

CENTRAL BUCKS BRANCH ODG AGM 2013

From the Chair.

Needing a bit of guidance as to what I should say in my report this year I came across my offering from 2011 and in a way wish I hadn't. It was so positive and upbeat and the comment at the end was more or less that I hoped the branch would carry on in the same vein and go from strength to strength. Sadly this year things seem to have lapsed back to a steady plod.

The advancing 6 and 8 bell practices and the advanced Major practice usually get enough people to make them worthwhile, but the monthly Branch Practice has at times been a struggle. It is at times like this that you realise how influential young people can be when they want to learn and how they can bring a new enthusiasm to an old craft and to the old crafters who have been doing the crafting for so long. Last year several of our young people disappeared off to University and pastures new and I am sure they are missed as much by others as by me.

The Branch outing too was disappointing. For some reason the more interesting areas didn't feel inclined to respond to my enquiries to ring and I found myself having to do a last minute trip to South Oxon. With only 8 people requiring coach travel, that had to be cancelled and therefore we lost at least three ringers. However, I don't think that would have made much difference as only 9 turned up anyway.

On a more positive note, the monthly midweek ring is doing brilliantly. Since our slightly over the top trip last February when 27 bodies turned up and caused a bit of a logistical problem, our numbers have evened out at around 16. Depending on the skills of those who come along we will do anything from rounds and call changes to London and... well, whatever is suggested, and although our ringing is serious and so it should be, we are also there to have a good time and there are usually lots of laughs along the way.

Also, a quick word about the six bell competitions which have also had a drop in the number of teams entering. In both instances Drayton Parslow fielded 3 teams of extremely enthusiastic new members. These are people who until just over a year ago had never touched a bell rope in their lives. If they can do this maybe we could learn a lesson from them.

Last month saw 21 members getting together in Haddenham for pre-dinner ringing followed by a very nice meal in the Rose and Thistle. It was lovely to catch up with old friends, some who I certainly hadn't seen for far too long, and again a good laugh was had by all.

This year I'm hoping to get around a bit and visit a few more towers so you may see me in yours – whether you want to or not! I intend to learn even more this year than last so be prepared, or beware. I hope all your ringing goes well and you continue to enjoy and learn.

Jan Robinson

CBB Secretary's report 2013 AGM

There seems to have been an endless stream of emails full of information to distribute – interesting, boring, informative, good, bad and sad. They emanate from the Guild and or are generated on Branch matters. How did the information get disseminated before emails? Fortunately as we head into 2013 only a couple of towers are not on the e-circulation system. The newsletter too is mainly distributed by email although I have additionally included a printed version with the ODG items such as Odd Bob and the

bulky annual report, mainly using hand delivery. This cutting back has reduced print and post costs considerably. There were 3 main newsletter editions and a smaller December update.

At present, I generate the copy for newsletters and the reports for ODG publications, with the Chairman and Ringing Mistress approving the drafts. However I find I am running out of things to say and becoming less accurate so I would welcome assistance on this aspect of the secretary's job if not a takeover of the whole job.

Another editorial responsibility in 2012 was to co-ordinate the CBB response to the ODG consultation document 'Change Ringing for the Future'. We wait to see what will come of it.

As well as the activity summary for the ODG report, I have to update all the member and contact information for towers. Following some unfortunate inaccuracies in the 2011 report, I conducted a complete check of data at the end of 2012. Thanks are due to most Towers for responding promptly.

The annual fixing of the next year's practices is another job and again most towers are very co-operative. What then happens at the events is a matter for all of us. It is disheartening for someone to have gone to the trouble of gaining permission for visitors and making them welcome to be confronted with a poorly attended session. This was particularly the case for the Half Year Meeting where a few of us did our best to consume a magnificent tea as well as appear to be democratic. No officers meetings were held. If all this sounds a bit downbeat then I have to add that it has been a pleasure and privilege to see all the information about the various branch celebratory ringing this past year with the Jubilee and Olympics and Paralympics. It's difficult to follow that but I am sure we can all find some reason to celebrate.

Diana Slevin

Treasurer's Report – Annual Accounts 2012

These are appended to the written reports

John Lomas

Ringing Mistress' Report – AGM 2013

My report this year is really very similar to that of a year ago, so things have not changed very much! As you will remember, I was not expecting to be here by now, and certainly not expecting to be in this position and writing this report, but, here I am!

For me, it has been a busy year personally, with many changes happening, so I recognise that I have not been able to give as much time and energy to my position as I would have liked. I don't know whether this has been a cause, or a pure coincidence, of Branch ringing not seeming to have developed as much this past year. As our Chairwoman has commented in her report, practices sometimes have been a bit 'flat'. The 'advanced' practice particularly has been a cause for concern, with reliance on a core of people to make it worthwhile, or visitors from outside the Branch. On a positive note, the 'improvers' practices, particularly the 3rd Tuesday at Stewkley, have continued to progress, with an encouraging number of young ringers attending. The mid-week rings too, under Janice's guidance, have been very successful.

