



# *Newbury Branch Newsletter*

## *Christmas 2018*



### DIARY

For an up to date diary , see the  
Events section at

[www.bellsnearnewbury.org.uk/](http://www.bellsnearnewbury.org.uk/)

And our branch facebook page-  
but coming up soon.....

### February

9th to 16th Quarter Peal Week

16th Branch Dinner

### March

2nd AGM at Newbury

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The copy deadline for the Summer 2019 issue is 30th June. Please send contributions by email as attachments, or on hard copy by post to the Editor

[mdrobins@hotmail.com](mailto:mdrobins@hotmail.com)



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## **HOT OFF THE PRESS.....**

### **Grants for bell maintenance**

It was decided at the last Officers Meeting, that the Branch would be able to provide grant contributions to towers for maintenance. Applications should be made to the Secretary for consideration by the officers.

### **Advert for Ringing Master(s)**

See report from The Chairman and Ringing Master below. Nominations and volunteers are sought for these duties. It has been suggested that the scale of the role has grown and now lends itself to it being split between more than one person.

### **QP Week 2019 and Branch Dinner.**

Quarter Peal Week 2019 will be held 9th to 16th February, with the dinner in the evening of Saturday 16th. Now is a good time to start planning your quarter peals for this popular event.

### **£100 subsidy for dinner**

The next Branch Dinner, to be held at the end of Quarter Peal Week, will be subsidised by £100 from Branch Funds, shared equally between paid-up members attending.

## From the Chair

At the recent committee meeting of the ODG (held at St Nic's Church Hall, Newbury), the Deputy Master, Tony Crabtree, talked about attempting to survey the whole of the ODG to find out how things campanological were going on a region by region basis. He suspected wide variation, with hot spots of activity, regions of steady progress and regions of decline. Our own branch itself is a mix of these three scenes, I guess, with some good recruitment of new ringers in some areas, but difficulty keeping going in others. But I think the progress outweighs the decline, so I am reasonably confident about the foreseeable future.

Some change is inevitable. One likely change is that the job of the Ringing Master will be split among perhaps three people, one to look after the first-Friday Branch Practices, another to organise the popular Wednesday/Friday monthly mini-outing with lunch, and a third to liaise with the Andover Branch to keep the monthly Surprise Practice going. The details and official recognition of this will have to be sorted out at the branch AGM, so do come along in March to air your views.

At the last Tower Representatives meeting the issue of Data Protection was brought up. The outcome was that the effort to get positive assent from you all has proved difficult. We took the view that this was probably down to oversight, boredom with GDPR, etc, and the decision was taken to abandon that effort and to send out the newsletter and other email communication to all branch members (apart from the few who did respond to Mark's GDPR questionnaire with 'No'). In other words, the branch officers are asking you to contact Mark to opt *out* of receiving stuff from him, rather than opting *in*. This way we hope to keep branch communications alive and efficient.

## Martin



### Officers 2018/2019

Chairman:	Martin Rice	01635 30709	<a href="mailto:jmartinrice@gmail.com">jmartinrice@gmail.com</a>
Vice Chair:	Marcus Allum	01635 204044	<a href="mailto:marcusallum@aol.com">marcusallum@aol.com</a>
Ringing Master:	Di Bridle	01635 868370	<a href="mailto:dibridle@aol.com">dibridle@aol.com</a>
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Guild Rep:	vacant		
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**WOULD YOU LIKE HELP TO LEARN SOMETHING NEW**

**OR**

**WOULD YOU LIKE HELP TO PRACTISE SOMETHING ?**

Contact Lucy at [lucy.pahopkins@me.com](mailto:lucy.pahopkins@me.com)

Suggestions:

Listening Skills	Grandsire Triples
Call Changes	Stedman Triples
Plain Hunt	Any of Std 8 Surprise Major
Ropesight	Ringing touches for any of the above
Plain Bob Doubles	Conducting any of the above
Grandsire Doubles	Rope splicing
Stedman Doubles	Tower Maintenance
Plain Bob Minor	Theory of bell ringing
Kent Minor	Ringing up and down
Cambridge Minor	

