



Newbury Branch Newsletter

Summer 2019

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The copy deadline for the Christmas 2019 is Monday 16th 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

I am pleased to report that although there have been some significant changes within the Branch, the business of ringing continues in a very positive manner.

Although no single person now has the title 'Ringing Master' the role appears to have settled down successfully, being shared out between Marcus Allum, who organises the first Friday practices, Mike Hopkins Till, who runs the second Friday Surprise practices, and Sue Smith, who organises the daytime mini-outings. My thanks go to all. These events are most enjoyable, friendly affairs, with something for everyone. There is a loyal band of regulars who come along, but it would be lovely to welcome more branch members to these events. Go on: ring at a new tower, ring something you haven't managed before, see what happens in different parts of the Newbury Branch.

The decision made at the Branch AGM to use some of the funds that have built up over the years for worthy bell-ringing causes has been acted upon, with a grant of £500 having been made to the Lambourn restoration effort. Hopefully the formidable fund-raising effort organised by the local Lambourn band will soon reach its target figure, and allow the present pause in the work to be changed to 'go'.



Martin

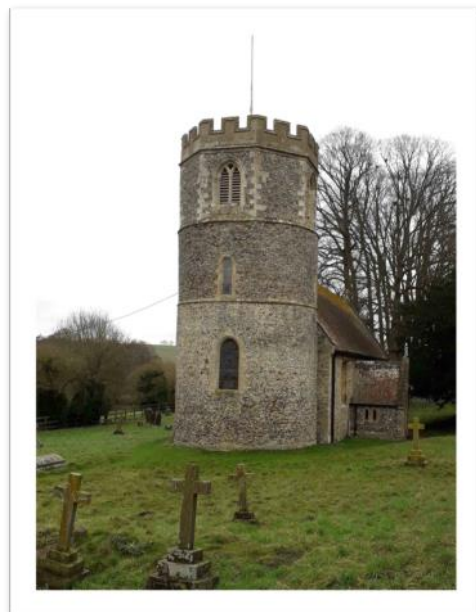
Officers 2018/2019

Chairman:	Martin Rice	01635 30709	jmartinrice@gmail.com
Vice Chair:	Marcus Allum	01635 204044	marcusallum@aol.com
Ringing Masters:	Mike Hopkins Till	01256 350718	mike.mktill@gmail.com
	Marcus Allum	01189 714446	marcusallum@aol.com
	Sue Smith	01189 844966	suesmithmrsad@waitrose.com
Webmaster	Julia Deady	01635 528482	julia.deady@gmail.com
Secretary:	Mark Robins	07759 680054	mdrobins@hotmail.com
Treasurer:	Rebecca Browning	01635 31983	rebeccabrowning@hotmail.co.uk
Newsletter Editor:	Mark Robins	01488 683645/07759 680054	mdrobins@hotmail.com
200 Club:	Cath Fittell	01488 682378	cfitell@hotmail.com
Guild Rep	Di Bridle	01635 868370	dibridle@aol.com
Training/Guild Rep	Lucy Hopkins Till	01256 350718/0766 833004	lucy.pahopkins@me.com

Midweek Group Ringing Outings

I expect most of you know by now that I have taken on the organising of the Midweek Group from Di Bridle. The meetings are held, in the day, once a month and we visit a church, mostly outside of the Branch, for some ringing and go to a pub for lunch afterwards.

We rang at Speen in February and this month, June, we went into the sticks to ring at East Woodhay in Hampshire. The practices were set up originally to help branch members to ring methods which they are unable to ring in their own Churches.



Please email me if you would like to be placed on the list for details of these practices.

