly confused instructions about when to ring so we went for two further touches, of guess what, you got it, Grandsire Triples. The last touch was timed to coincide with the arrival of the Queen and couple at the Chapel, so we finished with a few minutes of call changes and rounds.

During the service and beforehand between ringing we enjoyed the sunshine in our own reserved area in a corner of the Cloister in front of the west door of the Chapel, which is really quite an awesome spot. We were behind the camera boom which took the shots of the couple as they came through the door, down the steps and into the carriage flanked by the Guard of Honour. We were also with the



girls who had done all the floristry. We saw the couple come through the fabulous West Door, with the most amazing floral archway, descend the steps and get into the carriage during the performance of the Gospel choir.

So, to our *pièce de résistance*, a quarter peal of Grandsire Triples. Our earlier ringing had been good, but we did rise to the occasion, the ringing was superb, we were on such a high when the reverse rounds came up, then rounds, then stand. Fantastic. Here is the line up – right to left, treble to tenor:



Windsor, Berkshire, Curfew Tower, HM Free Chapel of St George, Windsor Castle, Saturday, 19 May 2018 in 0h47 (26 in C#)

1260 Grandsire Triples: 1 Edgar Skipsey, 2 Vikki Bulbeck, 3 Vernon Bedford, 4 Edward Westlake, 5 Stephen Smith II, 6 James White (C), 7 William Stungo, 8 John Payne.

Footnote: Following the wedding of HRH Prince Henry of Wales and Ms Meghan Markle, and during the carriage procession.

The Bellboard statistics are interesting: we were the featured performance for over a week, we received almost 100 'likes' and it was viewed over 29,000 times. Extraordinary to consider the millions who watched the wedding on television and would have heard the bells of Windsor Castle. It was great to be part of the occasion.

Loddon Reach Ringing: May-June 2018

Bobbie May reports: On the Royal Wedding day, in the evening, Swallowfield ringers and friends offered their own tribute to the royal couple and rang a quarter peal. We borrowed Ken Davenport from Wokingham to keep us on the straight and narrow.

All Saints, Swallowfield, Saturday 19 May 2018, in 47 minutes, 1320 Surprise Minor changes were rung comprising Beverley, Surfleet and Cambridge. Treble Stephen Jenkins, 2 Bobbie May, 3 Mary Clark-Maxwell, 4 Alan Barsby, 5 Tom Blomley, 6 Ken Davenport (C). Rung to celebrate the marriage of HRH Prince Henry of Wales and Ms Meghan Markle.

By coincidence (since we rarely ring quarters!) on 2 June Shinfield ringers and friends to help keep us right, rang a quarter peal to celebrate a good Ofsted report for Shinfield Junior School. This was



organized by Peter Robson, recently elected school governor, and the headmistress, Sue Runciman. Rev Paul Willis greeted us and stayed for the performance. June Saint and Stephen Rossiter from St Mary, Reading, joined us and helped to keep things on an even course! Quarters are rung for all sorts of occasions - but we think this is the first time one has been rung for a good Ofsted report!

In the photo, left to right: Rev Paul Willis, Bobbie May, Mike Bunn, Peter Robson, Steve Rossiter & June Saint.

St Mary, Shinfield, Saturday 2 June 2018, a quarter peal of doubles was rung to celebrate a good Ofsted report for Shinfield Junior School in 40 minutes, comprising 60 changes of Stedman, 600 of Grandsire and 600 of Plain Bob; Treble Bobbie May, 2 June Saint, 3 Mike Bunn, 4 Peter J Robson, 5 Stephen Rossiter (C).

Ringling for Centenary of World War I Armistice: 11-11-2018

Reading remembers: Colin Newman, Branch Ringing Master, estimates that ringing for Armistice Day took place in at least 21 of the 23 branch towers which have bands. Some of that ringing is given below – starting with the peal, then quarters, then alphabetical order.

Reading, St Mary, Sunday, 11 November 2018 (25-2-26) in 3h 6 (26), **5040 Grandsire Triples**, Comp by Albert J. Pittman (12 part)

1 June D Wells

2 E John Wells

3 Thomas R Sherwood

4 Jack S Ninnes

5 Peter R Ellis (C)

6 Daniel J Page

7 Colin G Newman

8 Edward J W Manley

Rung in celebration of the centenary of the end of World War One.

