

# EBSB NEWS

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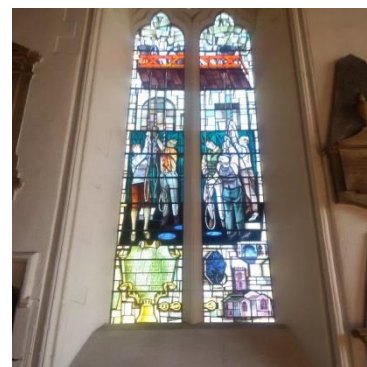
April 2017

## BACK AFTER A TEN-YEAR GAP

Much to their surprise and delight, a band representing High Wycombe has qualified for the Final of the National 12-bell Contest. This will be their 12<sup>th</sup> appearance in a final, seven of them in the 1990's, but the last Eliminator success was at Kidderminster in 2007, when the final was held at St Stephen's, Bristol. In the intervening years, there was no 12 bell practice at High Wycombe while the tower was awaiting restoration and, following the resumption of 12 bell ringing at the end of 2012, the former standards seem to have been rather difficult to attain.



Last year, despite the advantage of ringing 'at home', the band could finish only sixth out of eight in what was a very tough heat. This year the number of entries was well down and we found ourselves ringing against only four teams at Leicester, with the realistic prospect of finishing anywhere between third and last. St Margaret's, Leicester (known to many ringers as 'The Gate' and noted for its stained glass window dedicated to Ernest Morris) has a good sounding but notoriously challenging 33 cwt. twelve.



Some of the bells (notably the 9<sup>th</sup>) react unpredictably with others and there is some disconcerting odd-struckness. Following our allocated 90 minute practice there a few Sundays before, the feeling was that last place was the most likely!

The Cumberlands, one of the seeded bands, rang first, setting a good standard with some clean and steady ringing (a peal would have taken 3h 49) which we knew we wouldn't be able to match. Next came Norwich who have a challenging 12 of their own on which to practise. They seemed intent on matching the Cumberlands' style and managed to take at least ten seconds longer to complete their test piece. Bristol (the other seeded team) rang third, with a brisker performance, which was rather more exciting to listen to than the first two bands (3h 40). Walsall matched them for speed but not for accuracy. Then it was our turn. Although our test piece did not feel fast, it proved to be the quickest of the day (3h 38) and I thought that the first two thirds of it was really pleasing. Sadly, our ringing drifted off a bit towards the end but we were hopeful that we would finish above 5<sup>th</sup>!

Katie Town and Steph Pattenden, the judges, declared that Bristol were 1<sup>st</sup> (82%), SRCY 2<sup>nd</sup> (80%), High Wycombe 3<sup>rd</sup> (65%), Norwich 4<sup>th</sup> (62%) and Walsall 5<sup>th</sup> (55%). The High Wycombe band was: Angela Darvill 1, Patricia Newton 2, June Wells 3, Katharine Firman 4, Graham Firman 5, George Whiteside 6, Hilarie Rogers 7, Ken Darvill 8, John S White 9, David Cox 10, Charles Botting 11 and Robert Newton (C) 12.



So, it's off to Southwark Cathedral on 24<sup>th</sup> June for the challenge of ringing Cambridge on a newly rehung but significantly heavier ring of bells. The records show that High Wycombe has finished in all places in Finals except 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>. One of those is clearly a possibility this year! If you've never been to a 12 bell final (or even if you have) I can recommend it as one of the highlights of the ringing calendar and it's not too far to travel this year!

*Robert Newton*

## **Editorial:**

Once again I am most grateful to members who have sent contributions for this newsletter. It is particularly good to hear from Peter Jasper about the Wycombe High School girls. A few could already handle a bell, but most of them are being taught by Peter at an extra weekly practice at Hughenden – such good bells for new recruits.

