



Newbury Branch Newsletter

Summer 2024

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Officers 2023/2024

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From the Chair

There are a couple of things to bring to your attention this summer.

The first is the new Newbury Branch website. The look and feel of <https://newbury.odg.org.uk/> is based on the work done by Julia and Colin Deady but has now been added to and re-created by Nick Annetts, of Lambourn. The site is now part of the Oxford Diocesan Guild website, and so the costs of hosting are borne by the ODG instead of the Newbury Branch. The work of transferring, updating and maintaining the pages would have involved considerable spending, but Nick has done it all, together with the ODG web people, without charging anything, so our grateful thanks go to him and to the ODG guys. Do take a look and see if anything needs changing, or if there's something you would find useful that is not there at the moment.

The second issue is also to do with the ODG: the ongoing streamlining of the membership system. The idea is that the ODG holds information about its members on one central database (hosted by a commercial system called MemberMojo), including email addresses for everyone. This will allow the ODG officers to communicate with us all more directly. In the Newbury Branch we already have a pretty good system, with our Branch Secretary having a comprehensive email list, enabling Mark to pass on messages easily. (In some other branches, surprisingly, this is not the case.) The Newbury Branch has checked its membership list and passed it onto the ODG membership secretary, Jenny Bennett. The next step is to test out the new system, checking that only the authorised people are able to send emails, people are able to reply, email addresses are kept secret, and so on. This is currently happening with members of the Sonning Deanery, who were already using MemberMojo at branch level.

It shouldn't make much difference here, except that, once implemented, Branch Officers will be able to contact everyone in the Branch using the MemberMojo system, rather than asking Mark to forward stuff. Ad hoc tower WhatsApp and email groups that have grown up over the last few years will still be important communication links at local level, of course. The mechanism for collecting subscriptions will remain unchanged, by the way.

Well, it's still just about stopped drizzling here in Newbury, so it must be time to mow my surprisingly green grass.

Martin



Hampstead Norreys & Yattendon

Our rector, Revd Wayne Lautenbach, took early retirement, and we rang a quarter peal of 1260 Grandsire to mark the occasion. Three Allums (Marcus, Tessa, Jason) were joined by three Velvicks (Maureen, Jen and Tyler). Congratulations to Jen on her first quarter. Wayne has always been a friend to bellringers, his first action every Sunday when he enters the church is to walk over to us to say 'Good morning, bellringers, how are you?'. We will be sorry to see him go.

We have another new recruit – Julie joined us in April and is making strides.



We have a number of weddings to ring for this year in our two towers. We thought we'd seen everything until April, when the bride was accompanied into the church and down the aisle by her horse. And that was at a 10.30 am wedding on a Wednesday.



Marcus Allum



New Branch Website

The new branch website went live on the 28th April and is now being hosted by ODG free of charge and can be found at <https://newbury.odg.org.uk>, with an auto forward in place from the previous website address <https://bellsnearnewbury.org.uk>.

The existing content was transferred over by the ODG web team and thanks go to Richard Stanworth at ODG for making the process straightforward. A lot of time and effort has gone into enhancing the website, with every tower now having a dedicated area, which contains pages listing details of the bells, a contact form and directions. All of the previous branch newsletters and AGM minutes are also now available on the website.

Please take a look at the website and at your tower's page and if you would like any content adding or amending, do sent it over to webmaster@newbury.odg.org.uk and I will be more than happy to add it to the website or amend as advised.

The new web address has come with new email address for each tower. Details of these can be found on the website, but rest assured the old @bellsnearnewbury.org.uk email addresses are still live and working

Nick Annetts

Webmaster



ODG Eight Bell Striking Competition

This year, the powers that be decided to hold the competition at Stoke Poges, just a short drive along the M4 and up through Slough. We were drawn to ring quite late in the running order, so had our usual practice session at Thatcham on the morning of the competition and also time for coffee on arrival. The test piece was 224 changes of St Clements College Bob Major. Nothing too taxing except that it is Major and involves counting five dodges at the front, so easy to miscount or mess up a dodge or two. Anyway, our test piece went well and we came third, behind Reading and EBSB, so we felt our placing was quite respectable considering the opposition. Having rung, the next challenge was getting home as the M4 was closed West-bound, so it took twice as long as it did getting there.