Reading, St Giles, Berks, Sunday, 11 Nov 2018 (8 bells - 14–2–7): **1260 Plain Bob Triples:** 1 Lindsey Barker, 2 Ruth Hine, 3 Joyce Vernon, 4 Louise Ellis, 5 Tim Hayward, 6 Peter Bennett, 7 Steve Bennett (C), 8 Chris Phillips. Rung on the 100th anniversary of Armistice Day to commemorate the fallen on both sides in WWI.

Tilehurst, St Michael (8 bells - 17–1–15), Sunday, 11 Nov 2018 in 66m, **1918 Yorkshire Surprise Major**, Comp by Robert B S Oakeshott: 1 Rosa Bardwell, 2 Eunice A Wark, 3 Joanne P Druce, 4 Thomas R Sherwood, 5 David R Bardwell, 6 Colin R Cairns, 7 D Giles Winter, 8 Colin G Newman (C). Ringing Remembers 1918-2018.

Pangbourne, St James the Less (6 bells – 10 cwt), Sunday, 11 Nov 2018 in 44m, **1260 Doubles**, Stedman, Grandsire, St Martin, Eynesbury, St Simon: 1 Ken G Baker, 2 Ann Gardiner, 3 John Harland, 4 Len Palfrey, 5 M J Palfrey (C), 6 Nick Munson. Rung half-muffled for 100th Anniversary of end of WWI, prior to the

Service of Remembrance. “At the going down of the sun and in the morning, we will remember them.”

Pangbourne, St James the Less, Sunday, 11 Nov 2018 in 30m, **120**

Misc. Doubles, Rounds, call changes, Grandsire & Stedman.

1 Len Palfrey, 2 Michael Palfrey (C), 3 John Harland, 4 Mandy Morris, 5 Ann Gardiner, 6 Richard Carpenter, 7 Sue Norbury, 8 Adrian Daniel, 9 Bella Daniel, 10 Wendy Rapley. Rung prior to 10 am Service leading to the two minutes silence at 11 am. **Adrian and Bella Daniel** are **Ringing Remembers** recruits.

Pangbourne, St James the Less, Sunday, 11 Nov 2018 in 15m, **360**

Doubles, Rounds and call changes: 1 Len Palfrey (C), 2 Rosalind S Palfrey, 3 John Harland, 4 Ann Gardiner, 5 Sue Norbury, 6 Wendy Rapley, 7 Stephen Billyeald, 8 Tracey Coakeley, 9 Ruth Hampton, 10 Oscar Palfrey. Rounds and call changes rung at 7:05pm for the "Battle's Over" Tribute. **Tracy Coakeley, Ruth Hampton and Oscar Palfrey** are **Ringing Remembers** recruits.

Caversham, Berks, St Peter, Sunday, 11 Nov 2018 (8 bells - 7-3-13):

Rounds, Plain Bob Minor, Triples and Major, and Grandsire Triples. Half-muffled ringing from 9-9.30 am, prior to the Holy Communion service to commemorate the fallen of two World Wars; and open ringing 12.30-1.00 pm as part of Ringing Remembers to mark 100 years since Armistice. Twelve ringers took part.

Englefield, Berks, St Mark (8 bells - 8-0-11), Sunday, 11 Nov 2018

in 25m: **Rounds and Call Changes** were rung on eight bells, half-muffled, in remembrance of all those who died in World War I and subsequent conflicts around the world, in the morning. The bells were rung open at 7.05 pm to commemorate the end of World War I - **540 Plain Bob Doubles.**

Henley-on-Thames, Oxon, St Mary The Virgin (8 bells - 21-0-2),

Sunday, 11 Nov 2018: **Call Changes and Rounds** were rung by 11 ringers for morning service (half-muffled) followed by open ringing in celebration of Peace and to mark the Centenary of the Armistice. On 10 Nov, call changes were rung on eight bells, half-muffled, to

support The Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal concert. **Graham Marsden**, a **Ringing Remembers recruit**, rang on both days.

