

# *Oxford University Society of Change Ringers*

## **ANNUAL NEWSLETTER - JANUARY 1998**

A Happy New Year to all our members. Last year we were looking forward to the celebrations of the Society's 125th anniversary and the publication of the History. All enterprises went very well, and much of this issue will be spent reporting on them.

The History has been very well received, but we still need to sell another fifty copies before breaking even. **Please order your copy from the General Secretary as soon as possible.** We know you will be delighted with it, and it is ideal for dipping into as much as for curling up with. (Shakespeare ended sentences with prepositions, so Darby needn't write in just yet.)

### **Change to the Society's Rules**

Rule 4(d) has been amended to restrict the length of tenure of the Presidency. It formerly read 'A retiring officer may be re-elected', but now reads 'A retiring officer may be re-elected, except that no-one who has served for a total of ten years as president shall be eligible for re-election to that office. For the purposes of this rule, a year shall be deemed to be the period between one annual general meeting and the next'. This rule was proposed by John Camp and seconded by Paul Mounsey, and comes into effect upon the next change of president.

### **Meeting Dates in 1998**

The Society's business meetings are held on Mondays, and take place in the Quarrell Room in Exeter.

TGM dates - the first Monday in term. Jan 19th, April 27th, Oct 12th.

AGM date - Monday, Nov 30th.

Peter Giles

6 Pittsfield, Cricklade, Wilts SN6 6AN tel 01793-751690

*email Peter\_Giles@burmahcastrol.co*

## **New Officers**

At the AGM held on Monday, December 1st 1997 in Exeter College, the following Officers were elected:

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| President          | Andrew Stubbs   |
| Senior Member      | Dermot Roaf   |
| General Secretary  | Peter Giles   |
| Master             | Duncan McBurnie (Exeter)                              |
| Resident Secretary | Philip Livermore (Exeter)                             |
| Librarian          | Peter Elliott (Oriel)                                 |
| Treasurer          | Chris Poole (University)                              |
| Steeplekeepers     | Kate Levick (Magdalen)<br>Barney Stratford (St. John) |

All the Vice Presidents were re-elected: Peter Border, John Camp, Paul Mounsey, David Brown, Ian W Davies, Donald Niblett, Robert Bruce, Wilfrid Moreton, Dermot Roaf, Betty Robbins and John Spice. Doug Beaumont was elected at the beginning of the year in recognition of his achievement in being Master of the Cumberlands for a year, and Quentin Armitage similarly at the AGM for becoming Master of the College Youths. It is impressive to note that five of the twenty seven members present at the AGM have been or are Masters of one of these Societies.

Peter Niblett continues his three-year tenure as our sole Central Council representative.

## **Life Members**

The following have become Life Members:

|                   |                   |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| Roland Torode     | Jesus 1941-45     |
| Andrew Cunningham | Hertford 1961-64  |
| Ian G Judd        | Keble 1975-76     |
| Mark H Ainsworth  | Queen's 1994-97   |
| Dorothy G Barton  | St Hugh's 1994-97 |

## **Bell Restoration Fund**

The Treasurer and the Senior Member are trustees ex officio, and two others are elected annually. These are Chris Rusby and Philip Livermore. Mark Shepherd and Alex Byrne have been elected as Auditors.

The Society's set of 12 handbells has now been restored, to the satisfaction of the handbell ringers amongst us.

## **1998 Annual Tour**

The tour will be organised jointly by John Camp and Mike Richardson, and be based in Newport, Gwent. It will as usual be held in Easter week, Easter Sunday being April 12th. Accommodation will be available at various prices, and details may be had from the organisers: John Camp, 4 Elwes Way, Great Billing, Northampton NN3 9EA, tel 01604-785130, email Camp@Bigfoot.com, or Mike Richardson at 14 Caerau Road, Newport, Gwent NP9 4HL, tel 01633-841977. An internet web site has also been arranged, at <http://www.tropics.demon.co.uk/ous/tour1998/index.htm>.

We thank Doug Beaumont and Alex and Nina Byrne for arranging the 1997 tour in Reading at very short notice, and making a very good job of it.