**DVDs available for loan**

Our Chairman has obtained some training DVDs from The Central Council, which he will be making available for loan to towers or individuals. The Subjects are: **Bell handling and Ringing up and Down and PR.**

***Personal note:***

*Having rung Bristol S Major sporadically over a number of years, I still felt I hadn't quite got it and was all too often, the "weak link" when attempting quarters etc. So, on my request, Lucy arranged a practice evening for me. I wasn't the only "student" and I found it very useful to have 90 minutes of focussed Bristol, all place bells, touches and others sometimes going wrong near me, all helped enormously. It was a valuable consolidation exercise and one that I can recommend to anyone whatever the method/level/particular skill you need more time with. Please see the examples of what is available and make more use of your training organisation.*

***Thank you to Lucy and her helpers.... Mark Robins***

## **From the Ringing Master - Christmas 2018**

As this is my last contribution to the newsletter as Ringing Master, I would like to thank everyone for their help and support. This includes: all Branch members who have attended practices; those who have organised towers – especially Marcus who, during the past year, arranged the towers for the first Friday of the month practice; members of the Committee who filled in when I wasn't around; and my long-suffering husband who accompanied me to most practices.

I started with the intention of visiting most of the towers in the Branch to gain a sense of how each was coping. Could they ring for most services? Could they get new recruits? If so, could they keep their recruits and help them achieve their potential? Although I didn't manage to get round the whole Branch, it does appear to be a varied picture in which some towers have plenty of ringers but no recruits, while other towers have recruits but struggle with the number of competent ringers on their team. Quite a number of ringers ring at more than one tower on a Sunday, which is to be applauded.

Generally, the three practices a month are well attended, with anything from ten to eighteen ringers participating. The daytime practice and pub lunch is particularly popular, regularly attracting at least fourteen and sometimes even more for lunch.

As to my successor, I do feel there is so much that can be done to encourage ringing in the Branch, and that one person cannot do it all. I have found that organising (albeit with a bit of help) three practices a month rather a struggle and feel that these could be shared out. Perhaps one way forward is to appoint a number of people with specific areas to look after. Areas of responsibility could include: organising quarter peals for different abilities; recruiting and retaining both young people and adults; looking into whether ART (Association of Ringing Teachers) and their Learning the Ropes scheme can be of use to individual towers; and organising the Branch's various striking competitions. These are just a few ideas and I am sure others will have many more to add, so please do pass on your suggestions to the Chairman or Secretary.

One final thought: how about forgoing Ringing Master as a title and appointing a number of Ringing Development Officers instead?

The future of ringing is in your hands – good luck and a very Happy Christmas to you all.

