

EBSB NEWS

February 2007

New 10 Rings Out at Cookham!



Monday 27th November saw the bells returning to Cookham – the existing turned and re-tuned eight, together with two new trebles, plus the brand new frame and fittings.

On Tuesday 28th November, the Bishop of Reading led a joyous service of blessing and dedication. The bells were set out in the Chancel, looking magnificent with their new, bright red headstocks all lined up and in full view of the clergy, choir and congregation. Margaret Harrold (who together with her husband David donated the new 2nd), made a beautiful garland of flowers which was laid in front of the two new bells. All in all a truly majestic sight.

Fr Michael had put together an inspiring and very special service. Bishop Stephen gave an interesting sermon, following which he blessed the two new bells with Oil of Chrism. Then, with the Cookham ringers flanking the bells, all were blessed with the Holy Water – and that included the ringers, much to everyone's amusement! A touch of 3 leads of Kent Treble Bob Royal was then rung on handbells by Graham and Katharine Firman, Ken

and Angela Darvill and Marcia Dieppe.

Many members of the Cookham congregation and PCC attended the service, along with a number of EBSB branch members, Guild Master, Guild Treasurer and various sponsors and friends. This was one of the very few occasions when the bells could be viewed especially by non-ringers, and many people spent some considerable time after the service having an in-depth look at them and asking lots of questions. Many were fascinated to see the bells close up and to be able to actually touch them, walk around them – and take lots of pictures. Some had no idea of the size of the bells, others were very interested to see and read the inscriptions. Afterwards, about 100 people, including the Bishop, attended a Reception in the Parish Centre.

All agreed it had been a wonderful and very unique occasion.

The bellhanger, Alan Britton, along with a band of helpers, had the brand new frame installed by Saturday 1st December and all 10 bells either fixed, or

at least resting, in their pits. Builders were in the following week securing all beams into the walls and Alan was back on site w/c 11th December to start fitting up. This work had to be put on hold whilst new flooring under the bells was installed, but Alan was back again w/c Monday 18th to complete the work.

The evening of Friday 22nd December was our first try-out of the new 10. And what an evening! Smiles all around as the 10 rang out for the first time. Nigel Taylor of Whitechapel had done an exceptional job on the tuning, and Nicholson Engineering had made a super job of the installation. Andrew Nicholson himself was also there to hear the final result.

All the stops had been pulled out, enabling Cookham bells to ring again for Christmas.

Enormous thanks must go to all those who have given so generously of their time and energy to make this project the success it undoubtedly has been. Particular thanks must go to John Davidge,

Robert Harvey, Geoff Hopkinson and Freddie Daniel who, along with others, have given so much help. It's been hard work, but clearly worth the effort. Thanks too, to those who have donated financially, and to those ringers who are now supporting us with our new ten.

Marcia Dieppe



Cookham Ringers and friends on the occasion of the first ring – Friday 22nd December 2006

December Branch Outing

The Annual post-Christmas branch outing took place on Friday 29th December and this year we visited three ten-bell towers (all near the M25) in Surrey, the area in which the Chairman (who was organising the event) learned to ring. The first tower was St Mary's, Leatherhead, a 19cwt ring of 10 with nice easy-to-hear bells and a ringing room decorated with historic peal boards and photographs. In the 1920's this tower was at the forefront of peal and service ringing with a crack band containing many famous names. We didn't (quite) manage to achieve their standards but managed some very presentable ringing nevertheless.

Following a very relaxed lunch in the "Stepping Stones" at West Humble near Dorking (which this year everyone managed to find!), we moved on to St Martin's Dorking, a Victorian church with a very impressive spire and some equally impressive "high tech" sound controls. This is a 25cwt ring of ten augmented from eight in 1998 in memory of A. Patrick Cannon, a well-known ringer of his day, who was also my proposer for the College Youths. In those days you had to attend the proposal meeting, were sent outside while your proposer made the case for your admission, and then invited back to hear the result. Nerve racking! Once again, whilst some may have been "nerve-racked" the ringing here was quite good, ranging from rounds and call changes to Cambridge Royal.

The final tower of the day was St Mary's Reigate, another 19cwt ring of ten. Like Leatherhead, Reigate has had a ring of ten since the mid-1700's and was once a leading centre for ten-bell peal and method ringing for the area – not really surprising if you remember that rings of ten, in those days, were very few and far between. Once again we managed some passable ringing ranging from rounds and call changes to Yorkshire Royal.

