



# Newbury Branch Newsletter

## Summer 2017

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The copy deadline for the Christmas 2017 issue is 9th December. Please send contributions by email as attachments, or on hard copy by post to the Editor: Mark Robins

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## **From the Chair**

I'm Martin Rice – your new Branch Chair. I was elected at the AGM after Richard Marshall announced he was standing down. I ring at St Nic's, Newbury.

I must pay tribute to Richard for his many (20 or more) years as Chair. He has organised the Branch Dinner for many of those years, as well as running of the branch smoothly, and contributing in many other ways to ringing in the Newbury area.

He has left the branch in a healthy state – numbers are good in terms of membership of the ODG. At the April tower representatives meeting it emerged that many towers are forming close ringing relationships with other towers, such as Great Shefford and East Isley, Speen and Lambourn. It is good to hear about such active mutual support.

Recruitment of new ringers should be an on-going effort, and I hope that this edition of the newsletter contains some reports about the way towers have recruited members in the past. Some ideas may crop up that others might adopt. If you feel unsure about how to teach new recruits to handle a bell (or for assistance in progressing further), then do contact the branch training officer for advice and practical help.

I would also encourage all members to join Branch activities. The Wednesday/Friday morning monthly practices followed by lunch are well supported, but the Branch Outing (June 10<sup>th</sup>) seemed to be less attractive to the majority of members. What the ideal outing would be has been the subject of debate for many years. If that spirit of community shown by the way towers are linking regularly with others could extend to the whole branch, then I think the outing would be well supported. I wonder how we can achieve that feeling.

***Martin***



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## Recruitment

At our chairman's request, I asked towers to let us know how they found their most recent recruit, so that experienced gained can be shared. Here are the responses:

*Aldermaston:*

*Our latest recruit is the landlord at the Hinds head.*

*He learnt to ring as a child and then hasn't rung for a good length of time.*

*After one of our ringers telling him they had been ringing before going to the pub he decided to join us.*

*So it's word of mouth spreading the news I guess.*

*Imogen*

*Newbury:*

*Since St Nic's is the parish church of a thriving market town, new ringers move into the area, and then come up the tower, ready to ring. Great! It doesn't happen all that often, but five of our current band (including myself) arrived that way. We have 'trips up the tower' from time to time, sometimes on the National Heritage Weekend, and sometimes on Church Fete occasions. This has brought in a couple of new 'home-grown' ringers over the years. Several people have contacted the tower 'out of the blue' via the bellsnearnewbury or the church website, and have been taught to handle a bell. Many years ago we had an article in the Newbury Weekly News with a photo of three ringers, and appealing for recruits. One of our current ringers joined us (fully fledged ringer) as a result.*

*Martin*

*Bucklebury: A recruitment success story, see separate article.*

*Ed*

*Speen:*

*We have two newish ringers, both came as a result of leaflets which Moira designed and were put up in village hall, church and in parish notice boards. They have been up for nearly two years now and both new members saw them at some point.*

*Carrie*

*Hungerford:*

*Last year, we held an open evening as part of the Hungerford Arts Festival. This led to one new recruit, Stephanie, who went on to learn bell handling, but has since stopped owing to pregnancy. Hopefully, Steph will return when time permits. Since then, Andrea and Maurice have returned to us after seven years off and their daughters Amelia and Jessica are now learning to ring. So, PR, returning ringers after a break and family connections can account for our most recent additions.*

*Mark*

## Di Bridle's Daytime Ringing Outings

This idea has met with a good response from the Branch, with days out alternating between Wednesdays and Fridays. The first one was held at Peasmore with lunch afterwards at the pub. A most enjoyable day out with something for all levels, from Grandsire for the beginners through to London Minor for the more experienced. A silent non-conducted touch of Grandsire Doubles did prove a bit challenging for all though! The outing was rounded off very nicely with lunch at the Red Lion in Chieveley.



Recently, we went over the border into Wiltshire and rang the new six at Liddington (photos above), followed by lunch at the Village Inn pub. Once again, a mix of abilities present meant a wide range of ringing from call changes to a very nice touch of Cambridge Surprise Minor to finish with, and some good ringing on this brand new six was enjoyed by all.

**Mark Robins**

## **RINGING MASTER'S REPORT - JUNE 2017**

During the first 6 months of this year there have been plenty of ringing activities with which the Branch has been involved.

There have been practices on a Friday evening at Great Shefford, Thatcham, Lambourn and Yattendon with numbers attending ranging from 12 to a magnificent 25 at Great Shefford. (Though I was rather challenged trying to give all 25 people at Great Shefford enough "goes" to make it worth their while !) It is always good if the local hosting tower's members support these practices as it usually gives them a chance to either ring something different or ring with a more experienced band.

The quarter peal week in February was very successful with 19 quarters rung which included a number of firsts; and this year there was an option to ring 20 minutes of call changes. I am pleased that 4 towers participated in this and I was privileged to join the Bucklebury band to enable the Gray family to ring their first "long length". Perhaps next year it will be their first quarter.