***Di Bridle***



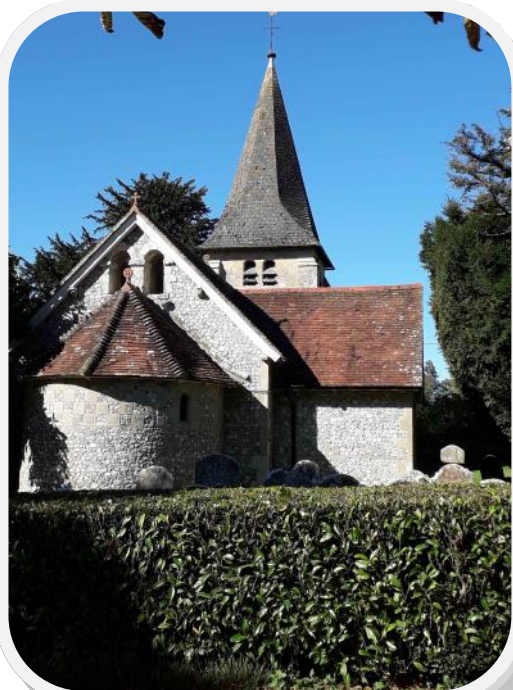


## Di's daytime ring and pub outings

Purley on Thames  
August



Shellingford - July



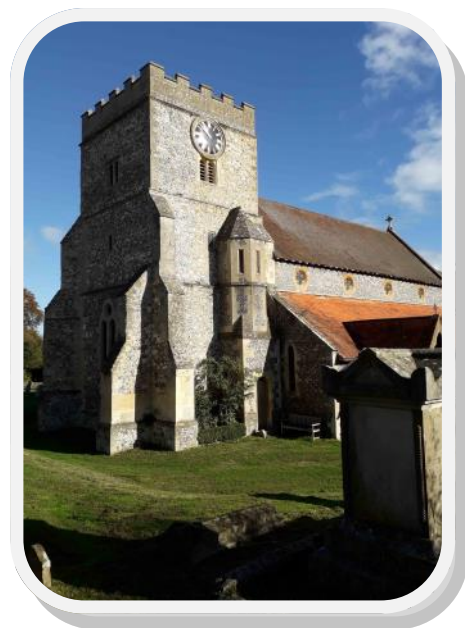
Tangley - September

*Photographs supplied by  
Pete Bridle*





Preshute - October



Streatley—November





**Below is a Press Release, from The Branch Chairman to the Newbury Weekly News. This was printed in the edition for the week preceding the Armistice Centenary.**

***Bells ring out to celebrate the end of the war 100 years ago***

*As the guns fell silent at 11 o'clock on November 11<sup>th</sup> 1918, bells across the land erupted spontaneously into joyful ringing in relief and celebration that The First World War was finally over. Next Sunday, one hundred years to the day after that momentous occasion, bells will, once again, ring out in a national celebration simultaneously from 12.30 PM. HM Government has requested that as many churches as possible take part as a symbol of thanks and remembrance to those who made the ultimate sacrifice in that awful conflict. The ringing community has been training new recruits for the special day and many will be ringing 'half-muffled' bells for the first time when ringing for the Services of Remembrance in their churches.*

*At St Nicolas parish church in the centre of Newbury we will be taking part, as will Beenham, Brightwalton, East Garston, Frilsham, Great Shefford, Hampstead Norreys, Hungerford, Stanford Dingley, Thatcham, and Yattendon.*

*The 'Battle's Over' campaign is also running throughout the day, and some ringing (at Bucklebury and East Garston) will be part of that programme, starting at 7 o'clock in the evening.*

*Martin Rice, chairman of the local bell-ringers association explains that ringing with 'open' bells produces the joyous sound normally heard, while 'half-muffled' bells produce a mournful sound appropriate for solemn occasions.*

*The recruitment of new ringers has been very successful locally with more than a dozen taking up the 'exercise' as we call it. It is sobering to think that seven ringers from local churches gave their lives between 1914 and 1918. One of these, John Allum, died in the last weeks of the war and was great uncle to the present tower captain at Beenham, Marcus Allum. The photo shows the plaque in the ringing room at St Nicolas commemorating the two Newbury ringers lost.*



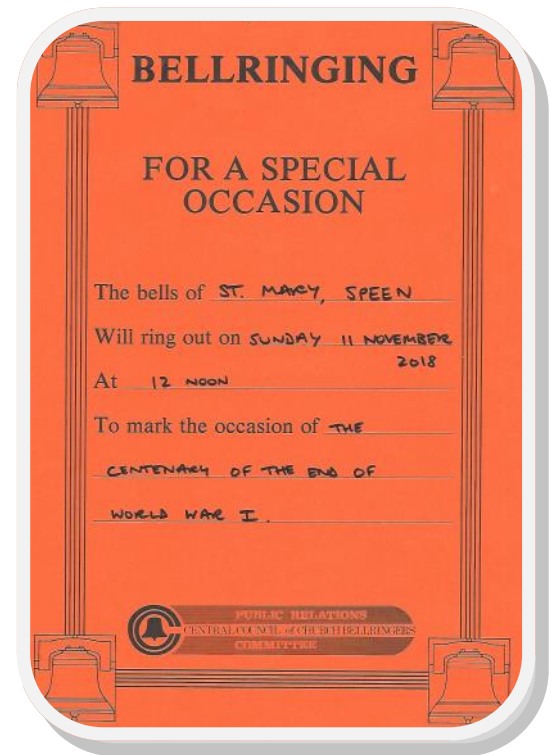


## Speen

Generally, we are still ringing regularly on Sundays and practice night and Gary, our newest member, is now up to speed on plain hunt.

