

EBSB NEWS

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April 2023

NEWS FROM HUGHENDEN



Our Tower Captain Steps Down after 50 Years

Eleven O'clock on Sunday 29th January was a special moment in Church because we celebrated a wonderful achievement and said thank you to a very special person. After approximately 50 years, David Cornwall retired from his post as Tower Captain here at Hughenden. He first took over the top job from Roly Biggs way back in 1970 and although there was the odd year when a couple of others tried their hand at it, he has always been there to take up the reins again when needed, and we've been in his capable hands ever since.

Under David's leadership we have a wonderful band of dedicated and committed ringers who offer each other great camaraderie, friendship and support and he has always been at hand; teaching and developing us as ringers, whilst at the same time keeping us all in order in the belfry.

Some towers have struggled to resume ringing since the pandemic, but in recent weeks our numbers have actually increased following a recruitment drive, and the future looks promising for the bells here at Hughenden. We all ring at least twice a week, calling people to Church every Sunday as well as attending our Tuesday night practices, and although David has stepped down from his Captaincy office, he'll still continue to be a central part of our ringing family here for a long time yet to come.

To mark the occasion on that particular Sunday morning, David walked down the aisle through a bellringers guard of honour to join Keith (our Vicar) at the front, where David was presented with a specially engraved commemorative handbell supplied by Bells of Whitechapel. We learnt that David was baptised here at Hughenden over eighty three years ago and he told us he's been involved in ringing here since about 1948. Keith went on to mention all the peal boards that he had noticed hanging up in the ringing room when he'd attended the bellringers AGM last month, and informed everyone that you'd have to go a long way to find any local towers without a peal board with David's name on it.

As well as the Church thanking David, the above photo shows the ringers at a celebratory dinner too. David for all your years of service and support, we are all incredibly thankful.

Verity Nicholls

Editorial

This is probably the shortest newsletter that I have sent out and the first since October last year, but I had received a few items of news from towers that I wanted to circulate. The next newsletter will be primarily a record of ringing for the Coronation of King Charles III. As yet there has been no specific suggestion of ringing time – just do what you can when you can over the weekend of 6th to 8th May. As Angela writes in her report from the Guild Committee Meeting, please try to advertise when you are ringing and why to the local community, then please post details of your ringing on BellBoard, adding Oxford Diocesan Guild to the report so that the Guild Officers can identify performances on our area. If you haven't used BellBoard before you may like to watch the video that is on the Guild website at:

<https://odg.org.uk/info/submit-a-performance-to-bellboard-video/>

As usual I am very grateful to those who have contributed to this newsletter. The information from Maidenhead may seem a little out of date, but Doreen is so pleased that, after a long period of little ringing at Boyne Hill, they were able to ring for the Queen last year and are now able to ring for most Sunday services.

Before Christmas Mike Spracklen sent a lovely poem to my husband, Robert. I thought others would enjoy reading it. For those who are not aware, Mike learnt to ring at Marlow in his teens but rowing took over. He became a highly regarded international rowing coach and it wasn't until after his retirement that he returned to ringing. Sadly his dear wife, Annie, passed away in February after a long battle against cancer.

Patricia Newton

Other news from towers:

Clewer:

A quarter peal was rung in memory of Vic Mitchell who sadly died in December:

Oxford Diocesan Guild

Clewer, Berkshire, St Andrew

Tuesday, 10 January 2023 in 45m (13-3-3 in F)

1260 Grandsire Doubles – Ten callings of 120 + 60.

1. Jane Cockman
2. Jacqueline Hazell
3. Jill Glennerster
4. Vikki Bulbeck
5. James White (C)
6. Lesley Cross

In memory of Vic Mitchell, shortly after his funeral service at the Royal Chapel in Windsor Great Park

Cookham:

Following the Ring For The King initiative broadcast recently on TV and radio, we're delighted to have gained two new recruits at Cookham. Both ladies have had a couple of lessons and are already showing great promise. We also gained a new learner a few weeks prior to Christmas. All three are very keen. They are being taught at Cookham by Roger Webb and David Brookes (Hitcham/Dorney), and we are extremely grateful for their help. In order to accommodate three learners, we have slightly changed our Tuesday night practice arrangements. Until further notice, we now have a dedicated learners practice from 19.30 - 20.15 hours, with general practice following on 20.15 - 21.30 hours.

*Marcia Dieppe
(Ringing Master, HTC)*

Maidenhead, All Saints, Boyne Hill:

We have been very fortunate to have four ringers move to Maidenhead to join us.

In May and June we rang for three weddings. For the Platinum Jubilee of HM The Queen we were able to ring on Friday 3rd June, and on 12th June a quarter peal was rung in celebration.