From the comments received afterwards, it was a successful day, with many people stretching their boundaries, either by ringing on ten for the first time or by taking the opportunity to ring methods on ten which would not normally be available to them; we were fortunate that the twenty-four people who came included a number with experience in ringing on ten and who provided a good framework and support for those with less experience. I would like to thank Graham Firman & Robert Newton for sharing the load of running the towers and contributing to a very successful day. The ringing ranged from rounds and call changes (lots!) through Grandsire, Plain & Little Bob to Stedman, Cambridge & Yorkshire Royal.

Now for next year.....

John Davidge

MBE for Chalfont St Peter Ringer



Dr Rowan Hillson, a ringer at Chalfont St Peter was surprised and delighted to discover that she had been awarded an MBE for her services to Medicine and Healthcare in the New Year's honours list.

Rowan works as a Consultant Physician at Hillingdon Hospital in Diabetes and Endocrinology and is also an on-call general physician. In 1981 she established the BDA outward bound courses for people with diabetes – a worldwide first – and ran 30 courses in 15 years. 12 years ago she led the project to develop Diabeticare, the district diabetes centre at Hillingdon, which is now

internationally recognized. This was born of her interest and enjoyment in looking after patients and helping them to learn about their own condition. She especially values the way in which the patients in Hillingdon share in their own care, and contribute to improving care for others. She feels that her patients and colleagues, locally and nationally, all deserve a share of her recognition.

Rowan is also an award winning author, having written 5 books for patients with diabetes and 'Practical Diabetes Care', a textbook for GPs.

Rowan went to the Palace on Tuesday 13 February to receive her honour. She said it was very exciting but so dramatic that she confessed to feeling rather nervous. However, she managed her curtsy perfectly and remembered to walk backwards away from Her Majesty. After the presentation she enjoyed a lunch at the Ritz and then home and back to normal life.

Congratulations Rowan on your well deserved honour.



T O W E R N E W S

Chenies

Chenies tower no longer runs its practice on a Monday night. Due to very low numbers they have combined forces with Sarratt (Herts) for practice and alternate between the two towers on Wednesdays between 8.00 and 9.00pm.

However, due to low numbers even on a combined basis, they do cancel on a fairly regular basis. If anyone wishes to join Chenies at their practices please telephone Sandy Homewood on 01923 282430 to find out if it's on and at which location!

Hambleton

Hambleton's bells are at the foundry being retuned with work on the frame currently being carried out. They are due to be returned and installed for ringing week commencing 12 March. The two new trebles have been cast and were blessed and named last month. The inscriptions read:

- 1 – To the glory of God. The people of Hambleton gave me.
- 2 - In honour of Her Majesty the Queen's 80th birthday year. The people of Hambleton gave me.

Obituary

John Cook of Hambleton died Saturday 10 February. He was associated with Hambleton tower for many years, ringing and maintaining the bells. He will be much missed.

High Wycombe

Another busy Christmas period is over and we have started the New Year in cheerful spirits but, sadly, with a depleted band due to so many of our ringers leaving the area in the last year or so. We are hugely grateful for the support we receive from our regular visitors, both on Sundays and at our practice nights on Mondays.

The 12 bell band are 'gearing up' for the eliminator stage of the competition at the end of March. We are drawn to ring at Kidderminster, facing tough opposition, but we are remaining focused and will be trying to reach the final again, this year in Bristol. We will also be hoping to have success in other striking competitions this year – following on from our success in the Guild 6 bell contest in October. The Guild 6 bell contest was held at the beginning of October in the Sonning Deanery Branch. High Wycombe were drawn in the eliminator at Shottesbrooke, making the cut for the final on the back 6 at Twyford. The band, ringing Grandsire Doubles, were convincing winners with 9 faults, Aston Clinton were second with 35 faults and Shrivensham 3rd with 37 faults. The ringers for High Wycombe were: Annie and Cliff Davies, Pat and Robert Newton, Charles Botting and George Whiteside.

Sheila Bruce

Branch Christmas Social 2006

Never been to a Barn Dance? If so, you have missed out on one of the great pleasures of life! For the Branch Christmas Social last year the Cookham ringers put on a wonderful evening of dancing, food and fun. Their bells were out of the tower for rehousing so there was no ringing beforehand, but that did not stop about 40 members and their families turning up for a social that was just a little bit different.



One of the key requirements of going to a Barn Dance is to have no prior knowledge of any sort of dancing. Even having watched *Strictly Come Dancing* would put you at a disadvantage. Our 'caller' for the evening was Freddie Daniel who talked us through the steps in time with the folk music. "This is just like *Grandsire Triples*", he said, "you just need to count up to seven". It was amazing to see so many have trouble with this as we weaved in and out of a line of dancers, with the result of everyone falling over each other, stepping on each others' toes, and generally making a fool of themselves. Great fun!