BAND	TIME	SCORE	RANK
1 WINDSOR CASTLE	9:48	76	6
2 SOUWING DENVER	10:5	78	5
3 EBSB	9:17	91	1
4 OXFORD CITY	9:37	72	7
5 READING	9:18	89	2
6 NORTH BUCKS	9:40	79	4
7 NEWBURY	9:17	80	3



The Team

Mark Robins

Shaw

In February, Sally Breach, Secretary for St Mary's, Shaw, retired after 37 years in post. Anyone who has requested the bells at Shaw in that time, would have contacted but never met Sally, so I thought best wishes and a thank you from the local ringing community would be appropriate. A card was despatched around the Branch and came back with over forty signatures. Thanks to Kevin and Lin Rogers for doing most of the leg work in this. We also bought Sally a bouquet as a token of our appreciation.

Oxford Diocesan Guild

Shaw, Berkshire

St Mary

Friday, 2 February 2024 in 45m (7-0-12 in A)

1260 Grandsire Doubles

- 1 Lin Rogers
- 2 Angela Brown
- 3 Marcus Allum
- 4 Kevin Rogers
- 5 J Martin Rice (C)
- 6 Chris Maslin

Organised by Roy Pratley in recognition of 37 years' dedicated work in the Church Office by Mrs Sally Bleach, who retires February 8th 2024.

The quarter peal rung for Sally's retirement



Sally with the quarter peal band, at her retirement presentation from the ringers.

Continued overleaf

Shaw (continued)

Looking after both Shaw and Midgham, I usually have no trouble finding bands to ring for weddings at either church. This year however, there were weddings at both churches at 2.00 pm on July 27th so I was faced with a challenge! I shouldn't have worried because ringers to the rescue, I found ringers from the West to ring at Shaw, and from the East to ring at Midgham, so thanks to all for helping out.



The band that rang at Shaw to commemorate the 80th anniversary of D Day. The ringing was recorded by someone from Greenham Trust who is writing a book on the area's events for the occasion

Roy Pratley



East Ilsley

Just a reminder about The previously advertised Bellringers' Songs of Praise at East Ilsley on Sunday 8th September at 6.00pm. Everyone will be welcome to attend.

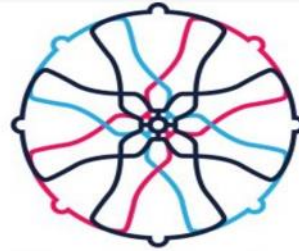
John Hibbert



Instagram



**VOLUNTEERS'
WEEK**



THE CENTRAL COUNCIL OF CHURCH
BELL RINGERS

Kevyn rings in Hertfordshire and organises district practices, striking competitions and outings for local ringers



„Other ringers gave so much to me as I was learning, that I wanted to pass that on and share both the enjoyment and community ringing offered me.“ #bellringing #volunteersweek

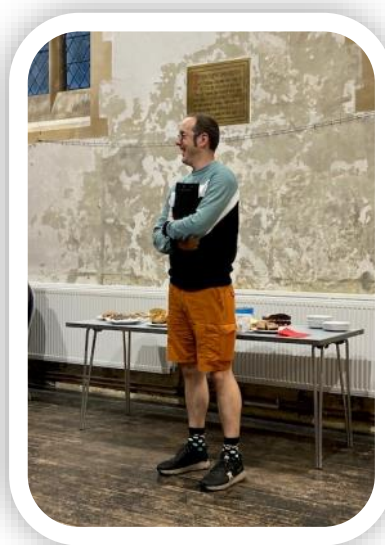


238.640 Me gusta



Branch Six Bell Striking Competition and Marshall Shield

This event was held at St Mary's Speen on Friday 14th June. The event is as much social as competition and the Speen ringers laid on a very nice tea with cakes for the occasion. Four tower teams took part, Newbury, Speen, East Garston and Bucklebury. Each team gave a good account of themselves, with three ringing doubles and one, Bucklebury ringing surprise minor. Ben Waller came and judged the ringing and gave a detailed debrief on each team's efforts with some useful and constructive comments. Despite them ringing something quite difficult, Bucklebury were judged to be first with the least faults and will go on to represent the Branch at the ODG Competition in October. Richard Marshall was present to award the Marshall Shield, which this year, was presented to Mike Head of Peasemore, for recruiting and training his band, mostly from scratch.



Mark Robins

Sue's Midweek Group

Our first six visits this year have been to Newbury Branch Towers, three to six bell towers, two to eight bell towers and the ten at Thatcham where we started the year in January. We rang all ten bells and had lunch at the ever popular White Hart.