Mapledurham, Oxon, St Margaret (6 bells - 7-3-3), Sunday, 11 Nov 2018: **Rounds & Plain Hunt Doubles** were rung half-muffled before the Remembrance & Holy Communion service on Armistice Day.

Mortimer, Berks, St John the Evangelist (6 bells - 7-2-16), Sunday, 11 Nov 2018: **Call Changes and 240 Doubles** - Grandsire and Plain Bob. Ringing for the Centenary of the WWI Armistice.

Mortimer, Berks, St Mary the Virgin (8 bells - 11-2-23), Sunday, 11 November 2018: **Call Changes**. This performance is linked to the event Ringing for the Centenary of the WWI Armistice.

Nettlebed, Oxon, St Bartholomew (6 bells - 5-3-17), Sunday, 11 Nov 2018 in 12m: **240 Grandsire Doubles**, Rung half-muffled for the Royal British Legion Parade to Church. This performance is linked to the event Ringing for the Centenary of the WWI Armistice.

Shiplake, Oxon, St Peter & St Paul (8 bells - 9-0-15), Sunday, 11 Nov 2018 in 25m: Call changes were rung open on eight bells to mark the 100th anniversary of the end of WW1.

Jenny Page, Colin Newman and Giles Winter got up early on Sunday 11 November to speak about Ringing Remembers on Radio Berks.

In memoriam – and James Champion marks 40 years of ringing
Caversham, Berkshire, St Peter, Saturday, 10 November 2018 in 2h 48 (7-3-13 in A)

5152 Johannesburg Surprise Major, Composed by R W Lee

1 E John Wells

2 June D Wells

3 Jenny M Page

4 Edward J W Manley

5 Paul F Warren

6 Daniel J Page (C)

7 James M Champion

8 Douglas J Beaumont

Rung in memory of Simon Milliken, Master of the South African Guild, who was killed near Durban at the end of August. Originally organised to mark the 40th anniversary of the first peal by the ringer of the 7. 100th peal together: 1 and 8.

Personal peal milestones in the branch: Daniel Page has rung 100 peals, Colin G Newman 400, Douglas J Beaumont 1,000, E John Wells 1,500 for the ODG. Many congratulations!

Congratulations to Mick on first quarter of Surprise Major

Goring on Thames, Oxon, St Thomas of Canterbury, Tuesday, 13 November 2018 (8–0–21 in A), 1250 Yorkshire Surprise Major: 1 Jill Kirby, 2 Wendy J Middleton, 3 Antoinette J R Jackson, 4 Mick Rollason, 5 Steve Smith, 6 Josie S Irving, 7 William S Harwin , 8 Nick J Clarke (C). First Surprise – 4.

Reading Branch outing 30 June 2018



L to r: Anna Sherwood, Doug Beaumont, Tom Sherwood, Helen Wells, Colin Newman, Robert Partridge, Pete Bennett, Paul Wells, Matthew Thewsey, Ruth Hine, Stuart Gibson, Josie Irving, Lindsey Barker, Catherine Turner, Graham John, Janet John, Adam Turner, Rose-Anne Kimber, John Harrison, Matthew and Debbie Turner

Pam Williams-Jones reports: Pete Ellis's outings are always a treat and the visit to Evesham was no exception. Despite some mutters (from the older set!) about an early start, a number of us gathered on Reading station for the 8.54 am to Evesham. We were a little surprised that the train was packed so that some had to stand until we reached Oxford at which point we were able to gather together and chat – a core part of any outing.

Pete had arranged the day so that we were able to walk from the station and between towers making for a very relaxed, sociable event. The first stop was the spectacular Evesham Bell Tower which was built between 1524 and 1532 and includes an arched gateway through its base that led into Evesham Abbey. The Bell Tower is all that remains of Evesham Abbey which was destroyed in the 16th century as part of the Dissolution of the Monasteries. The tower has a peal of 14 bells enabling a ring of 12, two rings of 10, two rings of eight and four rings of six. The original 12 bells (#1 - #12) were cast by John Taylor & Co Bellfounders of Loughborough in 1951. The 13th (#6b) was cast in 1976 by Taylors. The final bell (#0) was also cast by Taylors in 1992. The Bell Tower was placed on the Historic England Heritage Register in 2012 after stonework began to crumble. A massive £500,000 was raised and in 2015 restoration work began. This was completed in February 2016. This first ring was very much the highlight of the day and was declared by some as the best tower they had ever rung in. Mark Goodge took this photo of the tower.