At the end of the first dancing session we moved to the adjacent room where Marcia Dieppe and her willing band of helpers served out a delicious meal of lasagne and superb puddings. While all this was going on we had the attraction of the tombola where there were lots of prizes with David McKenzie keeping an eye on things to ensure there was no cheating.



Freddie and Ruth showing how to do this dance properly and Marcia demonstrating her curtsy

And then onto the second dancing session. It was at this point that Freddie announced that dancing wasn't actually allowed in the hall and there was the potential of everyone getting arrested (or something like that). But that didn't dampen our enthusiasm for more do-si-dos and left arm swings. Sensibly we started after the food with some slower numbers, but gradually built up to some energetic dances that gave everyone the opportunity to show that they are much better at ringing than trying to match Bruce Forsythe.

Thank you Cookham for a splendid evening. It was one I definitely will not forget for some time.

Graham Firman



A LEARNER'S TALE



by **Lucy Clayton & Robert Harvey**

About two years ago we independently saw articles in the local paper seeking new ringers for Chalfont St Giles. Enquiring phone calls & exploratory visits followed - ending with the inevitable question "so would you like to join us then?" The first lessons were held on a one to one basis and were perhaps the most bewildering. There was just so much "stuff" to learn and the understanding of each new term usually didn't sink in immediately.

The lashed 4th bell then became our sole experience, under John Davidge's tender direction of course, over the coming weeks. Dating from 1742 it has clearly seen many newcomers in its time - ordinary people from all walks of life - all with a common desire to learn to ring coupled with natural apprehension about controlling the ancient and precious metal gyrating overhead.

Eventually we were invited to join the Sunday ringing band to ring half a bell. This progressed to the whole bell once basic competence had been demonstrated. To experienced ringers it may sound insignificant, but the satisfaction of ringing rounds (call changes to one side for the moment) for the first time was immense and reminiscent of being able to ride a bike without stabilisers for the first time as a child. Standing the bell was always a challenge, it never seemed to be a problem on one to one practice evenings - only on a Sunday with everyone watching, and listening! We then started to learn to ring each of the eight bells, getting used to their different weights and idiosyncrasies. A milestone at this point seemed to come with the invitation to ring the service bell - and of course standing it when directed.

Call changes occupied many months of slow progress - two steps forward and one step back, and we're convinced that regression is a very real factor at this stage in learning. Forgetting which bell you are, not hearing calls properly, forgetting who is in front of you (and who's in front of them) - all combine with panic which increases exponentially when a mistake is made and conspire to make life interesting for the learner. You also feel very appreciative of the patience of the others in the band - however, they seemed to regard it as an investment for the future and point out that they were learners once too.

Early 2006 saw a broken stay by Robert, progression to ringing the Tenor behind and ringing the treble to Grandsire and Plain Bob. This kept us both challenged for many months until we finally managed to achieve mistake free plain courses in each.

After gaining basic competence, visits to other towers soon followed - usually as organised outings. This was a further eye-opener - the sound and feel of ringing in different towers varied so widely - heavy bells, many bells, long ropes, adjacent obstacles such as walls and ledges. It made you really think about your rope-handling style. So much experience was gained from these which I'm sure has accelerated the learning process as well as being an enjoyable day out. It was especially a privilege to ring in Guildford Cathedral.

One of us (Robert) has developed a keen interest in the mechanics of the bell-tower and has helped in the dismantling of the bellframe at Cookham and its subsequent replacement/reconstruction for the accommodation of two extra bells.

The assumption is that progress is being made as we have just started to ring the 2nd to Grandsire. Currently we are pressing ahead with more practice and understand that there might be some learners about to join St Giles.

The Ten-bell Striking Competition

Saturday 25th November was the date of the Guild Ten-bell striking competition, which this year took place at Banbury. This is a competition for Branch bands and six teams took part; EBSB entered a band and we had high hopes of improving on the result of the eight-bell competition, when we tied for first place with Reading, and last year's Ten-bell when we came a close second to Reading on their own ground. The test piece was a minute of rounds followed by a touch of 269 Grandsire Caters, which we rang well but, in the event, not quite well enough since once again we finished second – behind Reading!

A summary of the comments of the judges (Pete Tombs and Mike Dew) for each of the bands is set out below, together with the score and the estimated peal speed for the ringing: -

Reading 3hrs 7mins
8 faults
Excellent rounds, and it was a pleasure to listen to most of the changes. Small clusters of minor faults.