## **1998 Annual Dinner**

This year's Dinner will be held on Saturday, February 7th at LMH, at 7.00 for 7.30 - note the slightly earlier time. Tickets will be £32.50, or £25.00 without wine. The menu has yet to be decided. Unfortunately we cannot go back to New College, who have done us so well for the last two years, but there is the chance that LMH will be warmer in February. It is hoped that after-dinner drinking can be arranged at Wolfson, but if not St Hugh's may be able to take us. We have been promised that arrangements at Wolfson will be an improvement on the last time we went there!

Please order your tickets from Phillip Livermore, Exeter College, Oxford OX1 3DP by January 23rd, making cheques payable to 'OUSCR Dinner Committee', and stating your seating preferences and any special dietary requirements. Please send an s.a.e.

## **Society Ties**

Thirty-six remain, the price is still three pounds, and I could do with the space under the desk for putting my feet in.

## **Address List**

The Address List is available on request either on paper or diskette. An especial thank-you to IWD for using the internet to pick up addresses; largely as a result of his efforts, the 35 lost members have shrunk to 22: Catherine Bannister, Rosemary Clark, Paul Crane, Robert Galloway, Andre Gren, Sally Hawksworth, Luke Heaton, Lance Hewson, Anne Lambert, Andrew Loveland, JL Marshall, Phyllis Marshall, Melanie Milan, James Mumford, David Newman, Colin Parker, Julie Sheard, Nigel Sheppard, Colin Taylor, C Turnbull, Sarah Vicary and AJ Vincent.

## **Newsletter Account**

The cost of printing and posting this Newsletter will be about £160, for about the fourth year running. The Newsletter account will stand at about £680 after this letter has been sent. I thank Roland Torode, Andrew Cunningham, Donald Niblett, John Preston, Robin Woolley, Peter and Betty Robbins and Bill Gibbons for their contributions, which totalled £54.00. If you wish to contribute, please make your cheque payable to `Mr P Giles` or `Post Office Counters`.

Please refer to a later article about the internet as a means of reducing this cost.

## **History Index**

John Lonsbrough has very kindly undertaken the act of love of compiling an index to the History. This is available direct from John, at 43 Hanover Gardens, Manorsfield Road, Bicester, Oxon OX6 7DG (tel 01869-369649) for 1.75, or 1.50 if calling personally, of which 1.00 will go to the Society's BRF. Cheques are payable to 'J.V. Lonsbrough'.

This is a very useful companion, as it is surprising how many references there are to individuals: for a random example, there are 17 references to Bruce Wakefield.

## **Members` News**

We congratulate **Wilfrid Moreton** on his MBE for services to ringing and our Senior Member, **Dermot Roaf**, on his CBE for services to local government. We also congratulate **Tina Stoecklin** on her appointment as editor of the

Ringling World, after a nagging four months' delay for red tape.

This year we know of the deaths of two members. **Renate Tankard** was at St Hilda's from 1948-52. **Derek P Jones** was at SEH from 1943-47, and his obituary appears in the RW on page 835; he was especially distinguished as a six-bell expert. The editor apologises for reintroducing Frances Fielden to the list of lost members - a computer error. Thank you to the numerous members who wrote or phoned to say that she had of course died some years ago.

**Teresa Goatham** has reestablished contact with the OUS. She was up from 1981-84, joining the OUS after taking up ringing through the Fresher's Fair. **Clare Lovegrove** married **Simon Martin** in August 1995, a match which unfortunately missed the list in the History. In this case, the ringing followed the meeting and not the other way round as usual.

**Martin Petchey** married in 1990, and has a son and stepson. He is presently working in Oxford as an archaeological consultant and living in Milton Keynes. Canon **Frank Pickard** has moved from Northampton to Weedon Lois, Towcester, and hopes to resume ringing now that he has two six-bell towers.

**Charlotte Jackson**, now Stockley, wishes us well, but is unlikely to ring again as she is now happily involved in a church without bells in Bugbrooke. **Lester Yeo** has resigned his parish of Thorverton in order to become a Roman Catholic, and is now doing a PGCE at Exeter University.

Several members have written expressing pleasure with the Anniversary lunch, and the opportunity to meet old acquaintances again. **Frank Wright** has enjoyed dipping into his History and remembering the OUS peal at SMV half-muffled for George VI. **Margaret Moote**, now in America and not ringing, has bought a copy and brought back many happy memories: she wishes to be remembered to the older members.

