



# *Newbury Branch Newsletter*

## *Christmas 2024*

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## **From the Chair**

First, I would like to echo the message from Katie Lane, the ODG Master, and hope you enjoy your Christmas ringing. It does, I'm sure, bring joy to those who hear it.

The Newbury Branch continues to do well, I'm pleased to say, with three regular monthly events generally well attended, as well as enthusiastic individual and combined tower practices. We submitted bands for the Guild 6- and 8-bell striking competitions, but this year were unable to find 10 ringers who could all make the particular date for the 10-bell.

90<sup>th</sup>-birthday congratulations to John Kape of Thatcham (back in November).

The ODG membership system (MemberMojo) is getting ready to go live from Jan 1<sup>st</sup>. The system should allow the ODG as well as the various branches to access basic information about its membership more reliably, and to communicate better. In the New Year you should start receiving emails via the system rather than forwarded to you by our Branch Secretary, Mark Robins. For the system to work properly you do need to log into your individual account to initialise it and complete some information about yourself, such as what communications you would like to receive. For those of you who haven't done this yet you can either: visit the ODG website (<https://odg.org.uk/>) and click on the member login button; or you can get straight to the system by clicking <https://membermojo.co.uk/odg>. Subscriptions for 2025 will be collected in the same way as in the past, despite MemberMojo being live. The system is generally individuals pay to towers then towers pay to the Newbury Branch, including a list of names. Unattached members pay directly to the Newbury Branch. Our Treasurer, Maureen Velvick, will then pass the money onto the ODG treasurer, together with a list of names for everyone who has paid for the whole branch.

Once you reach the MemberMojo Home page, click the orange Join/Renew button. You may find that the system has renewed your membership up until the end of 2025, but that's not actually the case! You still need to pay your subscription for next year.

My thanks go to everyone in the Branch for supporting ringing, especially tower captains/ringing masters who organise everything on a week-to week basis.

I must also thank Mark Robins especially for continuing to produce this publication. He tells me, by the way, that he will be standing down as Branch Secretary at the AGM in March 2025, but is happy to continue putting this publication together.

***Martin***

## **Newbury**

Practice nights at St Nics have been exceptionally well attended this year, with sometimes more than fifteen ringers on the Monday evening sessions. The autumn has seen another four people beginning to learn to ring, Caroline, Eibhlin, Matilda and Penelope, to add to our other early-stage learner, . This brings the total number of new people having learnt and continuing to ring at St Nics over the past two years to eight (four teenagers and four adults). Sadly, St Nics lost its American ringer, Katie Pendlebury, due to relocation from Newbury to London earlier in the summer, but with the abundance of new learners together with the three 'return to ringing' ringers, the St Nics numbers are as healthy as at anytime in the recent past.

Focussed practice sessions have taken place approximately once a month, before the Sunday evening service. Here, one method is rung repeatedly to help develop specific ringers, supported by Ciril analysis (Martin Rice's bellringing analysis computer program).

## **David Bebbington**



***Did you know that the earliest carol singers were soldiers from Western France. They are shown on the Bayeux Tapestry, where they are known as the Brittany Spears.***

## Thatcham

John Kape of Thatcham celebrated his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday on Friday November 22<sup>nd</sup>. We were pleased to score a well struck quarter of Grandsire Triples on the Saturday morning especially as we knew that John's family were bringing him over to listen. They bravely stood outside to greet us afterwards despite the wind and the rain.

John's three daughters had organised a surprise party for him in the afternoon and we had all had to be very careful about what we said so that we didn't give the game away. The ringers were delighted to share in the occasion held in Beech Hill Memorial Hall. Many of us struggled with the quiz questions based around 1934- it's hard to match characters and actors to films when you've never even heard of the film!

We presented John with an engraved Whitechapel table bell and hope that it will give him pleasure for many years to come. Tony Smith kindly said a few words at very short notice ie he was asked during tea!



### **Thatcham, Berkshire**

St Mary

Saturday, 23 November 2024 in 47m (13)

#### **1260 Grandsire Triples**

- 1 J Martin Rice
- 2 Angela Brown
- 3 Janet E John
- 4 Rachel A Backhouse (C)
- 5 Adrian Moon
- 6 Richard J Marshall
- 7 Mark D Backhouse
- 8 Graham A C John

Rung to mark the 90th birthday on November 22nd of local ringer John Kape. Sue and Tony Smith, Rosemary Evans, Roy Pratley, Rhiannan Melvin-Chick, Helen and Charlie Cooke would like to be associated with this quarter.



***Continued overleaf***

## ***Thattham continued***

We continue to ring every Sunday and practices are generally well attended even if occasionally visitors outnumber the local ringers! Our two newest recruits Helen and son Charlie are now ringing with us on Sunday mornings. In September Rhiannan, who learnt last year in time for Ring for the King, scored her first quarter peal. Like many first timers she was nervous that she wouldn't be able to ring for over 40 minutes but we had no doubts and she rang very well.

