

# EBSB NEWS

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March 2008

## Rehanging of Clewer Bells

It looks as if the bells of St Andrews, Clewer might be taken down on schedule. After a fraught few months of uncertainty about the faculty (no surprise there!) there is now a question mark over the structural integrity of the tower. Hopefully all can be made sound by the end of the month before work is due to start.



It became clear last year that the bells needed some major maintenance. Running repairs are adequate up to a point, but we had gone beyond that. We had several surveys and considered a range of options before deciding with the PCC to take down our 6 bells which currently hang on two levels, and rehang them in a new cast iron frame to hold all 6 bells on one level. Whitechapel bell foundry were able to fit us in, and we hope to have the bells taken down on the 31st March, with work taking 3 months. The tower was originally a ring of 4, supplemented later with 2 more over the main frame. This meant that the ropes of the treble and 2 had to be guided through various pulleys, and has led in part to the reputation of Clewer as being a challenging ring!

There is a branch practice due to be held at Clewer in July. If all goes to plan the work will be finished by then, so you may have the chance to be one of the first to try out the new configuration. Or the branch practice will be somewhere else!

*Jane Cockman*

If you would like to contribute to this project cheques may be made payable to 'St Andrews Clewer Bell Fund' and the address is: St Andrews Church, Mill Lane, Windsor, SL4 5JH

More tower news on page 2.....

### DIARY DATES

12 April	Chalfont St Peter (6)	Surprise Practice	7 – 9 pm
<b>26 April</b>	<b>Annual General Meeting at Cookham (10) followed by Branch Practice</b>		<b>5 - 9pm</b>
5 May	<i>Guild Ringing Day – Reading Branch</i>		
10 May	Stoke Poges (8)	Surprise Practice	7 – 9pm
17 May	<i>Guild AGM - Woodstock</i>		
24 May	Denham (8)	Branch Practice	7 – 9pm
31 May	<b>Training Session</b> Listening Skills Course at Bray ( <i>see separate notice</i> )		
14 June	Chenies (6) Followed by	<b>Six Bell Striking Competition</b> Branch Practice	From 5pm 7 – 9 pm
<b>28 June</b>	<b>Bisham (3)</b> <b>Marlow (8)</b>	<b>Branch Practice</b>	<b>6.30-7pm</b> <b>7 – 9pm</b>

**NB: This is a change from the diary card.**

# TOWER NEWS

## OBITUARIES

### BERNARD COLLINS

Bernard, Denham's much loved tower captain, died suddenly at the beginning of March. His contribution to ringing has been invaluable as a ringer for over 50 years and also as a teacher for the Denham band.

### LIZ NALDER-WILLIAMS

Liz started ringing late in her life but has made a great contribution to Penn tower, as a loyal member of their band and as a friend.

Both Liz and Bernard will be much missed and our deepest sympathy goes to their families and to Denham and Penn Towers.

## MAIDENHEAD

### ALL SAINTS, BOYNE HILL

In the autumn of 2006 a large piece of masonry was found on the pavement outside the Church. This of course was a public hazard.

The Diocesan Architect was called. It was decided that it had fallen from the spire and nothing to do with the bells. Where the spire meets the tower, green netting was put to catch any more falling masonry.

Investigations started and fund raising commenced during 2007. To repair the church spire the estimated cost was £1 million. The church was delighted when English Heritage and the Heritage Lottery Fund granted the largest ever grant of its kind, £754,000. Included in the work might be the renewal of the clock face.

As I write, the work is about to start which will stop us ringing while it is done. We do not know how long this will be but probably the rest of this year.

*Doreen Young.*

## WINKFIELD

We rang a quarter peal of Plain Bob Doubles to celebrate Barbara Eastburn's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday, called by Trevor Scott (his 25<sup>th</sup> quarter) and was a first quarter inside for Jill Glennester (2). We also rang a quarter of mixed doubles (Stedman, Grandsire and Plain Bob) for the Oxford Diocesan Bell Fund which was a first for Jane Corbin on the treble.

We have recently held our AGM, the only change to our officers being that I am now Tower Secretary, but we arranged several social events including an outing to Paines Hill gardens which is planned for June. We also had a band outing to play skittles on 17 March.

Tickets are now on sale for our barn dance on 17 May, £10; numbers will be limited as hall is quite small. Ploughman's supper included.

*Kathryn Harris*

## HITCHAM

St Mary's Church Hitcham will be undergoing a major refurbishment commencing the end of March, which will probably last for a good few months. Included in this refurbishment, will be the erection of a new ringing chamber, which will be on a first floor, instead of being on the ground floor at present. This will mean that the exceptionally long draught of rope currently enjoyed, will disappear, to be replaced by a much shorter length of rope. Our practices on a Wednesday evening will therefore be suspended whilst this work is carried out. As mentioned, it is not clear when we will be up and running again, but a notice will be in the EBSB newsletter. With the shorter ropes, we guess there will be a mad scramble to ring our bells when the work is finished.