Our AGM was held in March and I would like to thank everyone who elected me to continue as your Ringing Master. We also elected a new Chairman and I would like to thank Richard Marshall for all his hard work in the past and for supporting me. We welcome our new Chairman, Martin Rice.

A new monthly daytime ringing followed by a pub lunch has been instigated and so far these seem to have been successful with approximately 12 for lunch and a few more just for the practice. We have been to Peasemore, Yattendon, Compton, Liddington and Speen. The hardest part is trying to find a suitable pub!

The outing was deferred to June because of closures on the M4 and was a very enjoyable day with good towers and some very acceptable ringing, although we could have done with a few more people and I feel that this was because we changed the date.

The Guild 8 bell striking competition was held in May at Islip and Thatcham entered a team in lieu of the Branch and achieved a very creditable 6th place - it's very difficult to beat High Wycombe and Reading. Perhaps that should be our aim next year.

Another item of note was the coffee morning held by the Lambourn band in aid of their bell fund and in memory of Steve Lowman - they are to be congratulated for a very well organised event with their obvious enthusiasm for their bells and ringing showing throughout the morning.

To sum up I think it has been a very active 6 months with plenty of people progressing and, also, enjoying their ringing and companionship. So keep it up and don't forget to recruit a few more people to join us.

***Di Bridle***



## **BBC Music Day—Bellringing Feature**

This series of features by the BBC was focussed on bellringing for the evening of Thursday 15th June, with coordinated ringing requested from 7.00 PM countrywide. The following Newbury Branch towers took part by ringing something at that time:

*Thatcham, Newbury, Speen, Midgham, Chieveley, Peasemore, Beedon,  
Great Shefford, Kintbury and Farnborough.*



**Listen out for church bells on BBC Music Day**

THE BBC Music Day today (Thursday) is about uniting people through music and many bell-ringers locally, and throughout the country, will be ringing out to show community cohesion.

This is perhaps especially relevant following the attempts in London and Manchester to disrupt our social structures.

The aim is to ring at 7pm today in as many places as possible.

Your readers should listen out for pealing bells at Newbury, Thatcham, Midgham, Bucklebury, Kintbury, Speen, Chieveley and Farnborough.

More information about the Music Day can be found on the BBC website, and about ringing at



[www.bellsnearnewbury.org.uk](http://www.bellsnearnewbury.org.uk)  
**MARTIN RICE**  
Chairman, Newbury Branch of  
the Oxford Diocesan Guild of  
Church Bell-ringers

With our chairman's letter in the Newbury Weekly News, a good bit of publicity must have resulted from this. We'll have to wait and see if it has a positive effect on recruitment.

**Ed**

## ***Grandsire Doubles***

**Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> August**

**9.00 AM to 12.30PM**

*Touches*  
*Plain Courses*  
*Calling*

Contact Lucy Hopkins Till: 07766833004/01256 350718  
[lucy.pahopkins@me.com](mailto:lucy.pahopkins@me.com)

## **Lucy's Training Notices**

### **Young Ringers Thing**

***Bowling and Lunch***  
***in Basingstoke***  
***Grabbing some Towers on the***  
***way***

**Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> July**

Contact Lucy Hopkins Till: 07766833004/01256 350718 [lu-  
cy.pahopkins@me.com](mailto:lucy.pahopkins@me.com)

**P.S RINGERS OVER 18 MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY  
A RESPONSIBLE YOUNG PERSON !**



## Bucklebury News

It has been a reasonably busy year so far at Bucklebury Tower. Generally practices are well attended, with a variety of abilities catered for and we are grateful for all the support we get from our visitors. Our learners are progressing really well, with Fiona, Ilona and Francis all able to ring rounds and call changes on 8, it is also great to see them boosting our numbers on a Sunday morning every week. Back in February Emma rang her first quarter during quarter peal week - Emma agreed to ringing a quarter peal despite Molly advising her not to do it. A very reasonable 1260 of Grandsire Triples was scored on 18th February with Emma on the treble, called by Michael Hurst. It is fair to say that most of Emma's ringing, up to that point, had been doubles so it was particularly good to see her achieve this as her first quarter. Well done Emma.

At the end of April we rang a quarter peal to celebrate Graham and Susan's 25th Wedding Anniversary. After much persuasion Molly agreed to ring her second quarter so Graham could have his daughter and father in the quarter peal for this occasion. Another successful quarter of Grandsire Triples was achieved.

Earlier in the year we had decided to have a tower outing on Saturday June 17th, obviously at that time not realising it was going to be the week after the re-organised Branch Outing. A select group of us headed off to the Swindon area, on one of the hottest days of the year, to do some ringing for the day. This was the first time our learners had rung at a tower other than Bucklebury, so it was very satisfying to see that they got on so well with "foreign" bells. We rang at a variety of 6 and 8 bell towers during the day: Chisledon, Wanborough, Liddington, Minety, Malmesbury and Great Somerford. Some good bells, good ringing and a good pub for lunch at Liddington - so all in all an excellent day. Parking in Malmesbury became eventful when Graham followed his Sat Nav down a one way hill to a long stay car park which would have only been accessible via that route in a much smaller car! This resulted in reversing up hill a rather long way, the wrong way up the one way street. Never trust a sign that says the road is 6' 6" wide in Malmesbury. Thanks to John and Ros for organising the day and thanks to the ringers that joined us for all or part of the day.



