

# EBSB NEWS

June 2007

## MEET OUR NEW DEPUTY RINGING MASTER



Fred Reynolds pictured with Chairman John Davidge and Ringing Master David McKenzie

This year the Branch AGM was held at Burnham on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> April. Following a service at St Peter's and a delicious tea provided by the Burnham ringers, the meeting was attended by 30 members representing 11 towers as well as the Guild Master and Deputy Guild Master.

The serving Branch Officers were re-elected unopposed and we also have a new Deputy Ringing Master, Fred Reynolds of Chesham: a very welcome addition to our team. Fred's first branch practice in charge as deputy was at Fulmer on 26<sup>th</sup> May where we rang a pleasing variety of methods ranging from Grandsire, Little Bob, St Clements and Single Oxford to Oxford Treble Bob, Norwich and touches of Cambridge. Feedback from Fulmer residents in the pub next door indicated that the ringing was greatly enjoyed. If you have never yet ventured to a branch practice please do come along. You can be sure of a warm welcome and the opportunity to ring whatever you may wish to try if at all possible, as well as enjoying the social side of ringing in the pub afterwards.

# OBITUARIES

## Margaret Ann Bethell 1949 – 2007



Ann was taken ill on the morning of Good Friday (with what was subsequently diagnosed as a brain haemorrhage) and was rushed into hospital where, despite an initially encouraging prognosis, she died on the evening of Easter Monday.

Ann was born and brought up in Birmingham where she enjoyed a very happy childhood. Her parents were both keen walkers and while she and her sister, Mary, were in their teens they frequently went as a family to Wales, Devon or the Lake District on walking holidays so that walking and the “great outdoors” became and remained a significant factor in Ann’s life.

As a schoolgirl Ann went to church with her parents and there began her long and continuous association with the Christian faith. In her early teens she responded to an appeal for new bellringers at St. Lawrence’s Church in Northfield and has been ringing ever since. She soon started attending practices on the 10 bells at Kings Norton where she and Mary also joined the active handbell choir. It was at a meeting at Northfield in the late 1960s that Ann first met Alan Ainsworth, then Ringing Master of the St Martin’s Guild. Ann used to tell the story of how he went over to her after a spell of ringing and said “Well done, well done”. She then ruefully used to say that he had never been so complimentary to her since, despite their ringing nearly 300 peals and hundreds of quarter peals together.

Ann’s first peal was Plain Bob Major at Edgbaston in 1969 conducted by the redoubtable Rod Pipe. This experience must have been traumatic as her next peal was not for another two years!

Ann widened her ringing experience during her years in London, first as a student and then when she joined the telecoms side of the Post Office; developing a large circle of good friends and ringing many peals on higher numbers. In London in the mid 1970s she rang frequently with the University of London Society and then increasingly with the Society of Royal Cumberland Youths, ringing her first peals of Maximus at Shoreditch in 1975.

She moved to Bromley in 1978 becoming Tower Captain at St Peter & St Paul, Bromley, from 1979 – 1983 and also Ringing Master of the Lewisham District of the Kent County Association from 1981 – 1983. Whilst there she did much to encourage ringing in the area and showed a real talent for encouraging good ringers to join the practices.

In 1983 she moved to Harpenden which meant a happy inclusion in the first class band there led by Bernard Taylor and her organisational abilities were used to good effect.

In 1986 Ann met Rob: they were married in Harpenden in 1990 and, taking redundancy from her very pressured job in 1991 she and Rob moved to Chalfont St Giles. There was some competition between St Giles and Amersham to attract her into the band but fortunately St Giles won and her presence, as a very experienced ringer, greatly enhanced the capabilities of the band. Her predominant interest was in peal ringing with a target of reaching the magic “1000 peals”; nevertheless, she wholeheartedly supported both service ringing and practices and was increasingly interested in arranging and calling quarter peals to help members of the St Giles band to progress. As tower secretary she arranged bands for weddings and organised the annual tower dinner efficiently and with the minimum of fuss.

