

Oxford University Society of Change Ringers

Annual Newsletter - January 2020

Officers

The following Society officers and officials were elected at the AGM held on Monday 2nd December 2019 in New College:

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| President | Liz Barnes |
| General Secretary | Simon Bond |
| Senior Treasurer | Mark Bell |
| Central Council Representative | Craig Robertson |

Vice Presidents: Nigel Orchard was elected, and 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 20th January 2020 in Exeter College:

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| Senior Member | William Poole, New College |
| Master | Claire Pearson, Trinity |
| Treasurer | Ella Caulfield, Merton |
| Secretary | Laura Martin, Linacre |
| Librarian | Jess Dixon, Brookes |
| Steeplekeepers | Cameron White-Spunner, Pembroke Ben White-Horne, St Anne's |
| Webmaster | Marcus Ham, St Hugh's |

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:

Laurence Odell, Brasenose, 2017-19

James Scott-Brown, Linacre, 2016-19

Connie Tongue, Corpus Christi, 2015-19

Cameron Waters, Queen's, 2016-19

Jonathan Wright, Corpus Christi, 2016-19

Residents' Review

Cameron White-Spunner, immediate past Master, writes:

Practices have mostly been well attended, with the year starting out strong with regular 10-bell bands, however the huge blip in Trinity (due to exams – which is fair) where we regularly turned out with 6 (and had to cancel twice) was never fully recovered, as practices in Michaelmas did not quite reach the standard seen in Hilary. The majority of practices focus around 6-bell ringing, which is excellent for our up-and-coming crop of ringers, but a few more experienced ringers would go a long way in helping the practice progress (and break this negative aura that seems to surround surprise minor). Our typical practice night repertoire includes everything from called changes (called DOWN - the correct way) up to Norwich Surprise Minor.

Sunday morning have been a bit hit-and-miss, as the prospect of Mary Mag no longer seems to draw people from their slumber as it used to. This has shown a distinct downward trend since the beginning of the year, with numbers this term even falling below that of last Trinity. For some reason St Ebbe's never was well attended and continues to be a somewhat "ringing desert". We continually rely on Craig rounding up unwitting and unwilling victims from breakfast to make any ringing here at all possible.

On a more positive note, joint practices with the St Aldates band are attended on a much greater scale! Though the main contingent of the band lies with the St Aldates ringers – and I am extremely grateful for their presence – St Thos 10-bell practices have proved a success, enabling many first times on 10 and lots of progression. I just wish more actual OUS would come to them... It is also worth noting that people must be reminded to go to St Aldates when it is their turn to host, as there seems to be a huge reluctance to ring anything on six that isn't Cambridge or Norwich at a push.

Termly 12 bell-practices have also been quite well attended, particularly noting, against the odds, the Trinity practice at St Laurence, Reading. This showed how lots of prior planning and organisation (something I usually lack) can motivate people to come ringing, and the practice on the whole was a success. Nevertheless, we had yet to suffer a 12-bell practice where we have not had enough to ring on 12, and these practices have proved useful especially to those with limited experience on higher numbers.

Social Stuff

The big one, of course, was the annual dinner in Hilary term! The weekend began with a quarter attempt at Carfax coming to a bloody end, but everyone drank away their sorrows at The Castle afterwards anyway. Perhaps a little too much, because the following morning there were a few hangovers "hanging-over" the residents peal attempt. In spite of this, they went on to score their peal, whilst the badgers did not! Quarters were later scored at Lincoln, and at Christ Church the following day, with many substantial firsts. Magdalen were also available for open ringing, which I believe had a substantial turn out. Oh, and the dinner was good too! Many thanks to Simon and Liz and anyone else who helped create the successful weekend!

Not so big ones included punting and "The Big Game" in Trinity term. Unfortunately only 3 set sail at the punting session this year, which was a shame seen as Connie went through all the

trouble of sneaking us in on the Corpus punts (thank you Connie)...it did however prove to be a valuable lesson in punting, as we spent about 20 minutes spinning round in circles and trying not to tip the boat as we took turns trying to unstick ourselves from the mess. You would have thought that we would've had more luck at the OUS-OS rounders match but noooo, we were forced to play with a handicap and paid the ultimate price. For those of you who do not understand how competitive I am, I sincerely hope my successor organises a few training sessions and drills in catching and batting, because it's coming home!