### **Oxford Diocesan Guild**

On Saturday, 22 April 2017 in 46

**Bucklebury, Berkshire  
St Marys**

**1260 Grandsire Triples**

- 1 Molly A Brown
- 2 John D Kape
- 3 Rosamund M Durham
- 4 Angela M Brown
- 5 John J Durham
- 6 Rod Brown
- 7 Graham M Brown (C)
- 8 Roy Pratley

Rung to celebrate 25th Wedding Anniversary of Graham and Susan Brown

***Graham Brown***



## Bucklebury's Recruits

Our latest recruits came in a rather unexpected way. We turned up at practice to find a group of people waiting at the church. Our first thoughts were that they were visiting ringers, but it turned out to be a family of 6 - mother, father, two girls and twin boys - who had recently moved into the area, joined the church and had become interested in the idea of ringing. After giving them all a go it was arranged that the mother, Fiona and the two elder children, Ilona and Francis, would learn. The two boys were a bit young to start and their father wasn't able to commit to the regular time needed to learn. I enlisted the help of John Kape from Thatcham and in October 2016 we started teaching on tied bells. They progressed well and were soon ringing unaided and starting rounds.

After 6 months or so, they were ringing quite respectable call changes on 6 and 8 and we decided to enter them into the branch striking competition ringing call changes for the Marshall Shield. Midgham bells are not the easiest, so we arranged a trial session to see how they would cope - very well as it turned out.

We entered the competition as the only call change band, and with all three of them ringing 'inside' bells, we were awarded the Marshall Shield. Many thanks to the other Bucklebury ringers and friends who made up the numbers, but the accolades should go to Fiona, Ilona and Francis - well done!



Left to Right  
Ilona, Francis and Fiona Gray  
With the 2017 Marshall Shield

## Branch Quarter Peal Week—17 – 26 February 2017

The Branch Quarter Peal Week took place between the above dates during a week of gales and rain, but with an absence of snow and not as cold as in previous years. This popular and well established event serves to boost the profile of ringing in the Branch and give ringers opportunities to progress. In total there were 23 performances in 15 different towers and one in hand, in all stages from Singles (for the first time) to Royal, including spliced, and also for the first time, including 20 minutes of rounds and call changes for the novices. There were an impressive 70 ringers included in one or more performances, both from our own members and with guest appearances from neighbouring branches. The main aims of the week were achieved with a number of “firsts” as shown in the footnotes with many others gaining valuable experience with “strong” bands around them which are not otherwise available. The week ended with the Branch Dinner, where we reflected on the week’s activities and achievements over a fine meal and in good company.

*Mark Robins*

### **Quarters and other performances rung during the week**

Aldermaston (St Mary the Virgin)	1260 Plain Bob Minor
Aldermaston (St Mary the Virgin)	20 Minutes Of Rounds and Call Changes
Newbury (St Nicolas)	1260 Grandsire Doubles
Englefield (St Mark)	1250 Yorkshire Surprise Major
Hungerford (St Lawrence)	1260 Single Oxford Bob Triples
Aldworth (St Mary the Virgin)	1260 Aldworth Giants' Singles
Compton Parva (SS Mary and Nicholas)	1260 King's Delight Doubles
Thatcham (St Mary)	1282 Lindsey Surprise Royal
Lambourn (St Michael and All Angels)	Rounds and Call Changes
Speen (St Mary)	1260 Grandsire Doubles
Kintbury (St Mary the Virgin)	1260 Spliced Triples (3m)
Thatcham (St Mary)	1250 Cambridge Surprise Major
Bucklebury (St Mary)	20 Minutes Of Rounds and Call Changes
Midgham (St Matthew)	1260 Plain Bob Minor
Newbury (St Nicolas)	60 Call Changes
Stanford Dingley (St Denys)	1296 Treble Bob Minimus (4m)
Thatcham (8 The Waverleys)	1312 Kent Treble Bob Major
Thatcham (St Mary)	1282 Yorkshire Surprise Royal
Newbury (St Nicolas)	1260 Grandsire Triples
Bucklebury (St Mary)	1260 Grandsire Triples
Newbury (St Nicolas)	1259 Grandsire Caters
Thatcham (St Mary)	1259 Grandsire Caters
Basingstoke (All Saints)	1320 Spliced Caters and Royal (2m)

## Lambourn

News from St Michael and All Angels Lambourn

We are grateful for the support of Maureen Tarbox, Mark Brock and George Rabbitts all from East Garston provided to our Thursday evening practices which is allowing us to continue to progress.