Maryanne Roach has provided a summary of the recent EBSB AGM. In the absence of any other volunteers I have since taken on the post of Branch Secretary. We are very grateful to Maryanne for looking after the secretary's role for the past 18 months. She has brought the Branch correspondence into the 21<sup>st</sup> century so that everything is now computerised and stored so that it can be accessed by other officers. I am probably not the most suitable candidate for secretary – living outside the Branch, holding several other tower, Branch and Guild posts, and being a rather a "luddite" when it comes to computers, but I will do my best to keep things going. Many of you have known me for years, but I have been less active in the Branch during the past decade so I am aware that there are many new faces out there. I will try to get to some of your tower practices, and hope that you will attend Branch practices, so that I can get to know our newer members.

I am very pleased that Ken Darvill is continuing as Ringing Master. He has introduced tower orientated practices (see report of the practice at Burnham) which are proving to be very successful.

We are very grateful to John Dieppe for his work as Branch Treasurer and Membership Secretary. This post remains vacant so we must find a replacement. Please contact one of the Branch Officers if you might be interested in taking this on.

*Patricia Newton*

## **Data Protection:**

As members should expect, a record of their membership is maintained on a combination of paper and computer systems. These records are solely used for the administration of the EBSB branch and for notification of future events. They are not made available to any other organisation except for the central Oxford Diocesan Guild who have a similar guideline. If any member wishes to inspect the records held for them, please contact the Branch Membership Secretary (email: [membership@ebsb.odg.org.uk](mailto:membership@ebsb.odg.org.uk) )

## **EBSB BRANCH AGM**

30 members attended the AGM which was held at Chalfont St Giles on 22 April with ringing on the light, ground floor eight before and after the meeting. It had been decided to experiment with re-introducing a Service, using a Hymns of Praise-style; the Incumbent, The Rev Ian Brown, officiated and Fred Reynolds played the organ. Members had been asked in advance to suggest their favourite hymns and Jan Galloway, John Davidge, Peter Jasper, Maryanne Roach and Meryl Kennedy each introduced "their" hymn.



Obituaries were read for the three members who had died since the last meeting: Reg Renn (Clewer), Paddy McDermott (Slough) and Arthur Grout (Hitcham).



22 new members were elected and one re-elected; Keith Sugden (Denham) was present and collected his certificate from the Chairman.

John Davidge, Ken Darvill and Jan Galloway were re-elected unopposed as Chair, Ringing Master and Deputy Ringing Master respectively. Maryanne Roach (Secretary) and John Dieppe (Treasurer and Membership Secretary) both stood down, there being no nominations for the positions which have

now fallen vacant. It is obviously urgent that volunteers are found for these roles if the work of the Branch is to continue. There is also a vacancy for a Branch Representative.

Members were pleased to hear encouraging progress with the Youth Group and unanimously agreed that the Branch should fund the monthly tower donations – "money well spent".

The main discussion item was on the topic "Should the Branch introduce defined durations of office?" A number of points both for and against were raised and Branch Officers have agreed to review them before deciding whether to propose this change.

*Maryanne Roach*

## **PR Matters**

I joined nearly 50 other people for the seminar on public relations organised by the PR Committee of the Central Council and held near Warwick on 25 February. It was professionally designed and delivered, including a presentation and a Q&A session with guest speakers from public relations, and print and broadcast journalism, and breakout groups to encourage participation by all.

Rob Orchard of The Slow Journalism Company explained that the impact of digital media on traditional print news meant that newspaper editors are now desperate for stories, particularly if they are ready-provided with good content for free. His "golden rules" were:

1. Target individual editors by name – don't send out multiple generic press releases to "The Editor". Build sustained relationships – although this is not easy in the light of high turnover; the reporter responsible for church affairs is often short of material. An offer of exclusivity is powerful - but you can still use the same story again by finding a different angle.
2. Use flattery: "I really enjoyed your article on ..."

