



Newbury Branch Newsletter

Summer 2018

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The copy deadline for the Christmas 2018 is Monday 17th December. Please send contributions by email as attachments, or on hard copy by post to the Editor: Mark Robins

mdrobins@hotmail.com

From the Chair

Who are the most important people in the branch? Well, *you* are, of course. So I hope to read about what you are doing in this issue of your newsletter. The newsletter doesn't have any reporters (although Mark knows quite a lot of what's going on) so we rely on you to keep everyone informed of what's going on by sending your tower news articles to the Editor.

It's good to see branch events being well supported. Hopefully you come along because you feel welcome, find that you get a chance to ring something useful, perhaps at a tower you don't often ring at, in an encouraging, appreciative atmosphere.

As you will read in the Ringing Master's report, Di Bridle has indicated she intends standing down from leading the ringing at branch events. I would like to take this opportunity to thank her for all the work she has done, especially in building the friendly ringing environment we enjoy at branch level.

Martin



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Di Bridle's Daytime Ringing Outings

These outings continue to prove popular with a good turnout on the day. Recent trips have included Burghclere and the Two Waterfalls pub, Yattendon and The Fox, Brightwalton and The Swan at Great Shefford and a bit more distant, Ber- rick Salome and The Chequers. Here are some images from those trips:



Pop-up Party

A regular feature of our monthly triples quarters, arranged and led by Ben Waller, is something to eat, home made sweets, cakes etc. So, with it being Christmas and all, how about a “pop—up party?” After our quarter of Battersea Bob Triples, we celebrated in style with mince pies, sausage rolls and cake, all washed down with some fizzy stuff. Very nice!

Ed



RINGING MASTER'S REPORT - JUNE 2018

The three practices held every month continue to attract a good representation of the Branch - the general practice held on the first Friday of the month is usually supported by at least a dozen members (and last month at East Garston we had twenty) with methods ranging from Grandsire to Surprise but, again, there were no ringers wanting just rounds and call changes. The joint Surprise practice with the Andover Branch has a minimum of twelve with the last practice attracting twenty ringers and methods ranging from Cambridge to spliced. The daytime ringing and pub outing is always a friendly session with people getting a chance to ring methods other than those rung at their home tower. As I book a table at a suitable pub I do get a bit twitchy as to whether I'll have enough people to make it worth while but there always seems to be a last minute rush!

During the Quarter Peal Week there were 19 performances including call changes at Aldermaston, one handbell quarter, a mini mini-ring quarter and there was also a quarter with 4 Allums ringing together. There were a number of firsts in the method and one first quarter peal.

The Newbury Branch entered two teams for the Branch 8 bell striking competition, one from Thatcham and one from the Branch as a whole and the Branch band came first - congratulations to all taking part.

On a personal note, Peter and I celebrated our Golden Wedding Anniversary and the actual day (Good Friday) was raining solidly and we had a very wet visit to London with some of the family. A couple of weeks later we had a small party with family, long standing friends and a few ringers at Esseborne Manor and that was a glorious sunny day.

I have decided not to stand again for the post of Ringing Master as I am spending more time babysitting/child minding and also age is catching up with me. So have a think about this role and who would like to do it. Alternatively I feel that there is scope for it to be split up with two or three people sharing this role.

Di

Jake's First Peal

On Sunday, 7th January, Jake rang his first peal with a band organised and conducted by Simon Edwards from Swindon. Congratulations and well done for success at first attempt. The band rang 5040 of Doubles in 12 methods. Jake rang the tenor.