We usually ring a mixture of Rounds, Call Changes and Plain Hunt and recently have been starting to look at Plain Bob Minimus. We ring regularly for our Sunday morning services and usually have 5 or 6 ringers available and continue to ring for weddings as requested. On Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> April, we visited and rang at six different towers ending up at St Mary's Aylesbury.

Picture of our Tower Visit to St. Peter and Paul Church, Ellesborough

L-R

George Rabbitts East Garston

Ross Couch Lambourn

Andy Clarke Lambourn

Maureen Tarbox East Garton

Jeanne Lambourn Hungerford

Amanda Marchant Lambourn

Nick Annetts Lambourn



Our fundraising Coffee Morning on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup>

June was a huge success we raised a total of

£3,230.57 towards our target. A big thank you to everyone involved in the organising, for all the help on the day and all branch members who came along to support us. By the time you are reading this newsletter we will have started our work on re- painting the bell frame.

***Amanda Marchant***

**From a Church notice somewhere:**

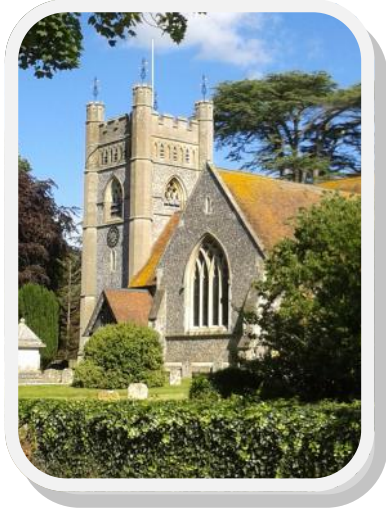
*“The theme of tonight’s sermon will be “what is Hell”?*

*Come early and listen to our choir practice”*

## Branch Outing, June 10<sup>th</sup>

After being postponed from May because of a closure of the M4, this year's branch outing took place on a beautiful, sunny June day.

The first tower was in the picturesque village of Hambleden. I had a strange feeling I was on a film-set as I walked to the church, and put this down to the total absence of street lights, telegraph poles and overhead cables. Later, I found that the village has indeed been used for films including Band of Brothers, Chitty Chitty Bang Bang and 101 Dalmatians. The bells were pleasant to ring but we didn't really get the best out of them.



The next tower was Hughenden, where we did manage some very good striking, from rounds and call changes to Stedman Triples and Yorkshire Major. The church is by itself in the beautiful grounds of the National Trust property Hughenden Manor. Benjamin Disraeli, Prime Minister of the UK in the 1860's and 70's, owned Hughenden Manor, and his tomb is in the churchyard.

After a break for lunch we resumed ringing at Wooburn. We were slightly depleted in ringers here because the entrance to the tower was locked for security reasons and not everyone was ready to climb the stairs to the ringing room at the appointed time.



However, we managed the bells reasonably well, including ringing a plain course of Single Oxford Bob Triples.

Almost everyone got to Hitcham OK, although there was some confusion over the location. (If you allow TomTom to take you to Hitcham you will end up in Suffolk!) This was an 'interesting' six-bell tower with a clever arrangement of platform and movable low walls to allow the tenor ringer to stand over the stairs.



The best was left to last. Stoke Poges is a splendid Gillett and Johnston eight and the church is in magnificent grounds that inspired Thomas Gray to write his "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard". Gaining access to the ringing room is slightly hair-raising, but the bells reward with



a wonderfully clear sound. Here we thanked John Kape for organising a very enjoyable day's ringing.

*Martin Rice*



*It was Di's birthday*



## Thatcham

It was all action stations after Peter Bridle phoned Tony (Our Tower Captain) on Tuesday 14 February to advise that the clapper had broken on the ninth bell during a peal attempt. This was only four days before the start of the Quarter Peal week and four quarter peal attempts had been arranged. Tony immediately sprang into action and made an urgent telephone call to Taylors. One of their Directors would be returning the next day from Taunton to Loughborough. Arrangements were made for Roy Pratley and John Collins to take the broken clapper to Gordano Services on the M5 where they handed it to Taylors.

Taylors made a temporary repair and returned the clapper by Courier overnight on Thursday and it was received on Friday morning at Tony's house. Richard and Tony fitted the repaired clapper on Friday afternoon in time for the first quarter peal on Saturday morning. Well done to everyone who helped and to Taylors for providing such an efficient service.

The Tower AGM was held on the 14 February and chaired very efficiently by Mark Bennett our Rector. All of the officers were returned unopposed.

The quarters in the quarter peal week were all successful being Grandsire Caters (rung as a wedding compliment to Sarah Zoe Marshall (Richard and Tricia's daughter) and Martin Paul Thompson), Cambridge Surprise Major, Yorkshire Surprise Royal and Lindsey Surprise Royal.

Quarters were also rung for the Christingle Service, for Candlemas Evensong and Evensong on 4 June.