EBSB 3hrs 7mins
9½ faults
Good rounds and very good opening changes. Technically a very good piece of ringing.

Vale of White Horse 3hrs 12mins
15½ faults
Ringing settled well and got better as it went on. Pleasant to listen to.

Old North Berks 3hrs 7mins
17½ faults
Good rounds but the changes were inconsistent with some problems with gaps when leading.

Banbury 2hrs 49mins
21 faults
This ringing was far too fast and there were even faults in the rounds. Didn't settle until the last course.

North Bucks 3hrs 33mins
25 faults
This ringing was little slow and inconsistent

Our band was: -

Alan Ainsworth, Ann Bethell, Charles Botting, Ken Darvill, John Davidge, Graham Firman, Meryl Kennedy, Patricia Newton, Robert Newton (C) and George Whiteside

and I would like to thank everyone very much for making the effort to attend the practices and for their ringing on the day. Reading can't go on for ever!

John Davidge

Notes from Your Guild Steward

I hope you find something interesting among the following bits and pieces, which I picked up at General Committee Meetings:

Communication: You may recall a recent article in this newsletter about improving "communication" throughout the Guild. The Working Group has now produced a report, a copy of which has been passed to your Branch Secretary and Branch Rep; Tower Captains should please ask him/her to see a copy and then discuss with the rest of their Band whether you agree with its proposals, and if so, how they should be implemented. As the previous article asked: "Are You Getting Enough?" – and is it the right stuff?

Tower Safety: Please can you all read the November 2006 issue of ODD BOB, particularly the article on "Risk Assessment in the Tower". Safety must be a paramount consideration, and this article gives suggestions for avoiding some of the risks and hazards that we may encounter during our everyday ringing. However, "safety" isn't just the Captain's responsibility - it is something we all have to contribute to. So please give this article some thought and help your Tower Captain to carry out a risk assessment – your ideas are important!

Guild Festivals. The 125th Anniversary Festival at Oxford was a great success. However, this raised questions about future Guild Festivals; these have been held annually in recent years and at various locations, but have been progressively less well attended. The General Committee have decided that Festivals should be held only every 5 years and will probably all be based on Oxford (as used to be the case). If you have any thoughts on this, please let your Branch Secretary and/or Branch Rep have your views or (better still) come to the AGM and tell everyone what you think.

Subscriptions for 2007 will remain at £5.50. However, another article in Odd Bob explains that the Chancellor of the Exchequer has changed the rules for taxing any interest that Societies' make on their savings and investments. The implications for the Guild are still being assessed, but Guild (and Branch) funds are now liable to Corporation Tax so the Guild's Budget for next year must make provision for this. And it is strongly recommended that any funds held by Tower Captains are formally incorporated into the Parochial Church Council accounts, so that they are not liable to this tax. **NB:** Please pay your subscriptions promptly (if only to ensure you are insured!).

Training New Ringers. If "The Exercise" is to continue to thrive, we should aim to have at least one trainee ringer in every Tower. Whoever is responsible for training beginners in your Tower should read the article "The Framework for Training Ringers" which can be downloaded from the Central Council's web site. **PS:** It's not a bad read for everyone else too!

AGM 2007 will be held at Beaconsfield on Saturday 19 May. Please put the date in your new diary as soon as you get it.

Brian Robson

Attracting new ringers

All ringing bands, some from time to time and some all the time, need to attract new recruits. If they don't, they die. Sometimes, having exhausted all the previously used avenues, it is difficult to think of new ones. The purpose of this item is to talk about some of the things we have done over the years at Chalfont St Giles, in the hope that this may help to open up new avenues, and also that other people might be prompted to talk about their experiences in future newsletters. So here goes: -

Ask a new recruit to find a friend. This has worked well for us and also has the advantage that the new person has someone at their own level to talk to/commiserate with. From an instructor's point-of-view, if you have two people at the same level (especially if they are younger) you can often play one against the other, which helps progress no end.

Hold an open day. Not very successful for us, so maybe we do it wrong. We usually get lots of interest, in watching the ringing and especially in going up the tower, but no interest in learning to ring (although we did once get the friend-of-a friend-of-a friend-of -a-friend who had been to an open day!). I would be very interested in hearing about those who have made this work.

Write an article for the Parish Magazine. I hope that you will note that I have not said "put an appeal in the Parish Magazine". The format I have found to be most successful is to write mainly about the history of our bells and about the history of ringing, and then to finish with a paragraph or two on the need to continually recruit to keep the tradition alive. I then "graciously indicate" that I will be happy to teach one or two people, and usually I get a response. I also, in the article, make the point that ringing is not hugely physically demanding (depends on your bells!) and does not require a 100% attendance every Sunday. I think that it is important not to give the impression – even if it's true – that things are in terminal decline, as people are usually much more interested in joining something that is working well.

