

Training Officer's Report 2020

In January, Sue Carter gained her ART Learning the Ropes Level 3 certificate, having successfully completed quarter peals, the result of attending a number of focused practices and travelling to other tower practices giving opportunity to treble to touches of Grandsire and Plain Bob Doubles.

In February we held a focused practice at Bletchington with experienced ringers supporting five Bicester Branch ringers in trebling and ringing inside to Doubles, Minor and Surprise Minor methods.

Six recent Bicester Branch recruits attended regular handling sessions held at St Helens Abingdon on Saturday mornings Between January and March 2020. Andy Wilkinson, having attended an ART Module 1 (teaching handling) course in 2019 also attended to assist the Abingdon Ringing School ringers teach handling, with Steve providing mentoring support.

Charlie Bates made great progress in his learning of methods and ringing quarter peals in 2020, achieving his ART Learning the Ropes Level 5 in March, with a very nicely struck quarter inside to Grandsire Doubles in March. Charlie also regularly attended the ODG Young Ringers' practices and events, involving walks, games and practicing for the Ringing World Striking Competition, sadly cancelled.

With the advent of COVID-19 restrictions on real ringing and teaching, Steve has led weekly virtual practices from April 2020 to the present, using the Ringing Room website to learn and practise methods; a further benefit of keeping teams from four towers in the branch involved in regular ringing and related social activities. Six ringers have completed virtual quarter peals, including first quarters for Gerald Bushby and Sally Cross trebling and covering to doubles quarters.

In another encouraging development, ringers from the Branch also signed up for online seminars run by the Gloucester and Bristol Branch summer and winter schools covering aspects from striking, learning methods, ringing up and down to standing behind and bell frame maintenance.

In addition to the use of Ringing Room, the branch has successfully used the Wheatley software programme, allowing us to supplement ringers on Ringing Room with computer generated ringers to ring specified methods at a good pace while also adapting to human striking. I thoroughly recommend using Ringing Room with Wheatley to develop understanding of methods and good striking. If anyone is interested in trying this out, I am more than happy to run a session.

Like all of you, I am looking forward to return to normality with real ringing and teaching of handling, but believe that the past year has seen exciting developments in online ringing aids which can still provide benefit even after return to normal ringing practices.

Steve Vickers

28 January 2021