We entered the Guild Eight Bell Striking Competition as a Thatcham Band (as it is also open to Branch Bands), on Early Spring Bank Holiday Monday, held in the Bicester Branch at Islip and came sixth out of nine bands.

On 16-19 June the Church held a festival of flowers displaying history from roman times through to the modern day. A very interesting booklet by the Thatcham Historical Society portrayed descriptions to the floral decorations. We were asked to provide an exhibit. Richard and Tricia Marshall and Jacqui Smith made a very attractive floral decoration with flowers, a bell wheel, a clapper, pictures etc as you will see from the photo.



Bill Butler is finding it increasingly difficult to climb the stairs but continues to ring. Ron Christopher sadly is finding the stairs too difficult to climb at Thatcham but does ring at Bucklebury where the stairs are fewer and wider. We wish them both well

HERE WE GO AGAIN but not the same urgency. Peter Bridle phoned Tony on Tuesday 30 May to say that the treble clapper had broken in a peal attempt. Roy took the clapper to Loughborough on Thursday 1 June and it came back on the 6 June to Tony's house. So it was removed on one Tuesday and replaced on the following Tuesday by Richard and Adrian. Taylors again did an efficient job and thanks to various members of the band for their help.

*Sue Smith*

### **Strange Goings on in Newbury Market Place**

There was an outdoor event in Newbury marketplace yesterday (Bank Holiday Monday) called Ringing Out, with eight bell-like structures being "rung" by local people trained for the purpose. They had learned sufficient control to get the bells to swing the full 360 degrees or 180 degrees or a quarter or three quarter swing as well as to stand the bells. It was not bellringing as we know it - the structures had no clappers and produced a slightly eerie electronic noise. As Martin Rice said "It's not exactly Grandsire Triples." Still, it was different and may have prompted a few people to find out more about real ringing.



*Mary Hills*

## Speen News

Both our learners are coming on well. Gary Barber brought his fiancée to see the ringing on 24 April and found himself making a very creditable debut as a Sunday ringer. Alastair has likewise done well, especially with the additional distraction of his finance course exams. Despite two ringers with shoulder problems, we are still managing to ring regularly on Sundays and to hold weekly practices, not least because of support from ringers from other towers.

Meanwhile we also managed a successful quarter peal of Grandsire Doubles in February, a first on the inside for Mary Hills. Thanks to Mark Robins for leading the quarter peal and, more generally, to the Newbury Branch for running the quarter peal week.

### Speen's Doughnut Project:

Two ropes had already broken and then bits of the treble rope started raining down to the distraction of its ringer, so we knew we had a problem. It concerned those round wooden things which encircle the ceiling openings for the ropes – there is probably a technical term for these (rope guides?) but at Speen they quickly became known as doughnuts. They were so old and worn that they no longer guided the ropes, which instead rubbed against the rough-edged apertures and started to fray. Inevitably, they then broke.

A kindly parishioner, Martin Evans, produced a template for replacements. Once the dimensions had been confirmed, he presented us with 7 beautiful new doughnuts. That was the easy bit. Then we had to work out how to attach them. Over to Dave Thorpe and Graham Green.



n't the most stable basis from which to work. So, we needed to hire a demountable platform. Before ordering anything, two of the women had a practice run at getting one of the poles up the spiral staircase. It was no go. Then one of the men (no names, no pack drill), fearing female incompetence, had another try. Still no go.

There was a ladder in the bell chamber but most of the rope apertures couldn't be reached from a ladder, which in any case was-





Speen continued—The Doughnut Project:

By this stage, weeks and indeed months had passed and a solution seemed no closer. Then another kindly parishioner, Michael Bell (appropriately enough) came up with the answer by offering the loan of his demountable platform, which fitted perfectly.

On 6 February, Graham Green, Dave Thorpe and Brian Nobes set up the platform and, within a couple of hours, it was off with the old doughnuts (which didn't put up much of a fight) and on with the new. So now the ringing chamber boasts shiny new doughnuts and fraying ropes are a thing of the past.

Many thanks to Graham Green, Dave Thorpe, Martin Evans and Michael Bell for all their help in completing the doughnut project.



**Mary Hills**



**From an insurance claim statement:**

*"I pulled away from the side of the road, glanced at my mother-in-law and headed over the embankment"*



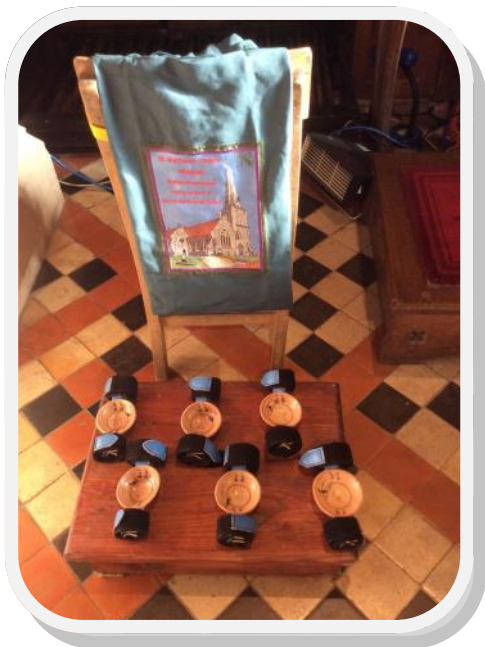
## Midgham's Muffles

Last September Midgham lost one of its oldest members of the community, Mrs Dorothy Collier, she was 90.

