



Newbury Branch Newsletter

December 2007

Editorial:

Thank you to everyone who has sent material for this edition of the newsletter. I'm sorry that I didn't manage to get a newsletter produced in the Autumn, but as you can see there hasn't been a great deal of material to work with. This edition is the smallest since I have taken over as newsletter editor. I'm sure there will be a lot going on over the next three and a half months, so please put pen to paper (or fingers to keyboard) and let us all know what you have been doing.

I wish you all a Happy Christmas and a healthy 2008.



The Newbury Branch takes off!

Were you lucky enough to receive an e-mail from Maureen Tarbox at the end of July? I wasn't, but I saw one which went to another member of Thatcham tower. It was about an evening at Shalbourne Gliding Club, where you could go along and try your hand at flying a glider, or just being a passenger and enjoying the view.

Well, having been brought up on the "Biggles" books myself in the 1930s, I could just picture myself soaring around the sky, wind in my hair (what's left of it!) and swooping up and down over the airfield and the thousands gathered there. (Come on: you have to let your imagination run riot sometimes!) It wasn't quite like that, but it was fun and I really enjoyed myself.

We were given the choice of two Thursday evening dates in August. I went to the second along with four other branch members, Martin and Eleanor Rice, Rosemary Evans and Margaret. The ringers on the previous Thursday included Mark Robins, our newsletter editor and other members of her family. Before we came we read the safety instructions about not driving across the airfield (gliders don't make a lot of noise when landing!) and also to watch out for the launching cable.

Individual talks on how to get out in an emergency and opening your parachute followed and then we were ready!

We took lots of photographs of each other in various stages – strapping on parachutes (very tight round the nether regions!) – climbing in (very difficult if you haven't got long legs) – climbing out (makes climbing in seem easy!). Photographs of taking off and landing were more difficult, but some of the views from the glider were splendid.

Although the maximum speed was about seventy-five miles per hour the take-off seemed much faster, and the rapid climb before the cable release really had your feet pointing to the skies! We circled around looking at the scenery and then were able to take over the joystick control and climb, dive or bank the aircraft – within limits! After about ten minutes our time was up and we returned to terra firma – only to want to go again! The £25 for the first flight includes a 30 day membership of the club, so going back at weekends within the time period gives you a flight for about £8. I reckon it is money well spent!

So, why don't some of you young trendies in the branch have a go! Have a word with Maureen, and get your name on her next list. It really was great fun. Thank you Maureen for organising it.

Bill Butler

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May Day ringing in Oxford

This was the first year that I have felt confident enough to participate in the May Bank Holiday ringing day. Having planned the route and noted the churches that I wanted to visit I set off with Jill Hunt my companion for the day. It started quite windy and there were plenty of blustery showers but we managed to arrive at the first church early and there was no queue, this set the pattern for the day. I think that the weather must have put some people off or perhaps they had taken the alternative route.

Because of the lack of numbers and the time saved in not queuing we managed to take in 8 of the 11 towers listed, giving ourselves plenty of time to look around the churches themselves as well as ringing.

Everyone was very friendly, the other ringers always made sure that everyone had a ring and at a few of the towers I rang more than once. The helpers were extremely kind and helpful, some of them covering more than one tower.

The day finished, for us, at Middleton Stoney where the church is situated in the grounds of the Villier's Estate, a lovely setting. We sat in the grounds, in the evening

sunshine, with a cup of coffee and listened to the bells come down to rest, a perfect end to the day.

We could have travelled into Oxford itself for evening ringing but I felt that I would then have been on overload and I did want to finish on a high.

I'm looking forward to next year's May Day already.

Maureen Tarbox

Caption Competition

The winner of the caption competition in the last edition was John Hibbert of East Ilsley. His caption, "The other side of the moon" was the only entry. Congratulations, Dad, the prize is me moving to York ;-)



Quarter Peal for Charlie Weaver's 75th birthday

Charlie learnt to ring at Peasmore before the Millennium. He is very enthusiastic about ringing and has rung regularly at Bradfield, Chieveley and Peasmore practices for the past 7 years. He also rings for services at Chieveley on Sundays.

In May, Charlie told us that he would be 75 in June and wondered if we could organise a ¼ peal to mark the event. We were very pleased to do so. Charlie then went for a long weekend in Europe and was not well. On his return he was diagnosed with a heart problem and had to stop ringing.

