



# Reading Branch News

## Christmas 2011



No. 104

Reading's team in Guild 10-bell striking competition:



*At Shrivenham, clockwise from left: Stephen Smith - Tenor; June Saint - Treble, June Wells 2, Jo Druce 3, Ian Judd 4, Robert Partridge 5, Giles Winter 6, Douglas Beaumont 7, John Wells 8, Stephen Rossiter 9 (C).*

|  |                   |
|--|-------------------|
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## Reading Branch Officers 2010

|                     |                  |                 |
|---------------------|------------------|-----------------|
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| Secretary           | Ken Baker        | (0118 943 2778) |
| Assistant Secretary | Joyce Vernon     | (0118 947 4281) |
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| Ringling Masters:   | Stephen Rossiter | (0118 941 1146) |
| for Adv. Practice   | Robert Partridge | (0118 940 1907) |
| Training Officer    | Vacant           |                 |
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### Reading branch practices

**Branch practices** are held on the second Saturday of most months, usually from 6 pm to 8 pm. All abilities welcome. See branch website for more details, or contact Steve Rossiter ([rossiter66@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:rossiter66@hotmail.co.uk)).

**Advanced practices** take place at **Shiplake** on the third Thursday of each month, 8 pm to 9.30 pm. For more information contact Bob Partridge (0118 940 1907)

**12-bell practices** take place at **St Laurence, Reading**, on the last Sunday of most months (**not** August or December), 1 pm to 2.30 pm. For more information, contact Steve Rossiter ([rossiter66@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:rossiter66@hotmail.co.uk))

**Minor practices are back at Shinfield** (after a sojourn at Swallowfield) and they are now being held on the **first Monday** (not the fourth, as they were previously) of most months from 7.45 pm to 9 pm. For further details, contact Jeff Wallace. on 0118 9883013 or by email [jeffwallace@talktalk.net](mailto:jeffwallace@talktalk.net)

**8-bell practices at St Mary, Mortimer**, have been discontinued for the present.

### Forthcoming events

|          |    |  |
|----------|----|--|
| December | 5  | Shinfield minor practice (6)                           |
|          | 10 | Branch practice (with mince pies, etc) - Caversham (8) |
|          | 15 | Advanced practice, Shiplake (8)                        |
| January  | 2  | Shinfield minor practice (6)                           |
|          | 14 | Branch practice - South Stoke (6)                      |
|          | 19 | Advanced practice, Shiplake (8)                        |
| February | 29 | St Laurence, Reading, higher numbers practice (12)     |
|          | 6  | Shinfield minor practice (6)                           |
|          | 11 | Branch AGM at Goring (8)                               |
|          | 16 | Advanced practice, Shiplake (8)                        |
|          | 25 | <i>ODG sponsored quarter peal week - ends 3 March</i>  |
|          | 26 | St Laurence, Reading, higher numbers practice (12)     |

Branch Practices 6 pm to 8 pm - these times may be changed. Advanced Practices 8 pm to 9.30 pm. Higher numbers practice 1 pm to 2.30 pm. See branch website [www.odgreadingbranch.co.uk](http://www.odgreadingbranch.co.uk) for further details

**Old North Berks (ONB)** branch runs training sessions from 2 pm to 3.30 pm on the fourth Wednesday of the month - see the ONB website [www.onb.org.uk](http://www.onb.org.uk) (Calendar)

*The Reading Branch newsletter is written for and by members of the Branch and contributions are always welcome. However, the views expressed therein are those of the writers and not necessarily shared by the Editor or Branch Officers.*

### Editorial round-up

Reading branch did very well in the Oxford Diocesan Guild striking competitions this year, but it didn't quite score a hat trick. It won the eight-bell competition in May and the six bell contest in October - but it was beaten by High Wycombe in the 10-bell competition at the end of November. See Bobbie May's report on page 5, and Alan Marchbank's on page 8.

The ODG organised a Bell Maintenance Course for young ringers on a Saturday morning in November. It took place at Cholsey and Jack Page attended the course and has sent in his report - see page 11. The month before Jack rang his first peal: Yorkshire Surprise Major - see page 12. A great achievement. Congratulations, Jack!

Robert Partridge looks back at 50 years of ringing peals, beginning with his first at Goring in 1961, when he was 14. See page 13. And Ann Osborne has celebrated 50 years of ringing at Caversham with two quarter peals - see page 16.

Susan Byers decided to celebrate a significant birthday by calling a quarter peal for the first time. With a little bit of help from her friends, she succeeded in conducting 1260 changes of Plain Bob Minor at Nettlebed. Congratulations, Susan! See page 16.

Helen McGregor and Peter Bevis came to Reading with a group of Channel Island ringers for a training weekend in early December. This has become an Advent tradition, and it was much enjoyed by all concerned - see page 18.

Frankie and James Milford celebrated their silver wedding by ringing a quarter peal of Pudsey Surprise Major, at St Giles-in-Reading, on 28 November - see page 19. On a sadder note, at the beginning of the month, a service of thanksgiving for the life of Jim Diserens took place at the Minster Church of St Mary the Virgin.

The Reading branch AGM will take place at Goring on 11 February. Please put the date in your diary and don't forget to come - it is a significant meeting - see below:

We hope you had a merry Christmas - this newsletter is rather belated - and best wishes for a happy New Year.

## **Next AGM: Message for all branch members**

The next ODG Reading Branch AGM will take place at Goring on Saturday 11 February 2012. This is a **red letter date** for your diary as some very important issues will be addressed:

- 1. June Wells** has given great service for many years as **Branch Chairman**, and will not be standing for re-election; and
- 2. Stephen Rossiter**, who for several years has been one of our excellent **Ringing Masters**, will not be standing for re-election because of work commitments.

These are two key positions in the Branch and must be filled at the meeting.

- 3.** For some years now the position of **Training Officer** has been vacant. This is another important post that should be filled.

You are asked to consider proposing suitable candidates for these positions. You must first ensure that anyone you plan to propose, is willing to stand for the post. The tasks are not arduous but do require attendance at a few meetings each year - and of course the

Ringling Master must either run the monthly branch practices, or arrange for someone else to do so.

For the Branch to continue and flourish (and survive?) we cannot leave these positions vacant, so your help is urgently required.

**4.** The **Branch Practices**, the **Higher Numbers Practices** and the **Advanced Practices** need your support. For some time now the number of members attending the practices has dwindled and Branch Officers are concerned that this may be due to a number of factors, for example:

- Is the time of the practice suitable/unsuitable?
- Are members concerned that they will not be made welcome?
- Do members think that the Advanced Practices are only for the “experts”?
- Are the Higher Numbers practices of value to members?

Please send your proposals to [readingbranchnews@btinternet.com](mailto:readingbranchnews@btinternet.com).

**5.** On 12 December Chris Johnson, the officer in charge of the branch web site, sent an email to members with this message, together with a **survey form** about branch practices. Please complete the form and send it to [readingbranchnews@btinternet.com](mailto:readingbranchnews@btinternet.com) by the end of January 2012. Branch officers would like to know your views before the AGM on 11 February – and **PLEASE COME TO THE AGM**.

At Goring on 11 February, ringing is scheduled to begin at 3 pm, followed by the service at 4 pm, then tea and the AGM.