## **The 125th Anniversary Dinner**

Last year's dinner was an extra-special occasion, which New College lived up to in fine style. The attendance set a record for the OUS of 157, compared with the usual 100 to 120. Even the speeches were good, with John Spice describing the considerable style of the Society by reference to specific incidents through the years, and Mark Regan delighting us with an

unprovoked attack on the Central Council. Herriott manfully stayed sober long enough to welcome the guests, unlike the unknown attender who cost the Society £100.00 to clean the SCR carpet.

Inevitably, the crush in the Undercroft afterwards was even worse than usual, but we still managed to distribute over fifty copies of the History there.

## **The 125th Anniversary Lunch**

At the suggestion of John Spice, a luncheon was also held for the benefit of those who could not make the Dinner, or do not like Oxford weather in February. These latter may not have done too well from the idea, since May 17th started in fog, went into a heatwave after lunch and by five was experiencing a monsoon.

It was particularly good to see such an even spread of members, with fifty three covering every epoch from Spice to the residents. Many had their first opportunity to ring on the marvellous new bells of St. Thomas and Mary Mag, and also the rehung All Saints. At John's request, SMV were added in the evening for the nostalgic.

The buffet was in New College Long Room, with copious volumes of wine, and a generous cheese board to round it off. Rodney Meadows spoke of the last fifty years, with only Betty Robbins in disagreement. Handbells were rung afterwards, and it was good to see one band ranging from Robin Woolley to residents.

Following several requests, the Society will consider arranging further such events, although it was felt that annually would be too frequent.

## **The History**

It is likely that the OUS History only followed the pattern of all private publishing efforts, but the frustrations and efforts required to get it done at times exasperated all those concerned. Many contributions came in only after the deadline; it was much longer than expected; the publishers needed more goading and more corrections than realised; some of the bills were higher than estimated; right at the end there were delays in printing and in correcting the dust jackets. Notwithstanding all this and more, Stephen Ivin and Peter Giles collected it from the printers just three days before the Dinner.

The end result is by any standards, and especially ringing standards, a large volume. 470 pages, excellently produced, of all the details on the OUS fit to publish. (Volunteers to write up the stuff not fit to publish, please!)

The book has been very well received, surprisingly so by non-members, who have bought over fifty copies. It received a considerable puff in the *Oxford Today* issue of June 1997, where John Spice was given two pages about ringing in Oxford, and George Pipe's review in the *Ringing World* on April 11th (pp 367-8) was fulsome. For those who missed it:

"This book is sheer delight. It has that rare combination of being so readable from start to finish and something that one can dip into at any page. Such is the breadth of interest that any notice might well exceed the length of the work..."

"...this labour of love looks good and smells good - it's a fine book to handle."

"What gives this book depth is the fleshing out of so many people that were just names..."

"It is people that make a place, but reading this history one is glad of the fine coverage too of colleges, parish churches and bells."

"...the appendices are a book in themselves..."

David Lane of the OS has found it particularly useful in answering visitors' questions when escorting them around the Oxford towers.

Through a generous gift we have been able to print 500 copies instead of the planned 300, the extra copies eventually providing almost pure profit to the BRF. In fact, the printers overran, so we ended up with 551 copies at no extra charge. Twenty four have been given - to the author, the benefactor, copyright libraries, reviews, and just three truly complimentary copies (the residents, the Oxford Society and the Central Council Library) - and at the time of writing 201 sold. Large numbers occupy Dermot Roaf's rooms, the Secretary's study and Nigel Orchard's flat. We need to sell another fifty or so to break even, and after that the BRF does very well. While the response of non-members has been excellent, that from members has been rather slow. If you have not yet invested, can you now be tempted to send £30.00, payable to 'OUSCR History', to the General Secretary at the address at the front of this newsletter?

## **History Errata and Addenda**

It is the intention to publish errata and addenda in the annual newsletter. The following list comes mostly from John Spice and Jim Cook.

## **Photographs**

*Page 104:* Between Pat Ibbotson and Frances Edgar is Anne Madge. On the left of Stella Hassid is Jean Sharpe.

*Page 125:* on John Dickinson's left is Jack Bray, and on Anna Sellor's right is Elizabeth Cowan.

*Page 175:* the man standing, front, was not James Cook, who in 1949 was still at school!