For her funeral the bellringers were asked if the bells could be rung muffled as the coffin arrived at the church porch. Suddenly there was a problem as nobody could find the muffles, a search was carried out but to no avail. Other churches have muffles but they are made to fit individual clappers. After a discussion with Rev Bevan and the family it was agreed to toll the tenor bell "open" and this was done ninety times.

After the service Mr Dereck Collier decided he would like to purchase a set of six muffles in memory of his mother, he had been a ringer himself in the past.

In January Mr Collier and Mr Stradling went up into the bell chamber and took measurements of the clappers which were duly sent to the manufacturers. Last month the new muffles arrived and Mr Collier and Mr Stradling painted the bell clappers red with a special sticky paint to stop the muffles sliding when fixed on.



The bellringers would like to thank Mr Collier for his most generous gift and all the work it entailed. The muffles are also kept in a beautiful bag with a picture of St Matthew's and a dedication to Mr Collier's parents. (Picture above).

The old muffles were finally found hanging in the belfry but in a very poor state.

It is hoped that the ringers will ring a quarter peal half muffled in memory of Mrs Dorothy Collier at some time in the future.

**Roy Pratley** (tower captain)

## **Vice Chairman's report**

Although a little late, as the branch AGM was way back in March and this is the first edition of the newsletter since, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome Martin Rice as the new chairman of the Newbury branch.

Martin takes over the role from outgoing chairman Richard Marshall and those of you who have been members for some years will know that Richard has been either vice chair and chairman for a very long time indeed!

During these years Richard has spent many hours attending officers' meetings, branch practices, socials and many more events. His generosity to the branch has been well beyond what was asked of him. During his time in office he presented the "Marshall Shield" that is awarded to novice teams at the striking competitions, provided liquid refreshments from his micro-brewery "Hermitage Ales", and sorted many a ringing-related problem or two. So on behalf of the branch I would like to take this opportunity to formally thank Richard for all that he's done for us in the Newbury branch. I know that Richard will still give his time to ringing, even if he is no longer a branch officer.

## **Yattendon and Hampstead Norreys News**

The good news is that after many months of waiting the new ropes finally arrived and were hastily fitted in time for the May branch practice. Also we took the opportunity to remove the 5<sup>th</sup>'s nylon clapper bush, bore it out by 0.15mm and replaced, so now we have a bell that will ring when the temperature rises above 18<sup>C</sup>. Next challenge is to sort out its odd strike.

We sadly lost stalwart ringer Stephen Vale after he suddenly died at home on the 4<sup>th</sup> July at the far too young age of 56. Steve was becoming very proficient at calling call changes and rang regularly at both Hampstead and Yattendon. He also attended practices at Beenham. As a Suffolk man, Steve was upset when the sallies for the new Yattendon ropes turned out to be in Norwich City colours.

Steve was head game keeper on the Eling Estate where his knowledge of the countryside was second to none. He also bred and trained Cocker spaniels. Steve will be greatly missed by his wife Diane, children and grandchildren and of course all of us who had the pleasure of knowing and ringing with him.

***Marcus Allum***



## EAST GARSTON BELLS

REMEMBER THE FALLEN  
1914-1918



<u>Name</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Regiment</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Battle</u>	<u>Buried/Commemorated</u>
Private B.A.C. Matthews		2nd Battalion, Royal Berkshire Regiment	25th December, 1914	Cambridge Hospital (diphtheria)	Cambridge City Cemetery, England
Private W E Wise	20	5th Battalion, Wiltshire Regiment	28th August, 1915	Gallipoli	Embarkation Pier Cemetery
Private Arthur Townsend	26	A Coy, 2nd Battalion Royal Berkshire Regiment	25th September, 1915	Loos	Ploegsteert Memorial
Private Frederick Townsend		1st Battalion, Royal Berkshire Regiment	26th June, 1916	Arras	Arras Memorial
Private Charles Bates	21	2nd/4th Battalion Royal Berkshire Regiment	19th July, 1916	Fromelles	Lavantie Military Cemetery, Le Gorgue
Private A T Rivers		2nd/4th Battalion Royal Berkshire Regiment	19th July, 1916	Fromelles	Lavantie Military Cemetery, Le Gorgue
Private C		2nd/4th Battalion Royal Berkshire Regiment	18th August, 1916	Fauquissart	La Gorgue Communal
Private S C A Smith		Machine Gun Corps	18th February, 1917	Miramount	Regina Trench Cemetery,
Private Arthur Bates	28	2nd/4th Battalion Royal Berkshire Regiment	1st April, 1917	Vermand	Vermand Communal Cem-
Private G Penton		1st/8th Battalio, Middlesex Regiment	9th April, 1917	Arras	London Cemetery, Neuville
Private W Fisher	19	2nd Battalion, South Wales Borders	21st November, 1917	Cambrai	Marcoing British Cemetery
Lieutenant Frederick George Waldron	26	Borden's Battery, Canadian Motor Machine Gun Brigade	24th March, 1918	Vimy Ridge	VIMY Memorial
Private Charles Abraham Shaw	19	B Company, 10th Battalion, Queen's Own (Royal West Kent Regiment)	31st July, 1918		Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery
Sherard Cowper-		Royal Flying Corps	14th October, 1918	Aerial Dogfight	
Serjeant S F Cullimore		2nd/4th Battalion Royal Berkshire Regiment	2nd November, 1918	Atres	Cross Roads Cemetery, Fontaine-Au-Bois
Private A Lewis		Essex Regiment (transferred to Labour-Corps)	4th March, 1919	Hounslow Hospital (pneumonia)	East Garston, All Saints Churchyard