We marked the Armistice centenary with muffled ringing before the usual morning service, followed by open ringing at midday. .

## Mary Hills



## St Matthews, Midgham, on Armistice Day

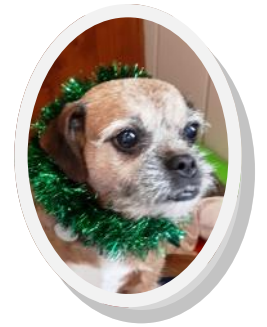
A half-muffled quarter peal lasting three quarters of an hour was rung before the service on Armistice Day. This is the first time the muffles, kindly donated by Derek Collier in memory of his mother, have been used. Derek and his brother came and listened to all the ringing. The band from left to right was Joanne Waller, Diana Bridle, Ben Waller, Angela Brown, Peter Bridle and Roy Pratley.

## Di Bridle

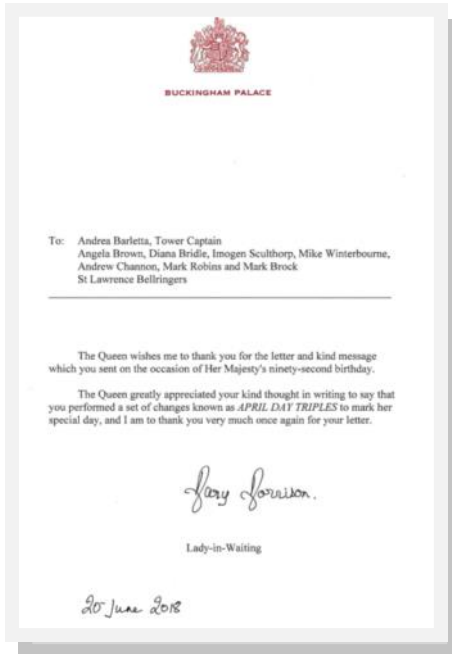




**ST. LAWRENCE'S**  
HUNGERFORD



Lollie is now the official mascot at Hungerford Tower. She trots in quietly every Sunday morning and Wednesday evening, jumps into her doggie bed and sleeps until ringing has ceased.



Hungerford now enjoys the delightful company of Amelia and Nora, our new young ringers who are learning the challenging art of bellringing at a rapid rate. Nora is ringing rounds and Amelia is trebling for triple methods. Jeanne has progressed to Plain Bob Doubles, so her perseverance and loyalty has paid off. **Well done Jeanne!**

St Nicholas Bob Triples has been a challenge this year and, as Christmas rapidly approaches, the Hungerford Team are still trying to perfect this seasonal method.

Buckingham Palace kindly posted a letter thanking Hungerford for ringing a quarter peal of Grand-sire Triples on the occasion of Her Majesty's 92nd birthday. The letter is now framed and proudly displayed in the tower.

Mark returned from his visit to China with lots of photographs of his daughter's gorgeous baby, Eleanor. Congratulations to Mark and his family.

The 100th anniversary of the Armistice was solemnly remembered with a quarter peal of Grandsire Triples, half muffled; a lovely mournful sound to mark this historic day.

Tower Captain Andrea and The Hungerford Ringers would like to thank all friends who support their ringing practices and wish the Branch a joyous new year.

**Cath Fittell**



*Armistice Centenary Grandsire Triples Band. Rung half-muffled following the Act of Remembrance. Composition by Sergeant A P Wakley, of The North Staffordshire Regiment.*

## Newbury

I am very grateful to all the tower members at St Nic's who come along loyally on Sunday mornings to ring. We often ring Grandsire caters now, along with good quality rounds and call changes. I am also very grateful to Julia for organising our annual tower dinner in November. We enjoyed a very good meal and good company at the Hare and Hounds.