## **ODG 10-Bell Striking Competition**

*Bobbie May reports:* The 10-bell competition this year was held on the recently restored and augmented 10 at Shrivenham, on Saturday 26 November. Eight teams entered, a record entry and most encouraging

The judges were the President of the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers, Kate Flavell, and her husband Paul Flavell, from New Malden (how did the ODG manage to get hold of them - when they are both so busy!) They said that the bells at Shrivenham were a nice 10, easy to hear and with no obvious odd-struckness.

The judges awarded percentages with higher scores for the better teams: 2 points for a good row, 1 with a clip and 0 for a crunch or two clips. Their tips included: all ring at the same speed; don't rush the leads or leave holes; exude confidence, not arrogance.

The test piece, 287 Grandsire Caters, was a mixture of tittums and handstroke home - the judges would have preferred to hear more runs in the touch. The piece was marked fairly severely because of the high standard of the competition.

Shrivenham bells are all but inaudible inside the church. If a Rave had been taking place in the church during the competition, neither the ravers nor the ringers would have been any the wiser. Those attending the competition would have had to have gone outside in the biting wind to listen and there were very few takers for that!

Many thanks must go to the Shrivenham ringers for supplying coffee, tea and ploughman's lunches. The day was very tight for time as some ringers had to go northwards in the afternoon to the Guild Autumn Meeting at Clanfield, near Witney. Thanks must also go to Alan Marchbank, ODG Deputy Master, for helping to produce a seamless arrangement of ringing and for keeping, in the main, to schedule.

As can be seen below, there were only 12 percentage points between 1<sup>st</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> place with very little difference in the positions in the middle. (For a photo of the Reading team, please see the front page.)

| Placed     | Branch        | Rang | %  | Judges' comments   |
|------------|---------------|------|----|--|
| <b>1st</b> | EBSB          | 3rd  | 89 | Peal speed 3:16. Whole piece measured and was consistent throughout. All had the same speed goal. Confident. Few faults. Occasional clips.   |
| <b>2nd</b> | Reading       | 6th  | 84 | Peal speed 3:19. Good, steady practice. Good opening rounds and once into changes ringing settled well. Occasional hesitations upset the rhythm.   |
| <b>3rd</b> | Central Bucks | 4th  | 83 | Peal speed 2:58. Very fast practice. Fast rounds settling into a crisp rhythm. Few faults. Little trips and rather edgy. Some little bells were clipping. Improved. Good over-all ringing. |

| <b>Placed</b> | <b>Branch</b>           | <b>Rang</b> | <b>%</b> | <b>Judges' comments</b>   |
|---------------|-------------------------|-------------|----------|---|
| <b>4th</b>    | Vale of the White Horse | 2nd         | 82       | Peal speed 2:59. Good, confident practice. Touch rung at a good speed and with confidence. Good recovery from trip but didn't get back the rhythm and hence quite a few clips.  |
| <b>5th</b>    | Newbury                 | 7th         | 79       | Peal speed 3:21. Difficulties in the practice. Measured opening rounds which never really settled. No method mistakes. Generally good but some small trips. Slow speed contributed, making it difficult to settle into a rhythm.    |
| <b>6th</b>    | Old North Berks         | 1st         | 77       | Peal speed 2:56. Lots of little bells clipping over big bells. Not all agreed on speed before going in to changes. Hence trips. Tenor good rhythm. Most faults at the back. Improved as it went along. Still a bit edgy and uneven. |
| <b>7th</b>    | Sonning Deanery         | 5th         | 69       | Peal speed 3:02. Choppy going in to changes. Not agreed on speed which led to some faults. Hesitant and never really settled to a steady rhythm, though got better. No major mistakes.  |
| <b>8th</b>    | Banbury                 | 8th         | 67       | Peal speed 3:13. Difficulties in the practice. Problems settling and ringing together as a unit. Some very nice runs. Lots of problems and did well keeping it together.  |

## St Mary, Reading, wins ODG six-bell competition



*St Mary's team:  
Front row, l to r,  
June Saint 1,  
June Wells 2,  
Louise Ellis 3  
(with Dominic  
and Jennifer),  
back row, l to r:  
Peter Ellis 4,  
Steve  
Rossiter (C) 5,  
John Wells 6.*

*Alan Marchbank, ODG Deputy Master, reports:* This year the annual Guild six-bell striking competition was hosted on Saturday 1 October by the Reading Branch, and the recently refurbished bells at Streatley were chosen to test the skill of the teams taking part.

The day and the venue were perfect for an afternoon of sitting in the sunshine and enjoying some of the best six-bell ringing the Guild can produce, as nine teams, each representing their branch, tried hard to impress the Judges, Richard and Claire Yates from Towcester. The judges sat in the dappled shade of a tree, listening to the teams ringing a test piece of one minute of rounds followed by 240 changes of their choice.

All the teams except one chose Grandsire Doubles as the method, most relying on two extents, but one team rang Morris's 240, which made listening more interesting.

An excellent tea of cakes, sandwiches and other savoury delights accompanied by freshly-brewed tea was provided throughout the afternoon by the Goring and Streatley ringers.

Announcing the results, Richard commented that the high standard of ringing at the competition demonstrated that the Guild was clearly in good shape. He added that the ringing was a great credit to all who had taken part. He was pleased that the bands had made full and effective use of the practice time by getting into changes, and testing the bells for odd-struckness in changes, not just in rounds. The results were as follows:

| <b>Placed</b>    | <b>Band</b>     | <b>Judges' comments</b>   | <b>Faults</b> |
|------------------|-----------------|---|---------------|
| <b>1st</b>       | Reading St Mary | Peal speed 2h 32. Practice was not good - ringing too fast. Test piece slightly steadier, band used to ringing fast? Very few faults in initial rounds. Very good ringing throughout. | 13            |
| <b>2nd</b>       | Thatcham        | Peal speed 2h34. Polished piece of ringing with a strong rhythm. Long spells with no faults. Rang more rounds than required.  | 15            |
| <b>3rd equal</b> | High Wycombe    | Peal speed 3h01. Test piece improved as it progressed and settled. The opening rounds were very accurate and established a good rhythm. A few minor method errors collected faults.   | 19            |
| <b>3rd equal</b> | Wantage         | Peal speed 2h56. Measured and steady piece of ringing. Much clean ringing until the last 60 changes when odd clips and hesitations crept in and picked up faults.                     | 19            |
| <b>5th</b>       | Sonning         | Peal speed 3h00. Good ringing and a good rhythm. The ringing improved as it progressed. Faults were in the initial rounds and in the last 120 changes.                                | 23            |

| <b>Placed</b>    | <b>Band</b>        | <b>Judges' comments</b>  | <b>Faults</b> |
|------------------|--------------------|--|---------------|
| <b>6th equal</b> | Drayton St Leonard | Peal speed 3h02. Confident ringing with good rhythm. The first 30 changes contained the majority of the faults.  | 29            |
| <b>6th equal</b> | Farrington         | Peal speed 2h51. Measured ringing which improved as it progressed. The first half contained more faults than the 2nd half. Occasional lateness of the tenor upset the rhythm | 29            |
| <b>8th</b>       | Woodstock          | Peal speed 3h11. Sedate pace with a good rhythm. Inaccuracies in the treble moving to 2nds place picked up faults  | 43            |
| <b>9th</b>       | Aston Clinton      | Peal speed 2h42. The unfortunate mistake when moving from rounds to changes took a long time to recover. The ringing did not completely settle down after this trip.         | 51            |

So the six-bell trophy returned to Reading. Conductor Stephen Rositer collected the cup from Richard Yates and congratulations were given to Thatcham, who came second, and High Wycombe and Wantage, who shared third place.

