

Secretary's Report 2016 to 2017

The Branch Annual General Meeting was held at Great Brickhill at the beginning of March. Ringing at the Church was followed by short service, and then a fine ringers' tea was provided in the village hall. The AGM was held after this - two officers stood down, and all other officers were re-elected. Two new members were proposed and elected to the Branch and Guild.

The Branch Outing to Oxford was held at the beginning of April. It was a lovely day: the sun shone and the bells rang. Over thirty people attended the outing, with ringing at St Thomas (10), Christ Church (12), St Giles (8), St Mary Magdalen (10), Lincoln College (8) and Carfax (6). Ringing ranged from rounds and call changes to Grandsire Cinques.

The end of April saw the St George's Day Sponsored Ringing Wave, with ringing throughout the Branch. Similar to the Mexican Wave seen at sporting events there was a single ringing wave which travelled from tower to tower across the whole branch, starting at Thornborough and ending up at Hanslope. A total of £965 was raised for the ODG bell fund and the Association of Ringing Teachers.

In early May nine delegates attended a rope splicing course at Emberton. This was a very entertaining and enjoyable day, and many thanks to Len Palfrey who ran the course.

Towards the end of May Brian Baldwin was elected as a Distinguished Member at the Guild AGM. Congratulations to Brian, who has been the tower captain at Woughton-on-the-Green for forty years and has made many contributions to ringing in North Bucks during this time, most recently nurturing a new band at Wavendon after the Big Ring Pull.

In June the branch hosted a successful ART bell ringing teacher training course at Newport Pagnell; our thanks go to Lesley Belcher who organised the day and Frank Seabright who took members through the course.

The Branch Summer Social and 6-bell Striking Competition was also held in June at Wavendon. There was ringing for all, with a fine ringers' tea followed by the striking competition. This year the striking competition was won by Great Linford.

In July we held a Joint Practice, Barbecue and Striking Competition with Towcester Branch. It was a perfect day for a barbecue - over 40 people sat outside in the sunshine at The Cross and Stable in Downs Barn. All three categories in the striking competition were won by Towcester.

The Branch Practice was held in August at Olney and was followed by a short service to commemorate the seven North Bucks ringers who lost their lives in 1916, one of whom rang at Olney.

The Branch Practice and Autumn Meeting was held in September at Bletchley. The Branch Practice was followed by tea, and then the Autumn Meeting itself, which included an interesting discussion item on what makes a great tower practice. Seven new members were proposed and elected to the Branch and Guild.

The Branch Workshop (training day) was held in October. This year the course was on ringing plain methods focusing particularly on Single and Double Oxford, and Single and Double Court. A great opportunity for members to ring and call these methods. Thanks to Lesley Belcher and Ann Birch for organising the workshop this year.

The Branch Practice and Christmas Social was held in December at Woughton-on-the-Green. There was a Branch Practice followed by an update from the officers, advent thoughts, and a buffet tea. There was also a bookstall and a number of bellringing DVDs were played.

As well as all of this we have been holding monthly Branch Practices, a monthly 8/10 bell practice, and a monthly doubles, plain hunt and call changes practice.

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 2016 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 four occasions during the year to co-ordinate and plan branch activities.

There have been 13 new members elected to the branch this year and 0 re-elections.

The Branch has a total of 215 (226 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.