



Newbury Branch Summer Newsletter 2025

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From the Chair

Hello everyone!

There is something of a new feeling to the Newbury Branch – in particular we have new organisers for the First Friday and Third Friday practices. Both of these meetings are well attended and I'm sure prove useful to those attending, both in terms of perhaps ringing something that is not possible at one's local tower, and in meeting ringers from various parts of the Branch, especially newer members.

We also made a fresh start to Branch communications by holding a Tower Captains/Tower Correspondents meeting in April. This was well-attended and a proposal to undertake a recruitment campaign for Shaw was put forward by Roy Pratley. Roy subsequently came forward with a lovely poster (designed by his granddaughter) that was published in the church magazine, Newbury Weekly News and other places. It is a bit disappointing that only one member of the public contacted Roy. What is the secret to getting more interest, I wonder.

A discussion on training also took place; perhaps at the next meeting (October 18th) we could take some of the proposals further. How about a regular Saturday school?

The Branch 6-bell striking contest takes place in September, on Friday 5th at Beedon. I hope as many teams as possible will enter, but there will be plenty of opportunity for you to ring even if you don't enter the contest. See you there.

Martin



ODG Eight Bell Striking Competition

This year, the competition was to be held at Benson and the test piece was 240 changes of Stedman Triples. An unusual 4 part composition which prevented the 5th (observation bell) from ever reaching 6/7. As has become the custom in our branch, we planned to practice immediately before the competition, this year at Cholsey which is on the way there. Benson's bells are loud and quite odd struck, but this is a striking competition after all, so making a good job of it despite any odd-struckness is of course, the whole point. So, under Tony Skilton's expert conductorship, we rang our test piece. There were a couple of hesitations but we thought we'd made a decent job of it. The consensus among us was that the **EBSB** and **Reading** teams were really in a class of their own, so us coming third was quite an achievement. I'm sure their teams are used to ringing together, giving them plenty of practice and quite an advantage, whereas our team is always drawn from across the branch, so we really only get to gel as a band at the practice immediately before the competition.

The Team: Martin Rice, Eleanor Rice, Mark Robins, Mike Hurst, Gemma Hurst, Tony Skilton, Jenny Skilton and John Manley. Unfortunately there is no team photo as taking it was entrusted to someone else who failed to press the right button, so no photo!



Rank	TEAM	BRANCH	Time	Points	PLACE
1	OXFORD CITY	BN 14	104	5	
2	EBSB		26.49	51 1/2	2
3	ONB		31.6	48	4
4	READING		31.14	50	1
5	NORTH BUCKS		32.15	46	6
6	NEWBURY		28.49	49 1/2	3
7	SOUTH OXON		31.7	43.2	7
8	SAUNDREY		-	-	

Mark Robins

General comments from judges were that it was a good venue for a striking competition - bells not too difficult to handle, could hear the bells - but that the back bells (excluding the tenor) for many bands had difficulty, sometimes late leading at handstroke. For Newbury we didn't really take control of the bells, kerfuffle at the start of the third part cost points (My fault!)

Results attached.

Many thanks again to Mark for organising, Tony for leading us and everyone for taking part.

Martin Rice



Ringling World National Youth Contest (RWNYC) 2025

By young ringer Nathan Lewis from East Ilsley

On Saturday 5 July 2025, I joined over 300 young ringers from across the UK in Birmingham for the 15th annual Ringing World National Youth Contest (RWNYC)—the largest youth bell-ringing event ever recorded. A record 37 teams participated in this celebration of campanological tradition.

Our Headquarters for the day was the iconic St Martin in the Bull Ring (16, 39-1-19), home to the country's only 16 bell ring, where contestants rung and spectators gathered. It was an experience like no other and I thoroughly enjoyed it! I was also fortunate to be allowed to play the organ there which is a very fine 4-manual, 68-stop instrument built by Harrison and Harrison of Durham and then rebuilt by John Compton. As a keen organist, this was a very exciting opportunity.