Use the local newspapers Now that you've spent the time writing an article, why not get it to the local paper. Most papers have a local news section (e.g. "Village voice") and if you find out who the correspondent is, they are often only too pleased to have some additional copy. In our case the local correspondent (who I have cultivated) got hold of the article, re-wrote it slightly so that it looked as if the paper had written it and gave us a prominent, separate, article. This was very successful as it produced Robert & Lucy, who wrote the item about learning elsewhere in this newsletter.

Use the web In Chalfont, we have a village newsletter and so it only took a few minutes to slightly modify the article and email it to the newsletter – it didn't produce any learners this time but from the comments from people I met it was widely noticed.

Paper the pews This has been the most successful method, so far, for us. At Chalfont, we now have "pew sheets" containing details of the services, readings, a prayer list etc.; we also have a photocopier. At Christmas we have at least four services where the congregation is expected to be around the two hundred mark and many of the people who come are those who only rarely attend. A whole new target group! So this Christmas I again slightly modified the standard article and produced flyers which were inserted into the pew sheets. Results – five potential learners, of which one has already started and two will do so as soon as they come back from holiday. If your church does not have pew sheets then you could put flyers on the seats – which is what we used to do (for non-ringing advertising) before the pew sheets came along. The next major service in most churches is Easter, so if you were thinking of "advertising" this would be a good time to do it.

I hope that the above may be helpful if you are wondering how to attract new recruits and, as I said at the start, I hope that other people will let us know what has worked for them. Obviously, once you have your learners you have to train them and, just as importantly, keep them. But that's another story.....

John Davidge

Next Youth Practice

Sunday 18th March 2007

White Waltham (6)

2.30 – 4.30 pm

See separate poster in your tower for more details

100 CLUB WINNERS		
<p>We don't appear to have published a list of winners for quite a while, so here are all those who have been lucky since last July.</p> <p>A new '100 Club year' began in October and we currently have 159 members, which is several down on the previous year due to one or two towers not responding, so the monthly prizes have been reduced by one.</p>	<p>JULY 2006</p> <p>£10 133 Jane Cockman Clewer £5 98 Eileen Stevenson Slough £5 50 Roger Webb Hitcham £2 80 Penn Tower £2 87 Elwyn James Chalfont St. Giles £2 121 Winkfield Tower £2 156 Bernard Poole Marlow £2 137 Sarah Roddy Clewer</p>	<p>OCTOBER 2006 (new year – new numbers)</p> <p>£10 31 Jane Cockman Clewer £5 113 Mandy Salter Cookham £5 29 Tony Dell Clewer £2 129 David Milne Marlow £2 69 Bray Tower £2 121 Paulann Walker Burnham £2 73 John Dieppe Bray</p>
	<p>SEPTEMBER 2006</p> <p>£10 83 John Davidge Chalfont St. Giles £5 128 Clewer tower £5 68 Richard Hoey Bray £2 164 Angela Bass Fulmer £2 7 Geoff Hopkinson Beaconsfield £2 58 Burnham tower £2 48 Les Hart Hitcham £2 65 Wenda Fowles Bray</p>	<p>DECEMBER 2006</p> <p>£50 6 Peter Sippitt Amersham £25 154 Denham Tower £10 30 Linda Jones Clewer £5 102 Patricia Newton High Wycombe £5 26 Clewer Tower £5 116 Winkfield Tower £5 142 Peter Legge Dorney £5 73 John Dieppe Bray £2 63 Alison Bayley Penn</p>

FUND RAISING COMMITTEE

Guild 125th Anniversary 2006 – we still have some of the 'special edition' mugs (£3.50) and engraved glass tankards (£9.50).

New(ish) Items - assorted fridge magnets and keyfobs, small white china bells with a design printed in blue (£3.50), also a small number of plain china bells with just a gold rim (£4.00).

Printer Cartridges - the collection of cartridges continues to be lucrative - don't bin your empty cartridges - give them to one of the Committee members.

Website - don't forget you can view our stock items on our website: www.bellfund.org.uk

Committee Members – There are currently five of us – Pat Newton, Angela Darvill, Trevor Woodward, Wenda and Derek Fowles. It really would be good to have another member – no special talents required, just a bit of enthusiasm!

Save the Date!!!

Saturday 30 June 2007

Branch Summer Social

Skittles at The Greyhound, Eton Wick

An evening of fun for all the family

More details to follow in separate poster