On Thursday 8th September we received the sad news of the death of HM The Queen. On Friday 9th we put full muffles on the bells and at 12 noon 96 pulls were rung. On Sunday 11th we rang eight in the morning. On Sunday 18th we rang six for morning service and a special Evensong quarter peal was rung. On Monday 19th September, the day of the funeral, we rang six at 10.00 am. The Vicar was very pleased with our efforts and met the ringers.

We continue to ring most Sundays. Charley Smith has rung a quarter peal and Elisa has learned to ring.

Just before Christmas, Gerald Newth, who had joined us from Rugby, was taken ill and sadly died on January 9th 2023.

Doreen Young

Notes from the Guild General Committee Meeting held at North Moreton on 11th March.**Bell Fund AGM**

New money raised for the Bell Fund in 2022 was £14,772 to which the EBSB made a generous contribution. Leaflets detailing how to leave a legacy to the Bell Fund are being distributed throughout the Guild, please contact the Branch Officers if you would like one.

Guild Committee Meeting

Tony Crabtree of the Towers and Belfries Committee said that last year's exceptionally hot and dry weather had severely affected belfries. E-mails were sent out to remind towers to check fixtures and fittings and he emphasised that there was still a need to carry on with these checks.

June Wells (Safeguarding Officer) reminded the meeting that all ringers should complete the C of E Basic Safeguarding Training as Church volunteers.

Stuart Gibson (Treasurer) presented the accounts and noted that it will probably be necessary to raise subscriptions next year.

Ring For The King has been well publicised recently and many recruits have come forward. It was noted that all this publicity was a little late to be truly useful for the actual coronation, but King Charles will be 75 in November so perhaps a project to Ring For The King's Birthday would be a good way to keep the interest of the new recruits going.

The important thing to remember is that if you do "Ring For The King" it should be publicised locally so that residents are aware of why the bells are ringing, and a record should be kept of all achievements.

Finally it has been suggested that there should be a Guild "Raising and Lowering" competition for which Robert Newton said he would consider donating a trophy. No details of where or when this competition would take place have been settled but it will be discussed by the F&GP Committee.

The Master, before closing the meeting, reminded everyone that there is a Guild Festival in Oxford on the 8th July.

*Angela Darvill
(Branch Representative)*

“Annie”
Mike Spracklen

‘Hear The Boat Sing’ has become ‘Hear The Bell Ring’, after decades of riding the waves,
A pertinent ploy for my closing page, from being surrounded by water to surrounded by graves!
From wide open spaces on beautiful lakes, to elegant churches one cannot but adore
To the comfort of a sally at the end of a rope: much kinder than sore hands one gets from an oar
And from out in all weathers come rain or shine, be it ice cold wind or hot burning sun
To warm cosy chambers up high in tall steeples, which climbing at my age, I must say is not fun
But satisfying contributing to enchantment that permeates across hills and vales that run deep
The projection of harmony one loves to hear, until bells start clashing with folks trying to get some sleep
The bell note that came from the end of oar is replaced by a bell note from the end of a rope
The exercise has physical limitations but for the mathematical astute there is ample scope
The bell notes from blades that made the boat sing, is replaced by real bells but not in a boat
Racing shells are built light for speed, and church bells are heavy, and church bells don’t float!
Performance in the boat rests with physical prowess, in the tower on an alert and active mind
Skill is essential to control both rope and an oar, precision only possible when all three are combined
From sitting and pushing horizontally with the legs, to standing and pulling vertically with the arms
Both are controlled by dexterity with hands, intricate skills about which there can be no qualms
From six hours a day to three hours a week, that includes Sunday which was once our day of rest
And from committed athletes to not knowing who will turn up, does put my resilience to test
Ringing bells like rowing shells call for hours of concentration, to be the best one can be
The quest for excellence is similar but not the same, there is no world champion in campanology
A whole new world of differing ideals, from diligent routines to a casual approach
An environment of friendly persuasion after obtrusive challenges that befall a coach
Sharing stress with ambitious athletes, who push themselves to physical extremes
To the serenity within church walls and the charm of bells ringing enchanting themes
Both indeed have similar appeals and time with friendly people comes first to mind
The joy of eight players moving together as one with rhythm and flow gracefully entwined
The pause before a hand stroke lead, is like the composure for a bell note catch
The aim of unity and pulling together as one is where rowing and ringing closely match
Relaxation and a long straight pull, with loose hold in defiance of a snatch or a grab,
Missing the sally or breaking a stay, is like dropping the oar or catching a crab,
Singing shells and ringing bells bring pleasure notwithstanding a different tune
But bells clashing like blades splashing is as popular as a power boat on a peaceful lagoon
The goal of eight men rowing the course in a shell, in world record time no matter what
Is now with eight ringers changing order 5000 times, standing for 3 hours on the same spot.
And the challenges from Montreal to Rio, and all those in between with different teams
Were not as daunting as Grandsire and Plain Bob, and complicated methods that only fill my dreams
After years striving for Olympic gold, the sweet sound of ringing bells has not come too soon
The Grand Challenge cup at Henley cannot compare with the Lorna Newton wooden spoon
Satisfaction comes in different packages, from years of preparation ‘till a race has been won
To climbing fifty steps up a narrow spiral staircase and pulling up a tenor that weighs more than a ton
Rowing and ringing have different appeals, but both bring pleasure we pray never to cease
Only one has no winners or losers and only one promotes prayers for everlasting peace
Calling people to church and not attending oneself, is hypocrisy one has to admit,
But with no ringers there would be no ringing bells, better some than none is the excuse I submit
Indeed Rowing and Ringing have different ideals from the raw beginner to the super star
But one place where they are exactly the same is that both begin with the capital letter “R”
And all skills benefit from 10,000hrs, where the Redgrave’s and Robert Newton’s are on a par
Dreams for me changed from Olympic Gold, the long journey and all that winning takes
To the peace and joy of ringing bells with nice people, and making no mistakes!
Ringing “Annie” in St Marys the Virgin in Turville, dedicated to my wonderful wife
Blessed with not having to climb a tall staircase,
I can hear her bell ring close to my heart for the rest of my life