In 2014 East Gaston Ringers decided that to honour the memory of the fallen from the village in the First World War they would ring muffled on the anniversary of the death of each man commemorated on the village War Memorial. The research of the date and place of each death had already been carried out by Mr David Knight who had for a previous village event took it upon himself to find out about and write about each individual. He had already published a limited addition of his findings and when approached was quite happy to provide the ringers with all the information they required. He also took it up on himself to publish a brief resume of the life and death of each person and display it on the railings of the war memorial and various other places around the village prior to each anniversary ring. The idea being that anyone listening to the muffled ring would hopefully bring to mind the person that was being rung for.

We meet at the designated time in the tower and before we ring Binyon's Lines are recited by Helen & Zoe Gay, this is then followed by a minutes silence. Helen & Zoe are the daughters of our ringers Nigel & Rebecca. Both girls have been taught to ring in Great Shefford but have not yet found the courage to ring East Garston

bells, we await that day.

Like many of my generation I have first hand experience of war veterans and have a great respect for all those that were involved in the two World Wars. Whilst each person is unique in their own special way, I have been involved in 2 rings which seem to me a bit more poignant. The first took place on 19th July, 2016, this ring was to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the death of 2 young men, Charles Bates and Arthur Rivers, the story is that they attended the village school together, joined up together & then both died on the same day, in the same battle. The second was when we rang on the 1st April, 2017, this was for Arthur Bates brother of the first mentioned Charles Bates. I can't imagine what their mother must have gone through, she was already a widow (not war related), which in those times must have been a struggle in itself and then she lost 2 sons in less than a year of each other. Makes you think, doesn't it?

By the time we finish our commemorative ringing programme we will have rung for 16 young men, they gave their lives for us & their country. Our first ring was on 25th December, 2014, this ring was not muffled due to it being Christmas day, the young man was Private Matthews & he died from Diphtheria in a hospital in Cambridge. Our last will be on the 4th March, 2019, this ring will be for Private Lewis who died of Pneumonia in a hospital in Cambridge and is the only lad named on the war memorial who was laid to rest in East Garston Churchyard.

It's an honour and a privilege to be able to ring in memory of these brave young men.

In the words of Binyon, WE WILL REMEMBER THEM

***Maureen Tarbox***



*A field of poppies near Stonehenge*

*7th July 2017*



## Branch 6 Bell Striking Competition

Midgham was the venue for this year's event and there were just two entries for the main competition, Bucklebury and Thatcham. It seems the Branch has yet to find the magic formula that brings in the entries by the dozen. However, those that took part and those that attended, had a pleasant evening at the "church on the hill", a lovely setting on a Summer's evening. Thatcham managed to field two teams for the main event while Bucklebury put on one call change team to try for the Marshall Shield plus one team for the main event. Mike Hopkins Till was judge for the evening and in his debrief, was most complimentary about all those who rang. Bucklebury's call change band, made up mostly of one family of novice ringers, gave a very good account of themselves, particularly on unfamiliar bells which are not the easiest to handle. The other three teams all made a good job of ringing the test piece (1 minutes rounds followed by 120 changes of a method). Apart from the ringing, a relaxed atmosphere prevailed in the evening sun, lubricated as in previous years, by Richard Marshall's homebrewed "Hocktide" beer.



### **The results are as follows:**

Bucklebury	Call change band	70% well struck rows
Bucklebury	Change ringing band	63 faults
Thatcham	Team B	53 faults
Thatcham	Team A	36 faults

So Bucklebury was awarded the Marshall Shield for the year and Thatcham goes on to represent the Branch at the Guild event on October 7th.

