
From the Chair

We're in high summer as I write this piece with the school holidays almost upon us. Just a few weeks ago, we held the Branch 6 bell striking contest at Midgham. For the first time, we held the competition on the evening of the monthly practice. Four teams took part: three for the change-ringing contest and one for the Marshall Shield. The original judge had to cancel at short notice so judging was done by our Ringing Master Mike Hopkins Till. The Marshall Shield band elected to ring first but the order of the other three teams was chosen by ballot.

The team from Hampstead Norreys, who were going for the Shield, acquitted themselves extremely well. The bells at Hampstead Norreys are very different from those at Midgham. Credit must go to their captain Marcus who has taught them very well. We were very pleased to award them the Marshall Shield.

In the change-ringing competition, three strong teams had entered and the overall standard of ringing was very good. Faults ranged from slight unevenness, minor slips and wobbles. The quality of the ringing was very good so it was difficult for those listening outside to decide who would win. In the end, the results were:

- 1st Thatcham (24 faults)
- 2nd Hungerford (30 faults)
- 3rd Bucklebury (34 faults)

Well done, Thatcham!

Striking contests are about trying to raise standards and this shows that we do have high standards of ringing across the Branch. It was great to have the four teams taking part and I congratulate everyone and also many thanks to Di Bridle and Eava Allen for looking after us all.

To other towers across the Branch who weren't able to take part this year, I do hope that next time you will try to enter the contest as it can help advance your tower's abilities. It may seem daunting to put yourself in such a situation but if your tower hasn't entered a ringing contest recently, then you should be eligible to enter the Marshall Shield, where you ring call-changes, not method. Although there's a judge, the judgement is constructive and there to help you.



Hampstead Norreys

(Marshall Shield)

- Treble Marcus Allum (cond)
- 2 Chris Pack
- 3 Sue Rice
- 4 Bruce Lousley
- 5 Mike Spencer
- 6 Steave Ebner



Bucklebury

- Treble Angela Brown
- 2 Gemma Hurst
- 3 Di Bridle
- 4 Ros Durham
- 5 John Durham (Cond)
- 6 Michael Hurst



Hungerford

- Treble Steve Lowman
- 2 Rebecca Browning
- 3 Eava Allen
- 4 Maureen Tarbox
- 5 Mark Robins (cond)
- 6 Kathy Bossom



Thatcham

- Treble Sue Smith
- 2 Graham John
- 3 Janet John
- 4 Tony Smith
- 5 Ben Waller (cond)
- 6 Jo Waller



Newburys Casualty Evacuation Exercise

During Newbury tower's AGM this year there was a discussion on how we could raise our awareness of what would be involved in dealing with an unexpected medical situation occurring in the tower, in particular if someone were to collapse in the ringing chamber. I took an action to speak to the local fire brigade about how they would evacuate an immobilised casualty. This led to possibly the most exciting thing to ever happen at Newbury tower – a practice casualty evacuation with 10 or so firemen and 2 fire engines in attendance!

Arrangements were made with Newbury Fire Station for their Red Watch to come out on a weekday evening. I offered to act as the pretend casualty – the thought of being carried down the stairs by a fireman was quite appealing – but due to health & safety the brigade had to use one of their own crew as the casualty. Tower keyholders were invited to attend to raise their awareness of what an evacuation would involve.

And so the excitement began. The first fire engine arrived at the church with a crew that knew all about the practice run and a couple of whom would be taking on specific roles – one would act as a medic, and another the casualty who in this scenario had collapsed in the ringing chamber due to a suspected heart attack. A second fire engine arrived shortly after with a crew that had been told nothing other than where to be and when, and they had been given a piece of equipment that was on loan from the manufacturer and was being trialled during this evacuation – a soft type of stretcher. This second crew had to assess the situation and start by setting up the equipment needed to safely manoeuvre the casualty (strapped to the stretcher) down the stairs.

Several ropes were secured to part of the metal frame in the bell chamber and the ends attached to the stretcher, and also to the firemen who would be holding each end of the stretcher so that they would not fall (particularly important for the fireman at the foot end of the stretcher as he had to go down the staircase backwards!).

It was in this manner that the casualty strapped into the stretcher was slowly and carefully lowered down the staircase, at an almost vertical angle in order to get him around the narrow spiral of the staircase. We were impressed that they managed to get someone who was 6½ feet tall down the staircase on a stretcher without banging his head.

In the debrief at the end of the exercise the brigade crews said that the practice run had been very worthwhile as the tower presented them with some unusual challenges, and the soft stretcher had proven its value – a hard stretcher would have probably been too wide to get down the staircase. And I got to sit in one of the fire engines before they departed, which made up for not being carried down the stairs by a fireman.