3. Be realistic – you must be able to deliver
4. Send a perfect email\* (but only after having spoken to the Editor by telephone)
5. Keep it short and succinct
6. Make them care – tell the Editor why he should run the story (the “hook”), and why now eg “People are interested in fitness now that it is Spring ... what better way than ringing bells ...”, “it is Mental Health Awareness Week – a number of our members have found ringing a great antidote to anxiety/depression”, “Some of our ringers are running in the Marathon ..”
7. Make their life easy eg by providing publication-quality photos and a ready-crafted headline (get students from a local arts/journalism college to assist?)
8. Follow up once by email, once by telephone, then take the hint!

\*His perfect pitch would be:

- Greeting
- Your name
- Flattery
- Who you represent
- What is the story and where/when should it be published, “hook”
- Story headline
- 2-3 paragraphs of description
- Attach suggested images
- Sign off

The topic of social media came up repeatedly; it was obvious that although some attendees had extensive experience of running a Facebook group or page, many admitted to knowing little or nothing about why or how to use one. It was suggested that Facebook pages should be titled and worded so as not to only target ringers, with 70% of their content being about the welcoming fun aspects, other activities and the tower’s community spirit, and only 30% about the ringing itself. Another idea was to join an existing Facebook page for the town rather than setting up a new one dedicated purely to ringing.

Whilst the Central Council website already contained much useful publicity material, further tailored presentations are being added: <https://cccbr.org.uk/services/pr/publicity/new-resources-2017/> There were also calls for a national bank of images (or links to the various individual sites where they might be found) and one of “soundbites”. There has already been progress on this front since the meeting: <https://cccbr.org.uk/services/pr/bells-and-bellringing/>

The timing of this seminar was highly opportune, coming as it did just after national publicity about York Minster, the accident at Worcester Cathedral, and the articles in the national press about Julie McDonnell and Mike Wigney.

One message I left with was that we should all be more pro-active in maintaining the visibility of ringing and a general “promotion” of ringing all the time. Whilst PR as a one-off activity is a vital and obvious part of any tower’s recruitment or fund-raising campaign, and the work of the Central Council at a national level is highly valuable, it was obvious that there is also a place for ongoing public engagement at a local level, using every occasion which might attract public interest. But perhaps more tellingly in these days of declining numbers of active ringers, I could see that modern media can be used to develop and maintain interest amongst ringers themselves; after all, who could fail to be “chuffed” when complimented on their Branch website (or better still Facebook page?) for having attended a Guild training course or on successfully ringing their first quarter?

*Maryanne Roach, Amersham*



## RADLEY COURSE

The 8th of April 2017 was a memorable day for me, a participant of the Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bellringers' "Radley One-day Course". Meeting at Radley Church, we were greeted by friendly organisers, helpers and teachers, serving tea, coffee and biscuits, to smoothly start off the sunshine-filled day-course. Tutor Colin Newman then provided us with valuable, substantial info materials to last way beyond the actual course day. After that, we were led to the first of 'our' three church towers for the day: Brightwell-Baldwin!

The entrance to this six-belled tower was well hidden behind the great organ, and I think it can be said that inside the tower it was really chilly! The cold, however, could not stop us from enjoying the first 90-minute ringing session of the day. Clearly, the beautiful bells of this tower not only were extremely pleasant to ring but also had a wonderful sound to them.

Brilliant, yet exhausting as the session was, we now needed some serious strengthening, so we quickly progressed to the Red Lion in Chalgrove, where we enjoyed some tasty, well-prepared food. A great opportunity also, to better get to know the helpers and socialise with the other course participants.

After lunch, we went on to Guild Master Hilarie Rogers's home tower: St Leonard is located in Drayton and was freshly refurbished and re-hung in July of last year. The bells, therefore, were strikingly beautiful! Colin then showed us an alternative ringing exercise, which proved quite challenging, even for some of the helpers!

We then moved on to the last tower of the day: Sunningwell. After climbing a narrow stone staircase, we were welcomed by a "loveliness of ladybugs", placing a smile on everybody's face. Here, we attempted our first ring of Touches, before we completed our total of 72 courses of Plain Bob Doubles of the day.



At the end of the day, Colin awarded us with personalised certificates. We then proudly returned to Radley Church, where we were treated to a scrumptious tea composed of a vast variety of delicious dishes, including a big helping of Sticky Toffee Pudding!

