

EBSB NEWS

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September 2024

Welcome to the September edition of the EBSB Newsletter, it's great to keep up with what's going on in our branch and in your towers. If you have anything you'd like me to put in the next edition please email me with your report and any pictures you may have, the more the merrier.

Lyn Lee Newsletter Editor

Striking Competition news

EBSB Branch 6-bell Competition

This year's 6-bell striking competition took place on 8th June on the lovely light six at Hitcham. The judges were Nigel Mellor and James Moynihan from Sonning Deanery Branch. This was a new experience for James, so the small number of entries gave him a gentle introduction to judging. James is no stranger to EBSB or to taking part in striking competitions because he rings with the Bucks and Berks Young Ringers.

The results were:

1st High Wycombe 19 faults
2nd Amersham 31 faults
3rd Clewer 102 faults

Refreshments were served by Roger Webb (Hitcham Tower Captain) and his wife, for which we were most grateful. I failed to take pictures of each band but did take one in the tea room and one of the winning team from High Wycombe.

Patricia Newton



Guild 8-bell Striking Competition

This was held on 18th May, the morning of the Guild AGM at Stoke Poges. The test piece was a two course touch of St Clements College Bob Major, which was not quite as straightforward as might be supposed. There was a good entry of seven bands, all of whom made a reasonable job of ringing these bright and exacting Gillett bells. The judges – Caroline Prescott and Chris Ridley from Surrey – commented that in several bands the front and back bells seemed to ring at different speeds from each other, and that faster ringing generally produced a better result.

Placing	Rang	Time m/s	Score %
1 EBSB Branch	3rd	9min 19sec	91%
2 Reading Branch	5th	9:26	89
3 Newbury Branch	6th	9:19	82
4 North Bucks Branch	7th	9:40	79
5 Sonning Deanery Branch	2nd	10:05	78
6 Windsor Castle	1st	9:48	76
7 Oxford City Branch	4th	9:37	72

It was good to have two bands from our branch participating: quite like old times!

The EBSB band was Tom Davies 1, Annie Davies 2, Fiona Wheeler 3, Angela Darvill 4, Ken Darvill 5, Matthew Johnson 6, Stephen Wheeler 7, Robert Newton (C) 8.

As there was a wedding after the contest, time was short but everything seemed to go smoothly. Our thanks go to the Stoke Poges ringers and their incumbent for their hospitality. It was rewarding to be able to make full use of 'home' advantage on this occasion.

Robert Newton



New Members outing 10th August

In the midst of the summer holidays, new EBSB members joining in 2024 were invited to their first branch outing. Luckily I was not on holiday, work or anything else, so happily signed up. I am very glad I did too, as I would highly recommend this course to future new members.

It is always nice to visit new churches, and this day involved visits to Clewer (ground floor ring, but beware of traffic wardens), Cookham (very smart tower Cookham with nice carpets and sallies!) and Shottesbrooke (an old 13 century church on hidden private estate, no facilities so beware but it did have a robotic Hoover sweeping up the bat poo!). It was the ringing experience however this course provided which was the focus. We had a small group, 5 newbies in total, and this small number meant we were all put to work together straight away. As soon as Vikki deemed we could just about ring together, there was very little swapping in and out. This gave us all hours and hours of ringing time on the ropes. Just what we needed. I did suffer my first ever ringing blister as a result. My 'new experience' also included a rope snap, which was rather alarming, but I was reassured calmly that this was not my fault!

A huge thank you to Vikki who patiently tutored us all day, also Di, Jane, Rob, Matt, George, John and many of the Cookham band who supported us. Thank you for providing your time generously and freely, and for the excellent tuition, advice and support. I just apologise for the times whilst hearing your instructions, my actions were just not yet connected to my novice technique to change in response! Thank you Katie (Guild Master), for showing off the silverware, and the telling of the hilarious "Chievly" bowl story. Thank you for the refreshments in Clewer, and just overall a fantastic day.

