

Oxford University Society of Change Ringers

Annual Newsletter - January 2019

Officers

The following Society officers were elected at the AGM held on Monday 26th November 2018 in Exeter College:

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| President | Liz Barnes |
| General Secretary | Simon Bond |
| Senior Treasurer | Mark Bell |

Vice Presidents: Quentin Armitage, Doug Beaumont, David Brown, Ian W Davies, Peter Giles, Nigel Herriott, Paul Mounsey, Donald Niblett, Dermot Roaf, Andrew Stubbs, and Lester Yeo were re-elected.

The following were elected at the student section AGM held on Monday 14th January 2019 in Exeter College:

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| Senior Member | William Poole, New College |
| Master | Cameron White-Spinner, Pembroke |
| Treasurer | Ben White-Horne, St Anne's |
| Secretary | Jonathan Wright, Corpus Christi |
| Librarian | Katie Child, Lincoln |
| Steeplekeepers | Craig Robertson, Keble and Tom Edgeworth, St Edmund Hall |
| Webmaster | Jess Dixon, Brookes |

Bell Restoration Fund

BRF Trustees: Senior Member and Senior Treasurer *ex officio*, Andrew Stubbs and Doug Beaumont

Independent Examiners: Nigel Orchard and Robert Wallis

Life Members

The following have become life members since the last newsletter:

Rebecca Gingell, Magdalen, 2008-12

Matthew Torr, Brasenose, 2014-18

Helen Bond, Bodleian Libraries, 2018-

Residents' Review

Connie Tongue, immediate past Master, writes:

Over the past year the OUS has gone from strength to strength. Practices have been consistently well attended, with only small blips in Trinity, around exam season as is to be expected, but we consoled ourselves with our traditional punting outing and the annual rounders match against the OS. This has enabled us to be more ambitious with methods including Surprise Major (including some spliced in recent weeks) and even Caters and Royal. The 12-bell practices at Christ Church have also been well attended and we have been able to attempt all sorts from rounds and calls through plain hunting up to Cambridge Maximus with the generous help of the OS.

The social highlight of Hilary, and indeed the year was of course the annual dinner which saw its highest attendance ever with 118 guests in total, so it was rather cosy! As usual the weekend began on Friday evening and although the Carfax quarter was unsuccessful, the St Aldates Tavern managed to lift any disappointed spirits caused by this. A successful peal was rung on Saturday morning by the badgers at St Thos of something awfully complicated, and although the residents peal at Mary Mag didn't quite make it, much was learnt from the attempt and a nice quarter of Yorkshire came out of it. Quarters were also scored at Christ Church and Lincoln, and a well-attended open ringing session took place at Magdalen. Thanks to everyone who helped to make it such a successful weekend, particularly, as ever, Simon and Liz.

The termly cheese and wine evening is still up and going and even in Trinity, where attendance was rather poor there was still much scope for merriment. We have been around a bit, visiting Craig in Hilary and Alan in Trinity, thanks to them for generously hosting the rabble. For Pancake Day we even ventured to Rachel and James' house in Headington where we were treated to possibly the most professional pancake spread ever witnessed within the OUS. As if melted chocolate wasn't enough, many bottles of home-brewed beer were produced from the cellar and much enjoyed by all who partook.

A few experiments have been trialled over the past two terms, initially we made the St Thos practice, which had been receiving little support, into a more advanced practice and managed to get some surprise going as well as a bit on 10, but partly due to the exam season it was difficult to tell if this was a success as the practice night was largely attended by those who had been in the quarter before-hand. This past term we have been sharing the slot with the St Aldates ringers which has solidified things and hopefully means more people have the opportunity to ring on 10 where they wouldn't otherwise be able. The Mary Mag practice was also moved a quarter of an hour earlier to give us a bit more time to let everyone have a better go and there can be little doubt that this was a positive from the start. This term we have made alternate Mondays opportunities for peal attempts at St Thos and although so far only one has been a success in the narrow sense, all have been a good learning experience and will hopefully continue to strengthen the resident OUS in general.

The Society has been very lucky with our freshers this year. Although we only have one or two regular learners (who are coming on in leaps and bounds), the crop of already made ringers has been spectacular and has had a very positive effect on the Society, enabling us to try some more ambitious things such as spliced surprise in recent weeks. Our pre-existing learners continue to make great progress too, moving on to some very neat plain-hunting/plain bob and a general improvement in handling and control as well. The quality of our ringing was further reflected at the SUA where we once again won the 8-bell striking competition with a very respectable touch of Grandsire triples.

President's Notes

Liz Barnes writes:

It was good to welcome some 41 members and friends of the Society to my home county of Kent for the Easter Tour this year. We were particularly pleased to be met, at Sevenoaks, by Lucile Corby, who is believed to be our oldest member at the age of 94. Many thanks to Isobel Fray for all the arrangements of what was another very successful and inclusive Tour. We look forward to next year's tour which is being organised by Rob Hornby and Matt Johnson in the Beds/Herts area from 8th to 11th April.