John & Ros Durham joined the Group at Bucklebury in February and we are pleased that they have attended most of the meetings since then. In April we went to East Ilsley and had lunch at The Swan. Ringing at these eight bell towers included Surprise Major in addition to Grandsire & Stedman Triples.

Maureen Velvick arranged for us to go to East Garston in March. Many of the Group had not rung here since the bells were rehung. Maureen, also, organised lunch for us at The Queen's Arms.

The Group went to Midgham in May, followed by lunch at The Angel in Woolhampton. The June tower was Beenham followed by lunch at The Cottage Inn, where the Landlord opened the pub specially for us.

Our July outing was to the eight at Overton where we joined by Helen Piper and David and Christine Holmes. Lunch was at The Star, Kingsclere.

Our numbers expanded to more than twenty in April. Ringing has been of a good standard with all capabilities catered for. I thank members for their continued support and Maureen, Martin and Tony for their considerable help on various occasions.



Sue Smith

Newbury

A busy six months has seen the St Nics tower ringers involved in outings, dinners, hosting visitors, competitions and teaching. The St Nics ringers started the 2024 year appearing in the Newbury Weekly News, with a report on the visit of the Mayor (Nigel Foot) and Mayoress's (Sarah Slack) to the tower to ring in the New Year (see photo). On Saturday 17th February the tower embarked upon their first outing for several years when a dozen St Nics ringers journeyed to ring at five towers in Surrey (St Mary's, Ewell, St Martin of Tours, Epsom; Christ Church, Epsom Common; SS Mary & Nicholas, Leatherhead; and St Mary, Stoke D'Abernon) (see photos). The outing lunch was enjoyed in Ye Olde King's Head in Epsom and the day was rounded off with a curry meal at the Curry Cave back in Newbury. A brilliant day superbly organised by Tony Skilton. On Saturday 20th April sixteen ringers and partners attended the annual dinner at The Craven Arms. On Friday 14th June a St Nics band (Jenny, Eleanor, Deb, Martin, Martin and Andrew) came a creditable second place in the Newbury Branch 6-Bell striking competition held at St Mary's, Speen. On Thursday 20th June the tower hosted the 2nd Newbury Cub pack, when nineteen cubs and five leaders were given a tour of the tower. Supplied with ear defenders they watched the bells in action, had a go at chiming a bell and viewed Newbury from atop of the tower (see photos). On Saturday 6th July, six Newbury branch ringers (Martin, Eleanor, Mike, Lucy, John and Deb) joined Oxford Society ringers to ring for the annual Magdalen College School commemoration service at St Mary the Virgin Church, Oxford, (see photos), then on the following Saturday, 13th July, eight bells at St Nics were rung for the wedding of Ellen Guest and Maxwell Astle. In April the tower started to teach another ringing novice, the fourth brand new ringer to be taught by the tower in the last two years (Eric, Judy, Mawgan and Trevor). The tower has also seen the reintroduction of four ringers back to ringing over the same period (Jenny, Tom, Leo and Katy).



St Nics ringers ringing in the New Year with the Mayor and Mayoress of Newbury attending.

David Bebbington

Continued overleaf

Newbury (continued)



February Outing to Epsom



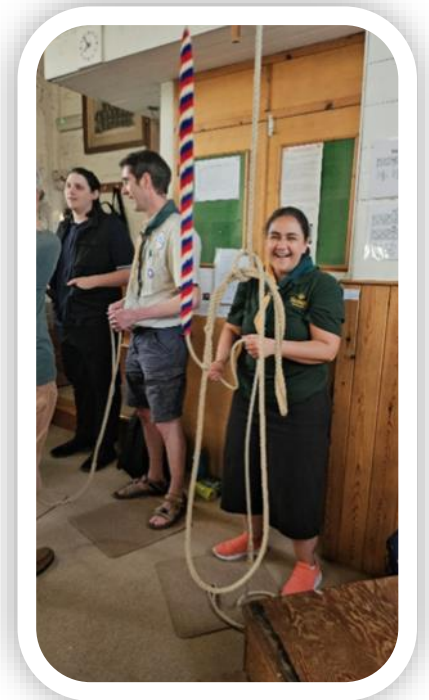
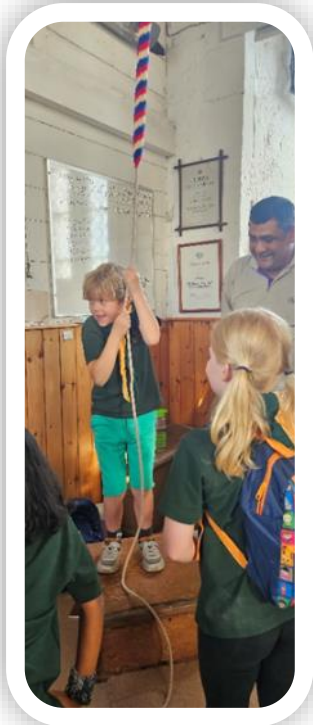
St Nics ringers ringing at St Mary the Virgin, Oxford.