Of course, this year has been a very special one, marking the Queen's Diamond Jubilee as well as London hosting the Olympic Games. This has given us in CBB, as well as the rest of GB, the opportunity to bring ringing to the fore. Apart from ringing for Her Majesty, we rang at a number of towers around the Branch as the Olympic torch passed through our towns and villages, providing lifelong memories. Some ringers also joined the national 'ring' on the morning of the opening.

This year saw the re-introduction of the Half-Yearly meeting, with the Striking Competition moved to May. The meeting was quiet, which might be expected being the first for a number of years. The Striking Competition was held at Drayton Parslow where John White, from South Oxon, came to judge the eight teams who 'had a go'. It was a lovely afternoon, with ringing and socialising, Aylesbury being the winners.

The Branch outing was, sadly, poorly attended, so a lot of ringing for those that did go but of limited variety. We visited the 'Old North Berks' area and were warmly welcomed at the host towers.

The Branch has had two notable successes this year. Firstly, CBB won the Guild 10-bell Striking Competition, thanks to the efforts of the band based in Long Crendon. My thanks to the Andrew Haseldine and helpers for organising this, as well as the Guild General Committee Meeting which took place after the competition at Long Crendon. A successful day all round.

We also took part in the Orchard Cup, hosted by the Chiltern Branch this year at Wendover; where Aylesbury repeated their recent success and retained the trophy! There were other towers close behind though, so the competition is strong!

The year has ended with our annual dinner, which followed a shortened practice, this year in Haddenham. The pub did well to serve nearly 30 of us together, and an enjoyable evening was had by all.

Heather Dobson

Branch Representative's Report

The last Guild General Committee Meeting was held in our Branch at Long Crendon last November. The full minutes are available through the Guild but here are a few points of interest for us:

Thanks were given for donations from the Branches for the Restoration Fund – about £700 has been raised.

The Guild Young Ringer's team came 2nd in the method ringers category at the national competition in Birmingham.

The Young Ringer's Award will start again, consideration is being given to offering this to the Ringing Foundation for national use also.

The Association of Ringing Teachers ITTS has grown hugely, being supported through the Central Council. An admin person is needed now, as a paid position and it is hoped to raise £25K over the next 2 years to cover this. Some discussion within the Branches around this was requested.

Chris Mew's questionnaire results are with the Education sub-Committee for collating

The Guild Report will carry advertising in the future, and not necessarily ringing related, although this will be limited, possibly to 10% of content in total – to be decided by the Finance & General Purposes sub-Committee.

'Odd Bob' was discussed, there was concern about duplication of content with the report in the Spring issue. Branches are asked to say what they would like to see included; possibly in 2 issues each year (rather than the current 3).

Subs are to be £8 pa; further discussion will be taken to the AGM regarding how this will be split between the Branches and the Guild, perhaps more to the Branches? It was suggested that some Branches currently manage to keep going because officers don't claim expenses.

The "Kimberley project" was discussed. The Guild has links with S Africa; support is being asked for with getting bells in place and training. The old front 6 from Abingdon are tuned and at Taylor's, having been paid for in 2006. A sub-Committee was formed to look into this.

The Spring meeting will be in Kidlington.

Heather Dobson

Webmaster's Report

Taken from an email

The bellringing.biz/cbb site is not letting me login anymore, so unfortunately the site has to remain as it is.

The new site has been set up at: <http://cbucks.odg.org.uk/wordpress/>

At the moment, it is just a shell as I haven't been able to find enough time to work on it at the same time as Uni and ringing commitments. In theory everything is there, it just needs the content added... Which should be quite simple, but can be quite hard to get it looking presentable.

The calendar runs directly from google calendars, so it needs someone to put in all the events via the google login and then the website should be updated.

Tower details: it's my intention to get a list of the towers on the tower page with links to their own pages with contact details.

Ultimately I would like to get the website running so that Webmasters don't have to be too involved with it in the long term and that it doesn't become a big job to keep up to date!... E.g. Secretary/Master/other officers are able to post to the news and keep the content up to date.

We've also got Facebook and twitter feeds that should be working with website posts.

The Facebook page is probably the best resource as there are quite a lot of branch members that use Facebook and Heather and Janice keep posting to the page which keeps it active.

Also, if possible, I think it would be a wise idea to appoint a new webmaster around the summer this year. I feel that there are people in a better situation than me that have the time and are regularly "in-touch" with the branch and should therefore be able to keep the website up to date. I would like someone to take over from me around the time of the Half Yearly Meeting (if that's still happening). The type of person to take it on does not need very complex skills – although some web knowledge would be helpful; the Wordpress site is based around an incredibly simple text editor. Also I wouldn't be throwing them in at the deep end as I would aim to have the whole website sorted by this point and I would be happy to provide advice by email or over the phone!

Ryan Noble

February 2013