In the tower we now have two registers – one for Sunday service ringing and another for other ringing. This has been at the request of the Church Office who like to know who comes up the tower. I am working on a high tech solution to their request to let them know how many people are in the tower at any time, just in case we need to be rescued for some reason.

Talking technical, we now regularly use Cirel in its background mode to help assess our striking. This is done with a very light touch, just in case any of you were worried about coming to a practice. It has helped raise awareness of striking issues at least, and is also helping steadily to improve the quality of our ringing. Recently, one member of our team managed to score an amazingly low error figure of just 23ms. (If you want to know what that means, and try to beat it, you will have to come along to a practice night to find out.)

Many of you will know Geoff Dodd. When he moved house to Newbury he joined the St Nic's band but has been unable to get up the stairs for many years and so has stopped ringing. He is currently in Newbury Hospital; quite 'perky' and being visited by ringers from all over the country.

## Martin

### Stop Press

It was 70 years ago today that Geoff Dodd rang his first peal. He rang this at Amesbury and a band of his ringing friends gathered today, to ring a peal of the same method on the same bells in his honour. Later in the day, the same band rang a peal of Geoff's favourite method, Bristol Surprise Major.

*This is the Belboard report on the Amesbury peal:*

## Ed



### Winchester & Portsmouth Diocesan Guild

**Amesbury, Wiltshire**  
St Mary and St Melor

Tuesday, 18 December 2018 in 3h 10

**5024 Double Norwich Court Bob Major**  
Composed by Sir Arthur P Heywood

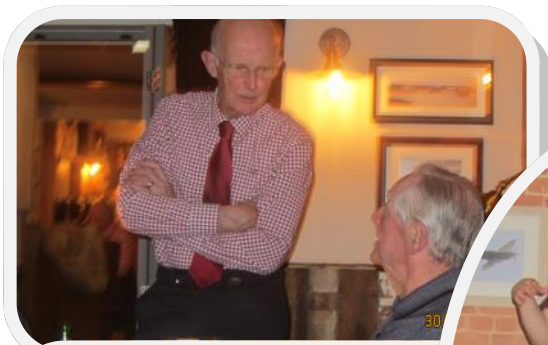
- 1 Nicola J Turner
- 2 Colin M Turner
- 3 Robert J Crocker
- 4 Roy LeMarechal
- 5 John P Loveless
- 6 Peter G C Ellis
- 7 Peter L Furniss
- 8 Michael E C Mears (C)

With the very best wishes of the band to Geoff Dodd on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of his first peal, same bells, same method.



## THATCHAM

After approximately a year, Bill Butler, his leg healed, returned to Thatcham Belfry on Remembrance Sunday, having spent a long time in the Royal Berkshire Hospital, Stockcross Nursing Home and at home. He eventually had a knee cap replacement and on the 27 June he returned home to recuperate. His target was to ring at Thatcham on Remembrance Sunday and as he predicted that is exactly what happened. The band are delighted to see him back after such a determined and courageous battle. Bill, we wish you well and it is wonderful to see you ringing Lincolnshire Surprise Royal, the special method of the month.



Janet John organised our Tower Dinner on 30 November at the Hinds Head, Aldermaston and booked the Officers' Mess again. There were twenty three of us and we had an enjoyable meal with good company. Jake, organiser of the competitions, passed the papers for the two competition to the diners. The first one was to name the Cathedrals from the nameless pictures. Pete Bridle excelled at this and won a box of chocolates. The second competition was a Method Names Anagrams Quiz such as "abbey resurrected unresolved" (answer at the end of the newsletter). Four couples, Martin and John K, Ros and John D., Pete and Di and Sue and Tony all had maximum marks and there had to be a play off. Eventually the winner was announced by Jake as Martin and John K. and their prize was a pack of beer. Thanks go to Janet, Graham and Jake for their arrangements in making this such a successful event.