*Page 185:* those to the right of Robin Turner in the front row are respectively Ashley Pugh, Kate Higgins, Betty Willcox and Michael Glover.

*Page 201:* respectively first and second from left in the back row are Sarah Prideau and Alethea Martineau.

*Page 227:* sixth and seventh from left back row are Valerie M Johns and Gillian M Wilce.

*Page 229:* first and second from left back row are Gillian M Wilce and Valerie Johns.

*Page 338:* those in the left in the back row are possibly Bill Jackson and Colin Taylor. In the lower photograph, the members given as Donald Niblett and James Cook have been wrongly identified: the man thought to have been James Cook may be Glyn Jenkins.

### **Other Matters**

*Page 22:* the Rev. E.P. Barrow was the grandfather of Michael Barrow, who came up in 1946.

Another founder member was Rev. H.R. Bramley, who by then was vicar of Horspath. He had previously been a fellow and tutor at Magdalen, and while there published a collection of Christmas carols, together with John Stainer (later Sir John), who was then organist of the college. The collection contained a number of carols which were then new but have since become favourites, including 'Amid the Winter's Snow'.

*Page 105:* the first paragraph should end '...as did Wilfrid Moreton, who after returning from Europe was posted to India in the summer of 1945'.

*Page 153:* James Cook says that in the early 1950s the OUS went regularly to the King's Arms, where 'one of the bar billiards tables was 'more of a crown green than a level plain'.

*Page 169:* the Coronation peal attempt at Carfax was lost through the 4th or 5th running dry, and not because of a wayward clock hammer. A possible swapping round as bells crossed at backstroke, so that Peter Border could ring it, was decided against. This was to have been the first 'all the Oxfords' peal.

*Page 170:* the analysis of handbell peals for 1952-53 should have included two peals in 9 minor methods.

*Page 172:* details of the handbell peals in 23 minor methods (no. 214) should have been given, rather than of that in 17 methods.

*Page 188:* the first 271 (not 281) OUS peals were copied out by Robin Pittman, not by Glyn Jenkins.

*Page 193:* the unfortunate member who broke his back at Abingdon is thought to have been David Wright.

*Page 216:* near the bottom, it should be John Thorp, not Thorpe.

*Page 248:* the name 'Nice People' was not an invention of Peter Giles. He later coined the expression 'Nice Age' for that era.

*Page 261:* the 7th in the peal of 8-spliced at Mary Mag was Douglas J Beamont, not Roger.

*Page 268:* the extension of Londonderry S Major was produced by Peter Giles not Lester Yeo. It was called Bogside.

*Page 286:* in the peal of Isis, the 2nd was rung by Elizabeth A Niblett (Somerville), the 3rd by Nicholas G Robinson (LMH) and the 4th by Philip RJ Barnes (New College), who was the conductor.

*Page 347:* John Pusey thinks the peal in 3 minor methods at Stanton Harcourt on 11.5.62 is marked by a peal board there.

*Page 368:* Readers will have been intrigued to see the Foreign Secretary mentioned as having rung 17 handbell peals for the OUS. The entry should have read James Cook. (JS says he was confused by the large number of Robins, male and female in the OUS in the 40s and 50s.)

*Page 369:* add James Cook, who has rung 25 peals for the OUS.

*Page 429:* James Cook's wife was Betty Willcox, not Wilcox.

*Page 432:* the 1987 weekend in Canterbury was organised by Scott Tebbutt, not by Elizabeth A Niblett.

*Page 451:* peals 195 and 218 were conducted by Peter Wright, not Frank Wright.

## **The OUS and the Internet**

*Mark Ainsworth writes:*

For those of you who have yet to step into the brave new world that is 'The Internet', you ought to know that you are missing out on a spectacular part of the OUS. This, of course, is the OUS' World Wide Web page, accessible to anyone with a computer, a modem and an internet connection.

For some years St. Thos quarter-peals have been organised by e-mail, but when I was master in 1996 I felt compelled to take the OUS even further into the information age by setting up an OUS web-site. Given Andrew Graham's assertion that most ringing web-sites were 'rubbish' (or some less printable word to that effect), I tried my best to impress him. So in April and May I duly created a web-site for the OUS, packed with entertaining items and fabulously useful features.