On a high after such a wonderful ring, we all made our way to Wetherspoons for a lunch and a chat. The walk to the next tower included a trip on the Hampton Ferry to cross the River Avon. This



ferry has been in use since the 13th century when the Benedictine Monks needed to cross the river to tend their vines. The ferryman was bemoaning the invention of mobile phones as he had been called in on his day off!!

From the ferry, it was a shaded stroll through woodland to the second tower of eight bells at St Andrew's Church, Great Hampton. These were an excellent ring of bells, a complete Taylor ring from 1948. Whilst the ringing room was relatively compact, the cool of the main church was appreciated by those who weren't ringing.

The final ring was at St Peter, Bengeworth, which sadly did not live up to the standard of the first two towers. It was decided that given the difficulty of ringing and the high temperatures that we would call it a day early, which left time for us to find a well-deserved ice-cream before heading for the station and home.



St Giles' 2018 outing to the Vale of the White Horse

Lindsey Barker reports: I approached organising a tour for the first time with trepidation, but it all worked well on the day, Saturday 1 September. We trotted to our first tower in Hinton Waldrist. The 13th century church is dedicated to St Margaret of Antioch and has a tower with a light but lovely ring of six (6-2-29). Tim ably organised us to ring from rounds and call changes to Stedman.



At Hinton Waldrist, l to r: Rita & Chris Phillips, Keith Vernon, Lucy Smith, Jennifer Ellis, Joyce Vernon, Louise Ellis, Sarah, Daniel & Chris Barrett, Ruth Hine, James Milford, Joseph Barrett, Colin Blayney, Lindsey Barker, Tim Hayward. Photo by Chris Phillips

Fascinating fact is that Airey Neave [1916-1979 – first British POW to escape from Colditz] lived locally as he was the local MP up to his death from INLA terrorist action in 1979. There is a memorial window to him, partly paid for by the people of Chartres in gratitude for his part in saving their cathedral in World War II.

We wended our way to Shellingford (6 bells – 6-2-10) to ring at St Faith. I was a little concerned as no-one was meeting us but the instructions were impeccable so we lurked behind the organ where the ringing chamber is situated and Sarah put us through our paces. Again we enjoyed rounds and call changes and a variety of methods, including Cambridge minor.

So off to lunch in the Prince of Wales in Shrivenham. Slight hiccup as we had not preordered but I had allowed plenty of time for rest and relaxation so there was no problem. Several games of Sevens were played as we waited for our very enjoyable lunches to be freshly cooked.

At this point Steve and Helen joined us. St Andrew (10 bells - 13-0-2) is conveniently almost next to the pub. We thoroughly enjoyed ringing there. We started with lots of rounds and call changes but Chris did encourage the band to attempt Grandsire Caters which was pretty successful.

Our final tower was an eight at St Mary the Virgin at Longcot (8-1-24). Fundraising was on the agenda here so we felt obliged to partake in the (prearranged) tea and cakes. As there was not a crumb left I think it fair to say that we were more than happy to give our financial support to the church. The vicar came to chat telling us all about the life of a country vicar - she has seven churches to look after and at the moment her only support is her husband who is a lay preacher! Steve organised the ringing here and again we went from very straightforward rounds to Single Oxford Bob Triples.

It was a leisurely day, the main focus was having fun and although tower grabs were not high on the agenda many of us added four new towers to our collections. Thank you to Ruth and Rose Anne who were my touchstones on the timings of the day, and to Pete Ellis for his advice on organizing an outing. We had some young ringers - Jennifer and Joseph – and less experienced ringers - Lucy and me - and we all managed loads of ringing by getting used to new bells, so we had a good day. We also had a guest from Australia, Colin Blayney, who joined us for the day missing only the last tower. He intends to be back next summer and is hoping for another outing!