A final note of feedback for any ringing 'marketing and advertising' teams as the little silver bell brooches have been the source of a number of friendly enquiries from non-ringing friends!

Thank you everyone, a very enjoyable day.

Caroline Pritchard, High Wycombe

The little silver brooch to which Caroline refers is the Guild badge

– available from the Guild bookstall, Branch secretaries and Guild officers priced at £1.70. I have plenty in stock!



Patricia Newton, EBSB Secretary

Oxford Diocesan Guild Sponsored Ringing Week in aid of the Oxford Diocesan Bell Fund



Every leap year during the last week of February the Guild holds a sponsored ringing week to raise money for the Oxford Diocesan Bell Fund. A trophy is then presented to the Branch that collects the most money per member. It was with great delight that I collected the trophy at the Guild AGM and I thank everyone in EBSB who contributed towards the total figure of £800 donated from our Branch. Quarter peals were rung at some towers, others gave donations for general ringing or just to support the event. Details are as follows:

Amersham:

The sponsorship was for general ringing at Amersham during the week. This included an evening of touches of Cambridge Minor and a QP on Sunday 25th Feb in memory of Bishop Alan. (about £132)

Sunday, 25 February 2024: 1273 Grandsire Triples: 1 Rosalind J Garrett-Bowes, 2 Martin Whitaker, 3 Janet Galloway 4, Godfrey C Reynolds, 5 John C Davidge, 6 Timothy J Yates, 7 Matthew R Johnson (C), 8 Christopher J Potter. Rung in memory of Alan Wilson, Bishop of Buckingham, by a band of friends of Lucy

Chalfont St Peter:

We did not ring anything specifically, but had a whip round from the ringers in the pub. I sent £60 payment to ODG.

Steve White

Cookham:

On Sunday 25 February, we successfully rang a Quarter Peal at Cookham to welcome our new vicar to the Benefice of the Cookhams and are 'using' this as a tower contribution for the sponsored ringing week. (Sunday, 25 February:

1260 Plain Bob Doubles 1&2 Leading and tenor covering: 1 Shirley Gostling, 2 Karen Townsend, 3 Kay Weallans, 4 Joan Mantle, 5 Mike Spracklen, 6 Andrew McKerlie, 7 Marcia Dieppe (C), 8 Martin Gostling.

To welcome Fr. Stephen Mills as vicar of the Benefice of the Cookhams. First Quarter Peal for Kay for 40 years

Marcia Dieppe

High Wycombe:

Sunday, 25 February: Quarter peal of 1260 Doubles (1p,2m) 300 Stedman, 480 Grandsire, 480 Plain Bob: 1 Sheila Bruce, 2 Ann Davies, 3 Verity Nicholls, 4 Patricia Newton, 5 Robert Newton (C), 6 Caroline Pritchard. First attempt: 6. Caroline started in March last year as a Ring for the King recruit. (£128)

Sunday, 3 March: Quarter peal of 1280 Yorkshire Surprise Major: 1 George Pickwell, 2 Ann Davies, 3 Angela Darvill, 4 Kenneth Darvill, 5 Tom Davies, 6 Robert Newton, 7 Patricia Newton (C), 8 Charles Botting. First surprise inside:5. First treble bob on eight:1. (£130)

Hughenden:

Hughenden rang on three occasions in the last week and raised £153. We only rang Plain Hunt and Call Changes but enjoyed participating especially as it involved all three of our newest recruits in turn, and it improved their confidence in ringing for longer durations as we rang for approximately 23 - 25 minutes each.

Verity Nicholls

Sunday, 25 February: Plain Hunt and Call Changes for 25m: 1 Verity Nicholls (C), 2 Diane Monroe, 3 Ann Davies, 4 Clifford Davies, 5 George Pickwell, 6 Tom Davies. We celebrate the progress of Diane since signing up for Ring for the King last year. Longest ring 2.