Alan Marchbank, ODG Deputy Master, thanked Richard and Claire for playing their part diligently and providing good, encouraging feedback. He also thanked the catering team who had provided the teas and all the towers for entering and making it a very enjoyable afternoon.

## ODG Bell Maintenance Course

*Jack Page reports:* On Saturday 19 November I attended a Bell Maintenance Course at Cholsey, organised by Alan Bentley and run by John Davidge, chairman of the ODG Bells and Belfries Committee.

It was organised specially for young ringers participating in the Young Ringers Award Scheme this year. Following the safety instructions, we were given the instruction sheet for how to inspect bells and belfries, used for the ODG Tower Maintenance award. We found a cracked stay, measured clappers to ensure they were parallel to the bell frame, and discovered that Cholsey's roof is leaking. In addition to this we also looked for oil leaks, frayed ropes and loose gudgeons.

It was an enjoyable experience. I can now tell people how to inspect a bell, and what to look out for when inspecting one. I would like to say thank you to both Alan and John for a good use of my Saturday morning.



*John Davidge (centre), Jack Page (second left), and three other young ringers on the ODG Bell Maintenance course.*

## Jack's first peal



*Back row: Steve Rossiter, Peter Bevis, front row: Jenny Page, Helen McGregor, Jack Page, June & John Wells, Doug Beaumont*

Fourteen-year-old Jack Page rang his first peal on Sunday 9 October 2011 at St Peter, Caversham, the tower where he was first introduced to ringing in 2008.

Jack has also spent many hours ringing in Alderney, under the guidance of Helen McGregor and Peter Bevis, and this particular date was chosen because it coincided with one of their visits to Reading. The method was Yorkshire Surprise Major, in an arrangement composed by the late Roy Harris, former Caversham Tower Captain, and the conductor was Roy's successor, Doug Beaumont.

**St Peter, Caversham (7  $\frac{3}{4}$  cwt), Reading, Berks**  
**Sunday 9 October 2011 in 2hr47**  
**5056 Yorkshire Surprise Major**  
**Comp: Roy T. Harris**

- |                       |                           |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. June D Wells       | 2. Jenny Page             |
| 3. Helen McGregor     | 4. Jack Page *            |
| 5. E John Wells       | 6. Peter J R Bevis        |
| 7. Stephen A Rossiter | 8. Douglas J Beaumont (C) |
- \*First peal

### **Robert Partridge on 50 years of ringing peals**

On 28 October 1961, six pupils from Wallingford Grammar School with an average age of 14 years rang a peal of Plain Bob Doubles at Goring. It was the first peal for four of the band including the writer. Fifty years on I'm fortunate to be still ringing peals and on 28 October 2011 I returned to Goring and successfully rang a peal of Bristol Surprise Major, ringing the same bell that I had rung in 1961.

When I started peal ringing, the opportunities were pretty limited unless one lived in Reading or Oxford. As schoolboys, with only bicycles for transport and with homework to do, we mostly had to arrange our own peals in the holidays or on Saturdays when not involved in school activities. Inevitably, our enthusiasm often got the better of us as we tried to run before we could walk, and a lot of attempts were lost.

I first came to appreciate what really good peal ringing was all about at Wallingford on a freezing cold December night in 1963. That peal of Stedman Triples was the first I had ever rung where the conductor said nothing, apart from making the calls, and the rhythm and striking were excellent throughout. Interestingly, the band consisted of ringers from surrounding villages, most of whom never rang anything as complex as Surprise, but they certainly could ring Stedman Triples!

A more recent experience of similar top quality ringing was the first peal of Triples (Stedman again) on the new bells at Shiplake. This was the sort of ringing that you don't want to end, described by one of the band afterwards as totally mesmerising.

Some peals stand out more than others, usually through the challenge of the bells or the method. A peal on the tough heavy eight at St

Mary, Enfield (now replaced by a lovely light eight) in 1984 was one of the hardest physically that I have rung (incidentally, it was Steve Ros-siter's first peal - what an initiation to peal ringing!).

The lovely bells of Wheathampstead tend to create fear and dread because of their massive unguided rope draft, and the fact that they are rung from what feels like the middle of an enormous open space in the chancel crossing. My first peal there (before the days of pre-stretched terylene rope tops) resulted in swollen tendons in my wrists for a couple of weeks.

Some of the most satisfying moments have come when completing peals with ringers whom I have taught to ring. In the early 1980s at Harrow Weald I was fortunate to teach three youngsters who all became excellent ringers. Two rang in a peal of Spliced Surprise Major and I was immensely proud of their achievement. At the opposite end of the difficulty scale, a local band peal of Bob Triples, also at Harrow Weald, involving three first pealers, two of whom were pensioners, was equally satisfying.

I have been fortunate in my peals to have had the encouragement of many very good ringers and conductors. John Mayne was someone who encouraged me and many others to ring peals and to advance their repertoire to heights that they had never dreamt of achieving. In the last few years I have become involved in spliced surprise ringing to a level to which I never thought I would aspire and I am most grateful to those who have organised, called and rung in those and indeed in all my peals. Hopefully I will be able to attempt peals for a few more years and continue to experience the mix of delight and agony that goes with successful and not so successful attempts. *Robert Partridge*

### **Goring on Thames, Oxon**

#### **St Thomas of Canterbury (8 cwt)**

Friday 28 October 2011 in 2h46 (8)

#### **5088 Bristol S Major**

Comp: Timothy G Pett

|                         |                    |
|-------------------------|--------------------|
| 1 Timothy G Pett (C)    | 2 Heather A Kippin |
| 3 June D Wells          | 4 Ian G Judd       |
| 5 Christopher M Tuckett | 6 E John Wells     |
| 7 Robert A Partridge    | 8 Robert C Kippin  |

Arranged to mark the 50th anniversary of Robert Partridge's first peal rung at Goring on 28 October 1961, on the same bell.



*Photo of the band which rang the first peal on Shiplake's new bells, in May 2010. Through an oversight by the editor, it was not published in a newsletter last year. This seems a good moment to rectify that omission. Details of the peal are below.*

*Back row left to right: Robert Newton, Roy Woodruff, Robert Partridge, Graham Clifton, Stephen Smith*

*Seated, left to right: Jo Knight, Patricia Newton, Joyce Vernon*

**SHIPLAKE, Oxon, St Peter & St Paul**

**Sat 22 May 2010 2h47**

**Tenor 9cwt 15lbs in G#**

**5056 Plain Bob Major**

**Comp: J R Pritchard**

**1 Joanna Knight**

**3 Patricia M Newton**

**5 Stephen R Smith**

**7 L Roy Woodruff**

**First peal on the new bells**

**2 Joyce Vernon**

**4 Robert H Newton**

**6 Graham J Clifton**

**8 Robert A Partridge (C)**

## **Ann Osborne celebrates 50 years ringing at Caversham**



Ann Osborne first began ringing at Caversham in 1961, when she was 10 years old, and she has been ringing there ever since. Today, she is very involved with teaching ringing at Caversham (and also at Mappedurham). In December 2011 she rang in two quarter peals, to celebrate 50 years of ringing at Caversham: Spliced Surprise had been planned for 11 December, but due to unforeseen circumstances (don't ask - too complicated to explain), Grandsire took its place and Spliced Surprise came later. Ann says: A huge thank-you to all who rang in both those quarters.