We have not rung as many quarter peals this half year as we usually do. The usual quarters have been rung for Evensong and Thatcham Festival of Music and the Arts. Special ringing for Remembrance Sunday is reported elsewhere. The most recent quarters have been two for Carol Services

In addition to a report from Whites we now have one from Taylors which will be reviewed by the band.

Thanks to John K and Rachel for covering for Tony in his absences. We are grateful to our many visitors for attending on practice nights which has enabled us to ring more advanced methods.

With best wishes for a Happy Christmas and a Healthy and Prosperous New Year to all members of the Branch.

**Sue Smith**



## Thatcham continued—Armistice Centenary

On Remembrance Sunday we rang the bells of St Mary's three times, all with the bells open. All of our ringers took part in the ringing on at least one occasion, with some ringing three times.

The first occasion was before the 9.30 am Parish Communion Service. We then rang a quarter peal of Grand-sire Caters starting at 12.45 pm. In the evening, we rang 360 Grandsire Doubles starting at 7.05 pm. This ringing had been requested by Thatcham Town Council and followed the beacon lighting ceremony in the churchyard.

**Tony Smith**

*Email from*

*Thatcham Town Council to St Mary's Ringers*

**From:** [Jennie Currie](#)

**Sent:** Monday, November 12, 2018 4:59 PM

**To:** [Tony Smith](#)

**Subject:** Yesterday's bell ringing

Dear Tony,

A huge thank you from me to you and the team for the fantastic timing of the bell ringing last night. Events on the ground ended up in slightly the wrong order but your bell ringers started at just the right moment. If you visit <https://www.brunopeek.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Battle%E2%80%99s-Over-Guide.pdf> and go to page 92 then you will see that you were included in the official list. It was a brilliant event and we have had some fantastic feedback so thank you for your support.

With kindest regards, Jennie

*Jennie Currie*

Community & Civic Manager

*Deputy Town Clerk*



# RINGING REMEMBERS




*The following ringers took part in  
commemorative ringing at*

**Thatcham, St Mary**

*to mark the Centenary of the Armistice  
11th November 2018*

(\* denotes those ringers who were recruited as part of the Ringing Remembers campaign to remember the 1,400 bell ringers who lost their lives in the First World War)

Mark Backhouse	Rachel Backhouse
Peter Bridle	William Butler
John Collins	Rosemary Evans
Graham John	Janet John
Richard Marshall	Amanda Miles
Adrian Moon	Roy Pratley
Jake Reid	John Robinson
Anthony Smith	Susan Smith



Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth  
Minister for Faith  
Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government



Christopher O'Mahony  
President  
The Central Council of Church Bell Ringers

## ODG Ten Bell Striking Competition

Held on our home turf at Newbury this year, the test piece was 240 of Plain and Little Bob Royal, to be judged by John and Hilda Ridley from the Gloucester and Bristol Guild. In recent years, it has been a struggle to raise a band to represent the Newbury Branch, but this year, there were fourteen volunteers. So we were well placed to field a strong team with reserves, representing a wide cross section of our local towers. We attempted two quarter peals of Plain and Little in the weeks leading up to the event, but both were unsuccessful although gave some useful experience of ringing Royal on these bells. From past experience, it seems best to focus on the test piece and the placing of the band, with a practice session as close to the event as possible. To that end, we duly met at Newbury on the eve of the competition for a practice. After a number runs through, we seemed to get the hang of it and felt quietly confident that we would do ok the next day. Drawn to ring second, we got going after a crunchy start (late pull-off by someone), and settled into quite a good pace and standard of striking. However, a mistake in the last lead of the Plain Bob that lingered for most of the lead, to quote the judge John Ridley, "cost us dearly" and we accrued 46 faults in total. Having said that, we did take part and rang well for the most part giving a good account of ourselves. Here are the results:

<u>Faults</u>	<u>Team</u>
14	Reading (winner)
30	EBSB and ONB (Joint second place)
46	Newbury (fourth)
92	Banbury (last)



*The winning team captain  
receiving the trophy from  
John Ridley*

## Project 'Resound' – St Michael's Blewbury Oxfordshire

Isn't it frustrating when visiting churches around the country on ringing outings, holidays, etc. and you find no record or recognition of the bells or bellringing despite searching through church guides? Well, St Michael's Blewbury will certainly be different because we are addressing this in a bold and beautiful way!