She was deeply involved, both as an organiser and participant, with the Chiltern Midweek group of ringers and a dedicated and enthusiastic supporter of the 12 bell practices and quarter peals at Amersham, and was a member of Bill Butler’s Tuesday morning peal band.

As well as ringing she became increasingly involved with the church and the village. For six years until last year she was a very popular churchwarden at St Giles, ably steering the church through two major maintenance projects – the replacement of the failed heating system and the complete re-

wiring and re-lighting of the church, both of which took an immense amount of energy and commitment. She still managed to average nearly 40 peals a year during this time. Sadly, Ann never made the "magic 1000"; however, her peal total was 683 in a good variety of methods with nearly a third of the total on 10 or 12 bells where her earlier experience in London stood her in good stead.

She also managed to complete the Surprise Royal alphabet once and the Surprise Major one twice and four more peals (of the right letters) would have made it four times.

Ann had a very wide circle of friends who held her in high regard as was amply demonstrated by the packed church at her funeral, with many of the congregation having travelled very long distances to be there. Ann's early death means that we have all lost a great friend, lively and full of plans for the future; sad though that is, we can at least be grateful that she was spared any suffering or disability and was able to operate at "full tilt" right to the end.

Our hearts go out to Rob and the family in their much greater loss.

John Davidge

(Edited from Ann's obituary which appeared in the Ringing World)

## Bryan Matthews

Bryan died on 24 April 2007 at the age of 73. He learned to ring more than 60 years ago as a teenager at Farnham Royal church under the tutelage of Mr Bill Henley, a well-known local ringer. His first peal was at Farnham Royal in 1947.



He also rang regularly at Stoke Poges and was elected Steeple Keeper when the St Giles Society of Bellringers was formed in 1994. Three years later he was elected Tower Captain, and continued in post for ten years until failing health made it impossible for him to continue. He was well known on the local scene, and had a wide circle of contacts and friends who would regularly visit Stoke Poges for service and wedding ringing.

At the same time Bryan was also responsible for the bells and ringing at Farnham Royal. There has not been a local band at Farnham Royal for many years, but Bryan worked very hard, often single handedly, to keep the bells in good condition. He served on Farnham Royal Parish Council for a while and also looked after the church clock and its mechanism, frequently checking its accuracy to the exact second. In 2004 he was instrumental in organising the refurbishment of J. J. Parker's grave in Farnham Royal churchyard. Following the service of rededication, Bryan very generously hosted a lunch at Farnham Royal Cricket Club for the ringers who attended the service.

Bryan was not a ringer seeking to ring large numbers of peals or quarters. However, he was known for his readiness to help a tower or band and his willingness to 'take a rope' when asked. Over the years he regularly rang at Windsor Parish Church, the Curfew Tower, Burnham, Fulmer and occasionally at Kettering when he stayed with his daughter and her family.

Bryan was a skilled electrician and having worked at Glaxo in Stoke Poges he was on the staff at Windsor Castle for more than 20 years. This was given due recognition last year when he was invited to take part in the ringing at the Curfew Tower when the Queen walked through Windsor on the occasion of her 80<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrations.

Bryan was well known and respected in South Bucks ringing circles. His willingness to help, kindness and generosity will be greatly missed not only by his daughter and grandchildren but also by all who knew him.

Bridget Farren / Peter Mackie

# NEW MEMBERS

A warm welcome is extended to the following ringers who were elected to the Guild at the Branch AGM.

|                 |        |
|-----------------|--------|
| Maureen Hossack | Clewer |
| Dave Hossack    | Clewer |
| Diane Johnson   | Clewer |
| Linda Mandin    | Clewer |

|                 |             |
|-----------------|-------------|
| Cindy Holbrook  | Fulmer      |
| Greg Fletcher   | Langley     |
| Juliet Grayson  | Langley     |
| Michael Day     | Langley     |
| John Bauld      | Old Windsor |
| Zoe Ledgerwood  | Old Windsor |
| Margaret Gilson | Old Windsor |
| Pat Seddon      | Penn        |

## First Peal Success!

Margaret Forrest of Hillingdon rang in her first peal on Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> April at St Mary the Virgin, Grundisburgh, Suffolk. The peal was rung in memory of her father and her brother who both sadly died last year and was a very notable achievement for a first peal, being 8 spliced surprise major.