Tuesday, 27 February: Call Changes: 1 Rosalind J Garrett-Bowes, 2 Janet Galloway, 3 Clifford Davies, 4 Daniel Hipwell, 5 Laura Griffen, 6 Stuart J V Galloway. We celebrate the progress of Daniel since signing up for Ring for the King last year. Longest ring 4. (Verity Nicholls C)

Sunday, 3 March: Plain Hunt and Call Changes: 1 Verity Nicholls (C), 2 Ann Davies, 3 Clifford Davies, 4 Keith Monroe, 5 Tom Davies, 6 George Pickwell. We celebrate the progress of Keith since signing up for Ring for the King last year. Longest ring 4.



Lane End Sent a donation of £137 which was also allocated to the sponsored ringing week collections.

Patricia Newton

ODG Bell Fund AGM & General Committee Meeting,

Great Brickhill,

Saturday 9 March 2024

The AGM of the ODG Bell Fund was held at Great Brickhill on Saturday 9th March. The main business of the meeting was to accept the accounts and to appoint the Trustees. The fund has been going for about 50 years and is now worth nearly £1 million. It has made a number of grants over the years towards repairs, renewal and augmentation of church bells in the diocese. Current grants and applications can be viewed on the ODG website.

The Trustees have produced a leaflet about leaving a bequest to the fund in a will.

Money is invested in various funds. In the past the Diocesan Financial Advisor has provided investment advice but this role is currently vacant. The Trustees are considering options for when advice is required and has contacted the Charity Commissioners for guidance. The meeting felt that a professional investment advisor should be sourced.

The amount raised by the Leap Year Sponsored Ringing for the Bell Fund will be announced at the Guild AGM on May 18th at Stoke Poges.

The General Committee meeting which followed had received a certificate from ART thanking the guild for its support and donations in 2023.

The CCCBR has produced a poster to be placed in all towers detailing the Code for Ringing. This is available on the ODG and CCCBR websites.

Reports from various workgroups were given as follows:

Learning and Development Workgroup had held a Tower Leadership course at Long Crendon in February, and gave advance notice of other courses in 2024:

Sat 28th Sept, Michaelmas Course

Sat 26th Oct, Steeple Aston Course

Sat 2nd Nov, Grandsire Caters Course, tbc

Towers and Belfries Committee reported on the work they have carried out and gave some advice on stretchy ropes and other reported problems. They run several belfry and rope course each year, details on the ODG website.

Finance and General Purposes Committee meet regularly. One main project is MemberMojo (as already discussed). A new ringers' day will be on 6 July at Abingdon (those who attended last year really enjoyed it). They have also set up a number of 10 and 12 bell practices around the guild. The first was in Amersham and there is one at High Wycombe on 15 September. For other dates of events, see ODG website.

The members of the various committees were elected

The 2023 Guild Report was issued and a copy should have been received by each tower. The report is also available online but the feeling of the meeting was that the paper version should be kept. Odd Bob, the Guild newsletter, is also published twice a year. Is this necessary, or would one printed version and one online version be enough?

The Accounts for 2023 were presented. There is a current deficit as one branch, in error, failed to pay over the subs in 2023. This should have been rectified by now. Fees have been increased to get back on to an even keel. The donations to the Bell Fund, Ringing World and ART will be discussed at the AGM. *Jan Galloway, Branch Rep*

Tower News

Look To, Treble's Going...Cheese Scone!

St Michael's Church, Bray hosts summer teas every Sunday during July and August, with different members of the church community hosting. The bellringers were hosts on the gloriously sunny afternoon of Sunday 11 August. At Bray, we pride ourselves not only on our fine ring of bells, but also on a very strong sense of camaraderie among the team. With ages spanning 8-90-something, we are a sociable bunch, and pretty good bakers as well.

We provided a good range of homemade cakes and scones with all proceeds going to TVAP, our chosen charity: Home | Thames Valley Adventure Playground (tvap.co.uk). By chance, one of the staff at TVAP is also a bellringer at Cookham. After a slow start to the afternoon, the crowds appeared and were generous in their purchases; we raised £300 for TVAP.