There was a quarter Peal rung at Hitcham on the 26<sup>th</sup> March 2008, by the following band :-

Treble	Arthur Grout
2	Jo Eden
3	Joyce Cooper
4	Janet Gillard
5	Leslie Hart
6	Tim Eden

Firstly to celebrate Arthur's diamond wedding anniversary, and secondly, so to speak, to put the bells to bed, prior to the refurbishment of the Church. It was conducted by Leslie, his first as conductor, and took 42 minutes.

Roger Webb

## COOKHAM

Our eagerly awaited set of brand new bell ropes has just arrived and they have now been put on to the bells. They look and feel superb. This now completes what has been an outstandingly successful tower refurbishment project. You are warmly invited to visit us on our practice night (Tuesday) to see the finished project. May I extend a huge thank you to all those who have helped and supported this project.

*Marcia Dieppe*



Cookham's newly decorated ringing chamber

## HIGH WYCOMBE

On Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> April, Adrian Dempster, Structural Engineer from Nottingham, visited All Saints to assess the condition of the tower. To enable him to see the movement of the tower and frame he invited us to ring various combinations of bells. It was lovely to hear the back bells again (possibly for the last time), and Bob Minor on 1,2,3,5,6,7 with the tenor covering sounded very pleasant. We were not so sure about Stedman Doubles on 1,2,3,6,7,8 of the back eight.

Death watch beetle damage to an ancient wall plate and several severe moving cracks in the tower walls has caused Mr Dempster to recommend the installation of a reinforced concrete ring beam. He also noticed significant movement in the bell frame. (No wonder we were finding the bells challenging!)

For the time being we are not permitted to ring the back four bells, but Monday night practices and Sunday service ringing will continue on the front eight.

*Patricia Newton*

## CHESHAM

Repair work on the tower at Chesham is due to begin at the end of April and this will mean no ringing. After an earlier estimate of maybe a year, the latest thinking is "later this year" - (hopefully by Christmas). The Branch practice on 23 August has been moved to Cookham; OK so ten bells and a new carpet but no lovely old beam right across the ringing chamber - and shame on those who have suggested we lose it as part of the repair work!"

*Fred Reynolds*

## OLD WINDSOR

On Easter Sunday morning St. Peters & St. Andrews church of Old Windsor had an electrical fire causing damage to the church roof. This in itself did not affect the Tower or the Bells but has left the church roof unstable. We have been advised not to ring as movement by the tower could result in more damage being done or even the collapse of the roof. Following this advice I have cancelled all ringing at Old Windsor until further notice. I would like to offer thanks to Tony from Winkfield for offering the use of their tower so we can keep ringing..

*Daniel Knight*

## CLEWER

With the 5<sup>th</sup> out of action we were unable to do a proper quarter peal for the Sponsored Ringing Week and we had ten ringers wanting to take part so we decided to ring the five bells continuously for the duration of a quarter peal. The previous practice night we learnt how to take over a ringing bell. On 29<sup>th</sup> February we rang call changes and plain hunt, switching to rounds for the changeovers. All participants made a donation. Everyone enjoyed ringing for an extended period of time and we have now started our practice nights half an hour earlier to give our learners a chance to ring for longer. (See front page story on Clewer bells)

*Jane Cockman*

**Editor's Note:** Thank you to all the towers who have contributed to the Sponsored Ringing Week.

## AN APOLOGY

### POSTSCRIPT : The Post Christmas Ringing Outing

In the last issue of the Newsletter the article on the Post Christmas Ringing Outing claims in error that these outings were started by Angela Darvill. They were in fact initiated by Peter Bruce during his term of office as Branch Ringing Master. Peter had the idea in the mid 90s to hold a Branch outing, the first of which had a 12 bell focus in Reading, High Wycombe and Amersham. This started a very popular Branch tradition which has been continued by our subsequent Ringing Masters with equal success. Our sincere apologies to Peter's family for this mistake.

## CAPTION COMPETITION

The winner of our caption competition is Roger Webb of Hitcham who receives a Guild commemorative mug.

Picture 1 : Down these in 1, and then see how good your striking is.

Picture 2 : Brian, how much did these shoes cost?

# TRAINING

## Raising & Lowering in Peal!

### Burnham: 9 February 2008

On a rather grey and chilly evening a very enthusiastic group of students met together to improve on the important skills of raising and lowering their bells. To the uninitiated it is the beginning and the end of the ringing performance. Robert Newton led us with considerable patience and gave a most informative introduction. I feel a very heartfelt thank you must go to the volunteers who kept us all on track and to the neighbours of Burnham for their endurance!

