

**OXFORD DIOCESAN GUILD OF CHURCH BELL RINGERS
CENTRAL BUCKS BRANCH
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING February 2011**

CHAIRMAN

Well, another year has passed in what seems to have been a haze of activity. With opportunities to do something different and progressive nearly every week of the year it is nice to see so many ringers taking advantage of the situation. Certainly the monthly Branch Practices seem well attended and with so many experienced ringers coming along, the less able of us have had a great opportunity to learn.

Amongst all the regular treats we have had some extremely enjoyable outings, with Hal's forays into the depths of our bygone railway systems, his young persons' trip to London and the Branch Outing all being very well attended and I suspect from the feedback, enjoyed by all.

It is with all this in mind that we must thank Heather Dobson our Ringing Master for all her hard work and organisation setting up and running the Branch Practices, the Advanced Major practices and the monthly improvers' nights.

Also Hal Drysdale for his support of her; his unquestionable enthusiasm for the young ringers in his care and his boundless energy and welcoming demeanour wherever he goes.

We should also thank Ryan Noble for his support within the branch; for his excellent work on the website; for his organisation of the Branch Dinner and for reminding us that you are never too young to be an incredibly important part of an organisation.

Personally, I would like to thank Diana Slevin, John Lomas and the other committee members who have made my life easier as Chairman and everyone of you for making this year and this branch the success it has been. Let's hope we go from strength to strength in the year to come.

Jan Robinson.

Chairman

SECRETARY'S REPORT

2010 was a routine year in secretary's terms, no resignations nor major edicts from ODG to implement! After the AGM, the decision on supporting the succession of Padbury and Hillesden to North Bucks went through to the ODG AGM where it was approved. The awaited changes to Child Protection rules came to an abrupt halt with the coalition government calling a halt on change. Nothing has been heard since but note it is still important for the current rules to be applied.

At the AGM I took on the production of the newsletter as part of the communications work. Three were produced and distributed in March, June and October. Thank you to all who contributed and notably to Ryan Noble who not only contributed but put them on the website. Contributions were also sent for inclusion in Odd Bob with an article on the Young Ringers outing also being accepted for the later one. Every effort is made to distribute print items such as newsletters, Odd Bob and Annual Reports though committee and other members as postal charges are very high and rising.

The steady stream of emails from ODG that, together with CBB announcements, has meant frequent emails on to the towers for which I have email contacts. This is a great facility further enhanced by Ryan putting information on the CBB website. However I have some concerns. Perhaps it's because of the immediacy of internet contact that many notifications are sent close to deadlines, but some of

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the information received cannot wait until the next 4 monthly newsletter and is lost to the non e-towers. I will look at other options this year, feedback would be welcome.

As I write this, I have just completed the CBB returns for the ODG Annual Report. It was great to add in new members and also more tower correspondents. Towers are urged to continue to notify me of any contact and other changes through the year so we can keep you informed. Appropriate information will be fed through to the website. (see below for website report)

From the Branch Secretaries' meeting I am passing on the idea that we all look at our churches' leaflets/guides/websites and review the mentions, if any, of the bells. I will also follow up the availability of information from North Bucks branch of copies of the documentation for their recent recruitment/training and organisation.

I am sorry that I did not get to more Saturday Branch practices during the year, Saturday is not a good ringing day for me! To that end I have floated the idea, also mention at the Secs' meeting, with Chairman Jan of a mid week daytime group as happens in some other branches. Let me know if you are interested.

Diana Slevin

Secretary

FINANCE REPORT

The annual accounts for 2010 are appended.

John Lomas

Treasurer

RINGING MASTER'S REPORT – AGM 2011

I am pleased to report that this last year has continued the trend of increased participation in Branch activities and opportunities for ringing together. The level of complexity of methods that have been rung has increased, and there are also a healthy number of learners within the Branch taking their 'first steps'. What is particularly encouraging is the number of younger learners who are maintaining their interest in all things campanological, for they hold the future of ringing in their hands. My personal thanks to all those who are giving a lot of their time to nurturing this interest so competently.

Following on from last year we have had a similar 'diary' of Branch activities this year. The first and third Tuesdays of each month have been 'Improvers' practices, held at Aylesbury and Stewkley respectively, for those who can handle a bell in rounds onwards. There has been a good regular nucleus of attendees, with new ringers joining them. There was even a practice during the snowy weather of December! This practice continues to be very flexible, aiming to meet the particular needs of those who arrive on the day. It has been managed very successfully by Hal Drysdale, the Branch Training Officer. My thanks to him.

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The second Saturday has continued the tradition of being the main Branch Practice held at towers around the area. We have had a good and varied turnout with an interesting mix in the ringing on 5 – 10 bells. The 'Advanced' Practice became a full Branch event and was moved to the fourth Saturday, as a trial initially. This has proved to be a success. Branch tower practice nights have been avoided, and ringers from other areas now regularly join us. This has enabled us to increase the opportunities offered hugely and, as with the main Branch Practice, to aim to provide a challenge for all attendees. Ringers with a minimum standard of Stedman Triples / 'treble bobbing' on 8 are welcome, as are Spliced Surprise ringers!