I am Sue Smith and ring at Thatcham. My email address is

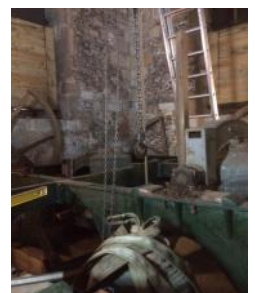
suesmithmrsad@waitrose.com

Sue Smith

Lambourn Bells—Restoration Work

Back in January, Lambourn had Nicholson's Engineering (Bellhangers) in to commence the planned work on the bells and, to keep costs down, it is customary to use local volunteer help for the non-skilled lifting and shifting type of work. Having never been involved in such a project, I volunteered as did a few others from the area and we set to work under the supervision of Tim, the Nicholson's engineer. The task was to lower each bell from its headstock onto steel H section supports with wooden pads, resting on the lower part of the frame and to remove the headstocks so that the bell crowns could be inspected for cracks and so that new resin pads could be moulded, to replace the old wooden ones. This work was heavier and more physical than I expected and mostly working at significant height as well. Tools and equipment had to be lifted from the church floor right through the hatches and into the belfry, a height of about 60 or 70 feet, and then down again afterwards. Subsequent inspections of the bells have found cracks in four of them that will need specialist repair (Soundweld), and they will have to be removed and taken away for that work, but not until funds are available and of course, Lambourn's formidable fundraising team is now hard at work to secure the necessary funding.

Here are a few pictures of the work in progress back in January.



Lambourn—continued:

Apparently, the cracks in the bell crowns are often caused by the left over stumps of cast-in iron crown staples rusting and expanding inside the bell crown. These are usually removed as part of the repair process, prior to the specialised welding work being carried out.

Another problem caused by rust, not at Lambourn in particular but many towers, results from the bells being left up for long periods (we're talking years or even decades). Rain water and/or condensation can run down the inside of the bell and puddle in the bottom, finding its way down the bolt holes and causing the bolts to rust, reducing the diameter of the loadbearing shaft of the bolt. A bell exerts up to three times it's static weight on it's fittings as dynamic force when it swings, so clearly they have to retain their design strength and must be replaced.



An example of a rusted headstock bolt

In Aid of Lambourn Bells Restoration

Bell Hanging Basket Brackets

Suitable for 16" – 18" Baskets

Also very nice for hanging outside lanterns or bird feeders

£15.00 each

(P & P £5.00 for quantities 1-3 Brackets, £10.00 for quantities 4-20,
Free delivery for Newbury Branch Members)



Maureen's excellent plant hangers, sold in aid of Lambourn's bell fund:

To place an order please contact
maureen.velvick@outlook.com or
amanda99cats@hotmail.co.uk

With grateful thanks to CY Sheet Metal Ltd

Mark Robins

Branch Quarter Peal Week—9th – 17th February 2019

The Tenth Newbury Branch Quarter Peal Week took place in February as in previous years, and was quite a successful one. The aims of this well established annual event are to ring quarters in as many local towers as possible while raising the profile of ringing in the Newbury area. But possibly the most important aim is to provide opportunities for ringers to progress, one that has been upheld very well this week. The number of participating towers, or quarters rung successfully, was down on previous years, but those that were rung, were mostly for 'first timers' in various ways. A number of quarters were lost but some of those were quite ambitious and others possibly shouldn't have been, with standard methods being rung by strong bands, but the 12 successes listed, made the week a success nonetheless. Firsts in method, first quarter, one in hand, plus some novice call changes and one newly named method, all contributed to the week. The Branch Dinner, held on the Saturday, was an enjoyable and sociable event where the week's proceedings were reflected on. So, although fewer quarters were rung and less towers were involved, the achievements made for another worthwhile quarter peal week.



Quarters and other performances during the week:

Aldermaston	Grandsire Doubles	
Beenham	Call Changes	First for Ann Tong
Hungerford	Stedman Triples	
Beenham	Grandsire Doubles	First quarter for Richard Keene
Chieveley	Chieveley Bob Triples	First quarter in method
Thatcham	Kent Treble Bob Minor	In hand
Thatcham	Swindon Surprise Royal	
East Ilsley	Rutland Surprise Major	First in method for Andrea Barletta
Speen	Call Changes	
Hungerford	Plain Bob Doubles	First quarter at first attempt for Amelia Barletta
Great Shefford	Plain Bob Minor	First in method for Philippa Phelps
Hungerford	Single Oxford Bob Triples	First in method for Ursula Osmond

Midgham

On Sunday 23rd June, Midgham celebrated 150years Service. Before service six ringers rang a selection of Grandshire Doubles. The band was John Manley, Diana and Peter Bridle, Diana Hibberd, Angela Brown and Roy Pratley.