Our lowering at Winkfield has certainly improved and we were able to pass on some of the valuable tips learnt. Raising, however, leaves a little room for improvement. Still, practice makes perfect.

*Sue Bish*



Robert Newton advising Sue Bish on how to lead up in peal

This course was very oversubscribed so we held another for those applicants who were unable to be included at Burnham. MS

### Chalfont St Giles: 15 March 2008

Alex, Sasha, Janis and myself recently went to an 'up and down' ringing session at Chalfont St Giles. It was very cramped in the ringing chamber as there were eight bells in a small space. At Turville, we are used to ringing with only five bells in a fairly open area. But that was the only downside. Apart from that the course was good and we all came away with more confidence and better bell skills. It really helped and was cool.

*Adam Mills (aged 12), St Mary's, Turville*

## Simple Conducting Hughenden: 8 March 2008

The poster for the EBSB branch course on Simple Conducting to be held at Hughenden was intriguing. I had previously enjoyed calling some simple touches of Grandsire, but if anything seemed awry I could only call stand -- my knowledge of conducting was therefore

zero. However, taking reassurance from the inclusion of 'simple' in the course title, I applied for a place and hoped that this background knowledge would suffice.

I had never previously attended a ringing course, so I did not know quite what to expect. The course was run by Ken Darvill, who had divided the proceedings into a short theoretical part followed by a longer practical one.

The theory began with an interesting introduction to coursing orders, from the point of view of a practical ringer. Then, taking a specific simple touch of Plain Bob Minor (wrong and home twice), he described a series of useful pointers along the way to help keep the calls in the right place and gave advice on how to watch that the other bells were in the correct place (we didn't discuss what to do if they were wrong!). After answering a variety of questions from the students the practical part of the course commenced.

Each student got a chance to call the touch wrong and home twice, with assistance provided by a group of reliable ringers! In my case, the first mistake was to take the tenor, as the calling looked easiest from this position, but I had not given due consideration to my lack of experience in turning in the tenor. My second error was to call "Go, Bob Major" when there were only six ringers, which caused due amusement. However, ultimately the touch was called successfully, although I am quite sure that I was not following the coursing orders as carefully as I should have been.

It was excellent to have the chance to try something exciting and rather different in a friendly and encouraging environment, which I found provided a boost to my confidence! I need not have worried about lacking sufficient background knowledge and given this experience I would certainly be on the look out for further training events to attend in the future.

We finished up with a challenge; during a touch two bells would deliberately swap over and it was up to the other ringers to shout out immediately anyone noticed. However, the crunch and confused looks gave things away -- it seems that going wrong deliberately is not as easy as accidentally going wrong. Maybe there is a gap in the ringing training market -- Simple Going Wrong?

After the course, Mandy Salter kindly provided coffee as an inducement to people to stay for the branch practice which followed immediately. This rounded off a very enjoyable and educational evening and I and the other students on the course are most grateful to Ken and the other organizers for their time arranging and running this course.

*Alan Bain*

## Chalfont St Peter Training TOWER VISIT

Following their successful visit to Fulmer, the experts visited our tower at Chalfont St Peter. We also are a small band, mainly 6 regulars – one just at Plain Hunt stage – plus a couple of Sunday ringers. This means we are rarely stretched. With our visitors we had a good effort at Grandsire touches and Plain Bob touches. Two of us were able to refresh our Stedman and I even managed to get through Cambridge.

Thankfully the other 5 knew what they were doing and ignored my mistakes.

It was a very enjoyable and helpful evening and has encouraged us to keep trying touches when we can, even without the Tenor.

Thank you to our visitors, maybe we will see you again sometime.

*Hilary Jelly*

**Editor's Note: If your tower would like a similar visit please let me or another Branch officer know and they will be pleased to arrange this.**

## MEMORIES OF DICK LEE

Sad to read of the passing of Dick Lee – one of life's gentlemen! Many ringers enjoyed his and Mary's hospitality at Wendover and later at Quainton. The old 5 bells at Quainton were memorable: a ground-floor, 19.5cwt anti-clockwise ring with long draught and the rope "circle" falling 1 3 2 5 4. There was an added, slightly macabre, difficulty in that to ring a couple of the bells (I now forget which) you had to stand in the arms of an angel or similar churchyard monument figure. These had been rescued/salvaged from the churchyard and stored in the ringing chamber. The difficulties in handling the long draught, particularly for learners, meant that these figures (which had arms outstretched) had suffered the loss of fingers or even a hand or arm, where ropes had caught around the stone limbs.

