

Oxford University Society of Change Ringers

ANNUAL NEWSLETTER - JANUARY 1999

A happy new year to everybody. This newsletter is noticeably slimmer than many past editions, mostly because the History has now been published and contributions have naturally lessened. At one stage it looked as if the editor would have to resort to reporting sightings of John Camp in a green bowler hat, but it hasn't quite come to that yet. Year 2000 permitting, another edition will follow next year.

1999 Annual Dinner

This year's Dinner will be held on Saturday, February 6th, again at LMH, at 6.30 for 7.00 - note the even slightly earlier time than last year. Tickets will be £36.00, or £29.00 without wine. The menu will probably be:

Chicken liver pate

fillet of pork en crouete with sage and apple and seasonal vegetables

chocolate profiteroles

coffee and mints.

For vegetarians, the first course will be vegetable terrine with herb vinaigrette, but the main course is as yet undetermined.

Drinking will be at Wolfson afterwards, where cheese and biscuits will be served by the residents.

Please order your tickets from John Taylor, St John's College, Oxford OX1 3JP by January 20th, making cheques payable to 'OUSCR Dinner Committee', and stating your seating preferences and any special dietary requirements. Please send an s.a.e.

Peter Giles

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

email peter_giles@burmahcastrol.com

New Officers

At the AGM held on Monday, November 30th 1998 in Exeter College, the following Officers were elected:

President	Andrew Stubbs
Senior Member	Dermot Roaf
General Secretary	Peter Giles
Master	Christopher Poole (University)
Resident Secretary	John Taylor (St John's)
Librarian	Mark Humphreys (New College)
Treasurer	Timothy Filtness (Christ Church)
Steeplekeepers	Rebecca Glen (Balliol) Sarah Butt (St Anne's)
Website Maintainer	Barney Stratford (St. John)
Brookes rep.	Lisa Broughton-Head
CC Rep	Peter Niblett

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, John Spice, Doug Beaumont and Quentin Armitage.

Peter Niblett starts a new three-year tenure as our Central Council representative. Under the new rules, university societies with between 75 and 150 active members in this calendar year are entitled to just one representative, and the OUS has attracted just over 120.

Andrew Stubbs has announced that he will be standing down as President at the next AGM.

Life Members

The following have become Life Members:

Christopher L Rusby	Lincoln 1995-99
Sarah Meikle	Lincoln 1993-97

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 18th, April 26th, Oct 11th.
AGM date - Monday, Nov 29th.

Bell Restoration Fund

Mark Shepherd and Alex Byrne have been re-elected as Auditors.

Charity legislation requires that the 'Auditors' become 'independent examiners'.

Despite the President's and general secretary's efforts to save the society the cost of a notice in the RW, the AGM decided that this is in effect a change to the society's rules and requires notice. We trust the residents will make the samll print as small as possible.

A peal has now been rung on the set of restored handbells, which were agreed to be most satisfactory.

The Annual Tour

The 1998 tour was an excellently organised event based on Newport, Gwent. Many thanks to Mike Richardson and John Camp for organising it.

Nobody has yet offered to organise the 1999 Tour. If you are interested in doing so, please contact the general secretary or the President (tel 0121-704-1638) as soon as possible.

Address List

The Address List is available on request either on paper or diskette. The following 22 members are still lost: Catherine Bannister, Rosemary Clark, Richard Clements, 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, Richard Tapper, C Turnbull, Sarah Vicary, AJ Vincent and Gill Wilce.

The Future of the Dinner

A discussion was held at the AGM about the future of the Dinner. We have no shortage of numbers (attendance has been creeping up from 100 to 140 over the last decade or so), but costs and organisation are the issue. Each year, the

real cost goes up a little but buys less quality, and finding a college in term time is once again becoming difficult, especially if we want good facilities for so many people afterwards.

A committee of residents plus the general secretary has therefore been set up to look at our options, not with the objective of necessarily changing the Dinner, but of finding out what we can do to get better quality. We will be looking at: how much better food we can get at what price; whether the dinner needs to be in a college; how value compares with outside alternatives; what those outside alternatives might be; whether the dinner needs to be in central Oxford at all; whether the dinner needs to be in early February; whether a dinner out of term-time is more or less feasible; and what members feel.