I would like to give my special thanks to the organisers, teachers, helpers and everyone involved, for making this day so enjoyable and successful!

I am certainly looking forward to coming back for more!

*Georgine von Enckevort, Clewer*

## Quarter peal at High Wycombe for High School Commemoration

High Wycombe has offered Grammar School education for boys in the town since 1562 when the Royal Grammar School was opened. Indeed by the 17th century, boys' schools had been opened in Marlow, Buckingham, Amersham and Aylesbury, but girls would have to wait several centuries before there was any secondary education provision within the county. Indeed, by the 1870's there were only 13 secondary girls' schools in the entire country and none of those in Buckinghamshire. If you were an 11 year old middle class girl at the end of the 19th century and could not afford a governess, you would most likely end up in a "cottage school" learning how to make lace or plait straw while your brother would have a choice of secondary schools.

In 1901, just 5 years after the town's first girls school, Wycombe Abbey School, had been started, the school that was to become Wycombe High School was founded. The first headmistress, Mary Christie (who was the first woman to be awarded a degree from St Andrew's University) enthusiastically started a curriculum that included such subjects that would have been considered proper for well off High Wycombe girls to study including Botany, French, German, Handwriting, Singing and Swedish Drill (a form of very gentle, and thus ladylike, gymnastics). The school continued to go from strength to strength until last year, when I was asked to come and teach Physics to the girls!

Ever since my arrival, I have tried to ensure that the bells of All Saints are rung by a band including staff and students from the school for the Christmas Carol service and so when discussions came up that ideas were wanted for ways to commemorate the 100th Anniversary of the death of Mary Christie, I felt that ringing would be a nice way to commemorate it. One of our sixth formers, Josie Godfrey has been an enthusiastic member of the Bucks and Berks Young Ringers and I felt that it would be nice for her to ring her first quarter peal for the school. After organising a band that included current and former staff and parents of students at the school, I invited Josie to ring her first quarter. By far the longest single piece of ringing she had completed, Josie covered very well and an excellent and fitting tribute was scored at the first attempt. Indeed, Josie even had enough energy to go on to join the practice at Hambleden that evening!

Ringing has continued to be popular at school (possibly in part due to its heavy plugging in a certain teacher's Physics lessons!) and there are now 10 girls at the school that are ringers. Maybe it will not be too long before bellringing joins Swedish Drill on the list of unusual subjects available on the Wycombe High School curriculum!



High Wycombe, Bucks. (All Saints) 17 Mar,  
1260 Plain Bob Triples:  
Sheila Bruce 1, Verity Nicholls 2, David Cornwall 3,  
Lavinia Sullivan 4, David Sullivan 5, Robert Newton 6,  
Peter Jasper (C) 7, Josie Godfrey 8.

First quarter at first attempt – 8. Rung by a band that includes present and former staff, students and parents of Wycombe High School as part of the commemorations of the centenary of the death of Mary Christie, the first headteacher of the school.

*Peter Jasper  
Head of Physics (and Unofficial Head of Bellringing)  
Wycombe High School*

## **Tower-Orientated Practice at Burnham**

The first Branch tower-orientated practice of the year was held on the morning of Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> March at Burnham. It concentrated on the ringers from Burnham, Dorney and Hitcham. These were augmented by other ringers from the Branch to enable the local ringers to develop and ring slightly more advanced methods. In total about 18 ringers gathered for an intensive two hour session covering mainly plain hunt, Plain Bob, St Simons, and Cloisters. We even rang All Saints Doubles which was a first for many of the more experienced ringers as well as the less experienced.

If you would like the Branch to organise one of these practices at your tower, then contact Ken Darvill at [ringingmaster@ebsb.odg.org.uk](mailto:ringingmaster@ebsb.odg.org.uk) or on 01494 713217. They will be orientated around the needs of your ringers and are in addition to the activities shown in the Branch calendar.