Among these were mundane items like the termcard, a description of Oxford's

towers, email addresses, useful links, an article on striking, and details on the organisation of the dinner. But there was also a 'Noticeboard', which led to a world of excitement and amusement... Marvel at pictures of John Camp from the 1996 tour! Gasp at the links to beer sites on the internet! Be amused by the 'dictionary', an invaluable guide to the in-jokes and peculiar phrases of the residents! Swoon at all the other fantastic frivolous features!

Eighteen months and over 3000 hits later, the site is largely the same creature as before, but it has gained a few extra limbs. These include a section for regular news updates, some historical oddities, a non-residents' section, some sound samples, and a link to Mike Richardson's continually updated details about the 1998 tour. The site has also acquired more photos (of the tour and dinner 1997), and the e-mail list has become ever more impressive, now with several dozen online residents listed.

In fact, the site has won 'Best ringing web-site of the month' twice in the space of seven months, thanks to the votes of impressed web-surfers visting the Change Ringers' Web Directory! Alas, Cambridge are one of the few to equal us on this score. They must have cheated, the rascals.

So now that you know what you're missing out on, you know what to do. Get an internet connection, and surf your way to:

<http://users.ox.ac.uk/~ouscr/>. See you there!

If any member would like to save the Society some postage and printing by receiving the newsletter electronically, please email the Secretary at [Peter\\_Giles@burmahcastrol.co](mailto:Peter_Giles@burmahcastrol.co)

## **The OUS and the Dorothy L Sayers Society**

*Jean Pailing writes:*

The Dorothy L Sayers Society celebrated its 21st birthday on February 23rd 1997 in a way that DLS would surely have approved of, with a *very* grand 1930's style tea party in the Park Lane Hotel. Over ninety members revelled as they demolished a lavish cream tea and enjoyed readings by, appropriately, Edward Petheridge, Harriet Walter and many other well-known names. Pealing bells welcomed the guests and the birthday cake, adorned with exquisite models of the church of Fenchurch St. Paul and Lord Peter's Daimler, was ceremonially cut to the accompaniment of yet more bells.

Another bellringing connection was highlighted in August when Anglia TV showed a film on DLS featuring the Secretary of the DLSS and our very own James Pailing, who sat on a wall in March churchyard speaking forth on the matter of bells and bellringing.

The worldwide appeal of DLS continues to expand: for example, the society has recently received copies of more translations of the detective novels into Japanese!

In fact, the activities of the DLSS are so international and so multifarious in character (what a tribute to DLS!) that I cannot begin to sum them up. It is just important to remember that we the OUS are, as a body, honorary members of the DLSS who value this connection. The OUS attempted a peal on December 9th to mark the fortieth anniversary of the death of DLS but, as yet, I do not know the result of the attempt. Whatever the result, I am sure that the DLS Society would like to send their appreciation of the OUS's support for this important occasion.

Jean's address is 9 Adcock Walk, Orpington, Kent BR6 9SY.

### **Ring in 2000**

The General Secretary receives the standard circulations from the Central Council, including now details of the Ring in 2000 millenium efforts. The Society's official reply has been that as a university society we will have very few members around on January 1st, so any in Oxford then will be encouraged to support whatever arrangements the OS makes. On the matter of recruiting and training ringers, it was stated that the resident society makes the maximum effort to do this each year anyway through the Fresher's Fair.

### **An Absentee Member's Tale**

*or, Why Liz Barber missed the Luncheon.*

I'd learned my Belfast and my Glasgow,  
I'd checked up my route on the map,  
dipped the oil-sump, bought plenty of petrol,  
and seemed proof against any mishap.  
For an OUS lunch of such import  
I could best be described as agog -  
but, alas, on the following morning  
I awoke to a blanket of fog.

I hoped against hope all through breakfast,

but a logic doom-laden and chill  
informed me that in the Thames Valley  
things could worse be than up on our hill.  
One can often drown sorrows in gardening,  
so I weeded and trowelled away  
as I tried to look forward to what was  
to come at the end of the day.

In a District six-bell competition  
I was eager to play a key part:  
St. Peter's had been last year's winners,  
and at Lemsford we met in good heart.  
At a great pace we pushed those light bells round,  
and did well until - how absurd! -  
I clouted the stay of the second,  
and reduced our position to third.