About 18 months ago, the bellringers were approached by our Rector, Father Jason St John Nicolle, and churchwarden, Susanne Lay, asking if we would like to work with the PCC to commission a contemporary work of art to celebrate the bells and ringing in the village community, in the form of a new stained glass window. It took a very short time for the ringers to meet and say a unanimous YES PLEASE!

There has not been a new stained glass window in our church for more than 110 years, and many of the existing windows are of an unremarkable Edwardian utilitarian leaded glass. With a brief to portray the heritage of the sound of bells across the village through the centuries, a sense movement and contemporary colour and design, three artists were selected to submit their proposals. Eventually, Rachel Phillips and Linda Norris of Studio Melyn in Pembrokeshire were selected and their artist impressions of the design for the large west window in the tower are shown below.

Richly coloured and echoing movement, dynamism and scale, the eight bells are represented by a range of circular textured glass forms of different sizes symbolising the octave. These strong forms reference the idea of sound waves travelling outwards over the village, community and landscape. It is intended to internally illuminate the window so that it can be appreciated by viewers externally during the evening hours of darkness and not just during daylight.

In addition, to reflect light into the church and enhance the bold beauty of the window there will be layered, mirrored glass banners on the side walls depicting method ringing and a 'blue line' diagram of Cambridge Surprise Minor. Why a minor method you may ask when there are 8 bells? To depict a major method would require four banners on each side of the window, which would have the effect of drawing the viewer away from the window, whereas three panels draws the viewer towards the window. Prior to 1906 Blewbury had six bells and so we think that we can historically justify a 6-bell method which is often rung on our practice nights.

The project was launched to the village in June and the community are enthusiastically supporting the fundraising effort to achieve the £75,000 target. We feel that such a stunning and beautiful artistic statement will also appeal to bellringers generally, whether



or not they have local connections. We are targeting to achieve the installation of the artwork in September 2019, subject to funding. We will welcome everyone from the national and global ringing community to see this stunning and beautiful artwork and to come to ring our lovely 8 bells.

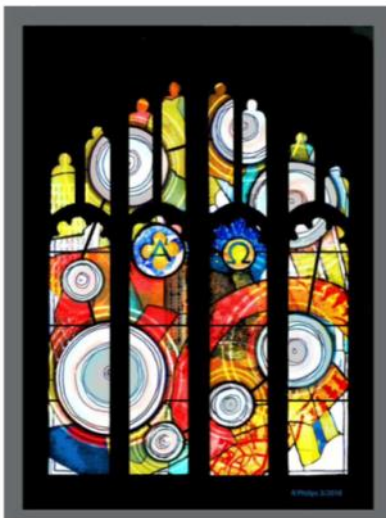
If you would like to help us to achieve this fundraising target by making a personal donation, please follow this link for information and how to donate. We will be most grateful for all donations.

<https://www.justgiving.com/campaign/Resound>

Please let us know if you have a special reason for your gift and we will gladly include this in the commemorative book which will describe the project and record all donors.

More details about the project called 'Resound' may be found by visiting Rachel Phillip's website at [rachelphillipsglass.com](http://rachelphillipsglass.com) and searching for Blewbury, or by visiting [blewbury.co.uk](http://blewbury.co.uk) and search for Resound. We will inform readers when the installation has occurred and welcome you to our beautiful downland village church.

Richard Loyd  
Tower Captain and Project Manager



St Michael's Church Blewbury, showing the West Window

*Wishing you all a  
Merry Christmas  
and a very  
Happy New Year*