*Ken Darvill, EBSB Ringing Master*

## **Use of “generic” email addresses for tower correspondents**

Every tower in the Branch has a “generic” email allocated to it eg [amersham@ebsb.odg.org.uk](mailto:amersham@ebsb.odg.org.uk) or [beaconsfield@ebsb.odg.org.uk](mailto:beaconsfield@ebsb.odg.org.uk) etc. These are “directed” to the Tower Correspondent of the relevant tower on the Guild server, the Secretary and Assistant Server Manager ensuring that the appropriate link is made.

You’ll have seen that these “generic” email addresses are used on the Towers page of the EBSB website when you click through to details of a particular tower eg:

<http://www.odg.org.uk/ebsbnew/Wordpress/amersham/>

There are two reasons for this “generic” address: it allows us to publish contact details without having to publish your private email addresses and it removes time sensitivity as, even in occasional publications, it is never out of date (as long as you have notified the Secretary of any change in Tower Correspondent, of course!)

However, the eagle-eyed amongst you will have noticed that the ODG Annual Report still cites individuals’ private email addresses; indeed, one Branch member recently commented to me that this made it difficult to dispose of the Annual report when he/she received the new version. Officers have decided therefore that when the EBSB submission is made at the beginning of 2018, all the entries will be converted to the “generic” addresses.

So it is important that you let us know as soon as there is any change in Tower Correspondent; please don’t wait until the Treasurer comes begging for your subs! In addition, at least once a year the Secretary will “test” that all the re-directions are working by sending out an email to all towers using these email addresses – please respond!

*Maryanne Roach*

## PROPER TIDY

(Not like me!)

What do you look like when ringing? Once upon a time this was difficult for a ringer to assess personally because until the videotape/camcorder revolution of the 1980's it was rare to see ANY movie film or telecast of ringers in action, let alone of oneself. Nowadays of course you can even capture a few seconds of moving picture on your mobile phone or Tablet, to show your pupils their faults if they persist in them. Be warned! It can come as quite a shock to any one of us – what we fondly imagined as an impressive, compact, cohesive style of bellrope handling is revealed in fact as an erratic display of flailing limbs and eccentric facial expressions – elegant it is not! We can, of course, take heart from watching the eccentricities and graceless genuflections of other ringers: indeed I remember one prolific peal ringer from Essex who justifiably earned the nickname of “Quasimodo”, and another staggeringly proficient composer and conductor, a thousand-pealer no less, whose ringing contortions reminded me of a chimpanzee with stomach ache! (He could gnash his teeth, too – when you went wrong!) Both were highly successful ringers in spite of their ungainly techniques; but I think it is the naturally “Stylish” ones we should admire and seek to emulate.

I remember on an outing nearly 60 years ago watching Russell Gotham ring Watlington tenor to a course of Superlative and his graceful style, with just his arms moving effortlessly as he placed the bell exactly where he wanted it, has stuck in my memory as the ideal action ever since. I nudged Frank Corke (himself a neat ringer) and indicated this demonstration, “Ah, proper tidy” he said, “proper tidy”. (While we are still at Watlington in 1958 or 9, another memory of that visit is that we were admitted by a local ringer in a wheelchair, which was an unusual sight inside a church in those days. What's more he joined in a touch with us (it's a ground-floor ring), ringing from his braked wheelchair!)

Other superlative stylists who have been a pleasure to watch have been Stuart F Kimber, Fred Scott (Slough) and on the distaff side Stephanie Pattenden and the late Alison Surry/Regan. I wasn't present when these individuals were learning to handle a bell, of course, but from my own experience of many years teaching others to handle, this compact, almost motionless stance – just effortlessly stroking the bell along is a natural aptitude possessed by just a handful of people. Regardless of what the instructor tries to instil, they are just naturally co-ordinated, compact and completely at ease with a tail end or sally from the first moment they grasp it. That aside, the only other “activity” I have identified as almost certain to produce a stylish, graceful bell-ringer is that of dancing – ballet, ballroom or chorus – presumably thanks to near-perfect muscular co-ordination (and sense of timing). The same may well be true of gymnastics, but I've never taught one to ring. It DOESN'T seem to hold for “sports persons” generally. So, if you want a whole team of graceful ringers, recruit them from a Dancing School.