Congratulations, Keith: Happy birthday!

Keith Vernon celebrated his 80th birthday by ringing the tenor in a “friends and family performance” of Grandsire Triples – his granddaughter rang the treble, his wife the 2nd and his son-in-law the 6th, and a few of his many friends rang the other five bells.

St Giles-in-Reading, Tuesday, 27 November 2018 (14–2–7 in F), **680 Grandsire Triples**: 1 Lucy Smith, 2 Joyce Vernon, 3 Pam Elliston, 4 Ruth Hine, 5 Lavinia M Sullivan, 6 Stephen Smith II, 7 David Sullivan (C), 8 Keith Vernon. A long extent of Grandsire Triples rung on the 80th Birthday of the Tenor Ringer.



L to r: Joyce Vernon, Lucy Smith, Ruth Hine, Keith Vernon, Steve Smith, Lavinia and David Sullivan, and Pam Elliston



The next day, at the branch practice, the St Giles band gave Keith a birthday card and a special Ordnance Survey map, entitled KEITH VERNON'S BIRTHDAY MAP 2018, which is centred on the Vernons' house (it was ordered on line by Ruth). This may encourage them to take fewer far-away expeditions (such as the SW coastal path), and more local walks in the Berkshire and Oxfordshire countryside – that way they'll seldom miss practice night!

Caversham's 2018 outing - to South Oxfordshire

On Saturday 15 September, the band of St Peter, Caversham, went for an outing in South Oxfordshire, organised by tower captain Doug Beaumont. Our loyal friends Marcia Dieppe and Monica Trow joined us – and Ruth Hine from St Giles came with us for the first time. We drove through beautiful countryside to picturesque villages and lovely old churches – an English Heritage outing!

The first tower was All Saints, Chilton (6 bells – 7-2-3), near the Ridgeway and south of Didcot. We enjoyed ringing there. The bells were rehung in December 2000 (they had been silent since 1959). We rang Stedman, Cambridge and Bob Doubles.

Next stop was St Mary the Virgin (6 bells – 9 cwt), at Long Wittenham, a beautiful church in a lovely old village by the River Thames, not far from Dorchester, and notable for having a genuine Norman lead font, which survived the rule of Oliver Cromwell by being enclosed in a wooden case. The bells are challenging, so we stuck to rounds and call changes.

Ralph Elmes met us for lunch at The Six Bells in Warborough, a picturesque pub with a thatched roof. The next tower, St Laurence (8 bells – 10-0-14), was across the road. It has a lovely ground floor ring, and we rang Stedman Triples, Grandsire, Bob Triples and Call Changes. Fortunately, as there were eight bells, Vicci Alexander joined us here.



From there, it was a short drive to Drayton St Leonard, and the church of St Leonard & St Catherine (6 bells – 7-2-3), with its timber bell tower. James Champion joined us, after ringing a peal at High Wycombe. It is the tower of Hilarie Rogers, former Guild Master, and she kindly came to greet us. The photo shows Daniel and Jenny Page, and Kiran Bahra ringing there.

Our last tower was St Mary the Virgin (6 bells – 16 ½ cwt) at Chalgrove - a beautiful 12th century church, with famous medieval wall paintings in the chancel. In 2007 the interior of the tower was modified to accommodate modern facilities, and stairs now lead to the new ringing floor. They were the heaviest ring of the day – as Roger Hopkinson noted when he rang up the tenor.





L to r, standing: Jane Havelock, Daniel Page, Marcia Dieppe, David Sumner, James Champion, Kiran Bahra, Roger Hopkinson, Jenny Page, Doug Beaumont, Vicci Alexander. Seated: Monica Trow, Ruth Hine, Gill Hopkinson.

Many thanks to Doug for organising a most enjoyable day and to Kiran Bahra and Daniel Page for lowering our average age and for raising the standard of ringing.

Tilehurst's 2018 outing to North Herts & Bedfordshire

Rosa Bardwell reports: With a break from tradition, we moved our outing from October to September. This year we visited North Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire. Eight of us (seven ringers, one supporter) travelled to Ashwell, near Baldock, on Friday 14 September, to Alders Barn, the base for the tour. Another break with tradition: self-catering. The challenge of breakfast chef was taken up by David Bardwell and when we emerged from our rooms on Saturday morning, the smell of cooking breakfast was delightful!