Julia Deady



NEWBURY BRANCH QUARTER PEAL WEEK 2015

What started as a fund-raising scheme for the Oxford Diocesan Guild Bell Fund back in the 1990s has become something of an annual tradition in the Newbury Branch. The Bell Fund needed to build up its funds and the Stewards of the day hatched a scheme, whereby every Leap Year the Branches in the Guild would be invited to have a sponsored quarter peal week in aid of the Bell Fund. We in the Newbury Branch joined in the endeavour and enjoyed it so much that we started to arrange a quarter peal week every year! We also maintained the fund-raising aspect and, for each quarter rung, the band contributed a donation for the Bell Fund, as well as to the host tower and (of course) the Ringing World.

This year was no exception and the week chosen was from 21st to 28th February (we do 8-day weeks in West Berkshire!). The theme this year was to enable people to ring a first of some sort, or to have some special aspect to the performance. As can be seen in the listings, we concentrated on the standard plain methods, although there were some notable exceptions (one each of Glasgow and Yorkshire S Major) and one band ventured out of the Branch to Reading for a taste of Cinques. A particularly noteworthy performance was that of 1260 Call Changes, with three first quarter-pealers. There were also quarters by a ladies band and a band of married couples.

The whole week went without too many hitches and we all enjoyed the ringing enormously. Even the unsuccessful attempts were fun – one of Stedman Doubles came to grief when a flighty rope refused to go in quick or slow, finishing with the bell down, having evaded the unfortunate ringer's hands and leaving the band chuckling at the frustrated remarks emanating from his mouth. All seemed much better after some refreshment at the establishment 100 yards down the road . . .

We were pleased to be able to ring a number of firsts in the method or on the treble or tenor. We celebrated a sixtieth birthday and re-acquainted one ringer with Grandsire Triples 30 years after his previous foray into the method! We were also delighted to be able to raise some money for the Bell Fund and hope to carry on the tradition next year.

Mike Hopkins Till

Newbury Branch Ringing Master

Branch Quarter Peal Week

21st to 28th February

Quarters rung as shown on Belboard

22nd Feb	Newbury	Grandsire Caters
	Thatcham	Yorkshire S Major Married Couples Band
24th Feb	Hampstead Norreys	Rounds and Call Changes
25th Feb	Hungerford	Grandsire Triples
26th Feb	Bucklebury	Glasgow S Major
26th Feb	Thatcham	Grandsire Doubles
27th Feb	Thatcham (Bill Butlers House)	Plain Bob Minor on Handbells
27th Feb	Reading	Grandsire Cinques
28th Feb	Midgham	Grandsire Doubles
28th Feb	Bucklebury	Grandsire Triples

Grandsire for a Grandson

Alexander Browning was born on 9th January 2015.

A Quarter Peal was rung at Hungerford on 11th January 2015, but with ringing in the family genes it was only a matter of time before a family Quarter Peal was rung to celebrate the birth of Alexander.

The Quarter Peal was rung on Sunday 8th February 2015 at St Lawrence Hungerford. A very appropriate date, as it would have been Alexander's Great Grandfather's 94th Birthday.



Sunday, 11 January 2015 in 45 mins

1260 Grandsire Triples

Comp: diary

- 1 Cath Fittell
- 2 J Martin Rice
- 3 Angela Brown
- 4 Eleanor Rice
- 5 Michael Hurst
- 6 Steve Lowman
- 7 Mark Robins (C)
- 8 David Thorpe

To congratulate Rebecca and Rupert Browning on the arrival of baby Alexander, born 9th January.

Also to celebrate the return of Katherine Perry, home after 12 weeks in hospital, well on the road to recovery and return to ringing at St Nicolas, Newbury.

Sunday, 8 February 2015 in 45 mins (12 cwt)

1260 Grandsire Triples

Composed by JJ Parker

- 1 Marilyn Payne
- 2 Imogen Sculthorp
- 3 Rebecca Browning
- 4 Michael Hurst
- 5 Peter Payne
- 6 Chris Pack
- 7 Mark Robins (C)
- 8 Steve Lowman

First quarter since motherhood - 3

Rung to celebrate the birth of Alexander Browning, born 9th January 2015. Son of 3 and Grandson of 1 and 5.

Rung on what would have been the late Rodney Cooper's 94th birthday; Father to 1, Grandfather to 3 and Great Grandfather to Alexander Browning.

Rupert, Alexander and I would like to thank all of our ringing friends who sent emails and cards of congratulations.