Shaw

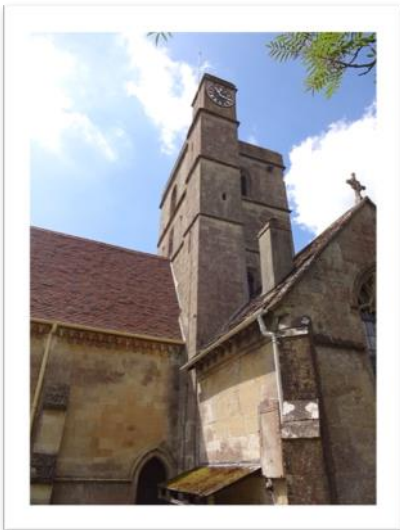
This year at Shaw Church there are only two Weddings booked in Aug and Sept. This meant that the bells were not used enough, so in January the church decided to ring at four church services and any other requests. The first was Ash Wednesday. The second was on Maundy Thursday.

As far as I know this ring on Thursday could be the first time in many years for this occasion. The ringers were Roy, Amanda, Angela, Ros, Chris and Sue. There are two more ringing events coming up, Pentecost and Harvest Festival.

Following the big fire at Notre Dame in Paris, The Archbishops of Canterbury and York asked if bells could be tolled at 7pm. This was done by Sue Gore for 7 minutes.

Roy Pratley

Branch Outing, June 10th

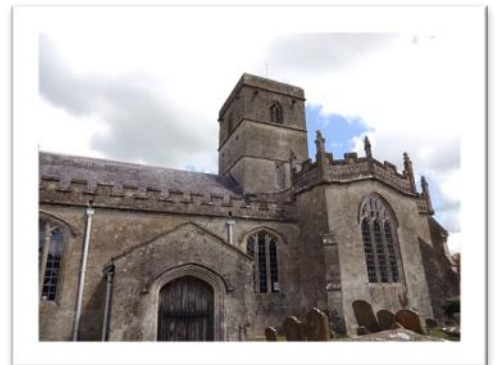


Just a thought: I wonder what the basic ingredients are for a memorable (note the word memorable) outing. Well, my check list could be:

1. *Some really nice bells*
2. *Some really awful bells*
3. *A very good pub lunch*
4. *A lockout.*

So, on that basis, this year's outing, "**A Wiltshire Wander**", was a great success. We managed to pick a Saturday when there were at least six weddings in the Branch along with Bucklebury's summer fete which involved ringing. So, understandably, we were a bit thin on the ground.

First tower was Bishops Cannings, a fine ring of eight, where we rang some very respectable Grandsire, Stedman, Yorkshire et al, but came to grief when Double Norwich was attempted. Next up was All Cannings, a pleasant country six, where we also rang some nice doubles and minor. The challenge set at this tower, was to get the 2nd to strike properly as it was extremely odd struck. Then on to the Kings Arms for a grand ringers lunch which was to a high standard and served promptly, allowing desserts to be indulged for most. The



third tower of the day was due to be Marden, but we were cancelled at short notice owing to urgent roof repairs becoming necessary. So, we went to Chirton instead. Not an easy ring by any means, and rarely rung we were told. But once they loosened up a bit, and we found out how to make the ropes behave themselves, we had some decent ringing. Next tower was a treat by comparison, Market Lavington. A chancel ring with a long draft, but evenly struck, well behaved and a delight to ring. Our final tower of the day was St John's, Devizes, where we had our lock-out. Undeterred, a few phone calls soon resulted in a key appearing and we ended the day with some Grandsire and Plain Bob Major, finally using up any dregs of energy left among those present.



<- Lockout

Key arriving ->

Mark Robins



200 Club

In January 1976 The Central Council asked each Branch to organise a new fund raising scheme, for the repair and maintenance of Church Bells. The Newbury Branch formed a Committee and The 200 Club was launched.

The Branch Newsletter dated October 1979 (Number 31) shows that in August of that year, one lucky winner, J Martin Rice won 25 pence!