**St Peter, Caversham, 11 December, for Evensong: 1260 Grandsire Triples in 42 minutes: June D. Wells 1, Jenny M. Page 2, Ann Osborne 3, Jack Page 4, Douglas J Beaumont 5, Stephen A. Rossiter 6, E. John Wells (C) 7, Ralph A Elmes 8.**

**St Peter, Caversham, Friday 23 December, for the Carol Service: 1280 8-spliced Surprise Major (Standard 8) in 41 mins: Ralph A. Elmes 1, Jenny M. Page 2, Ann Osborne 3, Jack Page 4, June D. Wells 5, Douglas J Beaumont 6, E John Wells 7, Stephen A Rossiter (C) 8. Also rung to celebrate the birth of Jackson George Hamilton, grandson of 5.**

## **Susan Byers calls first quarter peal – on her birthday**

*Susan Byers reports:* The big 60 was only three weeks away. What did I want to do? This was the question being asked by my family. My actual birthday fell on a Wednesday, Nettlebed's practice night. Suddenly it came to me: I would call my very first quarter peal. One of our ringers had sneakily had his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday a couple of weeks before mine, and hadn't wanted us to make a fuss, so I really wanted him to ring in it too.

Ralph reeled off what I needed to do... Hang on a minute, let me write this down, my brain doesn't go that fast. I was then given the opportunity to practise calling 360 changes and then the first 180 of the 540 over the next few weeks. Ralph picked a strong band, including

James Champion from Caversham who also knew the calling. Mark Castle, who is very steady, agreed to ring the treble.

The evening arrived all too quickly. The first attempt went wrong when Ralph thought I had missed a bob. Okay, start again. Then several of us, including me, went wrong in much the same place. Stand, have a short break, take some deep breaths, and there was still time to try once more.

All went very smoothly with some reasonable striking, despite me feeling rather tired and getting a bit slow with my handstrokes.

Then.... "That's all", I called. "No, No, No!!" shouted Ralph and James together: "Keep going everyone". Oops, I needed three times 180 changes, not just two lots. Amazingly everyone continued in the right direction. By the end I was very shaky but ecstatic.

Thank you to all my fellow ringers, and especially to all our other ringers who agreed to give up their practice night so that I could call this on my actual 60<sup>th</sup> Birthday.

**St Bartholomew (6 cwt), Nettlebed, Wednesday 21 September 2011, 1260 changes of Plain Bob Minor in 43 minutes: Mark Castle 1, Julie Champion 2, Jeremy Simon 3, James Champion 4, Ralph Elmes 5, Susan Byers (C) 6. First as conductor**



*Nettlebed, l to r: Mark Castle, Jeremy Simon, Susan Byers and Ralph Elmes. James and Julie Champion not in the picture as they are visiting South Africa*

## Channel Island ringers visit Reading



*Outside St Peter, Caversham, 4 December, some CI and some local ringers. L to r: Jenny Page, Jo Routier, Celia Anderson, Philip Maddocks, David Sumner, Paul Arditti, Heidi Sydor, Philippa Arditti, Jack Page, Helen McGregor, Peter Bevis, Jane le Conte, Duncan Loweth*

Helen McGregor and Peter Bevis came to Reading at the beginning of December 2011 with a group of ringers from the Channel Islands, for a training weekend. Similar trips have taken place in previous years, and it is becoming a tradition, with the students progressing every year. This time they rang at St Giles-in-Reading on Friday afternoon, with some of them fitting in a quarter of Surprise Royal at St Lawrence that evening. The next day they split into two groups: the more advanced practice took place at Tilehurst (ending with a quarter of Rutland Surprise Major at Caversham), and a more basic practice took place at Shiplake. (A young Caversham novice joined the Shiplake group, for tuition from Helen.) In the evening they rang hand bells at Jenny Page's house.

On Sunday morning they joined local bands for service ringing at Caversham and the Minster Church of St Mary in Reading, and they had a higher-numbers practice at St Laurence in the early afternoon. It was a very enjoyable and successful weekend.

### **Frankie & James Milford ring Pudsey for anniversary**

**St Giles, Reading (14 cwt), Monday 28 November 2011, 1280 changes of Pudsey Surprise Major in 45 minutes:**

Frances Milford 1, June D. Wells 2, Joyce Vernon 3, William Harwin 4, James R. Milford 5, Edward J W Manley 6, E John Wells 7, Chris Barrett (C) 8. First in method 3 and 4. Rung to celebrate the silver wedding of Frankie and James Milford, ringers of 1 and 5.

Answer to quiz: The church of SS Peter & Paul, Checkendon

### **Tribute to Jim Diserens**

A service of thanksgiving for the life of Jim Diserens was held on Friday 4 November at the Minster Church of St Mary the Virgin, the Reading church where Jim rang as man and boy, where he met and married his wife Helen, and where their four sons were baptised. At the service, tributes were read out by his son Tony and by John Wells, and the address was given by the Revd Adam Carlill. We hope that Jim looked down from above on that day, to listen to the beautiful ringing in his honour, that took place before and after the service. Jim's obituary, by his son Brian, appeared in *The Ringing World* on 25 November 2011, page 1195. Peals and quarter peals have been rung in his memory - below is one which was rung at St Mary:

**Minster Church of St Mary the Virgin (25 cwt), Reading, 13 November 2011, 1260 Stedman Triples: June Wells 1, Ronald Diserens 2, Kelvin Britton 3, Timothy Pett 4, Susan Apter 5, John Manley 6, John Wells (C) 7, Alan Flood 8. Rung half-muffled for Remembrance Sunday and in memory of Jim Diserens, a loyal member of this tower.**

## Christmas Quiz

Can you identify this Reading branch church? It has 14th century apse wall paintings of Christ in Glory, and St Peter and St Paul, and chancel wall paintings that date back to 1330. It also has eight lovely bells (10 cwt). The nave roof was renewed in the 1950s with bosses hand-carved by local people, under the guidance of Eric Kennington, churchwarden and artist.