The band:

1. George Vant
2. Simon Edwards
3. Joe Norton
4. Aaron Moulder
5. Isaac O'Shea
6. Jake Reid



Branch Quarter Peal Week—10 – 17 February 2018

The weather was kinder to us than it usually is this time of year and we were able to get about the Branch with ease and there were plenty of firsts together with valuable experience being gained by those wishing to advance. I personally enjoyed ringing at Newbury with our successful quarter of Zebedee Surprise Major. A Hungerford band had a mini-QP outing on the Saturday, partly to get Andrea and Maurice back into quarter peal ringing after nine years off with Grandsire Doubles at Speen and April Day at Shaw, but also just for a nice day out. Some of us also found out why the London named sister (rival?) method to ever popular Double Norwich Court Bob Major, Double **London** Court Bob Major, is so much less popular and seldom rung! Not nearly as easy or enjoyable as Double Norwich with long bits of hunting and not much to help you keep right but plenty of places where it is all too easy to go wrong! The Wallers were about pushing the usual boundaries with spliced TB minimus at Stanford Dingley and a quarter of Grandsire on their own “micro ring” with a tenor weighing a mighty 4/5 oz. The list of quarters rung and towers involved, says it all and a good week was had by those who took part.

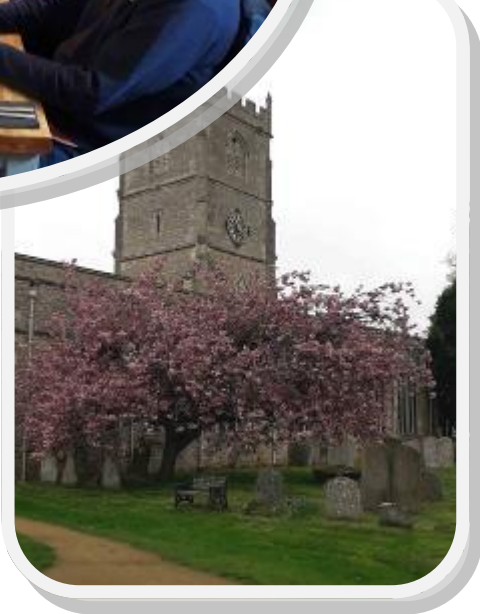


Mark Robins

| | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Bucklebury | 1260 Grandsire Triples |
| Thatcham | 1259 Grandsire Caters |
| Newbury | 1260 Grandsire Triples |
| Thatcham | 1282 Cambridge Surprise Royal |
| Stanford Dingley | 1296 Spliced TB Minimus (32 methods) |
| Thatcham (8 The Waverleys) | 1440 Kent TB Minor (in hand) |
| Hungerford | 1260 St Nicholas Bob Triples |
| Thatcham | 1260 Grandsire Doubles |
| Midgham | 1260 St Clements Bob Minor |
| Yattendon | 1280 Grandsire Doubles |
| Lambourn | 1260 Grandsire Doubles |
| Bucklebury | 1280 Double London Court Bob Major |
| Aldermaston | 20 minutes of Call Changes |
| Thatcham | 1282 Yorkshire Surprise Royal |
| Thatcham (Kennet Micro Ring) | 1260 Grandsire Doubles |
| Aldermaston | 1260 Bridge's Pleasure Bob Triples |
| Speen | 1260 Grandsire Doubles |
| Shaw | 1260 April Day Doubles |
| Newbury | 1280 Zebedee Surprise Major |

Branch Outing, June 10th

This year the outing, organised by John Kape, took the Branch across the border into Wiltshire on a wet day in May. The towers visited included Shrivenham, Highworth, Wanborough and Blunsdon, with the usual pub lunch. Here are some photos from that day.



Beenham

For some months we have been combining practices with the bands from Yattendon and Hampstead Norreys (the latter bells at present not safe to ring), alternating our Tuesdays between Beenham and Yattendon towers.

The publicity we put in the local newsletters about Ringing to Remember for the 100th anniversary of the 1918 armistice brought us 5 learners who have become regular members of the combined band and are progressing well, already two are ringing for Sunday service. We have naturally been focusing on giving the new starters as much ringing time as possible; their commitment and interest has re-energised the band, and practices have been great fun.