The 2019 Dinner will be held on Saturday 2nd February. The guest speaker is Hannah Taylor (née Wilby) with the toast to the guests being proposed by Jenny Lane. Following further intervention by the Proctors, the Student Society AGM will now be at the beginning of Hilary Term rather than the end of Michaelmas. Because of this, the Master's speech at the Dinner will now be given by the outgoing Master, Connie Tongue.

Society members have been most productive at the end of this year with new family additions for Catrin and James Morgan (Paul), Jenny Lane and Rupert Littlewood (Ralph), Mary and Olly Cross (Theo) and Lucy Bricheno and Dougal Lichtman (Sylvia). Congratulations to them all.

Society members also continue to hold prominent roles within the Ringing community. Henry Coggill has just completed his term as Master of the Ancient Society of College Youths, Paul Mounsey is Master of the St Paul's Cathedral Guild and Jeremy Pratt is the conductor of the Westminster Abbey Company of Ringers.

Finally I should like to like to thank all officers of the two branches of the Society for their support and hard work this year, and especially to Simon Bond for his sterling work as General Secretary and Stephen Cameron for his years as Senior Member. Due to the new Proctors regulations Stephen is no longer eligible to continue as Senior Member and we thank him for his enthusiastic interest in and commitment to the Society over the past 13 years.

2019 Annual Dinner

The 2019 OUSCR Annual Dinner will take place on Saturday 2nd of February, at 7.15 for 7.30pm. We look forward to returning to Harris Manchester College.

The guest speaker will be Hannah Taylor. Jenny Lane will propose the toast to the guests, and the immediate-past Master will reply to Hannah's toast to the Society.

Tickets sales have now closed following an early release, so the following is for information only.

Menu

Fillet of Gilthead bream with 'Dieppoise' Garnish

Pea and Rocket Risotto (v)

Rump of Lamb with Caramelised Shallots, Spinach and Cassis Sauce

Celeriac and Oxford Blue 'Rosti' (v)

Prune and Cognac Frangipane Tart

Cheeseboard with Port

Coffee and Chocolates

Pre-dinner drinking on Friday evening will take place in the downstairs room of the Castle Tavern, Castle Street from 7pm. General ringing and peal attempts will take place during the day on Saturday.

2019 Tour - Sunday 7th - Thursday 11th April 2019

The 2019 Tour will be based in St Albans and is being organised by Rob Hornby, with moral support provided by Matt Johnson. Rob writes:

This year's tour will take place from Sunday the 7th to Thursday the 11th of April, and will be based in St Albans with excursions around Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire. St Albans has a good range of pubs, restaurants, towers, and accommodation easily accessible from its main station on the Thameslink line.

For accommodation, I would recommend either the Clarion Collection Hotel, the Premier Inn, or an alternative cheaper option which I will be organising soon. Alternatively, feel free to look at other options around St Albans, but please still let me know which days you will be coming on tour.

St Albans has a centrally located Premier Inn, 0.6 miles from the station and 0.4 miles from St Albans Cathedral with room rates of £60.25 per night for a double, single or twin, please book directly with them.

The Clarion Collection Hotel in St Albans is a four star hotel with good reviews next to St Albans Cathedral and 0.8 miles from the station. They have offered us 15% off of their room rate for our tour dates, £86.28 per night for an en suite double room. To book with them, please contact them directly on 01727 848849 and quote the group name 'OUSCR', or quote the booking reference: 3611224. You will need to pay a £30 non-refundable deposit up front, and breakfast is an optional £9.95 per person per day extra if you would like it. This offer is available to us until the 9th of March, so please book before then to avoid missing out.

Let me know if you would like to come on tour by email at robhornby@gmail.com and feel free to ask any questions you may have. Also let me know if you're interested in the cheaper accommodation option so that I have an idea of how many people to plan for. I will ask you for further details and follow up with more information closer to the tour.

Obituaries

Rev Peter Robbins, Magdalen 1944, died 21st December 2017

Peter Robbins was born in 1925 in the Bristol area and came up to Magdalen in 1944. He was a bridge player and in 1946 when visiting a fellow player who had been struck down with appendicitis he encountered lots of “vivacious fellow visitors” who turned out to be the OUS! He was so taken by their good natured enthusiasm that he decided in October that he would take up ringing too. He was part of a large number of potential recruits who assembled in the belfry at New College to start to learn on tied bells under the mastership of Betty Spice (our first female Master). He was one of the recruits who stuck at it and during this, his final year at Oxford, he became hooked and, during the vacations continued his progress in Bristol. He kept in touch with the OUS over the summer vacation at an Agricultural Farming Camp at Honeybourne near Evesham, weeding and picking fruit during the day and ringing in the evening and he rang his first peal at Offenham on 29th August 1947 with a mainly OUS band. It was there that his relationship with Betty blossomed.