Throughout the day, as well as at St. Martin in the Bullring - the ODG Young Ringers rang at St. Paul's Church, Jewellery Quarter (10, 12-2-13), St. Mary's Church, Moseley (10, 18-0-9), and St. Peter's Church, Harborne (8, 12-3-24). In the competition, the team rang a touch of Plain Bob Triples at St. Bartholomew's Church, Edgbaston (8, 10-0-14). The event also featured portable mini rings. These included The Charmborough Ring (6, 0-3-10) situated at St. Paul's Church, Jewellery Quarter, and The Lichfield Diocesan Mobile Belfry (6, 0-2-20) which was also at St. Paul's. Within St. Martin's itself was The Higby Dumbell which consists of a wheel and a mass which is designed to feel like a 3.5 cwt bell. There is no stay or break - it is simply a loop of rope and a robust steel toggle. Also within St. Martin's were the handbell workshops, these were brilliant. The ODG Young Ringers even took on the challenge of trying 'Lapping' which was very impressive.



The ODG Competition Team
(anti-clockwise from top right)

Marc, Isaac, Simon, Kit,
Billy, Dom, Laura and Daniel

If you are unfamiliar with lapping, look it up online - it's amazing to watch!

Competitors ranged in age from eight to eighteen, and volunteers ensured safe, inclusive participation. Supporters and non-ringing attendees were encouraged to join simply to celebrate or enjoy the day's events. It was wonderful to see so many people joining in and maintaining such a wonderful tradition.



All of the ODG young ringers
attending the event

Continued overleaf

RWNYC 2025 (continued)

Myself and Bellringing

I have been ringing for two and a half years in East Ilsley under the excellent instruction and coaching of John Hibbert. As I mentioned before, I started ringing in response to the '**Ring for the King**' Campaign in January, 2023. I started ringing with the ODG Young Ringers at the start of this year and have thoroughly enjoyed making new friends, learning new skills/methods and ringing with some excellent ringers. As a musician, ringing has helped greatly with my musicality, too! Ringing has taken me all over the place, from London to Lichfield and I would encourage any young person interested in ringing to give it a go as you never know where it may take you!

Local media described the contest as “the biggest ever bell ringing competition for juniors,” and commended the diversity, inclusivity, and enthusiasm of participants. Headline coverage emphasised Birmingham as a centre of excellence for ringing and likened ringing at St Martin’s to performing at Wembley Stadium in terms of experience and prestige.

Participants found more than competition—they discovered teamwork, discipline, music, and community. Many young ringers (including myself) had stayed engaged following initiatives such as the 'Ring for the King' Campaign for the Coronation in 2023, highlighting ringing’s growing and enthusiastic youth base.

Looking ahead: the next contest is scheduled for Saturday 4 July 2026 in Nottingham. Stay tuned to The Ringing World and BellBoard for details on future events.

The results are on the next page, also:

The Whitechapel Trophy: donated by Whitechapel Bell Foundry, was awarded to the winners of the Method class overall.

The Robert Lewis Trophy: named in honour of a past Editor of The Ringing World and founding figure of the contest, was awarded for excellence in Call Changes.

Happy Ringing!

Nathan Lewis



RWNYC 2025 Results

Participants could enter in classes based on:

- Basic Call Changes (six bell)
- Advanced Call Changes (six or eight bell)
- Method (six or eight bell)

Teams were judged on factors including accuracy, rhythm, pace, and conductor performance.