In other news, termly cheese and wine has been quite on-and-off, with about 12 turning up for Hilary term, and 0 for Trinity. It was hosted by Connie in Hilary, but we are steadily running out of people with venues large enough and close enough to host. Shrove Tuesday saw many of us travel across Magdalen bridge (a rare event for undergrads) to Rachel and James' house for pancakes after Mary Mag practice. Some of the conversation was questionable, particularly with the surprise visit from past master Wilf, but was enjoyable evening nonetheless!

Striking Competitions

The OUS entered a contingent into the Oxford City Branch striking competition in Trinity at Cowley, and although the competition piece came to grief, we weren't allowed to win anyway, so we were just giving everyone else a chance...Their AGM proved a good time to mess around on the mini ring in the garden, where there was almost nothing you can think of that we didn't attempt, including repeated attempts to ring double-handed etc...

However, the big one, the SUA, was this year to be held in Oxford. This required almost a year's worth of prior planning and almost the entire resident OUS to put it into action. The weekend began with open ringing at Carfax, which yielded about 30 people crammed into the 6-bell tower, followed by drinking at the St Aldates Tavern afterwards. Unfortunately, one of our band took it upon herself to consume well beyond the recommended monthly intake of alcohol, and so was unable to ring with us the following day. However, this proved to be a minor issue, as our 8-bell band went on once again to win the 8-bell trophy. The 8-bell competition was however temporarily held up by an unexpected Romanian baptism blocking our access to the tower, which did nothing to help my sanity, but ultimately did not affect our ringing. Later on, the OUS band won the 6-bell trophy as well but were not allowed to take home the trophy due to having too many old people in the band. Open ringing was held at Christ Church and St Giles throughout the day, and results, dinner, and the Ceilidh all took place in St Columba's church hall. Overall, this was a successful weekend and my thanks go out to anyone who: rang in a competition, ran a tower, booked anything, cooked anything, or judged anything!

Freshers

Our crop of freshers has been good this year. We now have six ready-made freshers who have boosted attendance and helped us to ring a wider variety of methods at practice night. I just wish they would come on Sundays! We have three learners who are making great progress and are pretty much ready by this stage to join our Tuesday night practice.

President's Notes

Liz Barnes writes:

It was with great shock and sadness that we heard of the death of our former Senior Member Stephen Cameron on 15th April so shortly before he was due to enjoy his retirement. The church at Charlton on Otmoor, where Stephen was Tower Captain, was packed out for his funeral service with many ringers in attendance including Simon Bond, myself and Dermot Roaf, one of our Vice Presidents and another former Senior Member who had been Stephen's tutor. There was general ringing beforehand and dancing by the Kirtlington Morris Dancers, of which Stephen was also a member, concluded the service. The following day an OUS peal of 7 Surprise Minor was rung there in celebration of his life and we were pleased to meet up with Stephen's family afterwards.

We are pleased to welcome Will Poole, fellow of New College and grandson of the late John Poole who was a friend and supporter of the OUS, as our new Senior Member. We look forward to his continuing help and encouragement.

The 2019 Dinner was a great success with 117 in attendance. Many commented on the excellent quality of the food. The speakers were Jenny Lane toasting the Guests, Hannah Taylor, from Southwark, replying and toasting the Society and Connie Tongue valiantly agreeing to reply on behalf of the Society for the second year in a row. We are returning to Harris Manchester College for the 20th year on 1st February 2020 with Matthew Tosh (of 12 Bell Final Broadcasts) as our guest speaker.

This year's Tour was based in St Alban's organised by Rob Hornby. 39 members and friends, including 6 month old Paul Morgan enjoyed a most convivial few days ringing at 17 towers. We had one lockout and were thwarted from reaching one tower due to roadworks forcing the coach down a narrow country lane and then causing a major blockage! Next year's tour, organised by Laurence Odell, will be from 12th to 16th April based in Yeovil.

The tour was missing Hannah Guggiari and Courtney Spoerer who had got married the previous day in Oxford and alternative honeymoon plans taking precedence. Congratulations to them.

Congratulations too to James Marchbank who has continued with the strong link between OUS and ASCY becoming the CY Junior Steward in November.

2020 Annual Dinner

The 2020 OUSCR Annual Dinner will take place on Saturday 1st of February, at 7.15 for 7.30pm. We look forward to returning to Harris Manchester College.

The guest speaker will be Matthew Tosh. Andrew Deamer will propose the toast to the guests, and the immediate-past Master will reply to Matthew's toast to the Society.