After theological college at Westcott House in Cambridge he and Betty married in 1951 and Peter served as Vicar in Prestwich from 1955-59, followed by a period in Kent from 1959-1973

and then to Hampshire from 1973-1990. On retirement they moved to Staffordshire where he was assistant rural dean of Tamworth.

He and Betty had 4 children, 2 sons (Andrew and Richard) and 2 daughters (Catherine and Margaret). Both girls further the OUS dynasty as they are also OUS members having come to Somerville in the 1970s.

Peter rang 160 peals in total, his last being 60 years to the day after his first and once again Plain Bob Minor at Offenham. Only two of his peals were rung for the OUS - Rutland Surprise Major at Twerton, Bath on 10th April 1951 and Cambridge Surprise Major at Sileby on 17th April 1952.

Betty passed away in 2013 and Peter died on 21st December 2017 aged 92.

Rev Canon Derek G Goodman, Keble 1953, died 11th June 2018

Derek was born on 3rd June 1934 in Leicester and was a choirboy at Leicester Cathedral. He was an enthusiastic and accomplished handbell ringer having rung his first peal at the age of 14 - Plain Bob Major in hand. By the time he arrived in Oxford he had already rung 54 peals of which 44 were in hand. He had also rung peals of Stedman Cinques and Yorkshire Maximus on tower bells. At a time when experienced ringers were in short supply within the OUS he was a welcome addition.

He rang a total of 7 peals for the OUS all in hand. 5 of these were in 1957 with Bill Jackson, Robin Hodgson and Donald Niblett in Mary Mag belfry. A handbell peal of Grandsire Caters was unfortunately found to be false.

After graduating he trained as a teacher and initially taught English at Humphrey Perkins School in Barrow upon Soar, Leicestershire. He married Margaret Carr and raised a family, which seemingly somewhat curtailed his ringing activities as he rang no further peals after leaving Oxford.

In 1959 he went to Ridley Hall Theological College in Cambridge. He served his curacy at Christ Church, Chilwell near Nottingham then became Rector of St Mary's Eastwood followed, in 1984, by Woodthorpe. In 1989 he became Diocesan Director of Education for Leicester and two years later an Honorary Canon of the Cathedral.

He was also a magistrate and Rotarian and on retiring in 1998 he was appointed Chairman of the Monitoring Board at Leicester Prison and a member of the Probation Board. He was also, amongst other things Chairman of Governors of Westgate School, a non-executive Director of Leicester Royal Infirmary and a Relate counsellor.

He passed away on 11th June 2018 and was remembered in a handbell peal at Long Eaton rung by the Leicester Diocesan Guild.

James A Steadman, Merton 1956, died 15th November 2017

James Steadman was brought up in Northwich, Cheshire, and was educated at the Dragon School, Oxford, then Winchester College. James studied at Winchester during a strong time for soon-to-be OUS ringers and took charge of the school ringing club in 1955-56, between the tenures of Dermot Roaf and John Pusey.

James came up to Merton in 1956 to read chemistry. During his time in Oxford, James rang with the OUS though focused more on the pursuits of rowing and choral singing. He sang with his local choir for over forty years and also had a penchant for swimming in unusual locations including the Norwegian fjords. James rang only one peal, at Hartford in Cheshire. Together with other current and former pupils, he took part in 1959 in an attempt to ring what would have been the first peal on the bells of Winchester College, ringing treble to Plain Bob Minor; but the attempt was unsuccessful, and was called round as a 1680. He later worked with the Scientific Civil Service.

James died suddenly on 15th November 2017 aged 78 and is survived by his widow, Pat, and two children, Judy and Martin.

Meeting Dates

The Society's business meetings are held on Mondays, and customarily take place in Exeter College. Please confirm the venue in advance.

The changes resulting from last year's Proctorial diktat have yet to be tested fully, but the following are expected to be the dates for forthcoming meeting.

Student Section AGM: first Monday in Hilary term, 14th January 2019 (20th January 2020).

Student TGMs: first Monday in Trinity and Michaelmas terms, 29th April and 14th October

Senior Society AGM: the last Monday in Michaelmas term: 26th November

The Society's History

We still have a few copies of the OUS History available to purchase. These are available for a £5 or larger donation to the Bell Restoration Fund. Contact the General Secretary to snap up your copy. Ideal as a birthday, Christmas, Christening, or condolence gift.

Address List and Websites

The General Secretary maintains the Society's address list, of over 500 members. The vast majority are now on e-mail. Please do keep the General Secretary informed of any changes to email or postal address and, if you wish to get in touch with a member, get in touch with the General Secretary, who will try to put you in touch in a GDPR-compliant manner!

The Society also has a mailing list. This is used for important announcements and the dissemination of this Newsletter, and all members are strongly encouraged to join it. You can do so by visiting <https://groups.google.com/forum/#!forum/ouscr> or by contacting the General Secretary.

Contact Details

You can contact the General Secretary by post at:

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