Method on Eight Bells (Edgbaston)

1st: Yorkshire Tykes (Whitechapel Trophy) with a score of 9.5

2nd: Winchester & Portsmouth (9.0)

3rd: Oxford DG (8.5)

Method on Six Bells (Edgbaston)

1st: Brumdingers with a score of 9.0

2nd: Surrey Strikers (8.5)

3rd: Norfolk Young Ringers (8.0)

Call Changes on Eight Bells (Erdington Parish)

1st: Worcester Cathedral with a score of 9.0

2nd: Bucks & Berks (8.5)

3rd: Young @ Herts (7.5)

Advanced Call Changes on Six Bells (Erdington Parish)

1st: Three Spires (Robert Lewis Trophy) with a score of 9.5

2nd: Derbyshire Young Ringers (9.0)

3rd: Yorkshire Tykes (8.5)

Basic Call Changes on Six Bells (Moseley)

1st: Coventry Spires with a score of 8.0

2nd: Bedfordshire Young Ringers (7.0)

3rd: Norfolk Young Ringers (6.0)

Hampstead Norreys and Yattendon Towers

How many vicars does it take to make a wedding?

The marriage of Revd Renée Coulson and Revd Stephen Pix

It was a lovely wedding. Renée, with permission to officiate at the Hermitage Team Ministry and held in great affection by the village and congregation of Hampstead Norreys, met Stephen on a dating site for ex-clergy – or so we are told, but that may just be village rumour.

And when do vicars get married? On a Monday, of course – their day off. Renée has always been a friend to the bellringers: when we rang at St Mary's for the new year she appeared in the church just after midnight with a basket of mince pies and mulled wine to share with us. So we were delighted on 21st July to ring the very happy couple in and out of church.

The official pictures will probably be better, but here is our view from the balcony as Stephen paid tribute to his wife with his version of the 'Apache' blessing. Also a picture of some special wedding guests – Renée had raised a puppy, Gandalf, for Hearing Dogs for Deaf People, and quite a few of his friends turned up.

Marcus Allum



Newbury

2025 began in fine tradition at St Nicolas with the Mayor and Mayoress, Andy and Sheila Moore, joining ringers to welcome the New Year. A total of fifteen people enjoyed a joyful hour of ringing, accompanied by a generous spread of food and drink (see photo). The event even earned a mention in the Newbury Weekly News! The annual tower dinner took place on Saturday 29th March, with sixteen attendees gathering at The Coat and Bear in Newbury for a convivial evening of good food and camaraderie.

On Thursday 8th May, the bells were rung to mark the 80th anniversary of VE Day, followed by a celebratory curry at the ever-popular Curry Cave in Newbury. The bells were also rung for a joyful 'renewing of the vows' service in March—adding a resonant touch the special occasion.

Ringling in the New Year



The annual St Nicolas tower outing took place on Saturday 31st May and was masterfully organised by Tony and Jenny Skilton. The tour took in five charming Wiltshire towers—Milton Lilbourne, Wootton Rivers, Pewsey (see photo), Bishops Cannings, and Marlborough. A scenic pub lunch at

The Barge Inn and afternoon refreshments at the Honey Street Mill Café provided perfect breaks between ringing. The day began with unexpected drama at Milton Lilbourne when Andy Osbourne broke the stay of the treble during raising (see photo), injuring his hands badly enough to sideline him from ringing for two weeks. Nevertheless, his spirits remained intact, and he managed to raise a pint glass at lunch—and later, a fork at dinner (with help from friends at the Curry Cave back in Newbury!).



Andy Osbourne with the broken Stay at Milton Lilbourne

Continued overleaf

Newbury (continued)

St Nic's ringers have also been active further afield this year, representing the tower at some truly prestigious venues. Notable highlights include ringing at the Old North Church and the Advent Church in Boston, USA, as part of the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution; the Curfew Tower at HM Free Chapel of St George, Windsor Castle for Ascension Day (see photo); and Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford, for an Ordination service (see photo).

As part of the St Nicolas Open Day on Saturday 21st June, the tower welcomed approximately 100 visitors. Guided tours gave guests the opportunity to learn about the bells and their history, sparking great interest and enthusiasm among attendees.

Monday evening practices continue to be lively and well attended, with numbers reaching as high as seventeen. Four teenage ringers, including Daniel Hurst—scion of the Hurst ringing dynasty—have been taking part in special practice sessions. Over the summer we have also welcomed a new adult learner, Ellie Randall, to our practices.