Although not an affiliated member of EBSB, Marg is a welcome visitor to practices at High Wycombe and Beaconsfield where she also regularly rings for Sunday evening services. She also often attends our Branch practices and has recently helped with the Lincolnshire training session at Chalfont St Giles.

Congratulations Marg on your successful first peal, from all your friends in the EBSB



## GUILD MASTER CELEBRATES BIRTHDAY AT AGM



19<sup>th</sup> May was a special birthday for our Guild Master, Jon Chamberlain. He was 65. It also coincided with the Guild AGM but the occasion was not allowed to pass without mention – Pat Newton surprised him with a special celebration birthday cake complete with candles for him to blow out (he nearly managed them all in one go!) during the tea prior to the meeting.

The Guild AGM was held at Beaconsfield this year and was preceded by a service at St Mary's which all who attended agreed was lovely with an excellent address by the Vicar, John Wimbourne. Dorney, Burnham and Cookham towers were open prior to the service and there was a lot of interest in the new 10 with some nice ringing taking place.

### SKITTLES EVENING

Saturday 30 June  
7 – 11pm

The Greyhound, Eton Wick

Tickets £7.00 - still available from Graham Firman 01628 636484

## **SPECIAL RINGING TO WELCOME OUR NEW BISHOP OF OXFORD**

We welcome Bishop John Pritchard who will be installed as Bishop of Oxford on 8<sup>th</sup> June and is the new president of the Oxford Diocesan Guild. The Master has requested that as many towers as possible ring to celebrate this occasion.

General ringing in the EBSB to welcome Bishop John took place on 8<sup>th</sup> June at Clewer, Hambleden, Hughenden and Beaconsfield.

On 13<sup>th</sup> June, prior to the Episcopal Visitation of the Rt Revd John Pritchard at High Wycombe, Bucks. (All Saints) and to welcome his as the new Bishop of Oxford the following quarter peal was rung. 1277 Grandsire Caters: Sheila Bruce 1, Joyce Cornwall 2, Ann Davies (2nd cousin to Bishop John) 3, Josie Martin 4, Patricia Newton 5, Clifford Davies 6, Charles Botting (C) 7, David Sullivan 8, Robert Newton 9, David Cornwall 10.

Please notify the Guild Secretary, Hilarie Rogers ([odgsecretary@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:odgsecretary@tiscali.co.uk) 01865 890163) with details of what your tower has rung so the Bishop can be presented with a record of our welcome.

# **T O W E R   N E W S**

## **Winkfield St Mary's**

So we are back home in Winkfield again. Many thanks to Windsor, Warfield and York Town for allowing us the use of their bells for the 9 months we have been homeless.

The Winkfield ringers have been busy with Henrys and Dysons to return the ringing and bell chambers to some sort of order and cleanliness! The walls have been painted, new guide rings fitted for the hand rope up to the ringing chamber, the window ledge tiled with 'added decoration' and the notice board has had a general tidy up. All in readiness for our grand opening when HRH Prince Andrew came up to see what had been done. Hopefully everyone who came to our re-opening enjoyed the day as much as we did. From the number of champagne empties lined up in the lychgate for recycling it certainly appeared so!

We recently rang a quarter peal of Bob Doubles to welcome the Commonwealth War Graves Commission to St Marys. It was the first quarter rung at Winkfield for a while and was the first rung by Jill and Kathryn and the first conducted by Trevor. We have an interesting selection of events lined up for the year ahead and advance notice of

A barn dance next May '08 for those of you who enjoy 'em. We would love to see any of you who would like to view our new tartan carpet.