Tickets sales have now closed, the timing of the student AGM relative to the dinner being somewhat proximate, so the following is for information and the historical record only.

Menu

Smoked haddock soup with fresh herbs and spinach

Asparagus, broad bean and morels risotto (v)

Roast rump of lamb, cauliflower purée, cavolo nero and hazelnuts

Roast pepper and aubergine with buffalo mozzarella, olive and basil (v)

Steamed sloe gin and fruit pudding, bramble and blueberry ice cream

Cheeseboard with port

Coffee and chocolates

Pre-dinner drinking on Friday evening will take place in the Wadham Room (previously the non-smoking room) of the Kings Arms from 7pm. General ringing and peal attempts will take place during the day on Saturday.

2020 Tour - Sunday 12th - Thursday 16th April 2020

The 2020 Tour will be based in Yeovil and is being organised by Laurence Odell. All members are encouraged to attend, especially those who may not have attended a Tour for some time. Laurence offers the following information:

This year's tour will be based in Yeovil, from Sunday 12th until Thursday 16th April. The itinerary features a diverse range of towers across Somerset and Dorset; from a 7cwt ring of six to the world's heaviest rings of eight and ten bells, plus two 12-bell towers. Yeovil is home to a number of good real ale and cider pubs, as well as a decent selection of restaurants and several accommodation options. The town is well-connected; via direct train to London Waterloo (2 hrs, 10 mins) and the A303 or M5 for those arriving by car. Yeovil has two railway stations (Pen Mill and Yeovil Junction) and neither are walking distance from the town centre, but regular cheap buses run all day.

For badger accommodation, I recommend Premier Inn (Yeovil Town Centre, not Airfield), currently priced at £223.50 for singles or £249.99 for double/twin, including continental breakfast. Parking is paid-only and off-site, around 100m from the hotel, at £4 per day. The Green Room Hotel is also excellent but will cost between £50 and £100 more. I am also looking to provide the option of church hall accommodation.

If you would like to come on tour, or have questions I haven't answered here, feel free to get in touch. My email address is laurenceodell@hotmail.com - please write to let me know which days you are coming for and whether you're interested in church hall accommodation.

Society Funding

At the AGM, the matter of Society funding was discussed. The Society's general fund has little income, but supports much of the expense previously borne by the resident members' fund. Principal expenditures, being Central Council subscription and handbell insurance, cost around £200 per annum.

The Senior Treasure invites members to contribute towards the running costs of the Society. A similar call for donations in 2016 has financed the Society for the past four years. The Society's bank account details are available from the General Secretary, or members can contact the Senior Treasurer directly (mark.bell@jesus.oxon.org). It is only through the generosity of members that the resident membership can continue to free of financial commitments that may put destitute students off from becoming involved.

Obituaries

June M Brown, St Hilda's, 1942-44, died 26th March 2019

June Muriel Brown (nee Butler) was born in Poole, Dorset in 1924. She studied History at St Hilda's from 1942-44 and then went on to study medicine at Bristol. There she met Chris Brown whom she married on 6th April 1948 and they had 4 children.

Although Chris was an established ringer, June did not learn until the age of 50. She learnt at Wareham where she became tower captain in 1983, a post she held for 15 years. She rang 501 quarter peals between 1976 and 2005 and 32 peals almost all for the Salisbury Diocesan Guild.

She worked in A&E at Poole General Hospital and was Assistant Director of Public Health for Dorset. She and Chris were lovers of sailing and had their own boat, Toccata. June also enjoyed reading and knitting.

June joined the OUS as a life member in 1985. Chris died in 2013 and June passed away on 26th March 2019 aged 94 years.

Anna Tambling (née Sellors), LMH 1943-46, died 12th May 2019

Anna M Tambling (nee Edna M Sellors) studied at LMH from 1943-46 and learnt to ring at the start of Trinity Term 1944. She rang her first peals on 29th December 1944 (Grandsire Triples in hand) followed by Grandsire Triples on tower bells the following day.

She rang in 16 peals for the OUS between 1945 and 1947 and rang in many 'firsts' for the Society - first peal on 10 Tower bells, first of Cinques, first Royal on Tower bells and first of Stedman in hand by any University Society.

She married a fellow OUS member Peter Tambling (St Peter's 1939) in 1948 and they had three children. Peter died in 2008 in Wincanton, Somerset and Anna passed away on 12th May 2019.

