

Leeds Branch 2016 Report

2016 started off in January with a Handbell morning (with scored QP) – and, no surprise again, that the biggest draw was the homemade soup, break & cakes. Thanks once again to Penny Thorley for hosting at her home and providing a warm venue! In February the branch joined in with a joint handbell/towerbell event at Burley – organised by the Bingley ringers. In March it was a chance for branch members to come along to Chapel Allerton and have a go on the Wombel & Simulator. Remember this is a branch facility so if anyone fancies a go at any time, please contact Chapel Allerton. In April the branch helped out again with the Harrogate Course – as it turns out the last such course for a while. Also in April there was a Surprise Minor practice at Kirk Deighton, kindly organised by John Burnup.

May started very well with the branch winning the inter-branch 8 bell competition at Campsall. Thanks to Barrie Dove for organising the band. Also in May, we had a change from the norm – an open meeting at Bramley to discuss the direction of the branch. This meeting was suggested, organised and chaired by Barrie – bringing ideas with him from Western Branch. This meeting was very well attended, and certainly gave hope that there were ringers out there who wanted the branch to hold events for them! Thus fortified we moved onto the AGM and branch striking competition at Chapel Allerton in June. No surprise that Leeds Minster won the competition, kindly judged by John Leech. There was also a change in Leadership with Barrie taking over as Chair, James Holdsworth as Ringing Master and, as a new addition, Alan Futers as Deputy Ringing Master. Those leaving their posts are warmly thanked for the work that they have done in their roles.

In July there was a walk, led by Pete Oldfield, between Thorner and Barwick (and back again), ringing at both towers. This was a great success, and we hope to have more walks in future. In August an all standards 8 bell practice was held at Leeds Cathedral which was well attended. In September a few branch towers were open for the Heritage Open Weekend, with a particular push this year to have towers open and demonstrations given. Later in September we had a day of 6 bell ringing at Whixley and Kirk Deighton. On 1st October it was the Branch outing to Blackburn, kindly organised by Penny Thorley. The towers rung at were – Padiham, Ribchester, Blackburn (St Silas, Cathedral & St Jude's). This was a great day out, despite near starvation setting in whilst waiting for lunch!!!

Getting towards the end of the year, in November we held a Quarter Peal weekend. With a bit more focus, this was more successful than previous years with 6 quarters being scored, with quite a number of firsts. We hope to be able to build on this success in the coming year. Finally the year ended in December with another new idea – a Christmas Service. This was kindly organised by Alan Futers, and generously hosted by Birstall who put on a lovely service with coffee and warm mince pies afterwards. Later that evening there was a Christmas party – thanks once again to Kathy Thorley for hosting.

Finally, we would urge all members to get more involved with branch activities – we have some new management, new ideas (one being that all events will be on the 2nd Saturday in the month to help with planning) – and are there to help you. If you have any ideas of how the committee can help further, please contact us.

Peter Oldfield, Branch Secretary