Most of our ringers were in attendance, serving, washing up, demonstrating handbell ringing and giving Tower Tours. These tours were very popular, with lots of visitors heading up to the ringing chamber made famous in the Midsomer Murders bellringing episode. For those who had not ventured up there before, it was a chance to watch bellringing, see the peal boards, ask lots of questions and even have a go. There was also an opportunity to go up to the viewing gallery, from which they could look down and see the bells from above. It's always quite startling to see just how big the bells are, and how sturdy the beams in the belfry are. The most intrepid visitors also went up on to the tower roof. On a clear sunny afternoon the views over the neighbouring cricket pitch, the Thames, Windsor Castle and of course Slough Trading Estate were clear.

Having packed up at 5, the ringers headed over to the village green where we had a picnic supper, and a game of croquet.



Cookham

Despite the six month closure of Cookham bridge from approximately September to March, and the flooding earlier this year which basically cut all vehicle access off for the village, we were still able to maintain both service and practice ringing at Cookham during this period. We also rang for the Christmas services and, as is our usual custom, ringing in the New Year. One of the 'casualties' of the bridge closure and the flooding was the last-minute change of venue for the installation of our new vicar, Fr. Stephen Mills, on 11th January. This had to be moved from Holy Trinity to Cookham Dean. No bells there, so it was disappointing not to be able to ring for this very special service, however, we did ring a Quarter Peal to officially welcome the vicar on 25th February.

Our two learners were elected to the ODG at our Branch AGM in April. We also partook in the 80th Anniversary of the D-Day Landings ringing, on 6th June, as per the national request.

Due to the upcoming re-ordering of Holy Trinity, Cookham, the church will be closed from 16th September to 9th March 2025. At this point in time we are unable to advise if any ringing will be possible during this period.

*Please look out for updates via the EBSB eMail group.
Marcia Dieppe Ringing Master, Holy Trinity,*

High Wycombe

We taught several new recruits last year following the Ring for the King recruitment drive. Some decided it was not for them, one moved away but we still have Caroline, Sally and Julie ringing with us. Caroline has made excellent progress and rang her first quarter peal in February for the Sponsored Ringing Week.

When George Whiteside moved to Hampshire post-Covid we promised to visit him for our annual outing. It has taken a few years to do so but we made it on 8 th July, visiting 4 towers in his area. Selborne is George's new home tower, a ground floor eight, but he also helps out at Newton Valence (6) and Hawkley (a newly refurbished eight with a dark blue carpet so new that we used a dust pan and brush before we left to sweepup the pine needles that we had carried in from the church yard). Our final tower was Petersfield (8). Sadly our numbers were diminished, partly because of Wimbledon and England's quarter final match against Switzerland in the Euros, but those who made it enjoyed ringing with George again and catching up over the pub lunch.

We gained another George at the end of last summer. George Pickwell joined us from Boston, Lincolnshire. He had rung several quarter peals, especially on the tenor. We now congratulate him on ringing his first peal:

Oxford Diocesan Guild High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire All Saints

Saturday, 17 August 2024 in 3h 6 (11–0–09)

5056 Plain Bob Major

Composed by J R Pritchard

1 Ann Davies

2 Tom Davies

3 Patricia M Newton

4 Christopher M Tuckett

5 James F P Vockins

6 John R Fisher

7 George T Pickwell

8 Robert Newton (C)

First peal attempt:7.

Rung as a birthday compliment to George.

Our new bells were installed in 2012. After 12 years the bell chamber was getting coated with spiders webs, debris off the wall and other general dirt so six of us spent a morning cleaning the walls, walkway, floor, bells and frame, in addition to clearing up the feathers from the roof of the tower left by the peregrine falcon chicks. It was a mucky job but it looks so much better. We're thinking of applying for a Guild Tower Maintenance Award before it gets messy again!

Patricia Newton, Tower Captain

St Lawrence West Wycombe

Before lockdown (that does seem like a very long time ago) a new band was taught to ring as part of the Ringing Remembers Initiative. We had 6 adults come along to learn to ring from scratch and our big adventure started around October 2017.