Martin ringing for the Ordination service at Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford, on Saturday 5th July



Deb Bebbington and Martin Rice ringing for Ascension Day at H.M. Free Chapel of St George, Windsor Castle.

David Bebbington

Speen

We had our outing on 9 August - just in time for the newsletter and in perfect sunny but not humid weather. The seven ringers from Speen (plus a very well behaved 3 month old) much appreciated help from Kingsclere, Whitchurch, Hungerford and Newbury. We started at East Tytherley with splendid renditions of Grandsire Triples and Single Oxford Triples, as well as some rounds and call changes. (East Tytherley are apparently about to launch a campaign to re-hang their bells but, as the parish comprises little more than 100 people, they have a tough job ahead.) On to Lockerley, where the six were unanimously agreed to be lovely

bells: as someone commented, even rounds sounded lovely on these bells. Even better was the sound of Stedman and Cambridge Minor. We were also intrigued by the small wooden board on the wall with the numbers 3|24653|2 (see photo) for which we could think of no explanation (unless it was someone's security code). Lunch in Stockbridge was followed by the (fairly light) six at St Stephen, Sparsholt at the end of a narrow lane, with more Stedman and a touch of St Simon's. Lastly to the pretty village of Crawley: five fairly light but very pleasing bells on the Ground Floor. When asked if she had rung at these towers before, Helen revealed that her records showed she last rang at Crawley 49 years ago.

The seven Speen ringers were delighted to be joined by ringers from Kingsclere, Whitchurch, Hungerford and Newbury, plus a very well behaved 3 month old. We are also grateful to Ros Brandwood for arranging a characteristically well organised and enjoyable day.



Ringling at Crawley

Mary

Hungerford

Following a busy Christmas ringing season, we have had an eventful six months at St Lawrence's. We continue to ring at least six for most Sunday services, ranging from rounds and call changes to a variety of doubles methods and whatever we ring, the aim is always for decent striking. There are still just eight of us when we are all here so we ring all eight when we can. Our practices continue to attract ringers from all over and we are often up to around 15 on a good evening. Of course, skilled visitors allow us to stretch ourselves and ring methods otherwise out of reach, and all are welcome. In March our captain Andrea went on an extended absence so we took it in turns running things. We are of course, now well pleased to see her back with us. Likewise Mike, one our mainstays on Wednesday nights, has also had an extended absence from ringing and we were pleased to see him socially the other evening and looking forward to him being back to ringing in the Autumn.

There have been a number of quarters rung and one peal by our regular visiting Tuesday peal band. This time they rang John O' Gaunt Surprise Major (*John O' Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster (1340—1399), a name synonymous with the history of Hungerford from the charter, granted by his father, King Edward III for hunting and fishing rights to the towns folk*). Other quarters included Plain Bob, Grandsire, Hunslet and Double Oxford Bob Triples, Yorkshire and Three spliced Surprise Major, and our namesake method, Hungerford New Bob Triples. Some were rung for anniversaries and other events and some for the afternoon service.

Our annual dinner was held during Holy Week as always and was expertly organised by Dave at The Craven Arms, Enborne. Having had a number of fine dinners there in recent years, we seem to gravitate back there each time as "*If it aint broke, don't fix it*" seems to apply. Once again, good food, great service and a relaxed and enjoyable atmosphere added to the well planned and executed arrangements and a great evening was had. Janet laid on the quiz and we split into teams to test our knowledge (or lack of!) and many went home with prizes. Thanks go to Dave for laying on such a grand do and Janet for her fun quiz.