# Reading Branch News

## Christmas 2011



No. 104

Reading's team in Guild 10-bell striking competition:



*At Shrivenham, clockwise from left: Stephen Smith - Tenor; June Saint - Treble, June Wells 2, Jo Druce 3, Ian Judd 4, Robert Partridge 5, Giles Winter 6, Douglas Beaumont 7, John Wells 8, Stephen Rossiter 9 (C).*

|  |                   |
|--|-------------------|
| <b>Don't miss crucial Reading Branch AGM</b>                   | <b>Page 4</b>     |
| <b>ODG 10- and 6-bell striking competitions</b>                | <b>Pages 5, 8</b> |
| <b>ODG bell maintenance course for young ringers</b>           | <b>Page 11</b>    |
| <b>Jack Page rings his first peal: Yorkshire Surprise</b>      | <b>Page 12</b>    |
| <b>Robert Partridge reflects on 50 years of ringing peals</b>  | <b>Page 13</b>    |
| <b>Ann Osborne celebrates 50 years ringing at Caversham</b>    | <b>Page 16</b>    |
| <b>Susan Byers calls her first quarter - on her birthday</b>   | <b>Page 16</b>    |
| <b>Channel Island ringers visit Reading</b>                    | <b>Page 18</b>    |
| <b>Frankie &amp; James Milford celebrate by ringing Pudsey</b> | <b>Page 19</b>    |
| <b>Tribute to Jim Diserens</b>                                 | <b>Page 19</b>    |



## Reading Branch Officers 2010

|                     |                  |                 |
|---------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Chairman            | June Wells       | (0118 941 0061) |
| Secretary           | Ken Baker        | (0118 943 2778) |
| Assistant Secretary | Joyce Vernon     | (0118 947 4281) |
| Treasurer           | Keith Vernon     | (0118 947 4281) |
| Ringling Masters:   | Stephen Rossiter | (0118 941 1146) |
| for Adv. Practice   | Robert Partridge | (0118 940 1907) |
| Training Officer    | Vacant           |                 |
| Website Manager     | Chris Johnson    | (0118 942 4048) |

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Youth Rep Post in abeyance

Branch Reps Keith Vernon (0118 947 4281)

Len Palfrey (0118 984 2698)

Diana McClure (0118 947 2353)

Independent Examiners Sarah Dixon and Ann Osborne

Newsletter Editor: Diana McClure, 130 Kidmore Road, Caversham,

Reading RG4 7NB Tel: 0118 947 2353 e-mail: [jim.p.mcclure@btinternet.com](mailto:jim.p.mcclure@btinternet.com)

### Reading branch practices

**Branch practices** are held on the second Saturday of most months, usually from 6 pm to 8 pm. All abilities welcome. See branch website for more details, or contact Steve Rossiter ([rossiter66@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:rossiter66@hotmail.co.uk)).

**Advanced practices** take place at **Shiplake** on the third Thursday of each month, 8 pm to 9.30 pm. For more information contact Bob Partridge (0118 940 1907)

**12-bell practices** take place at **St Laurence, Reading**, on the last Sunday of most months (**not** August or December), 1 pm to 2.30 pm. For more information, contact Steve Rossiter ([rossiter66@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:rossiter66@hotmail.co.uk))

**Minor practices are back at Shinfield** (after a sojourn at Swallowfield) and they are now being held on the **first Monday** (not the fourth, as they were previously) of most months from 7.45 pm to 9 pm. For further details, contact Jeff Wallace. on 0118 9883013 or by email [jeffwallace@talktalk.net](mailto:jeffwallace@talktalk.net)

**8-bell practices at St Mary, Mortimer**, have been discontinued for the present.

### Forthcoming events

|          |    |  |
|----------|----|--|
| December | 5  | Shinfield minor practice (6)                           |
|          | 10 | Branch practice (with mince pies, etc) - Caversham (8) |
|          | 15 | Advanced practice, Shiplake (8)                        |
| January  | 2  | Shinfield minor practice (6)                           |
|          | 14 | Branch practice - South Stoke (6)                      |
|          | 19 | Advanced practice, Shiplake (8)                        |
| February | 29 | St Laurence, Reading, higher numbers practice (12)     |
|          | 6  | Shinfield minor practice (6)                           |
|          | 11 | Branch AGM at Goring (8)                               |
|          | 16 | Advanced practice, Shiplake (8)                        |
|          | 25 | <i>ODG sponsored quarter peal week - ends 3 March</i>  |
|          | 26 | St Laurence, Reading, higher numbers practice (12)     |

Branch Practices 6 pm to 8 pm - these times may be changed. Advanced Practices 8 pm to 9.30 pm. Higher numbers practice 1 pm to 2.30 pm. See branch website [www.odgreadingbranch.co.uk](http://www.odgreadingbranch.co.uk) for further details

**Old North Berks (ONB)** branch runs training sessions from 2 pm to 3.30 pm on the fourth Wednesday of the month - see the ONB website [www.onb.org.uk](http://www.onb.org.uk) (Calendar)

*The Reading Branch newsletter is written for and by members of the Branch and contributions are always welcome. However, the views expressed therein are those of the writers and not necessarily shared by the Editor or Branch Officers.*

### Editorial round-up

Reading branch did very well in the Oxford Diocesan Guild striking competitions this year, but it didn't quite score a hat trick. It won the eight-bell competition in May and the six bell contest in October - but it was beaten by High Wycombe in the 10-bell competition at the end of November. See Bobbie May's report on page 5, and Alan Marchbank's on page 8.

The ODG organised a Bell Maintenance Course for young ringers on a Saturday morning in November. It took place at Cholsey and Jack Page attended the course and has sent in his report - see page 11. The month before Jack rang his first peal: Yorkshire Surprise Major - see page 12. A great achievement. Congratulations, Jack!

Robert Partridge looks back at 50 years of ringing peals, beginning with his first at Goring in 1961, when he was 14. See page 13. And Ann Osborne has celebrated 50 years of ringing at Caversham with two quarter peals - see page 16.

Susan Byers decided to celebrate a significant birthday by calling a quarter peal for the first time. With a little bit of help from her friends, she succeeded in conducting 1260 changes of Plain Bob Minor at Nettlebed. Congratulations, Susan! See page 16.

Helen McGregor and Peter Bevis came to Reading with a group of Channel Island ringers for a training weekend in early December. This has become an Advent tradition, and it was much enjoyed by all concerned - see page 18.

Frankie and James Milford celebrated their silver wedding by ringing a quarter peal of Pudsey Surprise Major, at St Giles-in-Reading, on 28 November - see page 19. On a sadder note, at the beginning of the month, a service of thanksgiving for the life of Jim Diserens took place at the Minster Church of St Mary the Virgin.

The Reading branch AGM will take place at Goring on 11 February. Please put the date in your diary and don't forget to come - it is a significant meeting - see below:

We hope you had a merry Christmas - this newsletter is rather belated - and best wishes for a happy New Year.

## **Next AGM: Message for all branch members**

The next ODG Reading Branch AGM will take place at Goring on Saturday 11 February 2012. This is a **red letter date** for your diary as some very important issues will be addressed:

- 1. June Wells** has given great service for many years as **Branch Chairman**, and will not be standing for re-election; and
- 2. Stephen Rossiter**, who for several years has been one of our excellent **Ringing Masters**, will not be standing for re-election because of work commitments.

These are two key positions in the Branch and must be filled at the meeting.

- 3.** For some years now the position of **Training Officer** has been vacant. This is another important post that should be filled.

You are asked to consider proposing suitable candidates for these positions. You must first ensure that anyone you plan to propose, is willing to stand for the post. The tasks are not arduous but do require attendance at a few meetings each year - and of course the

Ringling Master must either run the monthly branch practices, or arrange for someone else to do so.

For the Branch to continue and flourish (and survive?) we cannot leave these positions vacant, so your help is urgently required.

**4.** The **Branch Practices**, the **Higher Numbers Practices** and the **Advanced Practices** need your support. For some time now the number of members attending the practices has dwindled and Branch Officers are concerned that this may be due to a number of factors, for example:

- Is the time of the practice suitable/unsuitable?
- Are members concerned that they will not be made welcome?
- Do members think that the Advanced Practices are only for the “experts”?
- Are the Higher Numbers practices of value to members?