John Allum 1882 – 1918

My great-uncle John Allum was a bell ringer at Yattendon. He lived at Calves Lea Farm with his wife Agnes and daughter Phyllis. We know that his father George and his brother Maurice (my grandfather) were also Yattendon ringers, and my father Reg has their Guild certificates.

John was killed fighting in France on September 27th, 1918 less than 7 weeks before the Armistice, at the age of 36.

100 years later to the date, we will attempt a peal in his memory: at Yattendon, on the bells that he used to ring, with the band made up largely of Allums.

Marcus Allum



The Yattendon band on handbells, John Allum 3rd from left

Speen Report

No major developments to report, except that Gary Barber rang for his first wedding in May. It was quite an event, with ringing before and after, carefully choreographed with the procession of Morris dancers. By contrast, another of our number reported on a recent wedding elsewhere, which had no choir, no flowers, no order of service but they did have bells.

Mary Hills

"Its Bellringing Jim, but not as we know it".....or....

Bells on my travels.

Wherever you go in the world, there are bells, well that's what I've found anyway. During a short break holiday in Bruges I couldn't really miss them as they are a major feature of the old city, where right in the centre stands a huge tower, known locally as "The Belfry" unsurprisingly jammed full of bells, no less than 47 of them. They are rung using a massive carillon which is an engineering work of art in itself. The tower also houses many mediaeval documents and artifacts from its rich mercantile past and is well worth a visit for the impressive bells, carillon, history and stunning view from the top. Once you have been up the tower, you can go for a beer in this pub (as we did more than once).



Bells Abroad (cont) - Melbourne's Federation Bells

Latterly, we travelled to Melbourne, Victoria to visit my son and daughter in law. While there, I, of course, arranged a ring at one of the several conventional rings of bells in the city, and was made most welcome by the band at St Patricks, RC Cathedral, an imposing building with a nice ring of eight and a friendly band. Not far away though, is my featured ring. The Federation Bells. These are steel bells set outdoors in the park on tall supporting poles. They are rung by a chiming system which is controlled remotely by computer, ringing the pre-programmed set of changes or tune. They were installed and commissioned in 2002 to mark the centenary of the Federation of Australia from its member states. Have a look here for more information: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Federation_Bells



St Patrick's RC Cathedral and the Sunday service band



Mark Robins

Thatcham

The New Year came in with a bang with fourteen ringers in the belfry. We rang the Old Year out and the New Year in, followed with prosecco, soft drinks and mince pies.

Bill has been in the Royal Berkshire Hospital and Stockcross Nursing Home for many weeks and at long last has recently had a knee cap replacement. We are pleased to hear that he arrived home to recuperate on 27 June. However, he was having difficulty walking at that time. His daughter with all of her family were arriving from the USA that day so he would not be doing much visiting. We all wish him well for a good recovery.

John Kape's daughter has been unwell and John has been unable to come on his usual regular basis as he has been helping the family. Her condition is improving and we wish her and John well. John Robinson is not ringing at the moment due to back problems. Tony has had an operation and has not been ringing for four weeks but is now making a good recovery. Thanks to Rachel and John K (when able) for arranging the ringing in Tony's absence.



On a more cheerful note Janet has returned to the belfry with renewed vigour and her shoulder has improved sufficiently to ring a quarter peal and handbell peals. We are very pleased to see Ron Christopher back in the belfry too, looking much better.



Tuesday of Holy Week is the evening when the band has a major spring clean in the ringing room which even involves taking down the peal boards and polishing them. Only six valiant souls turned up, as seen in the picture, but the ringing room, stairs etc looked spick and span. The Guild Tower Maintenance Gold Award has been renewed for another two years. Thanks to Richard and his helpers who have carried out work on the bells and in the tower.