Sue Bish

Congratulations to Winkfield who have recently been granted a Silver Tower Maintenance Scheme Award.

## **Chenies**

Scaffolding has been erected and work is now in progress with repointing the flints and repairing the stones of the tower.

The clock has been stopped as the clock face is to be restored, along with the tower windows. The bells will only be rung for weddings. The anticipated date for completion is end of August.

Chenies ringing practice has transferred to Sarratt on Wednesday evenings 8pm (prior to this we alternated between the two towers).

Sandy Homewood

# HAMBLEDEN

## NOW WE ARE EIGHT (Apologies to AA Milne)

For many years Hambleden band had the same number of ringers as the six bells. Two years ago, two of the band members moved away leaving us short of ringers.

Sheila Bruce of High Wycombe suggested that we hold a tower open day. This we did, assisted by John Walton of Wooburn, on a cold, wet morning. Some fifteen people attended, six of whom started training with John aided by Robert Newton of High Wycombe. Thanks to their excellent tuition, John's continued support, the wonderful spirit in the tower and their own determination, all six are now valued members of the Hambleden band.

We were due the first major overhaul of the bells for fifty years. With ten regular ringers, increasing up to twenty on our Friday practice nights, talk began to be centred on augmentation to eight. Contact was made with three bellfounders for estimates for the proposed work. We formed a steering committee, a member of which gave an excellent presentation to the PCC, which voted unanimously in favour of augmentation.

Funds were found locally and with a grant from the Guild Branch. Hayward Mills were awarded the contract for essential maintenance, hanging the 1954 sanctus as a new treble, casting new second and third bells, fitting new bearings all round and adapting the oak frame.



The inscriptions on the new bells are:

2. To the glory of God The people of Hambleden gave me.
3. In honour of Her Majesty the Queens 80th Birthday Year

The people of Hambleden gave me.



The two new bells were delivered to Hambleden for a service of blessing by the Dean of Christ Church, Oxford, and our own rector, Malcolm McNaughton. The new second was dedicated to St Peter, in memory of Peter Bruce (our last tutor), the new third to St John, in memory of John Cook (our last captain). All the bells and fittings then went away to the works and 7 bells arrived home in time to ring for Easter. Two 2nd bell castings from the commercial founders were initially rejected by Hayward Mills before the present bell was deemed perfect and joined the other bells aloft. The Hambleden band, together with Sheila Bruce from High Wycombe, and Andrew Mills and Tom from Hayward Mills raised eight bells and tested them.

"They pronounced them worth the wait, so now we are eight".

James Oldham

# STRIKING COMPETITIONS

## Guild Eight Bell Striking Competition Monday 7<sup>th</sup> May – Kidlington

In view of the simplicity of the method this year (Plain Bob Triples) it was a surprise that there were insufficient entries to warrant the semi-finals that were planned at Headington and St Giles, Oxford. All nine bands made a creditable job of the majestic 21 ¾ cwt eight at Kidlington and the judges (Philippa Whittington and Frank Rivett) commented on the very high overall standard. Their only other general observation was that the third bell seemed to give some bands consistent striking problems.

The full results were:

| Position        | Rang            | Peal Speed |                                   | Score |
|-----------------|-----------------|------------|-----------------------------------|-------|
| 1 <sup>st</sup> | 2 <sup>nd</sup> | 3h08       | Oxford City Branch                | 96%   |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> | 6 <sup>th</sup> | 3h03       | St Mary &<br>St Laurence, Reading | 95.6% |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> | 8 <sup>th</sup> | 3h01       | High Wycombe                      | 94.4% |
| 4 <sup>th</sup> | 1 <sup>st</sup> | 3h06       | Reading Branch                    | 92%   |
| 5 <sup>th</sup> | 7 <sup>th</sup> | 2h59       | North Bucks Branch 'B'            | 91.7% |
| 6 <sup>th</sup> | 9 <sup>th</sup> | 2h59       | North Bucks Branch 'A'            | 90%   |
| 7 <sup>th</sup> | 3 <sup>rd</sup> | 3h12       | EBSB                              | 89%   |
| 8 <sup>th</sup> | 4 <sup>th</sup> | 3h08       | Aston Clinton                     | 88.6% |
| 9 <sup>th</sup> | 5 <sup>th</sup> | 3h07       | South Oxon Branch                 | 82%   |