Radical thoughts indeed. At the moment we are interested only in exploring possibilities, and no decision has been taken at all to change anything, so do not panic. But if you have any views, whether you come to dinner or would do so if there were any changes made which you would find attractive, please let the general secretary have your thoughts as soon as possible. We want a better dinner!

Newsletter Account

The cost of printing and posting this Newsletter will be about £140, less than in the previous few years because of its fewer pages. The Newsletter account will stand at about £760 after this letter has been sent. I thank Peter Wright, Julian Morgan, Alex Byrne, Peter Sanders and Wilfrid Moreton for their contributions. If you wish to contribute, please make your cheque payable to `Mr P Giles` or `Post Office Counters`.

The newsletters for 1997 and 1998 have been included on the OUS website, and this and its successors will be joining it. If you would be happy to read it there and save the society some money, please let me know.

Society Ties

Thirty-three remain, at an increasingly irresistible price of just three pounds each. Alan Pink has been delighted to receive three, so why not emulate his happiness yourself?

The Society's History

So far, 222 copies have been sold and a further 25 given. 21 sales have been this year. About another 40 sales are needed to break even. How about it? Please send a cheque for £30.00 per copy (incl. postage and package), made out to 'OUSCR History', to the general secretary.

John Lonsbrough's index has not sold quite as well as hoped, so the remaining fourteen have been given to me to include free with the next copies sold.

History Errata and Addenda

This year I have received only two corrections to the History. One comes from Peter Wright, and corrects last year's amendment. Peter and Frank are agreed on this:

Page 451: peal 195 was conducted by Frank Wright as stated in the book. Peal 218 was conducted by Peter Wright, as stated in the correction.

Also:

Page 125: on Julia Preston's right is Enid Roberts, who John Lonsbrough says was 'a very quiet lady and no relation of "the horrible Margaret Roberts", quoting some contemporary Somervillians'.

Members` News

This year we sadly have five deaths to report. (in the last Letter I mentioned the death of Renate Tankard: John Spice thinks she must have been Renate Buchtal.) **Clare Scott** (nee Iles) died this autumn, and **Anne Dickinson** in January.

Ken Grayson was at Teddy Hall from 1944-45 and 48-51. Ewart Edge writes: 'He died on Sept 6th 1997 aged 71, suddenly but after some years of ill health. He came originally from Leyland and we had first met as hopefuls sitting scholarship papers at Oxford in 1941 and 1942. We were up on short courses in 44/45, Ken in the army and I in the QAFVR. We both graduated in 1951. We learned to ring together at New College in 1949. We rang our first quarter together, Grandsire Doubles at St Thomas's on Dec 1st 1949, a first quarter by an all SEH band, the others being Derek P Jones, who was the conductor, the (now) Prebendary John GM Scott, Eddie Seymour and the Rev. Eric Wood.

We rang our first peal for the OUS at St James Cowley (just rehung) PB Minor in 2hr25 on Feb 9th 1950, then our first of PB Major at St Ebbe's on Oct 10th and of Double Norwich at Kidlington on Nov 30th. He was in the

band which I conducted for PBM, my first as conductor, at St Cross on Feb 9th 1951 and in the first of minor on the bells at Iffley which I called on April 26th, rung for the ODG, being three OUS ringers - Ken and I and Frank Wright and three local Iffley ringers.

Ken was very active in the OUS, ringing, on the cycle outings and the early tours such as Shrewsbury and Gloucester. We played quite a lot of OUS bridge, especially after fast food at the Stowaway. Our ringing careers followed different paths when we went down, and Ken eventually more or less gave it up. We kept in touch over the years socially as well as via the OUS, and his son Matthew was our son Robert's contemporary at SEH, though neither rang. We had been in touch shortly before his death to fix another meeting, which sadly was never fulfilled.'