A number of quarter peals have been rung. Amanda rang her first quarter peal of Stedman conducted by Graham which was his first of Stedman as conductor!! The quarter peal was rung for St George's Day, the birth of HRH Prince Louis and a birthday compliment to Cameron Dunn Smith and Roy Pratley. Amanda has been awarded Employee of the Year for the South of England by Greene King. John Kape conducted his first quarter peal of triples as conductor for approximately 58 years. Congratulations to all of them.



We entered the Guild Eight Bell Striking Competition at Shrivensham on Spring Bank Holiday Monday, but did not complete the test piece. However, congratulations to the Newbury Branch Band for winning the Trophy.

Both Whites and Taylors have carried out inspections on the bells. Whites report has already been received and Taylors is expected shortly.

Sue Smith

Branch 6 Bell Striking Competition

On a warm summer's evening, where better could you spend it than in the grounds of Midgham church at the top of the hill, listening to the bells and drinking free beer? Well, others thought the same and we had quite a good turnout on the day. The rules regarding the Branch competition had been relaxed to encourage entries and you just had to turn up with a band and ring 120 of Grandsire. So, four teams duly took part, Thatcham, Hungerford, Newbury and a scratch band. Initially it wasn't intended to mark the ringing, just assess which band was best to go on to the Guild competition in October, but it was felt that some marking ought to take place after all, and Di then did the honours with the following results:

- 1st Thatcham
- 2nd Newbury
- 3rd Scratch band
- 4th Hungerford



This year we also reviewed the reasons for awarding the Marshall Shield, which previously went to the best novice team at the Striking Competition. This year it was decided to take a different approach, and it was awarded to Amanda Marchant and the Lambourn ringers. The best way to describe the reasons for awarding it, is to publish the citation nominating Amanda and the Lambourn Band. Here it is:

"I would like to nominate Amanda Marchant and the Lambourn Branch Tower for the Marshall Shield. The team led by Amanda have raised approximately £14000 in less than a year (this includes grants) to enable them to refurbish the ringing chamber and carry out essential maintenance on the bells.

Work on the ringing chamber has been started and work on the bells will start I believe early next year.

Amanda is a very enthusiastic ringer and promotes the band whenever & wherever she can. She keeps the tower clean, enhances the walls with poster displays & generally makes the tower welcoming.

The band is a very friendly one and the members never stop trying. They always muster enough people to ring for Sunday service and special occasions.

Visitors are always made welcome and it has been known for visiting bands to be supplied with tea & cake.

I can't really praise them enough, they are a lovely band and what they lack in skill (all being comparatively new to ringing) they make up with enthusiasm and determination.

Maureen"

Says it all.....**Ed**



Editors Notes:

Battle's Over—Centenary of the end of The First World War—Ringin' Remembers

Don't forget to get your plans in place for this national event. Here is an extract of the document announcing this nationally:

“On 11 November 1918 the ringing of church bells erupted spontaneously across the country, as an outpouring of relief that the first World War had finally come to an end. Just after the war, the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers wrote to all bell towers to compile the Roll of Honour, tragically this identified that 1400 bell ringers lost their lives as a result of that war.



On 11 November 2018, 100 years since Armistice, bells will again ring out in unison from churches and cathedrals in villages, towns and cities across the country. The vast majority of the UK's 5,000 ringable towers are expected to take part in the event, ringing more sombre music in the morning, then joyously in the afternoon and again shortly after 7pm, as a chain of 1,000 beacons are lit throughout the UK. Big Ben will also strike at 11am to mark the centenary. The centenary will also be commemorated with the recruitment of 1,400 new bell ringers in honour of the same number who lost their lives during the First World War. The campaign to recruit bell ringers, 'Ringin' Remembers', will keep this traditional British art alive in memory of the 1,400 who lost their lives – linking together past, present and future as a fitting tribute to the heroic men and women who sacrificed so much for the freedoms we enjoy today.”