Info

When a racing shell travels fast through water, it makes a high pitch whine rowers call "Hear The Boat Sing", A "Bell Note" is the sound a blade makes when it grips, although it is more like a "crack" than a "ring"

Robert asked me to add that he is rather embarrassed about the comparison with Sir Steve Redgrave, although he could introduce Mike to some real ringing superstars, not necessarily beginning with R! - Ed.

Programme for 2023

Sat	22 Apr	3.00 – 6.30 pm	Maidenhead (8)	Branch AGM
Mon	1 May	All day	Chiltern Branch	Guild Open Ringing Day
Sat	13 May	7.00 – 9.00 pm	Chalfont St Peter (6)	Branch Practice
Sat	20 May	All day	Witney & Woodstock Br	Guild AGM and 8-bell contest
Sat	27 May	2.00 – 4.00 pm	Iver (8)	Branch Practice
Sat	3 Jun	9.00 am – 5.00pm	Amersham	ART M1 Course
Sat	10 Jun	5.00 – 7.30 pm	Chesham (6)	Branch 6-bell Striking Contest
Weds	14 Jun	10.00am – 12.00	Fulmer (6)	Branch Practice
Sat	24 Jun	10.00am – 12.00	Wraysbury (8)	Branch Practice
Sat	8 Jul	All day	Oxford	Guild Festival
Sat	22 Jul	2.00 – 4.00 pm	Slough (10)	Branch Practice
Sat	12 Aug	10.00am – 12.00	Stoke Poges (8)	Branch Practice
Sat	26 Aug	10.00am – 12.00	Clewer (6)	Elementary Branch Practice
Sat	9 Sep	2.00 – 4.00 pm	Amersham (12)	Branch Practice
Sat	23 Sep	10.00am – 12.00	Old Windsor (8)	Branch Practice
Thurs	28 Sep	10.00am – 12.00	Clewer (6)	Branch Practice
Sat	30 Sep	All day	Local branches	Michaelmas Course
Sat	7 Oct	2.00 pm onwards	Chipping Norton Branch	Guild 6-bell contest
Sat	14 Oct	5 – 7.30 pm	Chalfont St Giles (8)	Final of Lorna Newton Contest followed by Half Yearly Meeting
Sat	28 Oct	2.00 – 4.00 pm	Bray (8)	Branch Practice
Sat	28 Oct	All day	Steeple Aston area	Guild Steeple Aston Course
Sat	11 Nov	7.00 – 9.00 pm	Beaconsfield (8)	Branch Practice
Sat	18 Nov	10.00am – 12.00	Marlow (8)	Branch Practice
Sat	25 Nov	All day	Banbury Branch	Guild 10-bell Striking Contest and General Committee Meeting
Sat	9 Dec	5.30 pm onwards	Hughenden (8)	Branch Practice and Social

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING at All Saints, Boyne Hill, Maidenhead On SATURDAY 22nd APRIL 2023

Open ringing 3.00 pm

Service 4.00 pm

Tea approx. 4.30 pm

AGM approx. 5.00 pm (depending on the length of the service)

If time, there will be general ringing after the meeting until 6.30 pm.