Continued overleaf

Newbury (continued)



***2nd Newbury Cubs learning
about the bells during their
visit to St Nic's***



Hungerford

Since Christmas, we have had a busy time at St Lawrence's, both in the belfry and in the church itself. Hopefully, anyone visiting us to ring, has had a look at our superb new facilities recently commissioned at the back of the church, and opened formally by Bishop Olivia. In the belfry we continue to give our best performances on Sunday mornings and, to the credit of our loyal Sunday Service Band, a very high standard is enjoyed by those listening outside. This also applies to weddings where we have had one so far with another due in September. There have been eight quarter peals and one peal rung so far this year and more planned for the coming Sundays. With the evening service being moved to 4.00 pm, our regular quarter slot is now at 3.00 pm and to date, we have marked HM the King's birthday, Palm Sunday, the Mayor's Carol Service and several firsts for ringers. Full details are on Belboard at [BellBoard \(ringingworld.co.uk\)](http://BellBoard(ringingworld.co.uk)). In April, we had a major clean-up in the ringing room and the belfry, where in the latter, bags full of sticks, donated by well-meaning birds stuffing them through the louvres, were removed and the whole place hoovered to inspection standard.

It was suggested by Mike Cole that we involve ourselves in the annual Church Fete on 8th June by opening the tower to visitors. So we set up an advertising stand at the Fete and arranged groups of visitors to attend the tower for 30 minute time slots. During each session, we gave a short talk on the bells and ringing in general, followed by a belfry tour witnessing the tenor being rung, finishing with a have-a-go session for those wanting to chime a bell. The event was a great success with all sessions fully booked and great interest shown during the visits. Chiming a bell was particularly popular.



The Tower Open Day

The 1st August saw us have a re-organisation of tower roles. This is the new set-up:

Tower Captain

Steeple Keeper

Treasurer

Correspondent

Weddings

Andrea Barletta

David Thorpe

Mike Cole

Mark Robins

Cath Fittell

Continued overleaf

Hungerford (continued)

We do like a good outing at Hungerford, so we tend to have two a year, one at Christmas and another in the Summer. On the day after Boxing Day, Jenny took us on a very nice trip to The Vale of Pewsey, and East Devizes area, with ringing at Urchfont, Upavon, All Cannings and Bishops Cannings. There was a good mix of country sixes and Eights with an excellent lunch at the Bridge Inn. Upavon was memorable as a grab for me, and a good ring at my old favourite Bishops Cannings, rounded the day off nicely. For the Summer fixture, Andrea arranged a first-class tour on 15th June in and around Cirencester. Without blowing our own trumpet, well maybe just a bit, the standard of ringing, even on the fine twelve at Cirencester, was very good. In fact, we were complimented by passers by on the eight at Coln, St Aldwyn, which was no mean feat with the wheel on the fourth being loose, making it difficult to ring. As is the norm, for both outings, we were joined by friends of the tower and regulars at our practices, and grand days out were had by all.

Christmas



Summer

Continued overleaf

Hungerford (continued)

The Wednesday in Holy Week saw us hold our annual dinner, which was in the usual Hungerford style, involving speeches, Captain's address, taking the form of "The News" , and a knock-out quiz between the two tables, which is always a good natured and mild mannered affair, with humble winners and gracious losers (not really!). I can't remember which team won, but nobody went home empty handed. The Craven Arms at Enborne did us proud as usual, with first class service and food.



Mark Robins



Just because it is one of my favourite places, here is a picture of Lincoln Cathedral, floodlit for Christmas-last, to enjoy while we while away our Summer hols, basking on sun-drenched beaches, splashing on the factor 30 and dreaming of chestnuts roasting on open fires.

Thank you to all who have contributed to this newsletter.
The deadline for the Christmas edition will be 21st December

Mark Robins—Editor