GDPR

The Branch policy, explanation and questionnaire on this subject went out at the end of May and thank you to all those who replied. Alas, the replies amount to only about a third of those canvassed by email, so further action is going to be needed. My next move will be to give a summary to Tower Correspondents of those who have yet to reply and include non-ringing 200 Club members too, asking them to elicit responses from the remainder. It is hoped that consent (or otherwise) will be forthcoming from all those in the Branch and that we can continue as before with communications etc.

Just in case they have been deleted, here are the four GDPR questions again:

1. Are you happy to receive the Branch Newsletter?
2. Are you happy with your photo appearing in newsletters (e.g. report of Branch event)?
3. Are you happy for your name to appear in the Newsletter (e.g. winner of 200 club prize)?
4. Are you happy to receive information/reminders about Branch/Guild events?

**If you have already responded and given me your answers to these questions, then thank you.
If you have yet to reply, then please do as soon as you can.**

Ed

Tower report – Newbury

We continue to have quite reasonable numbers on Sunday mornings – usually enough to ring all 10 bells, sometimes to Grandsire. Our two newest members continue to be very supportive, and we have two brand new recruits, who will hopefully soon join us for service ringing.

We have been in discussion with St Nicolas Church authorities in respect of insurance. This has raised questions such as whether we are actually insured by the PCC for what we do and whether the PCC is insured for public liability when other ringers come to our tower. Complications arise concerning insurance provided by the ODG, but this seems to be restricted to Guild events. Anyway, we are insured, thankfully. The term ‘authorised volunteers’ seems to be crucial in this respect. Straightforwardly, we ringers are authorised by the PCC as volunteer ringers for church services, and also for our practices. The idea seems to extend to visiting bands as well as long as they are officially entered into the church booking system. Discussions are ongoing as to whether ringers need to ‘sign in’ each time we meet, or whether some simpler system can be devised to meet the needs of the insurers. Exciting stuff!

Martin

Innovative ideas to make outings even more fun—part 1

On a recent outing, someone thought it would be fun to hold a

“dirtiest car on the outing competition”

This was the winner.

Ed



Ever heard of CCCBR, CRAG, CRO, CoRe? (Update)

In the previous newsletter I outlined events aimed at shaking up the national body that oversees bell-ringing, the Central Council of Church Bell-Ringers.

Well, the proposed reforms were voted in with a very substantial (85%) majority at the AGM in May.

It is not possible to say what effect this will have on our ringing, at Guild, Branch or tower level, but the mission statement of the new CCCBR is “To be the strategic leader and public voice of the ringing community, the arbiter of standards, and to promote an environment where ringing can flourish.” I’m not a great fan of mission statements as a general rule, but at least this has meaning, and we can all endorse the sentiment that ringing should flourish.

The six objectives of the new CCCBR are:

- To recruit and develop new learners and new leaders
- To engage maturely with the Church and other relevant stakeholders
- To continue to raise positive public awareness of ringing
- To celebrate and promote the historical legacy of ringing
- To promote excellence in standards
- To increase direct participation in the central ringing organisation’s activities



These seem to me to be quite relevant to my day-to-day ringing, and perhaps the CCCBR really will help me recruit new learners; will advise on how to raise positive public awareness of ringing, etc. Indeed, the Ringing Remembers project has already achieved both of these aims to some extent.

The last of the six aims means that any ringer can participate in the work of the CCCBR. If you think you could help ‘develop support mechanisms for ringers and bands of all abilities’ then the Volunteer and Leadership workgroup is for you. (Lucy Hopkins Till (Kintbury ringer) can tell you more about this workgroup since she is a member.) If you understand what ‘To encourage the adoption of complementary communications strategies by ringing societies’ means then join the Communications and Marketing workgroup. Perhaps you need advice on looking after bells: ask the Stewardship and Management workgroup for help. If you love the historical aspects of ringing then the Historical and Archive workgroup needs you. Can you ‘provide guidance on methods, compositions and aspects of ringing theory’? Join the Technical and Taxonomy workgroup, led by Graham John (Thatcham). The quotes given above are just snippets of the published objectives of the five workgroups, by the way: if you want more browse the CCCBR website under <https://cccbr.org.uk/about/reform/strategic-objectives/>

I think it all looks quite positive. It will be interesting to see if the workgroups can deliver at least some of the stated aims and objectives.