Please send your proposals to [readingbranchnews@btinternet.com](mailto:readingbranchnews@btinternet.com).

**5.** On 12 December Chris Johnson, the officer in charge of the branch web site, sent an email to members with this message, together with a **survey form** about branch practices. Please complete the form and send it to [readingbranchnews@btinternet.com](mailto:readingbranchnews@btinternet.com) by the end of January 2012. Branch officers would like to know your views before the AGM on 11 February – and **PLEASE COME TO THE AGM**.

At Goring on 11 February, ringing is scheduled to begin at 3 pm, followed by the service at 4 pm, then tea and the AGM.

## **ODG 10-Bell Striking Competition**

*Bobbie May reports:* The 10-bell competition this year was held on the recently restored and augmented 10 at Shrivenham, on Saturday 26 November. Eight teams entered, a record entry and most encouraging

The judges were the President of the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers, Kate Flavell, and her husband Paul Flavell, from New Malden (how did the ODG manage to get hold of them - when they are both so busy!) They said that the bells at Shrivenham were a nice 10, easy to hear and with no obvious odd-struckness.

The judges awarded percentages with higher scores for the better teams: 2 points for a good row, 1 with a clip and 0 for a crunch or two clips. Their tips included: all ring at the same speed; don't rush the leads or leave holes; exude confidence, not arrogance.

The test piece, 287 Grandsire Caters, was a mixture of tittums and handstroke home - the judges would have preferred to hear more runs in the touch. The piece was marked fairly severely because of the high standard of the competition.

Shrivenham bells are all but inaudible inside the church. If a Rave had been taking place in the church during the competition, neither the ravers nor the ringers would have been any the wiser. Those attending the competition would have had to have gone outside in the biting wind to listen and there were very few takers for that!

Many thanks must go to the Shrivenham ringers for supplying coffee, tea and ploughman's lunches. The day was very tight for time as some ringers had to go northwards in the afternoon to the Guild Autumn Meeting at Clanfield, near Witney. Thanks must also go to Alan Marchbank, ODG Deputy Master, for helping to produce a seamless arrangement of ringing and for keeping, in the main, to schedule.

As can be seen below, there were only 12 percentage points between 1<sup>st</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> place with very little difference in the positions in the middle. (For a photo of the Reading team, please see the front page.)

| Placed     | Branch        | Rang | %  | Judges' comments   |
|------------|---------------|------|----|--|
| <b>1st</b> | EBSB          | 3rd  | 89 | Peal speed 3:16. Whole piece measured and was consistent throughout. All had the same speed goal. Confident. Few faults. Occasional clips.   |
| <b>2nd</b> | Reading       | 6th  | 84 | Peal speed 3:19. Good, steady practice. Good opening rounds and once into changes ringing settled well. Occasional hesitations upset the rhythm.   |
| <b>3rd</b> | Central Bucks | 4th  | 83 | Peal speed 2:58. Very fast practice. Fast rounds settling into a crisp rhythm. Few faults. Little trips and rather edgy. Some little bells were clipping. Improved. Good over-all ringing. |

| <b>Placed</b> | <b>Branch</b>           | <b>Rang</b> | <b>%</b> | <b>Judges' comments</b>   |
|---------------|-------------------------|-------------|----------|---|
| <b>4th</b>    | Vale of the White Horse | 2nd         | 82       | Peal speed 2:59. Good, confident practice. Touch rung at a good speed and with confidence. Good recovery from trip but didn't get back the rhythm and hence quite a few clips.  |
| <b>5th</b>    | Newbury                 | 7th         | 79       | Peal speed 3:21. Difficulties in the practice. Measured opening rounds which never really settled. No method mistakes. Generally good but some small trips. Slow speed contributed, making it difficult to settle into a rhythm.    |
| <b>6th</b>    | Old North Berks         | 1st         | 77       | Peal speed 2:56. Lots of little bells clipping over big bells. Not all agreed on speed before going in to changes. Hence trips. Tenor good rhythm. Most faults at the back. Improved as it went along. Still a bit edgy and uneven. |
| <b>7th</b>    | Sonning Deanery         | 5th         | 69       | Peal speed 3:02. Choppy going in to changes. Not agreed on speed which led to some faults. Hesitant and never really settled to a steady rhythm, though got better. No major mistakes.  |
| <b>8th</b>    | Banbury                 | 8th         | 67       | Peal speed 3:13. Difficulties in the practice. Problems settling and ringing together as a unit. Some very nice runs. Lots of problems and did well keeping it together.  |

## St Mary, Reading, wins ODG six-bell competition



*St Mary's team:  
Front row, l to r,  
June Saint 1,  
June Wells 2,  
Louise Ellis 3  
(with Dominic  
and Jennifer),  
back row, l to r:  
Peter Ellis 4,  
Steve  
Rossiter (C) 5,  
John Wells 6.*

*Alan Marchbank, ODG Deputy Master, reports:* This year the annual Guild six-bell striking competition was hosted on Saturday 1 October by the Reading Branch, and the recently refurbished bells at Streatley were chosen to test the skill of the teams taking part.

The day and the venue were perfect for an afternoon of sitting in the sunshine and enjoying some of the best six-bell ringing the Guild can produce, as nine teams, each representing their branch, tried hard to impress the Judges, Richard and Claire Yates from Towcester. The judges sat in the dappled shade of a tree, listening to the teams ringing a test piece of one minute of rounds followed by 240 changes of their choice.

All the teams except one chose Grandsire Doubles as the method, most relying on two extents, but one team rang Morris's 240, which made listening more interesting.

An excellent tea of cakes, sandwiches and other savoury delights accompanied by freshly-brewed tea was provided throughout the afternoon by the Goring and Streatley ringers.

Announcing the results, Richard commented that the high standard of ringing at the competition demonstrated that the Guild was clearly in good shape. He added that the ringing was a great credit to all who had taken part. He was pleased that the bands had made full and effective use of the practice time by getting into changes, and testing the bells for odd-struckness in changes, not just in rounds. The results were as follows:

| <b>Placed</b>    | <b>Band</b>     | <b>Judges' comments</b>   | <b>Faults</b> |
|------------------|-----------------|---|---------------|
| <b>1st</b>       | Reading St Mary | Peal speed 2h 32. Practice was not good - ringing too fast. Test piece slightly steadier, band used to ringing fast? Very few faults in initial rounds. Very good ringing throughout. | 13            |
| <b>2nd</b>       | Thatcham        | Peal speed 2h34. Polished piece of ringing with a strong rhythm. Long spells with no faults. Rang more rounds than required.  | 15            |
| <b>3rd equal</b> | High Wycombe    | Peal speed 3h01. Test piece improved as it progressed and settled. The opening rounds were very accurate and established a good rhythm. A few minor method errors collected faults.   | 19            |
| <b>3rd equal</b> | Wantage         | Peal speed 2h56. Measured and steady piece of ringing. Much clean ringing until the last 60 changes when odd clips and hesitations crept in and picked up faults.                     | 19            |
| <b>5th</b>       | Sonning         | Peal speed 3h00. Good ringing and a good rhythm. The ringing improved as it progressed. Faults were in the initial rounds and in the last 120 changes.                                | 23            |

| <b>Placed</b>    | <b>Band</b>        | <b>Judges' comments</b>  | <b>Faults</b> |
|------------------|--------------------|--|---------------|
| <b>6th equal</b> | Drayton St Leonard | Peal speed 3h02. Confident ringing with good rhythm. The first 30 changes contained the majority of the faults.  | 29            |
| <b>6th equal</b> | Farrington         | Peal speed 2h51. Measured ringing which improved as it progressed. The first half contained more faults than the 2nd half. Occasional lateness of the tenor upset the rhythm | 29            |
| <b>8th</b>       | Woodstock          | Peal speed 3h11. Sedate pace with a good rhythm. Inaccuracies in the treble moving to 2nds place picked up faults  | 43            |
| <b>9th</b>       | Aston Clinton      | Peal speed 2h42. The unfortunate mistake when moving from rounds to changes took a long time to recover. The ringing did not completely settle down after this trip.         | 51            |