M Elizabeth Brown died on October 29th 1998 at her home in Auchenlarie after a long and defiant battle with cancer. She learned to ring at Damerham as a member of a young ladies' band, and after studies at London University took a post-graduate course in social sciences at Barnett House, Oxford from 1949-51. Her career took her to Cardiff, Edinburgh and then the less ringable parts of Scotland. (For more details, see the RW of Dec 11th.)

Michael Diserens died on August 31st at the age of 39 after falling ill on a family holiday. He read physics at Keble, but devoted his leisure mostly to rowing. At the age of 16 he represented Great Britain at the World Junior Rowing Championships in Montreal, and stroked the Blue boat in 1979 and 1980 as an undergraduate. Never the less, he did enough ringing to become tower captain at Brightwell in 1983, and after another break he took up ringing seriously again two years ago, becoming a life member of the OUS just this summer. (For more details, see the RW of Nov 27th.)

John and Elizabeth Lonsbrough have at last fulfilled a dream by moving into central Oxford, living very close to St Thomas's. John now complains there is one night a week when he doesn't get to any ringing. **Jane Bulleid** is hoping that the move from a six-bell tower at Swaffham Prior to an eight at Burwell doesn't prove too taxing. **David Hope** started ringing regularly at Worcester cathedral last September, and in May was elected guild secretary. They are very short of ringers, so all OUS welcome.

David Cooper hasn't rung since probably the early eighties, and says that the demnads of two young children make it unlikely that he'll ring again this century. He is now working in the computing dept of Sheffield University. **David Bennett** has take early retirement and is now living permanently in Bournemouth. **Andrew Stubbs** has also taken early retirement.

Residents' Review

It has been pointed out that the newsletter exists mainly for non-residents, but old members would like to know what the residents get up to. Duncan McBurnie has provided this review of 1998, and I hope the idea can be carried forward.

Duncan McBurnie writes:

The residents continue in much the same way as I am sure they always have. We continue to ring on Sunday mornings at St Thomas (usually a quarter peal) and Mary Mag's; and ring at SMV and St Ebbe's on a few Sunday evenings each term. Practice nights are at Mary Mag's on a Tuesday, where we regularly have 15 to 20 people for a practice and ring things ranging from rounds to spliced surprise. We also have a practice every other week at St Thos, when we are helped by some of the OS. Anyway, here is an overview of what has happened in the past year:

The first major happening of the Hilary term took place on the first weekend in February - oh yes, the Dinner! As usual, the Dinner was a great success, even though we did demolish the beer supplies afterwards in an unfortunately quick time. It was great to see so many people over the weekend - and hopefully there will be just as many if not more this year.

By two weeks later everyone had fully recovered, and we set out on the joint CUG outing. This was rather like a 'mini Tour', with the day being based around towers (or maybe that should read pubs!) in the Northamptonshire area. A great day was had in the company of our Cambridge cousins.

Other events of the term included a pancake party on Shrove Tuesday and a quarter-peal day.

A relatively large number of 'the children' joined up with lots on non-residents in Newport just after Easter for the Tour. We all enjoyed splendid few days in south Wales, and thanks must go to John Camp and Mike Richardson for organising such an excellent event.

The summer term was quite quiet ringing-wise due to the inevitable interruption of exams. However, we did have a most excellent evening in Reading for a 12-bell practice.

Now we approached Michaelmas term without the familiar faces of Andrew, Nigel and Sonia, who have all left Oxford for the time being at least - good

luck to them all. However, as ever, new enthusiastic ringers arrived to bolster our numbers and the term has seen a lot of worthwhile practices and quarter-peals. This year's freshers' outing took us to Woodstock (via Yarnton). despite the miserable rain, we still had a marvellous day.

A couple of weekends into November, fifteen intrepid OUS members journeyed into the capital for the SUA striking competitions. As well as the ringing we enjoyed an amusing afternoon socialising with the other Universities, and a curry in Brick Lane in the evening. In the 8-bell competition Oxford came a close second to Cambridge, whilst in the 6-bell our two bands were placed 4th and 6th out of 10 bands - a very creditable performance by everyone to round off another successful year.