Rev C R Chad Coussmaker, Worcester 1954-58, died 27th August 2018

Canon Colin Richard Chad Coussmaker, known as Chad, was born in Birmingham in 1934. He studied Chemistry at Worcester College from 1954-58 followed by training at Chichester Theological College. He was made Deacon in 1960 and ordained priest in 1961. He served as assistant curate in Reading from 1964-67 before moving into the Diocese in Europe where he served in Istanbul, Malta, Antwerp, Brussels and Moscow.

On retirement in 1999 he was awarded the OBE and he and his wife Jean moved to the south of France where he continued his ministry as Honorary Assistant Chaplain at Holy Trinity, Nice and St Hugh's, Vence and also assisted at St Michael's Beaulieu sur Mer.

He rang a total of 22 peals between 1957 and 1965 with just one for the OUS - Grandsire Triples at Witney in 1957.

He died on 27th August 2018 at the age of 84 years.

Nicholas J Martin, St Peter's 1959-61, died 7th July 2019

Nicholas J Martin was born in 1940 in Bromley and learnt to ring at Chelsfield, Kent where he became tower captain at the age of 17. He studied Physics at St Peter's from 1959 to 1965.

On arriving in Oxford, he joined just about everything on offer, and apparently developed a life-long love of curry.

From the OUS History we have a number of entries from Nick including:

'I went up to St Peter's Hall in MT1959 a competent ringer of Grandsire and Bob Doubles, who had never rung Stedman and had rung rarely on seven or eight bells, but who was determined to learn more. I soon found it to be straightforward to progress as a ringer within the OUS; all

you needed was ringing ability and 200% commitment! To someone keen to learn the OUS in MT59 was friendly and welcoming.'

He was Master in 1961, succeeding Andrew Stubbs. However this was at a time when drinking of beer after ringing as an alternative to coffee was causing tension within the Society and Nick did not support the 'overwhelming beer culture that was now at the centre of the OUS'.

He does though credit the OUS with forming the broad framework of his life for most of this six-year period. He was always grateful for the learning opportunities it provided. Because of this he tried to maintain a larger view, and the personal pettiness and antagonisms seemed unimportant in the overall context.

During his time in Oxford he rang 21 peals for the OUS including Cambridge Maximus rung at Cripplegate in 1964 which was the Society's first peal of maximus on tower bells. In May 1965 he called a peal at Deddington of a then unnamed method and named it Chelsfield Surprise Major after his home tower.

In 1967 he married Gillian Croft and they managed to create what Nick considered the perfect life becoming a sheep farmer in the depths of the Kentish countryside. They had two boys, Jocelyn and Barnaby and spent holidays on their own tiny island of Soay off the coast of Skye.

For a while Nick gave up ringing but started again in 2000 at Frittenden, Kent. The last time he rang was in August 2017.

He died in July 2019 aged 79 and was buried on his own land.

Christopher M P Johnson, Keble, 1961-63, died 5th January 2019

Chris Johnson was born in Blackpool in 1931. He learnt to ring in Accrington, where his father was headmaster of the Grammar School, in 1943. Clearly progressing quickly, he scored his first peal in 1945, being PB Minor at Accrington. National Service with the RAF was followed by a degree in Natural Sciences at Selwyn College, Cambridge. During his time as an undergraduate, Chris rang in many Cambridge University Guild firsts, including the first resident-only peals of Cambridge and Yorkshire Major, the first Guild peals of Surprise Royal and Maximus, and a handbell peal rung by all Selwyn College members, a footnote which would recur over his ringing career with all-college peals on 8, 10, and 12. He was elected Master of the Guild in 1954.

In 1960, following his PhD in Cambridge, Chris moved to Oxford following his former supervisor who took up a Professorship here. Chris and wife June, who he had married the previous year, took up residence briefly in Christ Church Old Brewhouse, now part of Blue Boar quad. During his time in Oxford, Chris rang a number of peals with the Oxford Diocesan Guild and the Oxford Society, notably conducting a peal of Stedman Cinques at the Cathedral, though he never rang a peal with the OUS.

Soon tempted back to Cambridge, Chris returned to Selwyn in 1963, appointed Bursar and college lecturer in Physics. A distinguished career in the University followed, with Chris holding, at various points, posts including Senior Bursar at St John's, and roles at Newnham College, Darwin College, Murray Edwards College, Clare Hall and Wolfson College as well as serving on the Board of Governors of several Cambridge schools, and as Director and Trustee of the Cambridge Arts Theatre Trust.