So the six-bell trophy returned to Reading. Conductor Stephen Rositer collected the cup from Richard Yates and congratulations were given to Thatcham, who came second, and High Wycombe and Wantage, who shared third place.

Alan Marchbank, ODG Deputy Master, thanked Richard and Claire for playing their part diligently and providing good, encouraging feedback. He also thanked the catering team who had provided the teas and all the towers for entering and making it a very enjoyable afternoon.

## ODG Bell Maintenance Course

*Jack Page reports:* On Saturday 19 November I attended a Bell Maintenance Course at Cholsey, organised by Alan Bentley and run by John Davidge, chairman of the ODG Bells and Belfries Committee.

It was organised specially for young ringers participating in the Young Ringers Award Scheme this year. Following the safety instructions, we were given the instruction sheet for how to inspect bells and belfries, used for the ODG Tower Maintenance award. We found a cracked stay, measured clappers to ensure they were parallel to the bell frame, and discovered that Cholsey's roof is leaking. In addition to this we also looked for oil leaks, frayed ropes and loose gudgeons.

It was an enjoyable experience. I can now tell people how to inspect a bell, and what to look out for when inspecting one. I would like to say thank you to both Alan and John for a good use of my Saturday morning.



*John Davidge (centre), Jack Page (second left), and three other young ringers on the ODG Bell Maintenance course.*

## Jack's first peal



*Back row: Steve Rossiter, Peter Bevis, front row: Jenny Page, Helen McGregor, Jack Page, June & John Wells, Doug Beaumont*

Fourteen-year-old Jack Page rang his first peal on Sunday 9 October 2011 at St Peter, Caversham, the tower where he was first introduced to ringing in 2008.

Jack has also spent many hours ringing in Alderney, under the guidance of Helen McGregor and Peter Bevis, and this particular date was chosen because it coincided with one of their visits to Reading. The method was Yorkshire Surprise Major, in an arrangement composed by the late Roy Harris, former Caversham Tower Captain, and the conductor was Roy's successor, Doug Beaumont.

**St Peter, Caversham (7  $\frac{3}{4}$  cwt), Reading, Berks**  
**Sunday 9 October 2011 in 2hr47**  
**5056 Yorkshire Surprise Major**  
**Comp: Roy T. Harris**

- |                       |                           |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. June D Wells       | 2. Jenny Page             |
| 3. Helen McGregor     | 4. Jack Page *            |
| 5. E John Wells       | 6. Peter J R Bevis        |
| 7. Stephen A Rossiter | 8. Douglas J Beaumont (C) |
- \*First peal

### **Robert Partridge on 50 years of ringing peals**

On 28 October 1961, six pupils from Wallingford Grammar School with an average age of 14 years rang a peal of Plain Bob Doubles at Goring. It was the first peal for four of the band including the writer. Fifty years on I'm fortunate to be still ringing peals and on 28 October 2011 I returned to Goring and successfully rang a peal of Bristol Surprise Major, ringing the same bell that I had rung in 1961.

When I started peal ringing, the opportunities were pretty limited unless one lived in Reading or Oxford. As schoolboys, with only bicycles for transport and with homework to do, we mostly had to arrange our own peals in the holidays or on Saturdays when not involved in school activities. Inevitably, our enthusiasm often got the better of us as we tried to run before we could walk, and a lot of attempts were lost.

I first came to appreciate what really good peal ringing was all about at Wallingford on a freezing cold December night in 1963. That peal of Stedman Triples was the first I had ever rung where the conductor said nothing, apart from making the calls, and the rhythm and striking were excellent throughout. Interestingly, the band consisted of ringers from surrounding villages, most of whom never rang anything as complex as Surprise, but they certainly could ring Stedman Triples!

A more recent experience of similar top quality ringing was the first peal of Triples (Stedman again) on the new bells at Shiplake. This was the sort of ringing that you don't want to end, described by one of the band afterwards as totally mesmerising.

Some peals stand out more than others, usually through the challenge of the bells or the method. A peal on the tough heavy eight at St

Mary, Enfield (now replaced by a lovely light eight) in 1984 was one of the hardest physically that I have rung (incidentally, it was Steve Ros-siter's first peal - what an initiation to peal ringing!).

The lovely bells of Wheathampstead tend to create fear and dread because of their massive unguided rope draft, and the fact that they are rung from what feels like the middle of an enormous open space in the chancel crossing. My first peal there (before the days of pre-stretched terylene rope tops) resulted in swollen tendons in my wrists for a couple of weeks.

Some of the most satisfying moments have come when completing peals with ringers whom I have taught to ring. In the early 1980s at Harrow Weald I was fortunate to teach three youngsters who all became excellent ringers. Two rang in a peal of Spliced Surprise Major and I was immensely proud of their achievement. At the opposite end of the difficulty scale, a local band peal of Bob Triples, also at Harrow Weald, involving three first pealers, two of whom were pensioners, was equally satisfying.

I have been fortunate in my peals to have had the encouragement of many very good ringers and conductors. John Mayne was someone who encouraged me and many others to ring peals and to advance their repertoire to heights that they had never dreamt of achieving. In the last few years I have become involved in spliced surprise ringing to a level to which I never thought I would aspire and I am most grateful to those who have organised, called and rung in those and indeed in all my peals. Hopefully I will be able to attempt peals for a few more years and continue to experience the mix of delight and agony that goes with successful and not so successful attempts. *Robert Partridge*

### **Goring on Thames, Oxon**

#### **St Thomas of Canterbury (8 cwt)**

Friday 28 October 2011 in 2h46 (8)

#### **5088 Bristol S Major**

Comp: Timothy G Pett

- |                         |                    |
|-------------------------|--------------------|
| 1 Timothy G Pett (C)    | 2 Heather A Kippin |
| 3 June D Wells          | 4 Ian G Judd       |
| 5 Christopher M Tuckett | 6 E John Wells     |
| 7 Robert A Partridge    | 8 Robert C Kippin  |

Arranged to mark the 50th anniversary of Robert Partridge's first peal rung at Goring on 28 October 1961, on the same bell.