### **Thattham, Berkshire**

St Mary

Sunday, 1 September 2024 in 44m (13)

#### **1260 Grandsire Doubles**

- 1 Rhiannan C Melvin-Chick
- 2 Rachel A Backhouse (C)
- 3 Mark D Backhouse
- 4 Richard J Marshall
- 5 Adrian Moon
- 6 Anthony D Smith

1st quarter and birthday compliment to Rhiannan

## ***Rachel Backhouse***





**Shaw**

On 6th June we commemorated the 80th anniversary of D-Day. To mark the occasion we rang Grandsire Doubles and other methods. The ringers taking part were Angela Brown, Marcus Allum, Lin and Kevin Rogers, Rosemary Evans and Roy Pratley. Thanks to all for taking part. Afterwards there was a beacon lit at Donnington Castle.



**Roy Pratley.**



## **Sue's Midweek Group**

The second half of this year started with a visit to the six at Uffington in August. I had tried to arrange a visit here on a previous occasion, but as the church is next to the school, daytime ringing is restricted to school holidays. Lunch was at the local pub, the Fox & Hounds.

Tony and I went to Puglia in Southern Italy in September. Maureen Velvick kindly agreed to arrange the meeting for that month, with a visit to North Moreton followed by lunch at the Red Lion in Brightwell cum Sotwell.

In October we returned to the popular eight at Drayton, followed by lunch at the Plum Pudding.

The final tower of the year was in November at the six at St Mary Bourne, a tower we had previously arranged to visit just as the Covid restrictions were introduced. What we didn't know was that the local water company had installed a road closure in the middle of the village. A number of the group followed the signed diversion only to find that the single track road was blocked by a large queue going nowhere. Tony and Kevin, eventually abandoned their cars on the wrong side of the road closure and walked the last half mile. Only six of more than twenty arrived on time. Lunch at The Oak at Scammell rounded off the day and the year.

The ringing has been of a good standard, ranging from call changes to surprise major, with numbers often over twenty but reduced during the late summer/early autumn due to holidays. My thanks to Maureen and Tony for their help and to members of the group for their attendance, which has made these outings possible.

With my best wishes for a Happy Christmas and New Year. The first meeting of 2025 will be at Thatcham on 15 January and lunch at the White Hart, the usual tower and pub for January.

**Sue Smith**



*St Mary's Uffington*



## **RICHARD THOMAS HIBBERT**

At the annual dinner of The Ancient Society of College Youths, held on the first Saturday of November, they always have a silent toast to the fragrant memories of the past masters of 100, 200 and 300 years ago. The master of 100 years ago was my Grandfather's Brother, Richard Thomas Hibbert, and the following tribute was read out.

*Born in East Ilsley, and spending much of his working life with the Great Western Railway in Reading, Richard Hibbert (known as Tom) was elected to the Society in 1886. He rang his first peal for the Society in 1889 and rang several of his early peals with James Washbrook and the Revd FE Robinson. He was an accomplished back bell ringer, ringing the ninth to the first peal at Wells Cathedral in 1891 and the ninth (now the eleventh) in the first peal at Exeter Cathedral in 1902. Hibbert rang in record peals beginning with the tenor in the record length of 12,160 Bristol Major in 1912 at Knebworth. He was a member of the band for the peal of 21,363 Stedman Caters at Appleton in 1922 which was the longest peal ever rung at the time.*



***Continued overleaf***

## **Richard Thomas Hibbert *continued***

*Ringling for 9 hours and 17 minutes, he rang the 10th in the record peal of Stedman Cinques at Southwark Cathedral in May 1923. This peal is recorded on a board at the tower and Hibbert noted in his peal book that it was the “finest Stedman Cinques I have ever heard”. Unfortunately, the peal was proved to be false some 13 years later.*

*Bill Butler wrote of him in *The 100 Years of the ODG* that “he was nicknamed as the Prince of Strikers”.*

*Hibbert died in 1946, aged 77, in the year in which he would have reached 60 years of membership. He rang 86 peals for the Society*

*I would add that he was born at The Sun Public House (now demolished) in East Ilsley where his father, Thomas, was the landlord and local blacksmith.*

*Richard T. Hibbert was a past secretary of the Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bell-ringers and was largely responsible for augmenting both East Ilsley Bells from five to eight and St. Laurence, Reading from ten to twelve.*

## **John Hibbert.**



## Yattendon and Hampstead Norreys

During the last few months we have been pleased to welcome another new ringer - Julie - to the world of bell ringing. Julie recently moved into Hampstead Norreys. We are also very pleased to have been joined by Cathy Hawkings from Compton who is returning to ringing after a gap of some 40 years ago when she became too large (by being pregnant) to climb the small staircase at Compton. We hope that we can help her to keep the Compton bells active by ringing there for the odd Sunday service and other special services.