The first words spoken to me by an instructor (tho' not a very good one) were “Stand Still! Keep Quiet! Pay Attention to me!” – pretty sound advice actually, and very close to Troyte's famous “Listen! Look! Keep Quiet!” (Audi, Vide, Tace.)

*David Rowlands, Iver*



## PROGRAMME May – Dec 2017

<i>Guild Open Day &amp; 8-Bell Striking contest</i>	01 May 2017			<i>Bicester Branch</i>
Walking Outing	05 May 2017			
Young People's Practice♦	07 May 2017	15:00	16:30	Penn (6) HP10 8NY
<i>Guild AGM</i>	20 May 2017			<i>Tilehurst</i>
BP Penn (6)	25 May 2017	14:30	16:30	Penn (6) HP10 8NY
Young People's Practice♦	04 June 2017	15:00	16:30	
6-bell Striking contest	10 June 2017	17:00	19:30	Fulmer (6) SL3 6HD
TP Lane End (6) †	17 June 2017	18:00	20:30	Lane End (6) HP14 3HG
BP Wrybury (8)	24 June 2017	19:00	21:00	Wrybury (8) TW19 5DE
<i>National 12-Bell Contest Finals</i>	24 June 2017			<i>Southwark Cathedral</i>
<i>Ringing World National Youth Competition</i>	01 July 2017			<i>Birmingham</i>
Young People's Practice♦	02 July 2017	15:00	16:30	
BP Marlow (8) TBC	08 July 2017	19:00	21:00	Marlow (8) SL7 2AA
BP Beaconsfield (8) *	22 July 2017	17:30	19:30	Beaconsfield (8) HP9 1ND
Young People's Practice♦	06 August 2017	15:00	16:30	
BP Chenies (6)	12 August 2017	19:00	21:00	Chenies (6) WD3 6ER
TP Hughenden (8) †	19 August 2017	18:00	20:30	Hughenden (8) HP14 4LA
Young People's Practice♦	03 September 2017	15:00	16:30	
SP Iver (8)	09 September 2017	19:00	21:00	Iver (8) SL0 9JY
BP Hambleden (8)	23 September 2017	19:00	21:00	Hambleden (8) RG9 6RP
<i>Guild Michaelmas Training Day</i>	30 September 2017			
Young People's Practice♦	01 October 2017	15:00	16:30	
<i>Guild 6-Bell Contest</i>	07 October 2017			<i>Witney &amp; Woodstock Branch</i>
Lorna Newton Final & Half Yearly meeting	14 October 2017	15:00	18:00	Chalfont St Peter (6) SL9 9TW
BP Burnham (8)	27 October 2017	14:30	16:30	Burnham (8) SL1 7HX
<i>Steeple Aston Training Course</i>	28 October 2017			<i>Steeple Aston area</i>
Young People's Practice♦	05 November 2017	15:00	16:30	
TP Hitcham (6) †	11 November 2017	16:00	18:30	Hitcham (6) SL1 7DP
BP Hughenden (8)	18 November 2017	16:00	18:00	Hughenden (8) HP14 4LA
<i>Guild 10-bell Striking contest</i>	25 November 2017			<i>North Bucks Branch</i>
Young People's Practice♦	03 December 2017	15:00	16:30	
Branch Practice & Social	09 December 2017	18:45		Cookham (10) SL6 9SW
Post-Christmas Outing	29 December 2017			

The Calendar on the website [www.ebsb.odg.org.uk](http://www.ebsb.odg.org.uk) is constantly updated and can be printed out at any time.

♦ Contact [youngringers@ebsb.odg.org.uk](mailto:youngringers@ebsb.odg.org.uk) for invitation

\* It is suggested that those attending this practice have a meal together afterwards.

† Applications for this event will be invited about a month beforehand.