Our first tower on Saturday was at St Peter, Arlesey, a nice ring of six bells (10-3-15). We started with Plain Bob Doubles, which was very well struck. We were then joined by two of our ringers who were

only coming for the day. On to St Mary, Henlow, with eight bells (14 cwt), more our weight. We rang Plain Bob Triples, Plain Bob Major, Stedman Triples and Yorkshire Surprise Major. The bells were not bad, but the new ropes were rather “springy”.



The next tower, All Saints at Clifton (8 bells – 10 cwt) was the best so far. Although a slightly long draft, they were easy and we rang a very nice course of Stedman before our lunch break. We were told about the restoration of the East window: repairs costing approximately £20,000 were needed, and this was raised. When the work was completed, it had cost £60,000! which was also raised. The final result was stunning.

After lunch we went on to St Mary the Virgin, Stotfold (8 bells – 11 cwt), the first tower where we had to ring the bells up, so it was good that we’d had lunch! The ringing chamber was on a gallery with a glass window looking down into the church. The long draft made the ropes a bit flighty, but the bells went well. We were then joined by the rest of the ringers who had been ringing a peal: we were now complete with 13 ringers and four supporters.

The bells at St Nicholas, Norton (8 bells – 9 cwt) were interesting. They went well, but the sound was not so good. Again we were on a balcony with a glass window into the church. Ringing here was a bit mixed, although a course of eight-spliced was achieved. The last bells of the day were at Holy Trinity, Weston, and quite different from those at Norton. The Norton tenor (8 bells) weighed 9 cwt, the Weston tenor (6 bells) weighed 12 cwt. We had some good ringing and finished with ladies ringing St Clement’s Minor and men ringing Little Bob Minor. It was judged that the ladies’ band was the better!!

Saturday evening saw us all together in Baldock at an Italian restaurant where good food and good company was enjoyed.

After a hearty breakfast on Sunday, cooked by chef David, we walked to St Mary the Virgin, Ashwell, five minutes away. Here were the “interesting” six bells everyone had told us about, with an 18 cwt tenor and new ropes, like elastic! Thank goodness “the men” had had a good breakfast! It took two of them to start ringing up the tenor. They were hard work, but we managed to ring for Sunday service with three of their ringers. The “quirky” ring of the weekend.

Our next stop was St Peter & St Paul, Kimpton (eight bells - 10 cwt), probably the best ring of the weekend. Unfortunately, by now there were only seven of us. We rang minor methods on the back six: Plain Bob, London, St Clement’s, and Cambridge.

Our final tower was St Michael at St Albans. Again, eight bells, with an 8 cwt tenor. We asked the local ringer to join us; she said she rang Plain Bob Triples and Grandsire Triples, but got a loud cheer when she added that she also rang Middlesex Triples - a Tilehurst special! Bells 3 to 8 were easy to ring, but 1 and 2 were hung above the others, needing careful handling. We rang very nice courses of Middlesex, Plain Bob, Little Bob, Grandsire and Stedman.

This was our 11th tour and has proved that good company, fellowship and ringing can all go together – and we had sunshine for the weekend. It was a great way to see our lovely villages and towns.



Tilehurst 2018 outing, l to r, back row: Matthew Stone, Colin Cairns, Martin Foakes, Giles Winter, Robert Sherwood, David Bardwell, Tom Sherwood, front row Jo Druce, Eunice Wark, Jenny Foakes, Rosa Bardwell, Jo Knight, Anna Sherwood.

Henley Autumn outing to Gloucestershire – 6 October 2018

Helen Lansdown and Ania Kozniowska report: It was a cold, wet Saturday morning as we set off from St Mary, Henley-on-Thames, for our autumn-guest-ringing outing in rural Gloucestershire.