It was hard, there's no two ways about it. After about 6 months we had all 8 bells ringing with all the new ringers taking part, something that hadn't happened in our tower for a very long time. We carried on through 2018 and 2019, learning and refining our call changes and having a go at plain hunt, and then lockdown happened. Our last ring was March 2020.

At the same time, the church and tower were undergoing structural investigations and consultations as to what was going to happen due to the dwindling congregation and expense of keeping a mixed up mediaeval/Georgian church in good repair. It was decided after lockdown that the church in the village was going to be used for services and St Lawrence's effectively locked up.

Sadly, despite our best efforts to get ringing again we were constantly met with opposition from the architect. We couldn't ring for the passing of Queen Elizabeth II and having rung for all important occasions over the years, this hit us quite hard.

We went to the PCC AGM in April 2023 to say we wanted to ring for the King's coronation, a phone call was made to Archdeacon Guy who said if we could get the bells checked and they were ok, then yes, we could ring for the King.

A few phone calls and some swift action our bells were checked by John Davidge the following Wednesday and we were ringing on Thursday.

We have been ringing every practice night that we can since and get lovely messages on Facebook from the villagers saying how much they love hearing the bells.

But the church isn't being used for services, so now we have another issue. I was invited to a meeting with the Archdeacon along with a couple of other people and was asked about the idea of forming a CIO charity to take over the running of the church from the PCC. We now have a committee made up of some ringers and a few members of the chamber choir and we are currently winding our way down the CIO path. It's not easy and takes time but we have done a bit of fundraising to pay the bills. We are looking at over £750k to get the first phase of work done to the church. We have opened the church on a few occasions for afternoon teas and enjoyed welcoming the Young Ringers for their practice as well as holding a huge open evening for the recent D Day commemorations.

We're trying to keep it all going and it is hard but we are determined that we will succeed.

A huge thank you to John Davidge for coming over to check our bells so quickly and to Alan Keen for being there and helping teach our new ringers. We have retained most of the learners and have added to the team with a returner.

We do need some help moving them on to other things, if you're free on a Thursday and can help with moving the ringers on to treble plain hunt and bob doubles please let me know. You will receive a warm welcome.

Lyn Lee Tower Captain



EBSB Branch (and ODG) Programme

September – December 2024

Sat	Sept 14	Old Windsor (8)	19:00-21:00	Branch Practice
Sun	Sept 15	<i>Guild 10/12 bell practice</i>	<i>15.00-17.00</i>	<i>High Wycombe</i>
Thurs	Sept 19	Chalfont St. Peter (6)	10:00-12:00 (noon)	Branch Practice
Sat	Sept 28	Burnham (8)	10:00-12:00 (noon)	Branch Practice
Sat	Sept 28	<i>Michaelmas Course</i>	<i>All Day</i>	
Sat	Oct 5	<i>Guild 6-bell and Raising & Lowering Competition</i>	<i>Afternoon</i>	<i>Shottesbrooke and Twyford</i>
Sat	Oct 12	Fulmer (6)	14:30-18:00	Final of Lorna Newton Contest followed by half yearly meeting
Sat	Oct 26	Horton (6)	14:00-16:00	Branch Practice
Sat	Oct 26	<i>Steeple Aston Course</i>	<i>All Day</i>	
Sat	Nov 9	Chalfont St. Giles (8)	14:00-16:00	Branch Practice
Sat	Nov 16	Winkfield (6)	10:00-12:00 (noon)	Branch Practice
Sun	Nov 17	<i>Guild 10-bell practice</i>	<i>15.00-17.00</i>	<i>Bicester</i>
Sat	Nov 23	<i>Guild 10-bell Competition & General Committee Meeting</i>	<i>All day</i>	<i>St Thomas Oxford and Reading Branch</i>
Sat	Dec 14	Chenies (6)	17:30 onwards	Branch practice and social gathering

Please note that Windsor St John is no longer available for the practice on 28th September so the practice will be at Burnham instead.