THATCHAM

Sottanstall's BobTriples was the first QP to be rung after the last newsletter at Thatcham. This was rung by Ben and his band including six members of the Waller family and believed to be the first QP in the method. This method appears in William Sottanstall's 'Element's of Campanologia' of 1867 as 'Sottanstall's Double Place'.

Two married couples QPs have been rung; one of which was for the Golden Wedding Anniversary of Tony and Sue on the 22 June in which five couples took part ringing Yorkshire Surprise Royal. The total number of years of marriage was 177 years. Each ringer rang next to their spouse as follows:

Susan E Smith II 1, Anthony D Smith 2, Janet E John 3, Graham A C John 4, Rosamund Durham 5, John J Durham © 6, Diana M Bridle 7. Peter Bridle 8.

Tony and Sue's Wedding Anniversary was actually on the 12 June, and they went to Venice and Sorrento to celebrate. Also a QP for the marriage of Nicholas Smith and Joanna Marshall (daughter of Richard) on 2 January at Abingdon was rung at Thatcham.

A number of other quarters were rung including a Ladies QP during quarter peal week, an in memoriam QP for Private Harry Addison who died in Flanders Field on 15 March 1915 in the Great War. He was the Great Uncle of Sue and came from Herringswell, Suffolk.

Also others to celebrate the life of Philip Chalk, St George's Day, birth of Harrison Boyde Clark Gt Grandson of Bill, the birth of Princess Charlotte, 70th Anniversary of VE Day, the Magna Carta and various service quarters.

The Tower AGM was held on 17 February. Apart from the Secretary's position all were re-elected unopposed. Margaret Robinson retired for the SECOND time, after the previous secretary decided to give up after a few months. We thank Margaret for taking over again and she was presented with a bunch of flowers. Janet John is now secretary. Tony Smith is still the correspondent for requests for the bells.



Mark Bennet our Rector asked if the band could present a display of bell ringing on the occasion of the AGM of Thatcham St Mary's PCC. Graham John took photographs of the bells and took various trophies from the Ringing Room, which included Bill's bell, various historical and current striking competition pictures, ringing books etc. These were displayed in the Church at the bottom of the Chancel steps and presented a good interpretation of ringing.

(continued overleaf)

Ben organised a good outing in Jo's old ringing territory on 20 June. The outing started at Binfield and the ringing finished at Sonning where there was very heavy rainfall. An enjoyable day was spent ringing, and was followed by a delicious meal at Land's End, Charvil, where the heavy rainfall developed into a very close thunder and lightning storm.

We were delighted to win the 6 Bell Striking Competition at Midgham and look forward to representing the Branch in the Guild Competition on 3 October in the South Oxon Branch. Service ringing is well attended, with Cambridge Royal being rung on some Sundays. Many thanks to our visitors who attend for practices and QPs

Sue Smith
6 July 2015

St Mary's, Speen

Not much to report this time except that we are hanging on there despite our limited numbers and competing claims on our time. We still usually manage to raise a band on Sundays and the monthly joint practices with Lambourn remain great boon. We were particularly impressed by Jean, who seemed unfazed when her rope came apart during a joint practice at Speen in January, and thanks to Dave Thorpe and Graham Green for replacing the rope within minutes. More recently, the incursion of a swallow proved a more baffling problem but the bird fortunately decided to beat a retreat in time for us to ring before the service.

Thanks also to all those involved in Quarter Peal week and especially those who helped Mary Hills to ring her first QP. The week really is a great opportunity for anyone who would like to "have a go" but isn't sure they can do it: I'd encourage anyone who's thought about it to have a try.

Mary Hills.

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in
a



Branch Outing 2015
to Hampshire

Some photos of the day
reading clockwise:

Bishops Waltham

Hursley

Upham

Upham

Shedfield

Curdrige





Our annual dinner was held this year at The Furze Bush, Ball Hill. A good crowd of Hungerford Ringers past and present, friends of the tower and partners attended a lively evening with a simple “Guess who I am” game that became an instant hit or even an obsession on the night! We were also entertained by Denise and Sarah, who re-enacted the Two Ronnies “Four Candles” sketch, entertaining the staff as much as the guests. With speeches and medal awards to finish, a grand night was, as always, had by all.



Apart from outings and generally having a good time, ringing at St Lawrences goes on as normal. We often get 8 on a Sunday morning, but stick to call changes to keep the standard up. Wednesday night practices are usually busy with plain hunt on 5 through to Kent TB Major (our current project) and occasionally Surprise Major. Our novices are coming along very well and Minna is looking forward to attending the Bradfield Course in August.

Well that’s about it from Hungerford for now.

Mark Robins