Martin Rice

How many ladies does it take to hold the ladder?

This question was asked at Hungerford recently, when the Steeple Keeper needed to sort out a problem with the rope guide.

The answer is 3, as illustrated in the trial report photo.

Ed



Guild 8 Bell Striking Competition



This year's competition was to be held at St Andrew's Shrivensham and with the test piece being a 240 of Double Norwich Court Bob Major, I thought it would be well within our grasp, and that a branch band ought to be forthcoming which indeed it was, and Thatcham fielded a tower team as well. The Branch team were drawn from three towers (not intentional) and as we had not rung together as a band, nor felt fully competent with the method, it was decided to have a couple of practice sessions just to be sure that we could perform as desired on the day. First practice at Bucklebury had sporadic successes with one pass through the test piece without errors, but other attempts always seeming

to fail because of mistakes. If we could get the method right, I was sure the striking would follow, but the next practice session at Hungerford on the eve of the competition, was just as beset with mistakes and not really at any particular place, tricky bit, calls or anything, just people randomly going wrong! "Ah well", we said, "lets just turn up anyway and maybe we will do ok and not come last". So, on a rather warm day, we duly turned up at Shrivensham and went for a pre-comp cold drink at the pub over the road and then, strikingly refreshed and drawn to ring first, we headed up the (not easy) stairs to do our stuff. Well, after all the gloom and despondency during the practices, the band came up trumps just when it counted and we had a clear run through the test piece with just one slight trip that was recovered in a couple of blows. The bells aren't very clear inside the church, so it wasn't easy to assess the rest of the competition unless standing outside and we had no idea really how the other teams had got on, nor were we aware at the time, that Thatcham hadn't completed their test piece. Anyway, the judges were listening more intently than we were and, following their deliberations, gave a detailed debrief with the following results:

| | | |
|-----------|--------------|----------------|
| 1st place | Newbury | 54 faults |
| 2nd place | Tilehurst | 56 faults |
| 3rd place | Banbury | 58 faults |
| 4th place | High Wycombe | 91 faults |
| 5th place | Thatcham | didn't finish. |

I wish I'd taken a picture of our faces when we were declared winners; shock, amazement, disbelief? Anyway, a most unexpected but excellent result and congratulations to the band.



Mark Robins



The past six months have been a very busy, exciting and challenging few months indeed for the Hungerford Ringers...

The Hungerford Christmas Outing last year, was organised by our newest, albeit returning recruit Andrea, who with her family we have all welcomed back with open arms! Andrea's eldest daughter Amelia is also rapidly becoming a valued and competent member of our band.



It was an interesting day indeed as the snow lay all around (not deep or crisp, but quite even). As we all set off to the Cotswolds for a ringing frenzy we were joined by our usual ringing friends, with their wide mixture of talents and capabilities! We were very happy to be joined on this occasion again by our great friends Phil & Bini Miles as well as Rebecca's parents, the whole Hurst family, Bryan Castle from Marlborough, Mike Clark from Swindon and Steven Hall, who normally rings at Garlickhythe in London, as well as many others.

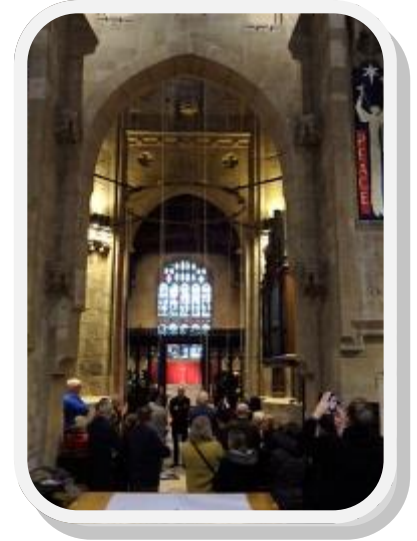
Starting at Barnsley (no not Yorkshire!) we were treated to a lovely "almost modern" 4 cwt Whitechapel ring of six, all rehung in 1987 but still left with its original 4 cast by lo-

cal founder Edward Neale in 1677!