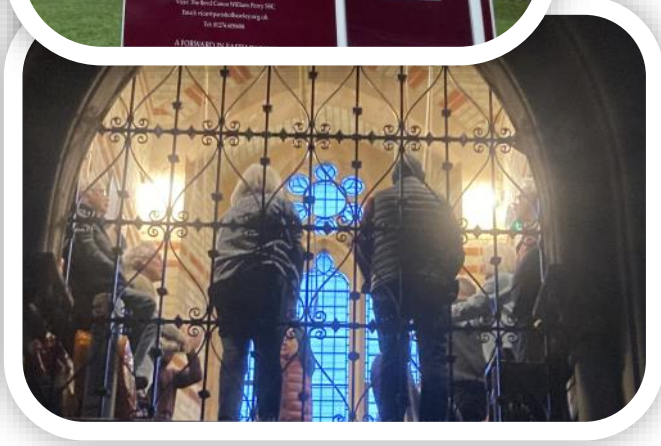
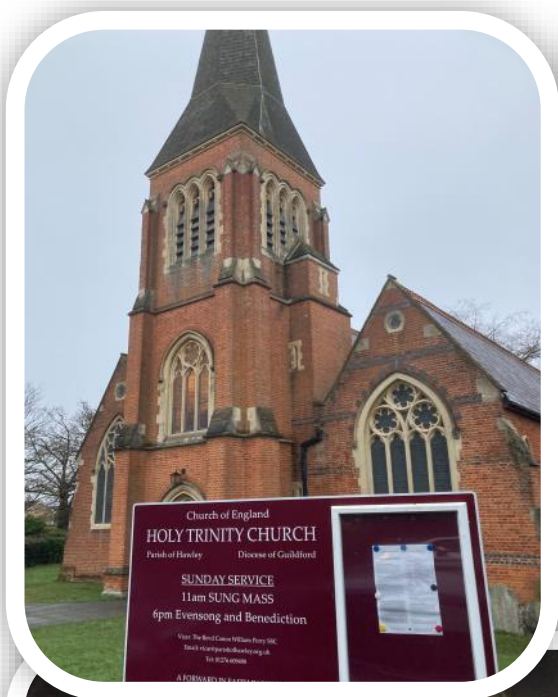


Mike showing us how it's done!

Continued overleaf

Hungerford (continued)

We have had two outings since the last edition, both brilliantly organised by Andrea. Just after Christmas we had a day out to ring at Heckfield, Eversley, Yorktown and Camberley. Our Christmas outings are ever-popular and this one was no exception. Here are some views of the day.



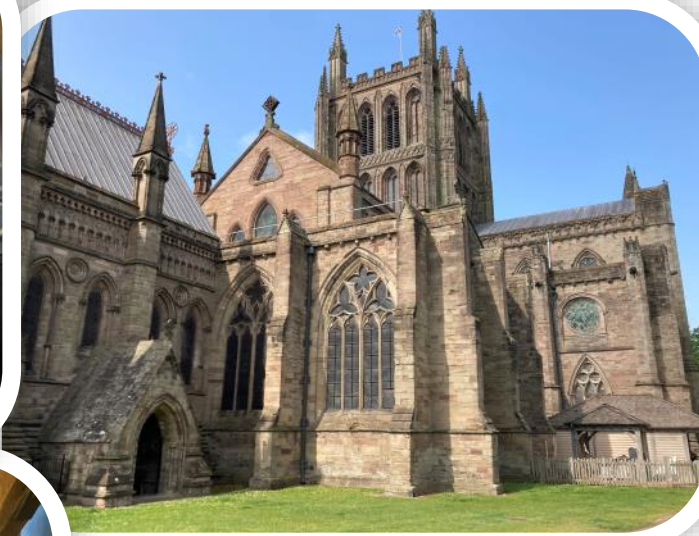
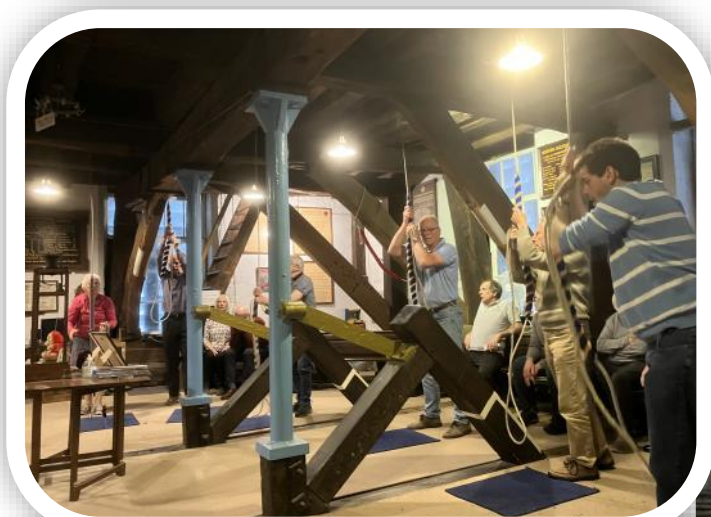
In June we had a weekend outing to the Hereford area. A wide variety of bells, countryside, and weather conditions often adds interest, sometimes excitement but always makes it memorable and this outing was no exception. We had warm sunshine interspersed with torrential downpours and bells ranging from the almost unringable bells at Hampton Bishop to the delightful six at Holmer, with its interesting stand-alone tower.