*Ed*

## Tower report – Newbury

I am very grateful to be supported by our local ringers and we usually manage to ring at least eight on a Sunday morning, often Grandsire Triples, sometimes Stedman Triples and occasionally Grandsire Caters, together with rounds and call changes. Practice nights tend to attract fewer numbers but this gives us the chance to get our newer members ringing Plain Bob Doubles, Stedman Doubles, treble to Grandsire Triples, treble to Bastow, etc. Visitors at this stage very welcome, as well as any other stage, of course.

As you may know, I like to experiment with techy things and have two innovations to mention.

I find it difficult to pick out the sound of the smaller bells when we are ringing 10, and thought it would be a good idea to install some loudspeakers to enhance the clarity of the sounds of the individual bells. I already have sensors attached to the sound bow of each bell. These generate an audio signal, but the low frequencies are less pronounced than the high; ideal, I thought for a clearer sound. I purchased five pairs of inexpensive PC speakers from Argos and five 'powerbanks' from Poundland. I cabled the system up, directly from bell one to the speaker behind the treble ringer, from bell two to the speaker behind the ringer of bell two, and so on. Looked impressive! (Shame I didn't take a photo.) Testing one bell at a time was also encouraging, with a nice 'ting' sound coming from the speaker behind me as well as the normal 'dong' from the bell itself.

When we rang all ten I could still hear the ting from the speaker behind me, but it didn't seem to bear any relationship to the normal sound of the bells as a whole ring. I couldn't hear the 'ting' coming from any of the other speakers, so couldn't fit my bell into the change any better than before. Very disappointing! All now removed.

I wonder if I added all the ting-sounds together and installed an induction-loop system, whether I could use my hearing-aids to pick out the sounds better...Will report back later!

The other gismo is to do with looking after the church clock. I have built some electronics to monitor the pendulum swinging to and fro, and measure how long it takes for the clock to tick/tock 1200 times, i.e. progress one 'clock-hour'. The electronics records the actual time taken for each of these 'clock-hours' over a period of a week, i.e. 160 pieces of data. I can download this data to my phone, which then displays the information as a bar graph, so I can see if the clock is tending to slow down or speed up. The puzzle I have now is to find out why it varies so much (+ or - 40ms) from hour to hour, even though the long-term stability is good.

We have new heaters. When I was installing them I found a note pencilled on the boarding saying that the existing heater was installed on such and such a date. Astonishingly, this was 53 years *to the day* that I found it. I added my own note for a future electrician to find...

**Martin**



2017 kicked off with our usual Tower Outing, that this year took us across into Wiltshire. As usual, a good mix of bells was on the agenda, along with a village pub for lunch. We started off with Steeple Ashton, a heavy six in a most imposing church considering the size of the village. Then on to Westbury, a heavy and challenging eight but very rewarding to ring. The Duke Pub in Bratton was a great choice for lunch and, although there was a good crowd of us, food was promptly served, hot, and most appetizing. After lunch, we went on to Edington Priory, a far from inspiring ten. A lovely setting though, and the walk across the roof to the belfry allowed us to enjoy the scenery. Edington is notable for its internal sound control where quilted padding is fixed to the ceiling in the ringing room to lower the sound volume and giving it the local nickname, "The Duvet". Quite difficult to ring and strike, some met their match there and the bells do sound much nicer outside than in, which I suppose is appropriate. Finally we went to Bratton, on a steep hillside in a deep valley, a nice country six to end the day. Thanks to Dave for a well organised and most enjoyable winter's day out in the country .



**From a Sunday sermon somewhere:**      *"I have good news and bad news. The good news is, we have enough money to pay for our roof repairs. The bad news is, it's still out there in your pockets."*





Our annual dinner this year was held at the Three Swans hotel in the High Street. Ideal for most as it didn't involve driving. Around 30 of us attended and the usual good company and good food was enjoyed by all.

A few months back, we were pleased to welcome Andrea and Maurice back into the fold after some years away from ringing. Their contribution has boosted our Sunday service band and we now regularly have all eight ringing, and, as an added bonus, their daughters Amelia and Jessica are now learning bell handling and progressing well. We

hope to see Jenny and Ursula back again soon, following long-term absences and are grateful to our loyal regulars, Rebecca, Mike, Mike & Margaret, Martin & Eleanor to name just some. As with most towers, our practices are varied depending on who turns up, which is never predictable. So some Wednesdays it is basic doubles and others, Surprise Major, but on Sunday Mornings when it matters most, we always give a good account of ourselves.



Each year, Hungerford holds its "Festival Fort-night", also known as HADCAF, which involves artistic, musical and recreational events around the town. This year we held an open evening in the tower to give an insight into our activities to members of the public, but also with recruitment in mind. The event, well organised by Minna, was popular with good attendance and was most enjoyable to those who came. All present had a go, and we shall see if, as in previous years, a new ringer is forthcoming.



For the past couple of years, St Lawrence's has held a flower festival in July. This year's theme was "your favourite poem" and Cath did an impressive arrangement on the theme of "Silver", a poem by Walter De La Mare.

*Have a great Summer everyone and don't forget to save those photos and tower stories ready for the Christmas edition*

**Mark Robins**