Since 2002, £5710 has been sent to The Oxford Diocesan Guild Bell Fund.

Leaping forward 43 years, the prizes, which are drawn quarterly at the Branch practices are now:

1st prize: £50 and 2nd prize: £25

At the Christmas Draw there are three prizes £100, £60 and £30.

This year we have 168 members. It would be quite an achievement if next year we could reach the original target of 200.

The fund is as important in 2019 as it was at the start, so THANK YOU to all our loyal members and may the 200 Club continue for many years to come.

Cath Fittell



Lambourn

The year got off to a great start with our scheduled maintenance work starting in January. As the bells were being dismantled we discovered that four of our bells were cracked and required weld repair. Our fundraising efforts to find an additional £20,000 is continuing and I am pleased to report that we have nearly reached our goal.

We have received some very generous donations of money and assistance both local and from the branch with this project and are extremely grateful to Maureen Velvik (East Garston and Lambourn Ringer) and CY Sheet Metal of Bone Lane Newbury for the now famous Bell Hanging Basket Brackets. Wow!!! What an amazing response from the local and wider bell ringing community with over 300 sold to date and orders shipped as far away as New Zealand.

Currently the work is starting to install the lifting beams required to remove the bells from tower and we hope to be back ringing in time for Christmas.



Amanda Marchant

HM The Queen attends funeral at Highclere

On the morning of 25th April, five Newbury Branch ringers rang for the funeral of Jeanie, Countess of Carnarvon. This is a photo of The Queen arriving for the funeral.

Lucy Hopkins Till



Mike and Lucy's Stained Glass Windows



Some time back, our front door window got smashed so we had the idea to commission Mark Brock to make a bespoke stained glass replacement for us. We designed it collaboratively and he installed it yesterday. We are absolutely thrilled with it ! Unfortunately the photos don't do it justice



Lucy Hopkins Till



Roundels after soldering - these were made using the copper foil technique (as used by Louis Comfort Tiffany) and then built into the overall leaded panels:



Some pictures, taken during their creation

A completed panel on bench just before soldering

Mark Brock

Thatcham

The ringing for the New Year was well supported and we were very pleased to see Rob Backhouse attending again this year. After ringing in the New Year we drank prosecco and ate mince pies.

After our practice on 5 March we held our Annual Tower Meeting. John Kape did not wish to stand again as Deputy Tower Captain. Tony Smith thanked him very much for all the work he had done covering for him and assisting with various duties. Rachel Backhouse agreed to be the new Deputy Tower Captain for which Tony thanked her. In any other business, Graham John told the meeting that this year marked the 25th anniversary of a significant peal at St Mary's Thatcham. On the 19 November 1994, a record length peal of 10,440 changes of Wootton Rivers Surprise Royal was rung in 5 hours 59 minutes and our regular visiting friend, Peter Bridle, rang the tenor. Wootton Rivers is possibly, the most difficult Royal method. Graham proposed that we have a peal board made up to celebrate this excellent achievement, and this was enthusiastically agreed by our members.



Bill Butler is now ringing regularly and manages to climb the stairs with the aid of the rope which is provided to help people ascending and descending the tower. Rosemary has been struggling with walking and at one time could not ring at all. Thankfully she is slowly recovering and is ringing again.

Practices and Sunday ringing are well attended with rounds and call changes to surprise major and surprise royal being rung. The special methods are still popular with a different surprise major method and surprise royal being introduced nearly each month and are being enthusiastically rung by our band and visitors.



In quarter peal week we rang one quarter peal, Swindon Surprise Royal, and eight quarter peals in the half year. One was rung to mark the Golden Wedding Anniversary of Roy and Josephine Pratley on 5 April – congratulations to them. On St George's Day a quarter peal of Cambridge Surprise Major was rung as an 18th Birthday Compliment to Cameron D Smith, Birthday Compliment to Roy Pratley and for the Anniversary of the death of Mark Robin's Father.

The Archbishop of Canterbury requested that bells should be rung for Notre Dame de Paris on 18 April and Mark Backhouse tolled the tenor for seven minutes on that day to mark solidarity with the French people after the fire at Notre Dame.

