

## **Secretary's report 2015**

The Branch Annual General Meeting and Annual Dinner was held in March, two weeks later than usual in order to commemorate the life of Frederick Charles Andrews who had died exactly 100 years previously. Frederick was wounded during the Battle of Neuve Chapelle and died of his wounds the next day, 14 March 1915. He rang at Clifton Reynes and was a member of the North Bucks Branch from 1907 to 1909.

The day started with half-muffled ringing at Newton Blossomville, a ring of three which is seldom rung. The ringing at Newton Blossomville was then followed by half-muffled ringing at Clifton Reynes, where Frederick rang regularly for services.

After this a short but poignant service was held, and our thanks go to The Reverend Canon Christa Pumfrey for conducting the moving ceremony.

The AGM itself was held later in the day at the Two Brewers in Olney. A new chairman was elected, two officers swapped roles, and all other officers were re-elected. Ten new members were proposed and elected to the Branch and Guild. The AGM was followed by a candlelit annual dinner, when those members staying were joined by some non-ringing family members.

An open towers day was held in April for the Hanslope restoration project. The day attracted ringers from as far afield as Portsmouth, Bath Abbey, Cheshire, Essex, Gloucestershire and Yorkshire, and a total of £600 was raised.

The Branch Summer Social and Six Bell Striking competition was held in June, and was kindly hosted by Whaddon. They laid on extra parking by the Church, and provided plenty of food and refreshments. The striking competition was judged by Robert and Pat Newton, whose comments were constructive and helpful – they noted that unevenness of the sound inside the ringing room made it difficult for the lighter bells to strike well. The winners were Woughton, who went on to represent the branch at the guild striking completion at St Mary, Chalgrove.

The Inter-Branch Striking Competition with Towcester Branch was held in July. The afternoon's events started with a joint practice on the six at Potterspury. This was followed by a picnic which was held on the Bury Mount at Towcester. After the picnic, the ringers met at Towcester for the striking competition. This year it was a closely fought contest again, but North Bucks managed to win by 2 to 1.

The branch outing in August was to Central London. It was a gloriously sunny day which was enjoyed by everyone. All the towers were within a short walk of each other. The outing started at St Clement Danes and finished at St Olave (which was unfortunately a lock-out).

The Branch Autumn Meeting and Commemoration Supper was held in September at Bradwell. It commemorated the lives of EJ Webb, WG Spires and AJ Fennemore – local ringers who died a hundred years ago in the First World War. The practice was

followed by a short church service, the chairman's cup competition, the Autumn Meeting itself, and finally a fish and chip supper.

The Branch Training day was held in October. This year the course was on doubles variations. Everyone who attended thoroughly enjoyed the day, and went back to their towers to practice what they had learnt.

Branch Quarter Peal week was held in November and coincided with Remembrance Sunday, so a number of quarters were rung half-muffled and/or dedicated to the fallen of WW1. In total eleven Quarter Peals were rung, including a number of firsts. Of particular note was a quarter of eleven doubles methods and variations rung at Simpson following on from the recent Branch training day on this subject,

The Branch Practice and Christmas Social was held at Stony Stratford, with ringing beforehand, followed by a fish and chip supper and a quiz

As well as all of this we have been holding Branch Practices and monthly bob doubles, call changes and plain hunt practices.

The annual process of checking the tower and tower contact information has been completed. The branch records have been updated, and these have been used to provide up-to-date information for the 2015 Guild Report and to update the website. Thank you to everyone who responded.

Reports of the branch's activities have been provided for inclusion in the Guild Report and for inclusion in the two editions of Odd Bob.

The Officers of the branch met on five occasions during the year to co-ordinate and plan branch activities.

There have been 11 new members elected to the branch this year and 5 re-elections.

The branch has a total of 226 (235 the previous year) members. The total number of towers in the branch is 59, of which 16 are unringable. The number of towers in the branch with members is 32.