Recently the nearby residents of Hampstead Norreys enjoyed a somewhat different practice night when we attempted to ring Twinkle Twinkle Little Star on the church bells. Standing on backstroke was the greatest challenge and a little more practice is required before we attempt a concert!

Bruce Lousley who was Hampstead Norreys tower captain for many years has recently not enjoyed the best of health and we hope that he will be fit again soon to return to the bell ringing that he so enjoys.

***and from the 1907 Newbury Weekly News***

### YATTENDON.

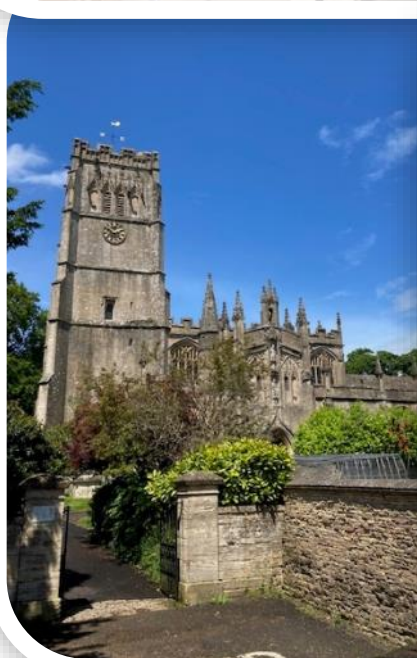
CHOIR AND RINGERS' SUPPER.—At the invitation of the rector, the Rev. A. Simeon, the adult members of the church choir and also the bell ringers, met at the rectory at 8 p.m. on Old Year's night, to partake of supper, kindly provided by the Rector, and an excellent repast was done justice to by the company, numbering about sixteen. After supper the evening was spent in harmony, some capital songs being sung by the ringers, the choir preferring to listen, as only one song was forthcoming from that quarter. The ringers also enlivened the company by selections on the hand bells; but time flies too quickly on these occasions, and 11.30 soon arrived, which meant the ringers retiring to the church tower to ring out the old year and usher in the new one, so after a hearty vote of thanks to the Rector for his kindness, the party retired home.

***Marcus Allum***



## Hungerford

As usual, we've been busy with outings, quarter peals and special events as well as our core Sunday Service ringing. In June, we set off for an excursion around the Cotswolds and enjoyed ringing at both the 12 and the 8 in Cirencester along with Northleach, Bibury and Coln St Aldwyn. The weather was great and the ringing was of a high standard. In fact, while enjoying our last ring of the day, a passing local ringer was heard to comment "*This lot know what they are doing, they are really good*" which wasn't bad as the wheel on the 4th was loose making it quite difficult to ring.



## Hungerford *continued*

A variety of quarter peals have been rung recently. Notably, we rang in memory of our old friend and ringer Barbara Newton, and also on the death of General Sir Mike Jackson, resident in the town and ex Head of the British Army.

### **Oxford Diocesan Guild**

**Hungerford**, Berkshire

St Lawrence

Tuesday, 22 October 2024 in 45m (12-1-8 in G)

#### **1260 Grandsire Triples**

Composed by Sgt A P Wakley, North Staffordshire Regt

- 1 Cath Fittell
- 2 Andrea Barletta
- 3 Michael Hurst
- 4 J Michael Cole
- 5 Mark Robins (C)
- 6 David Thorpe
- 7 J Martin Rice
- 8 Maurice Barletta

Rung half-muffled in memory of General Sir Michael David Jackson, GCB, CBE, DSO, DL (21 March 1944 – 15 October 2024), resident of this town.

### **Hungerford**, Berkshire

St Lawrence

Wednesday, 10 July 2024 in 43m (12-1-8 in G)

#### **1260 St Augustine Bob Doubles**

- 1 Rebecca Browning
- 2 Helen Piper
- 3 Tim Pink
- 4 Mark Robins
- 5 Michael Hurst (C)
- 6 Mike Clark

On practice night by those not watching the football.

### **Oxford Diocesan Guild**

**Hungerford**, Berkshire

St Lawrence

Thursday, 7 November 2024 in 44m (12-1-8 in G)

#### **1260 Stedman Triples**

- 1 Rebecca Browning
- 2 Angela Brown
- 3 Andrea Barletta
- 4 J Martin Rice
- 5 Sarah Cooney
- 6 J Michael Cole
- 7 Mark Robins (C)
- 8 Maurice Barletta

6 - first Stedman for many years.

A very nice piece of ringing. Well done to the band.