Continued overleaf

Hungerford (continued)

On the Saturday evening we all descended on a curry house in Hereford for dinner which became a lively affair as the Cobras started to flow, often the case when we all get together. Last but by no means least were the heavy and quite challenging ten at Hereford Cathedral, where we rang for Sunday service with the local band. They were short handed so were glad for us to be on hand so that all ten could be rung. Finally, thanks and well done to Andrea for two fabulous outings.

**St Bartholomew,
Holmer**



Hereford Cathedral



**Us, in the Cathedral ringing room,
pleased with ourselves after Sunday
Service ringing**

Continued overleaf

Hungerford (continued)

This sign caused quite a chuckle. Might be useful to copy it if your organist plays too loudly or the congregation are prone to singing distractingly!



**Chillin' at the hotel
post-ringing
and
pre-curry.**



Most recently we had Dave's significant birthday to celebrate and, although we didn't get the quarter, we had drinks at Andrea and Maurice's afterwards. The following evening after practice, Dave treated us all to pizza at the Three Swans. This was also the last practice for our regular visitor Sarah, who is moving to the West Country and a significant birthday for Mike Hurst, who it turns out, is thirty years and one day younger than Dave!



So quite a bundle of events to celebrate!

Mark Robins

East Garston

The bells of East Garston go from strength to strength. Since their return last year, we have been very pleased to welcome a couple of visiting bands, which has not been the case for some years & it is very nice to think that all the hard work of the restoration is being appreciated. Work on the tower is still on going and should be completed this year. With new louvres installed and the necessary stone & roof work completed we will be able to finally reduce the level of sound in the ringing chamber. Although it is acceptable at the moment it will be nice for the ringer calling changes or conducting methods not to have to shout



Practice nights are usually well attended and with outside support we normally have at least 8 ringers but with the holiday season once again up on us we regularly combine with Great Shefford to make the practices worthwhile to all.

Once a month we hold a Valley Practice which incorporates East Garston, Lambourn & Great Shefford ringers. We all take a turn at hosting, which seems to work well. Martin Rice & recently Mike Hurst have been a great support at these practices and we are all benefitting from their expertise.

We recruited 2 new ringers back in January 2024, they progressed well & were elected to the Branch, unfortunately for us 1 moved up to Northumberland, hopefully our loss is their gain, however Rosie is still ringing with us & is a great help with Sunday service ring & means with the help of Amanda & Nick from Lambourn we manage to ring all 6 bells for most services.