In June the Branch Striking Competition was won by Wing, with a novice band, at Whitchurch. They then went on to represent us at the Guild Competition. This was the first time for several years that the Branch has entered a 6-bell team at Guild level. Alan Bentley and Simon Lockwood from Chiltern Branch were our judges this year.

The Branch was also very well represented at the Guild 10-bell Striking Competition by a team based around ringers from Long Crendon. The competition was held at Amersham. The judges commented that the standard of ringing was such that this band must have local connections! They were placed second, by a narrow margin.

The Orchard Cup competition was held in October, hosted by the Chiltern Branch at Ellesborough. Aylesbury successfully retained the cup for the Branch for the third year running. It is good to think that the Branch is making its presence felt at these events.

There have been three Branch outings this year. Our main outing took place in September, this year to the London area which provided a new experience for many and was enjoyed by all. In June we also had a second very popular 'steam and ring' family outing; to the GWR at Cheltenham; and then, at the beginning of September, a young ringers' outing was organised to Big Ben, with all the places being filled very quickly.

The year ended with over 30 of us, representing 10 Branch and 3 visitors' towers, enjoying a good meal in Bierton for the dinner, after a shortened Practice. My main difficulty? Fitting everyone in to ring! A good way to end a successful year.

I would like to thank all those, 'officials' and others, who have helped to arrange towers and activities this year. The programme has truly been a team effort of which we can be proud, and which has made the ringing in our Branch such an enjoyable, sociable, but challenging activity for us all.

Heather Dobson

Ringling Master

BRANCH REPRESENTATIVES REPORT

Matters arising from previous minutes:

Branch Secretaries are to be asked to offer to towers the option of a PDF version of the Guild Report this year, to help reduce wastage and cut down costs.

Ringling for St George's Day. Because this will fall on Easter Eve this year generally any ringling should only be undertaken after discussion with, and support from, the incumbent.

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St Cross in Oxford. A lot of work has been done to get the bells removed but the Listed Buildings Council has ruled, sadly, that they stay put.

Correspondence:

The Guild, after invitation, has voted to give £40 to sponsor the Ringing World Centenary Celebrations.

The Treasurer has received more enquiries regarding the Guild's personal accident insurance. As it seems to be costly for smaller associations the idea that the Central Council might consider a universal scheme will be put to it.

To achieve greater accuracy for the Guild report it is suggested that conductors send full details of peals to the Peal Secretary, along with the fees, for peals rung in December. This will get around the problem of late publication in the Ringing World.

Reports of the Sub-committees:

Education:

The young ringers award last took place in 2008 and it will happen again in 2011. Details are on the Website.

Towers & Belfries:

Concerns regarding insurance were raised as to what happens when a report by a professional company is overridden by private individuals masquerading as experts, but with no professional indemnity. The incumbent of the church should be made aware as the insurance could be invalid. The Vicar, PCC and Churchwardens would bear the responsibility.

Central Council Representatives' Report:

The Ringing Committee (which superceded the Trends Committee) and the Central Council are particularly concerned with the recruitment and retention of young ringers. The Trends Committee report shows that the average age of ringers is increasing year by year. The Ringing Committee is engaged in a survey of the towers that have been successful in recruiting and retaining young ringers and are investigating strategies for success.

Subscriptions: These will remain at £6 for all in 2011.

Peal fees: These will remain at 40 pence per person for 2011.

Festival 2011

There was much discussion regarding this. The Guild Master and Secretary have been given a free hand to organise it at Christ Church in Oxford.

Heather Dobson

Branch Representative

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BRANCH WEBSITE REPORT

As reported to the AGM last year, a new branch website had been set up awaiting content. During 2010, we have had all sorts of news that wouldn't normally be featured in a branch newsletter, such as first quarter peals and tower outings. I have also been kept informed some of the regular visitors to the website of any incorrect information and anything that needed to be updated; this was mainly changes of tower contact details and service ringing times. One thing that Hal has been trying to do is to record all of the towers in our branch so that they feature on the website. So far we've got seven, and we will be looking to get more in 2011!

The Cuddington Bell Ringers asked if we could provide somewhere to host their bell ringers' website. The answer to this is yes and Hal will be sorting it out. If any towers would like to have their own website, please let me know and we can set one up for you.

In May the all of the branch officers had guild generic emails set up for ease of contact; these are advertised in the Branch newsletters. At the same time as setting up the email address, I made enquiries to have branch emailing lists set up, this is a service that is offered by the guild. Following this I sent some specifications to the Guild server managers for four lists that would replace ones that we currently use. After half a year waiting, I was last informed that these would be set up in the first week of January (2011) but nothing has yet to be completed.

It has been great to read the news that is sent to me, but I would like to remind members to send in any news, photographs or other items of interest no matter how big or small!

You can contact me using this address: webmaster@cbucks.odg.org.uk .

Ryan Noble