A ¼ peal of Grandsire was rung at Chieveley on 13th June, his birthday, but Charlie was unable to participate.

Charlie has been told to take it easy for the time being and give himself time to recover. We are pleased to say that he has recently been able to join us on practice nights at Chieveley and Peasmore, ringing a little at Chieveley on one occasion.

We all look forward to Charlie continuing to improve and being able to enjoy ringing with us again, regularly.

Chieveley, St Mary the Virgin. 13th June 2007. 1260 Grandsire Doubles.

Treble Jan Brown
2nd Sue Foote
3rd Paul Shave
4th Rod Brown
5th Graham M Brown (c)
Tenor Peter Brown

Hungerford

Tower Redecoration. As mentioned in the last newsletter, for some time we had planned to do up the ringing chamber, as most of it was looking shabby and the seating quite tired. In fact, if the seating was tired, the carpet was totally exhausted, so in April, we embarked on the project and Maurice took the first turn by painting the walls which meant working aloft (naval speak for quite high up) and without any potential 'targets' below, so we kept out of the way. After intensive painting effort, that bit was complete and Dave then set about the seating with grand plans for panelling it all in. Others of us joined in and filled holes and did more painting until all that was left was to choose and order seat cushions and carpet.



This of course, was the really hard bit heralded by "What shade of beige do we want the new carpet to be?" I always thought that choosing carpets was a tricky business and best left to the experts, which is certainly the case at home where I'm allowed to give an opinion as long as it is the right one.

Anyway, over a couple of weeks, samples came and went and "how about a nice red" was countered with "but it'll show the dirt" and "it'll clash with my new shoes" but after narrowing the field, a show of hands and the choices were made. I think the pictures speak for themselves. Dave's panelling, Maurice's painting and all other effort is a fine job done and we are all pleased with the result and would take this opportunity to pat each other on the back. In fact, some have considered moving into the tower as it is so cosy.

Marshall Shield. It always seems to be a struggle to get a band for the branch 6 bell competition and this year was no exception except that this time, I couldn't make it either (three line whip for a birthday party in Portsmouth – Gloom!). Anyway, a six were duly mustered, including our novice ringers and off they went to challenge the Marshall Shield. Apparently, a good time was had by all and they returned proudly bearing their trophy. By the way, the birthday party was predictably nothing like as much fun as the striking comp and I won't make the same mistake next year.



And as for ringing at our own tower? Our usual performances have prevailed at home and there have been quarters on many Sundays and some commemorations too, notably the centenary of scouting, where we were supposed to ring at 0800 sharp. However, being good neighbours, we opted to ring at tea time instead, which is 0800(ish) in Western Samoa and Midway Island, so still technically correct and 1260 of Grandsire Doubles was duly rung. We rang a very good 1805 date touch of Grandsire Triples for Trafalgar Day and a less successful quarter on HM the Queens Diamond Wedding Anniversary. After dropping HM a line saying that we had nonetheless rung, we received a very nice letter back from the Palace thanking us for our efforts. Our youngest member Myriam, who achieved her first quarter earlier in the year, has become a regular tenor ringer for quarters and is now progressing rapidly towards her first trebling or inside. Several members of the band are now aspiring towards calling a quarter peal and we'll all be supporting them in their efforts towards that goal. The occasional quarters of Surprise Major seem to have kicked off again after a year or so break, with one of Bristol in July, followed by Pudsey. Superlative is also planned and Yorkshire and Cambridge are in the pipeline for Dave and Maurice after completing the Surprise Major course at the excellent Michaelmas Training Day. A peal of Grandsire Triples was attempted in June but it all went horribly wrong in the 5th part after experiencing brain overload. A repeat attempt in November also failed and a "third time lucky" attempt is planned for February. A very nice peal of Stedman Triples was rung on Remembrance Saturday. This has become somewhat of a regular event with it being the third year running that we have had a half -muffled peal to mark the occasion. The ringing went very well, but there was an anxious moment when, at about 3.15 PM about half an hour in, John asked "Mark, where is the light switch? It'll be dark in an hour". Luckily, the offending switch was easily accessible without stopping and the lights duly switched on!

There will be the usual Christmas outing and busy ringing programme during the festive period and there is also talk of ringing in the New Year at midnight this year. So, that's all from the Extreme Western end of the Branch folks. See you all next time.