We asked our learners for their thoughts on learning to ring and this is what they said:

“Learning to ring the church bells has been a lovely way to get to know people in the village and beyond. I thoroughly enjoyed a recent trip we had to different towers and seeing some beautiful churches. It’s not as easy as more experienced people make it look, but it’s enjoyable & I like being part of an important village tradition”

“I’ve always loved the sound of church bells so to learn how to ring them was something I never imagined I would be given the chance to do. I’d never been into a ringing chamber and love the tradition and history of the bells. Everyone is supportive, with experienced ringers always willing to offer help on technique and constructive advice. As teaching takes place before normal practice, I’m so grateful for the time, patience, expertise and encouragement Rebecca and Maureen give to the learners. It is a huge sense of achievement to ring in rounds for the first time, do call changes and then finally your first service. It’s also been fantastic to ring bells in other churches in the valley. If anyone has listened to the bells and wondered if they could ring them, the occasional open Saturday mornings that are held are a great way to give it a try.”

Continued overleaf

East Garston (continued)

We held an open evening in Lambourn at the end of June, specifically for a couple of people that had shown an interest in learning, it's really gratifying to see their progress. We are hoping to hold another open morning in both East Garston & Lambourn in the Autumn, fingers crossed for the same success.

Going away from East Garston bells for a moment, we are really impressed with the work Nick Annetts has put into the new website. The calendar is really useful & we will be putting our next recruitment morning on there as soon as a date has been arranged.

Maureen Velvick

Details of the Branch Website.

Written by Nick Annetts our webmaster and repeated from an earlier edition, in case anyone needs to refer to it:

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 send 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

Midgham

At the end of December I took a call from the daughter of a gentleman called Christopher Pettifer who's funeral was coming up. She asked if I could ring the number 5 bell at her fathers funeral on January 9th. I wondered what the connection was, so made enquiries. It turned out that Christopher had been captain at Midgham some time in the past. After the funeral I discovered that indeed he had been captain at Midgham and Marcus Allum remembered him from the early eighties. He had had a daughter and two sons who he taught to ring and he always rang the fifth. He lived in a house opposite Midgham lane on the A4 and he has now been laid to rest in Midgham church yard.

On Saturday the 10th May a quarter peal was rung to mark the eightieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War.

Midgham, Berkshire

St Matthew

Saturday, 10 May 2025 in 41m (5-0-9 in C#)

1260 Great Grandsire Minor

[View composition](#)

- 1 Carol Waller
- 2 Ken Waller
- 3 Joanne A Waller
- 4 Gemma Hurst
- 5 Mike Hurst
- 6 Ben Waller (C)

Rung to commemorate the 80th anniversary of VE Day.



Shaw

On May 6th a quarter peal was rung to mark the eightieth anniversary of VE Day.

Shaw, Berkshire

St Mary

Tuesday, 6 May 2025 in 41m (7-0-12 in A)

1260 VE Day Bob Minor

- 1 Rosamund Durham
- 2 Gemma Hurst
- 3 J Martin Rice
- 4 John Durham
- 5 Michael Hurst (C)
- 6 Mark Robins

For the 80th anniversary of VE Day.



Roy Pratley

First Friday practices

Attendances have been very pleasing with numbers around 20. Well done to the less experienced ringers who have been brave enough to come along and ring in unfamiliar towers. A big thank you to those who come to support their ringers and those who provide strength to the ringing.

A few suggestions from me on how to manage strange bells.

Before you get to ring watch others and look out for rope lengths- will you need a box to reach or want a knot in the rope? Did people seem to be managing easily or were there some bells that looked as though they might be difficult? Any of the more experienced ringers will always be happy to offer guidance and make suggestions as to which might be the best bell for you.

Remember to pull right through (both strokes) and firmly but initially catch a little high/early (especially on small bells) so that you don't bounce the stay. Do make sure you know which number you are ringing! It can be confusing in different towers .

In order for you all to be able to make the most of ringing with a strong band around you I may sometimes ask you not to ring. Please don't be offended as I will make sure you get your go but again trying to give you as much support as possible.

Please do keep coming and I look forward to seeing you and am doing my best to get all your names right!