*Top left:
Arriving at St
John,
Taynton;
Bottom left:
Tower
captain Joan
Bennett
climbs stairs
at Coln St
Aldwyns;
Middle left,
ringing
chamber,
Coln St
Aldwyns;
Right - new
sally at
Taynton.*

St John the Baptist in Coln St Aldwyns (commemorating St John without his head! – 8 bells, 7-2-26) is of Norman origin while the bell-tower was completed in the 19th century. Our first port of call, we were swept inside by gusts of wind and rain and had not anticipated the hand-over-hand steep climb required up a series of ladder-like stairs to reach the bijoux bell tower. As there were 11 of us it was a cosy fit, but the bells were a joy to ring. We were at the time unaware of the church's literary connections. John Keble, appointed Chair of Poetry at Oxford in 1831, who founded the Oxford

Movement, was curate for 10 years; his father was vicar for 40 years. Stained glass windows in the chancel commemorate their ministries.

St Nicholas, Hatherop, had another interesting approach to the tower, but fortunately less challenging, so we had reserves in hand for the ringing. It has a ring of six bells cast in 1715 of which the front four bells remain. The 7 ½ cwt tenor was recast in 1852 and the 5th in 1906. Our newer ringers were becoming more accustomed to ringing in different environments with a wider band of experienced people.

After a warming lunch at the Catherine Wheel in Bibury, we went to St Peter in Windrush (6 bells, 7-1-13), where another surprise awaited us. Ground floor bells this time, but we had to position ourselves around/on a number of broken commemorative plaques/tombstone covers which had been placed in the bell tower temporarily while a side chapel was restored. Furthermore, the bells were ordered anti-clockwise! It was eyes on stalks for some responding to call changes!

The final ringing of the day took place in Oxfordshire, at St John, Taynton (6 bells, 7 cwt). Tucked away down a quiet lane it was a delight to climb into this strikingly immaculate little tower which boasted new ropes along with three new bells for the treble, 2nd and 3rd, installed in April this year. The church is built in the Decorated style, rather than the more common Perpendicular, and constructed in locally quarried stone as early as medieval times. Taynton stone is highly prized, and used by almost every church within 20 miles of Taynton. Many of the colleges and churches of Oxford used Taynton stone. Sir Christopher Wren hired his Master Mason from Taynton to ensure that the Taynton stone used for St Paul's Cathedral was properly carved. Given this, it is not surprising that St John features some exceptional examples of stone carving.

Through the day, various assemblies of band members rang Bob Triples, Grandsire Doubles, Bob Minor, Plain Hunt and Cambridge as well as the obligatory call changes. Before we headed for home we thanked our Tower Captain, Joan Bennett, for yet another marvellous and thoroughly enjoyable tower outing.

Reading mourns Frankie Milford – 1937 - 2018



It is with great sadness that we report the death of Frances Milford, wife of James Milford, who died unexpectedly on 21 July 2018, of an internal haemorrhage. Fortunately she suffered no obvious pain during the very short time she was ill.

Her ringing career was unusual. When bells were donated in 1959 to the Cathedral in Salisbury, Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) she was among new recruits, and she was a founder member of the Southern Rhodesia Guild of Bellringers (now the Zimbabwe Guild). Clocking the bells in a frame in the cathedral grounds and ringing handbells were the activities until a tower was built and the 10 bells hung. Five weeks later she was ringing her first rounds on 10, during the dedication service.

For the next 25 years she was a staunch member of the band, with a few visits to ring in South Africa and England. Marrying in 1986 brought her to Reading to join the St Mary's band. Then from 1995 to 2007 she was based in her old home city, now Harare, before returning to Reading, this time to St Giles.

Frankie was not an ambitious ringer. She rang just three peals, but hundreds of quarters. She regarded ringing as her main hobby, as well as a service to the church. It was important in her private life as well because she first met James as another recruit when the Harare bells were hung. They met again when James, recently widowed, visited friends in Harare and joined the band to ring in the New Year for 1984.

After her early life on a tea estate, boarding school and a steady professional life in Zimbabwe, it took Frankie time to adapt to life in Reading, especially its climate, and to a family steadily producing grandchildren. Her care and love for others was an outstanding characteristic and she was always ready to help others less experienced than herself. She will be greatly missed. *Many thanks to James Milford, for this obituary.*