We then moved on to Bibury, once described by William Morris (who?) as "the most beautiful village in England". We rang here on one of the few original Abraham Rudhall sixes cast in 1723 at 9 cwt, rehung by Taylors in 1896 and then given the blessing of ball bearing by Whites in 1997. A nice ring but rather difficult to hear in the ringing chamber I remember!



We all then enjoyed a very social lunch at the Catherine Wheel in Bibury where old friends and new acquaintances could mingle over good food and ale (or whatever else was their tippie) and catch up on recent events and memories, good and bad! Past and present.



Our third tower of the day was to be Coln St. Aldwyn, another Rudhalls 6 augmented by Mears in 1865 and rehung by Whites in 1998 making a 7 cwt 8 that went well and sounded very nice to boot.

Finally, we were faced with the challenge of the day, ringing at the Fairford 17cwt 8, with its extraordinarily long draft, multiple hanging rope guides, which, once mastered, produce a most beautiful sound indeed!! Well, we wrestled and wrangled, missed sallies and tangled with our tail ends, but all had a ring of one sort or another and I think we did them justice for all that.

The Hungerford Bellringers AGM was held in the tower on January 24th, where the main event was that we were very pleased and excited to install Andrea Barletta as our Tower Captain. Mark had requested to stand down after many years sterling service, putting up with all our ringing problems, mistakes, bad striking etc., which I should say he did wonders in improving over those years. All our grateful thanks go to Mark for that.

Our **Ringers Dinner** this year was competently organised by Minna Mackenzie, as we congregated at The Bella Vita Italian restaurant on Wednesday 14th March, for an evening of dining, with a few speeches. A good time was had by all with good food and much liquid refreshment as we were all being treated to a private room. Andrea gave her first after dinner speech as our new Tower Captain and Mark Robins wished her well as he handed over the role he has held with dedication for 14 years.

We were also very happy to be joined by many of Hungerford's long-suffering bellringing friends from around the area, without whose help patience and endurance, would leave our practices certainly more challenging, or maybe less challenging...depending on your viewpoint!! Good food and excellent company made the Hungerford Annual Dinner a great success again this year.

Our thanks go to Minna, for arranging the event and to all friends of Hungerford tower who attended.



Quarter Peal Week saw two quarter peals rung successfully for Maurice at Speen and Shaw, Andrea ringing St. Nicholas at Hungerford and local ringer Jeanne successfully completed a quarter peal of Grandsire Doubles on the treble at Lambourn.

Practices continue to be well supported by local ringers, friends and visitors from other local towns and villages, who amazingly put up with all our good days, bad days, foibles and quirks and we are so very grateful for their valuable contribution. It is because of these visitors that we are all able to learn and ring such methods and Yorkshire Surprise, Double Norwich and St Nicholas Bob Triples and can look forward to new challenges almost weekly!

A **Weekend Outing** is currently in the organisation phase by our resident ringing guru and arch quarter peal ringer Mark, to be set in and around Worcester on the weekend of 16th September...So all our long-suffering ringing friends and cohorts should reserve this date immediately as another amazing event in the Hungerford Calendar unfolds...Watch this space.

David Thorpe & Cath Fittell

Thank you to all who have contributed to this newsletter.

Please send me your ringing photos, outing memories, ringing experiences, achievements and anything else vaguely related to bells and Branch activities, to be published in this year's Christmas edition. After all, it is only a newsletter if it contains.....news.

Have a good summer

Mark Robins—Editor