Chris became President of the Cambridge University Guild in 1989, a position he held until 2006, garnering great affection from both junior and senior members of the Guild. He rang 190 Guild peals, almost half of his total, in the 57 years between joining the Guild and shortly after stepping down as President. He died in January this year, three days short of his 88th birthday.

Stephen A Cameron, Keble, 2006-19, died 15th April 2019

Stephen Alan Cameron was born in 1958 in Ilford, East London and spent most of his childhood in Ramsgate, attending Chatham House Grammar School. He came up to Oxford in 1977, studying mathematics at Exeter College in 1977, where his tutors included Dermot Roaf, his first contact with the Society. While studying for his PhD in Robotics at the University of Edinburgh, he met Frances who he married in 1984. Further research in robotics and artificial intelligence took him to the University of Missouri.

Stephen returned to Oxford in 1986, at first working with the robotics laboratory in the Engineering Department, a position with an associated fellowship at Keble College, before taking up a lectureship in Computation. Stephen held his fellowship at Keble for the next 33 years, with stints as Tutor for Graduates, Secretary to the Governing Body, and Deputy Bursar.

Stephen's research into robotics focussed on spatial reasoning tasks - how to prevent robots or autonomous vehicles crashing into each other. Some of the more public-facing aspects of this work saw him developing the robot sheepdog project, which actually involved herding ducks as they're easier than sheep, and entering teams into the RoboCup football world football tournament. His office in Keble was always filled with off-the-shelf robot toys that might have been part of his research, but could just have been for fun.

Stephen, along with Frances and their two children, lived in the village of Charlton on Otmoor, north of Oxford. He was heavily involved in the life of the village and took up ringing for the Millennium. More of an enthusiast than someone who was going to frequently grace the peal columns, Stephen was always very keen to show interested villagers up the tower, often encouraging them all the way up to clamber amongst the bells. Following a spell as steeplekeeper, he recently took over the role of tower captain recently when Willie Haynes became unwell. Stephen was also strongly involved in Kirtlington Morris.

In late-2005, when John Pusey retired from the Bodleian, the OUS was looking for a Senior Member. Simon Bond had come up to Keble that term and suggested that his CS tutor Stephen Cameron, might be a suitable candidate. He served the Society in that post until the start of 2019, when a change of Proctors' rules meant that he was no longer eligible for re-election. During his time in office, Stephen did much to serve the Society, well beyond the minimum that

the post-holder would be expected. He attended all the Society business meetings he was able to, usually only missing them when out of the country. He attended the annual dinner in traditional Scottish dress with similar frequency and dealt with the often challenging requirements of the Proctors' office through more than one set of changes to the Society rules.

Stephen suffered a serious stroke on 5th April and did not regain consciousness before dying a week later, only some five months away from retirement. The President, General Secretary, and former Senior Member Dermot Roaf attended Stephen's funeral at Charlton on Otmoor on 3rd May, and a Society peal was rung there the following day.

Oxford University Society

Charlton on Otmoor, Oxfordshire

St Mary the Virgin

Saturday, 4 May 2019 in 2h 56 (14–3–18 in F)

5040 Surprise Minor (7m)

Norwich, Wells, Westminster, Ipswich, Bourne, London, Cambridge

- 1 Connie M Tongue
- 2 Elizabeth A Barnes
- 3 Rosanna Cretney
- 4 Adam D Rebick
- 5 Jeremy R Pratt (C)
- 6 Simon A Bond

In celebration of the life of Stephen Cameron, tower captain of Charlton on Otmoor, Fellow of Keble College, Oxford since 1986, Senior Member of the Oxford University Society 2006-19, whose funeral took place here yesterday.

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.

Meeting Dates

The Society's business meetings are held on Mondays. Our long-standing arrangement at Exeter College has recently faltered, so members wishing to attend meetings are advised to check the venue first. Non-resident members are welcome to attend meetings of the student section, but are not entitled to vote at these meetings.

Student Section AGM: first Monday in Hilary term, 20th January 2020 (18th January 2021).

Student TGMs: first Monday in Trinity and Michaelmas terms, 27th April and 12th October

Senior Society AGM: the last Monday in Michaelmas term: 30th 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

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