There have also been quarters of Uxbridge, Rutland, Yorkshire and Lessness Surprise Major, Double Norwich Court, along with several of Grandsire and Stedman Triples





## Hungerford *continued*



On Remembrance Sunday, we rang half-muffled as I'm sure most towers will have done. We also rang a quarter of Grandsire Triples on Armistice Day, starting at the end of the Two Minutes Silence, followed by a commemorative drink in the Three Swans.

### **Oxford Diocesan Guild**

**Hungerford**, Berkshire

St Lawrence

Friday, 6 December 2024 in 44m (12-1-8 in G)

### **1260 St Nicholas Bob Triples**

- 1 Maurice Barletta
- 2 Andrea Barletta
- 3 Rebecca Browning
- 4 Gemma Hurst
- 5 Michael Hurst
- 6 J Michael Cole
- 7 Mark Robins (C)
- 8 David Thorpe

Rung on the Feast Day of St Nicholas.

First in method - 4 & 6

As Christmas approached, we turned our attention to Captain Andrea's favourite, St Nicholas Bob Triples. This year we rang it on December 6th, the Feast day of St

Nicholas. This local-band quarter was particularly well rung and afforded well-deserved pats on the back all round. We also rang it again for one of the highlights of the season, The Mayors Carol Service, where the church is packed to capacity and the Mayor commented "*that was awesome!*" on the ringing. As we go to print, a busy Christmas week beckons, with bells throughout and our traditional Christmas Outing as we approach the New Year. After a very good year for St Lawrence's, lets hope for more of the same in 2025.

A Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to everyone, from the Hungerford Bellringers.

## **Mark Robins**



## Newbury Branch—Towers Word-search

Can you find all 29 Newbury branch towers? Words can be diagonal as well as from left to right.

Hint [newbury.odg.org.uk/branch-towers](http://newbury.odg.org.uk/branch-towers)

Y E B S M S B C H I E V E L E Y W J U N  
B W J P I V T R L L J T H A T C H A M Q  
P H S E D W S A I A E M J R G C T N H E  
B R L E G X H Y N G M I V M L X O E U N  
C E H N H S A A K F H B O X F O R D N P  
O G E A A V W N C I O T O Z O Y G E G E  
M E R D M Q F C B Y N R W U U C P C E A  
P V A E O P I A H U Y T D A R D T O R S  
T A D S A N S W R A C A B D L N Q M F E  
O N L G T T A T O N D K T U I T Y B O M  
N E D D Q G S Y E F B D L T R N O E R O  
P W H M E V A H T A I O L E E Y G N D R  
W B F C M R I R E X D Y R E B N L L G E  
E U K L L I M I S F B N X O W U D T E P  
L R S S A E Q A J T F E O O U O R O T Y  
F Y T G Z C N H S M O O E R Y G R Y N Y  
O A L D W O R T H T J N R N R V H T U P  
R C B R I M P T O N O D H D H E O E H G  
D Y Q C S M F F Q E Y N L N L A Y K G I  
R E A S T I L S L E Y Z L M Z M M S F T

*Courtesy of Marcus Allum*

## Why not have a go at Christmastide Doubles?

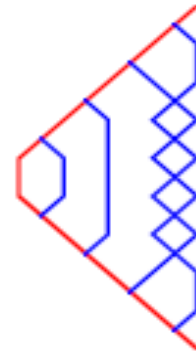
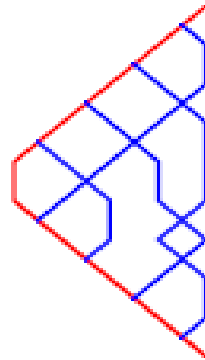
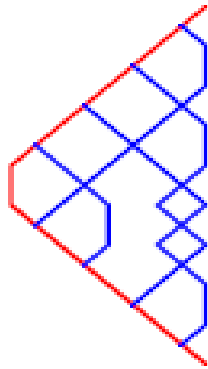
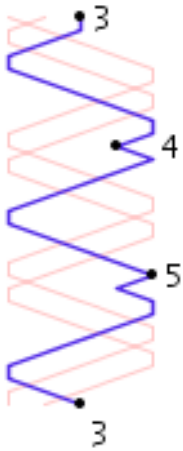
Christmastide Doubles. Grandsire Doubles with a Grandsire Single and a Burton Bob:

Grandsire

Plain lead

Burton Bob

Grandsire Single



Calling: SBSBSPSBSBSP

## A Tropical Belfry

Here we have the 'open to the elements' bell tower at:

***Notre-Dame Auxiliatrice Church***

***Cap Malheureux***

***Mauritius***

This photo was taken by Hungerford ringer Jenny Jones while swanning about the Far East. Well suited to warmer climes, perhaps this tower design will catch on here as our Summers get warmer.

***Ed***







*Thank you to all who have contributed to this newsletter.*

*The deadline for the Summer Edition will be 28th July 2025*

*Mark Robins—Editor*

*Merry Christmas*