Although the band representing our branch produced the slowest ringing of the day, the judges felt that they started their test piece at a pace that was uncomfortably brisk for them and that they improved as their ringing steadied later on. High Wycombe's ringing was described as a nice piece with no particular pluses or minuses – obviously there is some consistency here: exactly the same score and position as last year.

From an organiser's perspective, it was refreshing to have a 'new' band winning the trophy. When I saw the Oxford City entry form I commented that it looked like they meant business, and so it proved. It seemed to me that what set the top two bands apart from the rest was their impeccable rhythm.

Robert Newton

## Branch 6-Bell Striking Competition Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> June – Dorney

A rather disappointing turnout of four bands met at Dorney on a warm Saturday evening for the branch heat of the 6-bell striking competition.

Having settled our judge, John White of Aston Clinton, in the stable block alongside the church the competition began. Beaconsfield rang first ringing Grandsire doubles, followed by High Wycombe A with Cambridge Surprise Minor, Dorney with Grandsire doubles and a Branch scratch band with Plain Bob doubles.

Giving the results John White commended all the bands taking part and complimented them on ringing a full 240 changes as required for the Guild competition. Apparently most branches just ring 120 in the heats.

High Wycombe were awarded first place with 55 faults, an excellent piece of ringing which 'improved from good to better' and will go forward to represent the branch in the Guild competition later in the year (as defending champions).

Thanks were given to Dorney for stepping in to host the competition at short notice due to building work currently taking place at Chenies, the original venue, (see Tower News) and for providing the refreshments.



The High Wycombe Band

# Quarter Peal Week 2007

Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> July – Sunday 05<sup>th</sup> August

Iain Anderson, a ringer who has recently moved into the Amersham area, is organizing a quarter peal week within our branch as part of a project in which he is currently involved.

There are many benefits to ringing a quarter peal that are harder to achieve from normal stop-start ringing. These include getting time to settle down into the rhythm of the ringing; really getting to know the method being rung; and actually doing more ringing in a shorter period of time than you would on a practice night. These benefits make quarter peals an excellent way of developing ringing skills.

The aim of this quarter peal week is to encourage every tower to try something new. Perhaps there is a ringer in your tower who has never rung a quarter peal of grandsire triples because you are always one ringer short; or maybe the local band has never rung plain bob minor together without outside support before; Alternatively, you may ring at a tower which has one or more regular conductors and nobody else has tried calling a quarter peal.

The aim is to use the resources available across the branch to allow each tower to attempt (at least) one quarter peal. Ideally, each tower will be able to organize its own quarter peal. However, in some circumstances, a tower may require a little assistance from other ringers in the branch to obtain a suitable band. To help co-ordinate the attempts centrally please could each tower complete the section below and return it to Iain, even if no quarter peal is planned.

Tower: \_\_\_\_\_

Yes, we shall attempt a quarter peal during the week.

Details of the quarter peal attempt:

Method: \_\_\_\_\_

Time and Date: \_\_\_\_\_

We shall require the following assistance: \_\_\_\_\_

No, we shall not be attempting a quarter peal during the week.

However, the following ringers may be willing to support local towers with their attempts:

| Ringer | Ability/Standard | Contact details |
|--------|------------------|-----------------|
|        |                  |                 |
|        |                  |                 |
|        |                  |                 |
|        |                  |                 |

Please email your reply by **Sunday 01st July** to: Iain Anderson [iain@talentinnovations.co.uk]