A number of the items proposed by the Bell Hangers in their reports last year have now been carried out by the local ringers. Because of this we are now seeking comparable quotations for the outstanding items from both Taylors and Whites.



In November 2018, at a special tower meeting, we agreed to request the PCC to obtain a faculty to install air conditioning in the ringing room, which would be paid for from the Tower Fund. We had hoped that we would have air conditioning installed for summer 2019. The initial process has taken much longer than we anticipated. Currently we are awaiting confirmation from the PCC that all necessary information has been sent to the Diocese to enable the Diocese to issue the 28 day Public Consultation Notice. We hope that the installation should be completed for Summer 2020 once the Faculty has been granted.

Sue Smith

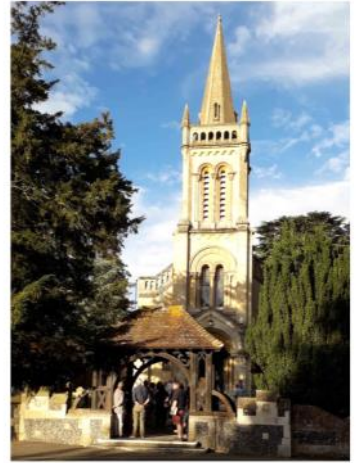
Branch 6 Bell Striking Competition

The bells of St Mary's, Shaw proved quite tricky to master, but five teams had a go. It was a lovely summer evening. Teams awaiting their turn were able to enjoy picnics in the churchyard whilst Tim Pink and Helen Piper judged the ringing. It was great to see this event well-supported with members from Beenham, Bucklebury, Lambourn, Newbury, Speen, Thatcham and Yattendon attending.



Results

Beenham 87
Newbury 67
Bucklebury 26
Thatcham Tigers 20
Thatcham Lions 25



So Thatcham won with just 20 faults and will therefore represent the Branch at the Guild 6-bell competition, to be held at Chalfont St Peter on 5th October. We wish them the very best.



Marshall Shield

The change in the aim of the Marshall Shield has resulted in Lambourn receiving the first of the new awards. It was given for their fund-raising and restoration efforts. The award this year has gone to Beenham and Yattendon for the highly successful recruitment effort, with nine new ringers: great effort by Tessa and Marcus and the bands. More details of the aims of this scheme and recipients of the award are on the bellsnearnewbury website.



Martin

Newbury

As ever, I am very grateful to all the tower members (and occasional visitors) at St Nic's who come along loyally on Sunday mornings to ring. It is also pleasing that the Monday evening practices are well attended, despite difficulties with parking sometimes. (If you do come along and cannot park, there is space available at the solicitors, Coffin Mew, just a couple of hundred metres away in Oddfellows Road.)

We rang in the New Year after a splendid supper provided by Eleanor, and with contributions from tower members.



We lost two quarters for quarter peal week, but salvaged the Grandsire Triples a few days later, with Lorraine ringing her first on the treble. We rang a satisfying quarter of Stedman Caters (for my 70th birthday) at the end of March.

Controversially, we decided not to ring for the Notre Dame fire. When I advised the church office what we intended, they said they knew nothing of the call from the archbishops. You may recall that huge sums of money were being pledged, and we felt that it was all a bit OTT!

Martin

Bucklebury

With the help of our regular visitors, we have been able to practice regularly. A couple of times we've met with just bare numbers, so rang a quarter instead. This has been quite instructive, some of us ringing doubles methods we've not rung for ages, if at all, a quarter for Chris Maslen to consolidate Beverley Surprise and, just for a change, some St. Clement's minor. We now have three young ladies at various stages of learning: Molly and Naomi plain hunting, and our newest learner, Poppy, doing well at call changes.

Bucklebury village put on a 'Best of Bucklebury' weekend and we were asked to do some ringing on the Saturday for the event. Unfortunately, the weekend clashed with the Branch outing, so my first thoughts of ringing a quarter had to be abandoned in favour of some more general ringing (billed as 'a selection of pieces on 6 and 8 bells') followed by opening up the tower and letting visitors go up and see the bells. We also put up a display in the church, which attracted quite some attention from people viewing the church's flower festival. I had intended to let interested visitors have a little go at chiming or ringing a bell, but with the numbers of people in the bell chamber looking at the bells, this wasn't practical. Only time will tell if this activity means any new recruits come forward.