Ringling there for Evensong on one occasion with the Luzars and George Swift, in addition to methods, we had some rapid call-changes in which Dick simply called out the pairs of bells to change: i.e. the instruction "one and two" from rounds, gave you –2 1; "three and four" – 4 3 and so on. It was very useful for teaching learners to think for themselves, which way they were going and to acquire "ropesight". We use it at Iver sometimes and it's a simple way to effect rapid changes.

*David G Rowlands*

## MORE BEACONSFIELD VISITORS

Possibly the most deserving of the regular visitors to Beaconsfield was the late Frank Sinkins of Slough (he died in 1961). When I told him about cycling the 11 miles to Beaconsfield (and 11 miles back!) with my grandfather who was then in his 60s, Frank smiled and said that for several years in the 1880s he (and sometimes Billy Fussell – a stalwart Slough ringer, thousand-pealer and organiser of "The Great Adventure" ringing tour of Australia in 1934) used to WALK from Slough to the Beaconsfield practice every week, in order to learn change-ringing. So, when Eileen Stevenson drives over to attend the Beaconsfield practice she is continuing a long-standing tradition! Since she is an enthusiastic walker, maybe she should follow in Frank's footsteps (literally)! I never thought to ask Old Frank how long it used to take him.....

Slough and Windsor were affiliated to the West Middlesex Association almost from its inception in 1874 (they still are) but only rang call-changes until around 1886. Frank had a vast store of anecdotes..... One he told me was that the St Paul's Cathedral band rang only Stedman Cinques because the St Paul's organist (the celebrated Dr John Stainer) had told them it was the only thing that sounded "musical" on twelve bells! Billy Fussell (who died in 1944) is buried at Farnham Royal not far from J J Parker's grave.

*David G Rowlands*

# A Moving Moment

During our lives we have many moving moments, some more so than others. Indeed, some have a lasting effect, one way or another on us, and when we recount them year after year, they will either make us smile or bring a tear to ones eyes. This happens annually at the tower in Dorney, and, I am pleased to say, always evokes the former emotion.

Each year, during the dark cold nights of February, the Dorney ringers wend their way up the tight spiral staircase to the ringing chamber above. As they do so, the usual chatter rings out, “don’t rush me Peter”, “have you sold many of your expensive coffee’s today”, “arggggh a spider”, “oh shut up”, “need to do a risk assessment on this”, “stately homes, what are they”, “they never stop, even if I’m in the middle of the road”, and “I really don’t know what a green Nymph looks like” being a few of the more common ones heard. But, in January/February a new one enters the vocabulary, “I wonder if tonight will pass unhindered”.

What does this mean, I hear you ask. Well, many years ago, in 1914 to be precise, a young man named James Moriarty went out to fight for his country, and, sadly, was killed in battle on the 12<sup>th</sup> October 1915, aged 22 years and 9 months. His father was also James, the vicar of Dorney, from 1914 to 1927, and a plaque commemorating the young James hangs in the Church. As his father was the Vicar, many people would have known him, and would have shared in their Vicar’s loss. There is also a window in the Church dedicated to young James.

After his death, it became a rumour that young James “visited” the church round about the time of his birthday, which was in January, and the aforesaid ringers do have a number of instances that substantiate this theory. There was the night when, during a very nice touch of Grandsire Doubles, towards the end of the evening, the door to the ringing chamber suddenly opened, and Leslie, on the second bell, completely lost his rope. Now some of you may think that he has permanently lost his rope, but he was adamant that it was grabbed and moved in mid ring, from where it should have been. At the same time, the other five ringers experienced an intense down draught of cold air from the holes in the roof, where the ropes go through.

“Rounds, stand”, was immediately called, and no one wasted a nano second in complying with this request. Then, a further suggestion was mooted, “shall we ring them down and go round the Pub?”. Again, there was no objection to this, and the bells were duly lowered, and preceded the mad scramble to get out. Over the various beverages, the discussion was all about the evening.

We still remember the time of our very own “moving moment” with a touch of affection, especially as January approaches. It is also humbling to think that, just possibly, this very brave young man who gave his life so many years ago, thinks that our ringing is worthy of a visit by him. I am sure that deep down, we all welcome him back, to his father’s former bell tower, with a huge amount of respect and admiration.

Yes, a moving moment indeed.

*Roger Webb*

## WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

A warm welcome is extended to the following new members who were elected at the High Wycombe Branch practice on 23<sup>rd</sup> February

### HIGH WYCOMBE

Peter Burns  
Chris Parkinson (re-election)

### BEACONSFIELD

Andrew Halford

### MARLOW

Mark Southon  
Simon Church

### AMERSHAM

Maryanne Roach  
Dulcie McLerie (re-election)

Peter Burns and Maryanne Roach were present at the practice.