Forthcoming practices

September 5 th	Beedon joint with branch striking competition
October 3 rd	Yattendon
November 7 th	East Garston

Rachel Backhouse



Sue's Midweek Group

Four of our visits this year have been to Newbury Branch Towers. We started the year as usual at Thatcham, but Tony and I were unable to be there as we were attending the funeral of Tony's sister in Lancaster. In February we went to Shaw, followed by lunch at The Red Lion in Chieveley. In May we rang at Bucklebury and went to lunch at The Cottage Inn, being one of the most popular lunchtime venues. We went to Compton in June, which was the first time that the Group had rung there.

We returned to Harwell in March where our numbers were lower than usual and were pleased to receive valuable assistance from Philip Roberts. Lunch was at The Swan in East Ilsley, where Joyce Pack was in charge as Tony and I were unable to stay for lunch. In April, we rang on the six at Brightwell Baldwin, where Lin Rogers spent some time looking at the noisy rooks which were nesting in the Yew tree in the churchyard. We had lunch at The Red Lion at Chalgrove, where we were made very welcome. Unfortunately, the July meeting to Englefield had to be cancelled due to lack of support.

However, meetings remain popular with attendance usually being between sixteen to twenty ringers. Ringing is of a good standard, with methods ranging from easier methods to surprise minor and major.

My thanks to members for their continued support, to Tony and also to those who have helped in various ways.

Sue Smith



Bruce Lousley—A Tribute

Bruce was Tower Captain of Hampstead Norreys church for many years; we believe he was taught to ring at Yattendon by his father in the late 1970s.

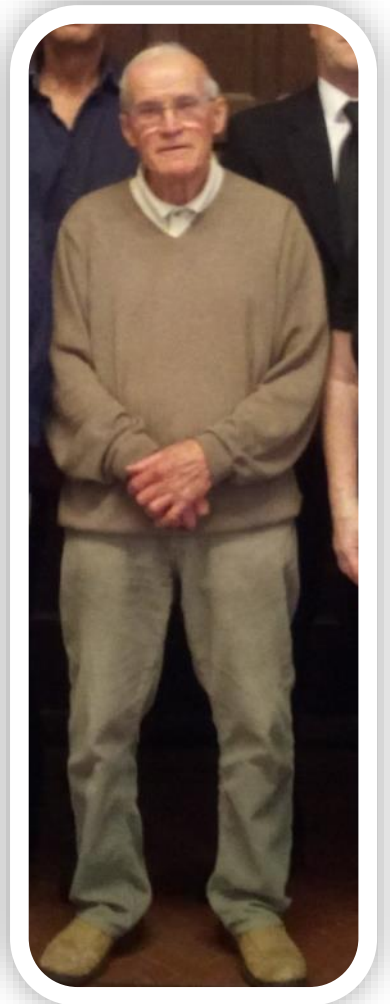
Together with Mike Spencer at Yattendon, he kept the bells of both churches ringing during a time when the band was diminished. Bruce's friendliness, loyalty and humour, and that he welcomed everyone to the ringing chamber, have been a great part in the revival of church bellringing in the two villages. He was also a member of Hampstead Norreys' handbell ringing team.

Bruce continued to ring as long as possible during his illness, and even after that wasn't possible he still joined us on Tuesday evening practice for support and chat. His knowledge of the countryside was extensive, and we learnt a lot about local history, trees and forestry.

In our great respect for this lovely, peaceable and gentle man we rang bells half-muffled before Sung Evensong on April 6th. As 'Bruce's bell' at Hampstead Norreys was the No4, a space was left in our rounds as a silent gap, to mark his absence. A few days later we rang a quarter peal of Grandsire — again half-muffled—in his honour.

A thanksgiving service for Bruce's life was held on June 21st, with a church full of friends, his favourite hymns and a medley on the handbells. This time we rang open in celebration for the life of someone simply described by all as 'a lovely, lovely man'.

Bruce's presence at ringing will continue to be felt for a long time by all his bellringing friends in and around Hampstead Norreys and Yattendon.



Marcus and Tessa Allum

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

Mark Robins—Editor