I'd like to extend my thanks to all who turn up on a Thursday night, especially the visitors. Having three young learners, I unashamedly try to give them as much rope time as I can - after all they are the future of ringing - but it inevitably means loads of rounds, call changes and plain hunt for the more experienced. I really appreciate the time and patience they put in for this, and try to reward them with something to push their own boundaries. There's always something new to learn in the world of ringing!

John Durham

Bellringers commemorate The King's Cup and Peace Regatta at Henley on Thames

In July 1919, following the end of hostilities, the Henley Regatta resumed which, on that occasion was known as The Peace Regatta. At that time there were troops from many nations still billeted in UK prior to being demobbed and repatriated, so, at the Regatta, six nations put in military teams to compete for The King's Cup; Australia, Canada, New Zealand, France, USA and UK all competed and Australia won. Last Friday 5th July marked the centenary of this event which was to be commemorated by the race being rerun as part of the Henley Regatta, this time by armed forces teams from the original six nations plus Germany and The Netherlands. Further information can be found at

<https://www.kingscup.org/>

The three Armed Forces Bellringing Guilds decided to mark this event by attempting a quarter at Henley on Thames on the day of the race. Unfortunately, we suffered a broken rope two thirds through the quarter, but in view of the importance of the occasion, and the fact that we had nonetheless, rung for the event, recorded the details on belboard anyway.

Armed Forces Guilds

Henley on Thames

St Mary the Virgin

Friday, 5 July 2019 in 30m (21–2–0 in D)

840 Grandsire Triples

- 1 Sue Portsmouth
- 2 Nicola Roberts
- 3 Clare Le Marie
- 4 Elaine Farrow
- 5 Mike Le Marie
- 6 Paul Wotton
- 7 Mark Robins (C)
- 8 Andy Robinson

Rung to wish the UK Armed Forces crew good luck in the King's Cup at Henley Regatta. The race was last held 100 years ago at the Peace Regatta following WWI.

A Broken rope stopped play 2/3rds of the way through the quarter peal.



Mark Robins

News from Hungerford Tower

The **Hungerford Christmas Outing** "last year" (Jan 2019) took us a bit farther afield as we all wended our way to "border country" in Berkshire / South Buckinghamshire for a delightful day of rivers, muddy bridges, parking conundrums and lunch by the Thames. The day was organised by Andrea and with apologies to daughter Jessica for messing up her brand new white trainers!



We were delighted to be joined again this year by Mike Clark, Rebecca's parents Peter and Marilyn, Phil Miles, the whole Hurst Family, Imogen Sculthorp, as well as Martin and Eleanor and two ringing friends of Andreas from Leicestershire, Terence and Colin Lord.



Congratulations of the day must go to Mike Clark for

his incredibly accurate reverse parking! We all rang at St. Michaels at Bray, a 24cwt 8; St. Peters at Burnham, a 12cwt 8; Lunch was at The Bounty, a pub situated by the river at Bourne End; followed by ringing at All Saints Marlow, a 15cwt 8; St. Marys at Henley-on-Thames which was a 21 cwt 8. A great day was had by all who attended with the weather being cold but dry.



Our **Newest Ringers** are progressing well. Amelia rang her first quarter during Quarter Peal Week, ringing the treble to Plain Bob Doubles and is now ringing Plain Bob Doubles inside. Nour is also progressing well and it is great to see her whenever she is able to fit us in with her busy work schedule! Some perfect Call Changes and improving ringing up and down from Nour recently serves as evidence of this progress! The progress of these ringers has been helped not only by Mark and Andrea but also Mike Winterbourne.

We have had 13 successful **Quarter Peals** at St. Lawrence since the last report including those rang during Quarter Peal Week. These included a quarter peal of Yorkshire to celebrate Mike Winterbourne's 70th Birthday, followed by a convivial lunch at the John of Gaunt pub in Hungerford, a

First for Amelia and a first for Ursula Osmond.....