*Photo of the band which rang the first peal on Shiplake's new bells, in May 2010. Through an oversight by the editor, it was not published in a newsletter last year. This seems a good moment to rectify that omission. Details of the peal are below.*

*Back row left to right: Robert Newton, Roy Woodruff, Robert Partridge, Graham Clifton, Stephen Smith*

*Seated, left to right: Jo Knight, Patricia Newton, Joyce Vernon*

**SHIPLAKE, Oxon, St Peter & St Paul**

**Sat 22 May 2010 2h47**

**Tenor 9cwt 15lbs in G#**

**5056 Plain Bob Major**

**Comp: J R Pritchard**

**1 Joanna Knight**

**3 Patricia M Newton**

**5 Stephen R Smith**

**7 L Roy Woodruff**

**First peal on the new bells**

**2 Joyce Vernon**

**4 Robert H Newton**

**6 Graham J Clifton**

**8 Robert A Partridge (C)**

## **Ann Osborne celebrates 50 years ringing at Caversham**



Ann Osborne first began ringing at Caversham in 1961, when she was 10 years old, and she has been ringing there ever since. Today, she is very involved with teaching ringing at Caversham (and also at Mappedurham). In December 2011 she rang in two quarter peals, to celebrate 50 years of ringing at Caversham: Spliced Surprise had been planned for 11 December, but due to unforeseen circumstances (don't ask - too complicated to explain), Grandsire took its place and Spliced Surprise came later. Ann says: A huge thank-you to all who rang in both those quarters.

**St Peter, Caversham, 11 December, for Evensong: 1260 Grandsire Triples in 42 minutes: June D. Wells 1, Jenny M. Page 2, Ann Osborne 3, Jack Page 4, Douglas J Beaumont 5, Stephen A. Rossiter 6, E. John Wells (C) 7, Ralph A Elmes 8.**

**St Peter, Caversham, Friday 23 December, for the Carol Service: 1280 8-spliced Surprise Major (Standard 8) in 41 mins: Ralph A. Elmes 1, Jenny M. Page 2, Ann Osborne 3, Jack Page 4, June D. Wells 5, Douglas J Beaumont 6, E John Wells 7, Stephen A Rossiter (C) 8. Also rung to celebrate the birth of Jackson George Hamilton, grandson of 5.**

## **Susan Byers calls first quarter peal – on her birthday**

*Susan Byers reports:* The big 60 was only three weeks away. What did I want to do? This was the question being asked by my family. My actual birthday fell on a Wednesday, Nettlebed's practice night. Suddenly it came to me: I would call my very first quarter peal. One of our ringers had sneakily had his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday a couple of weeks before mine, and hadn't wanted us to make a fuss, so I really wanted him to ring in it too.

Ralph reeled off what I needed to do... Hang on a minute, let me write this down, my brain doesn't go that fast. I was then given the opportunity to practise calling 360 changes and then the first 180 of the 540 over the next few weeks. Ralph picked a strong band, including

James Champion from Caversham who also knew the calling. Mark Castle, who is very steady, agreed to ring the treble.

The evening arrived all too quickly. The first attempt went wrong when Ralph thought I had missed a bob. Okay, start again. Then several of us, including me, went wrong in much the same place. Stand, have a short break, take some deep breaths, and there was still time to try once more.

All went very smoothly with some reasonable striking, despite me feeling rather tired and getting a bit slow with my handstrokes.

Then.... "That's all", I called. "No, No, No!!" shouted Ralph and James together: "Keep going everyone". Oops, I needed three times 180 changes, not just two lots. Amazingly everyone continued in the right direction. By the end I was very shaky but ecstatic.

Thank you to all my fellow ringers, and especially to all our other ringers who agreed to give up their practice night so that I could call this on my actual 60<sup>th</sup> Birthday.

**St Bartholomew (6 cwt), Nettlebed, Wednesday 21 September 2011, 1260 changes of Plain Bob Minor in 43 minutes: Mark Castle 1, Julie Champion 2, Jeremy Simon 3, James Champion 4, Ralph Elmes 5, Susan Byers (C) 6. First as conductor**



*Nettlebed, l to r: Mark Castle, Jeremy Simon, Susan Byers and Ralph Elmes. James and Julie Champion not in the picture as they are visiting South Africa*

## Channel Island ringers visit Reading



*Outside St Peter, Caversham, 4 December, some CI and some local ringers. L to r: Jenny Page, Jo Routier, Celia Anderson, Philip Maddocks, David Sumner, Paul Arditti, Heidi Sydor, Philippa Arditti, Jack Page, Helen McGregor, Peter Bevis, Jane le Conte, Duncan Loweth*

Helen McGregor and Peter Bevis came to Reading at the beginning of December 2011 with a group of ringers from the Channel Islands, for a training weekend. Similar trips have taken place in previous years, and it is becoming a tradition, with the students progressing every year. This time they rang at St Giles-in-Reading on Friday afternoon, with some of them fitting in a quarter of Surprise Royal at St Lawrence that evening. The next day they split into two groups: the more advanced practice took place at Tilehurst (ending with a quarter of Rutland Surprise Major at Caversham), and a more basic practice took place at Shiplake. (A young Caversham novice joined the Shiplake group, for tuition from Helen.) In the evening they rang hand bells at Jenny Page's house.

On Sunday morning they joined local bands for service ringing at Caversham and the Minster Church of St Mary in Reading, and they had a higher-numbers practice at St Laurence in the early afternoon. It was a very enjoyable and successful weekend.

### **Frankie & James Milford ring Pudsey for anniversary**

**St Giles, Reading (14 cwt), Monday 28 November 2011, 1280 changes of Pudsey Surprise Major in 45 minutes:**

Frances Milford 1, June D. Wells 2, Joyce Vernon 3, William Harwin 4, James R. Milford 5, Edward J W Manley 6, E John Wells 7, Chris Barrett (C) 8. First in method 3 and 4. Rung to celebrate the silver wedding of Frankie and James Milford, ringers of 1 and 5.

Answer to quiz: The church of SS Peter & Paul, Checkendon

### **Tribute to Jim Diserens**

A service of thanksgiving for the life of Jim Diserens was held on Friday 4 November at the Minster Church of St Mary the Virgin, the Reading church where Jim rang as man and boy, where he met and married his wife Helen, and where their four sons were baptised. At the service, tributes were read out by his son Tony and by John Wells, and the address was given by the Revd Adam Carlill. We hope that Jim looked down from above on that day, to listen to the beautiful ringing in his honour, that took place before and after the service. Jim's obituary, by his son Brian, appeared in *The Ringing World* on 25 November 2011, page 1195. Peals and quarter peals have been rung in his memory - below is one which was rung at St Mary:

**Minster Church of St Mary the Virgin (25 cwt), Reading, 13 November 2011, 1260 Stedman Triples: June Wells 1, Ronald Diserens 2, Kelvin Britton 3, Timothy Pett 4, Susan Apter 5, John Manley 6, John Wells (C) 7, Alan Flood 8. Rung half-muffled for Remembrance Sunday and in memory of Jim Diserens, a loyal member of this tower.**

## Christmas Quiz

Can you identify this Reading branch church? It has 14th century apse wall paintings of Christ in Glory, and St Peter and St Paul, and chancel wall paintings that date back to 1330. It also has eight lovely bells (10 cwt). The nave roof was renewed in the 1950s with bosses hand-carved by local people, under the guidance of Eric Kennington, churchwarden and artist.

