

Secretary's Report 2023

2023, in common with most years, has seen highs and lows – a record number for our AGM in February with two new members elected, many towers in the Branch ringing for the King's Coronation in May, new learners in Ambrosden (which has had no resident ringers lately), enthusiastic turnouts for the April Branch outing around Bedfordshire and for the striking competition in September. In addition Branch practices have seen good numbers of participants, and several practices, held in Bicester, for more advanced ringing have proved popular. On the downside, we have no resident ringers at 3 towers (Brill, Souldern and Woodeaton) and ringing is infrequent at Charlton-on-Otmoor now, as well as at Piddington which has also seen the sad loss of Morwen Ashton who died in May.

Kirtlington has been the venue for the Winter Ringing School, as well as the Oxon Ringing School, and focussed practices have been held at Bletchington leading to several ringers achieving their first quarter peals in the year. Other Branch members have enjoyed attending the Radley or Steeple Aston courses as students or helpers/ tutors and ART courses during the year.

The Branch was asked to give the prayers at the Guild Festival Service in July which reminded us, as quoted in *The Voice of the Church* by The Guild of Clerical Ringers that 'change ringing is something to be celebrated, nurtured, discovered and promoted'. Our newly purchased model bell, in memory of our past President, Willie Haynes, will also be a useful addition to further understanding for those unable to see bells *in situ*.

Kathryn Grant