The full list of quarter peals and peals follows...



1260 Union Triples	
1280 Yorkshire Surprise Major	Mikes 70 th Birthday (see photo)
1260 Reverse Union Triples	
1280 Yorkshire Surprise Major	
1260 Single Oxford Bob Triples	
5152 Spliced Surprise Major	Visiting band
1260 St Clements College Bob Triples	
1260 Stedman Triples	
1260 Plain Bob Doubles	Amelia's first
1260 Single Oxford Bob Triples	Ursula's first
1260 St Nicholas Bob Triples	
1250 Yorkshire Surprise Major	
1260 Calvary Bob Triples	

Wednesday Practices continue to be largely well attended with a virtual plethora of interesting methods being rung (some well and some not so well) by a plethora of interesting ringers and visitors! The Pewsey Mob continue to amaze us with their continued attendance and virtuosity, with the Ludgershall Crew providing fruit and vegetable as well as their considerable ringing experience. Mike Clark (Ogbourne St George – where?) continues to support us as does Rebecca and Martin & Eleanor.

Our **Annual Dinner** this year was held at the Craven Arms at Enborne with a wide range of tucker served in a timely manner by attentive and efficient staff. The dinner was attended by some 16 ringers and partners and we choose from the menu on the evening, one course, two or three, depending upon individual requirements. Mark amused us with his topical news round-up, whilst Andrea gave us a short speech regarding both hers and our experiences during her second term as our Tower Captain. We were again delighted to be joined by various partners of ringers, by the Pewsey Mob, Phil Miles, Martin and Eleanor and Mike Clark and Feli...



Our **Annual Tower Spring Clean** took place in early May where all the locals turned out with mops and buckets, tickling sticks, vacuum cleaners, wrinkled stockings and headscarves, to give the ringing chamber and tower stairs a good clean, dust and polish. One of the major tasks was to rid the upper reaches and Staircase of dust and cobwebs and Hoover up a kilo of alien ladybirds from the upper corners of the window arches! Here's a gardening tip; I took some home and sprinkled them on my roses – Goodbye Whitefly / Greenfly ☐

After many years of debate and indecision (mainly by me) and much repair work by Mark the old **Ringling Room Ventilation Fan** just had to go. A new one has been installed by Mark, who to be honest, is the main user of the device, to keep his abnormally high thermostat within the normal operating range. However, during the hot weather, we will all be grateful for its new-found functionality. Recent testing shows a good wide sweep with power setting from a low breeze to gale force! Excellent....



David Thorpe

Beenham

A few years ago, Beenham and Yattendon towers decided to join together for practices: attendance at both towers had seen a dip, and Yattendon, sharing ringers with the currently unringable Hampstead Norreys, were open to raising their standard of ringing.

At the beginning of 2018, an article in the respective village newsletters about Ringing for Peace resulted in a number of new ringers coming forward, and there are now six new ringers between the two towers.

Priority has been given to teaching these new recruits, and the experienced ringers helped and encouraged them. Practices are social, friendly and fun. All the novices achieved their aim of ringing to commemorate the anniversary of the end of the First World War, and are now regularly ringing for services and weddings.

In 2019 quarter peal week, two of the newer ringers rang their first quarter peals, and in April there was a joint tower outing to five Downland towers (Chieveley, Great Shefford, Brightwalton, Peasemore and Comp-ton). The most heard response was "That was great fun, can we do that again ?" !

It is thanks to our new ringers for their staying power and sense of humour that they have contributed to the revitalisation of these towers, which will also extend to Hampstead Norreys once its bell restoration is complete. But the greatest contribution has been from Marcus Allum, who has with patience and skill handled evenings of up to nine learners at a time. Marcus has through the years taught many people to ring, but this has been his greatest challenge; new and experienced ringers thank him for his constant help and encouragement.

We were very pleased to receive the Marshall Shield, jointly with Yattendon, in recognition of this.

Tessa Allum

Coming up..... The ODG Ten Bell Striking Competition in November, to be held at Warfield on the morning of 23rd November. The test piece will be Grandsire Caters. Full details in due course.

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