Chairman's Jottings

Well, it's nearly the end of another year, and possibly for most of us the busiest ringing time of the year. Not only the normal church services, but also Christingles, Carol Services and Crib Services, not to mention Christmas Day, Midnight Mass and New Year celebrations. There is often the odd wedding thrown in for good luck, although at Beenham weddings have been rather thin on the ground this year.

It was a pleasure to see a quite a few towers ringing for the Diamond Wedding of the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh. At Beenham, over perhaps one or two many beers, we decided to ring a quarter peal in wedding attire. It seemed like a good idea at the time and thanks to this, we attracted the attention of the local press, with a picture and a small article being published in the Newbury Weekly News. I am still waiting for the phone to start ringing with new recruits. Well, at least we achieved some publicity for the Branch. Like other towers, we received a thank-you letter from the Palace (although it was not personally signed!).

At the last tower reps' meeting it was decided not to hold a striking competition this year. Instead, we will replace it with a social afternoon, probably comprising bell ringing with a rounders match and a BBQ. More on this later. The committee hopes that this will be well attended and the sun will shine. Only one of these is in our control. I would like to think that after a break of a year or two we could return to a striking competition.

Attendance at monthly practices has been somewhat spasmodic lately. We welcome participation from ringers of all standards, so please try to attend regularly as only by having a wide range of fellow ringers will the best be made of the bells. Please feel free to request, either in advance or on the night, any special methods that you want to try. This can be anything from call changes to Surprise (although we may need advance notice for some methods).

It now only remains for me to wish you all a very happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

Marcus Allum

The Ancient Society Of College Youths 1637 to 1937 300th Anniversary Dinner to Be Held at Cannon Street on Saturday 6th November 1937 (70 years ago).

I thought some of our members might be interested in a booklet I have been lent belonging to the late George Stocker of Bucklebury.

I note with interest that of the 243 invited guests Mr R T Hibbert and Mr W Hibbert from East Ilsley and a selection of the Davis Family from Bucklebury were also present (as no doubt were also others I don't recognise from the Newbury branch) along with the Lord Mayor of London and the Archdeacon of London.

The meal was the culmination of activities: first a laurel wreath had been laid for the founder Lord Brereton (he died in 1664), and another in St Brides, Fleet Street, for Benjamin Annable (Master 1746). Before the dinner a tablet on the tombstone of Sir Henry Tulse was unveiled - he had been Master in 1684 while also Lord Mayor of London - a busy year.

At 4.00pm the Society attended a service at St Paul's in accordance with a suggestion made by the Archdeacon

of London, who preached a sermon. There was a special hymn and anthem. The former Master, Fabian Stedman (1682), was also remembered in three courses of Stedman Cinques, etc.

The meal started with Various Hors d'Oeuvres and went on to the delights of Various Soups, Roast Surrey Chicken and York Ham and to finish Peach Melba and Wafers. Beer was also available at 9d a pint although there is no mention of wine!

There were no fewer than 8 Toasts starting with "The King" and finished with "The Press". These were intermingled with handbell touches of Spliced Surprise Major and handbell solos of Solveig's Song by Grieg

So are any of our branch members attending the 370th dinner and if so how have things changed?

Marcus Allum

Birthday Peals

In my younger days, birthdays came and went. On the odd occasion, if a birthday coincided with a peal, the footnote would probably be "Birthday compliments to Geoff Dodd" but I made no effort in those days to specially arrange a birthday peal.

But on my sixtieth birthday, balloons mysteriously appeared in Highclere belfry and in the churchyard on our practice night. Lots of visitors from Oxford and Sunningwell, a cake with candles that would not blow out, all good fun and for the birthday boy, a complete surprise.

It was only then that birthdays began to mean something, I celebrated one in Belfast and remember paying £19 for a round of drinks that evening.

I fixed my own seventieth birthday peal in Newbury, a special 5070 of Stedman Caters and paid an equal sum in the Hogs Head afterwards.

Next, in 2004, was Double Norwich at Harwell, which I called for the 72nd, celebrating afterwards with Harry Wells who had been listening outside. 2007 was another big one when we rung 5075 at Wallingford on the day and 5075 London Royal with a backstroke start, which had been specially laid on, at Bishopstoke (and successfully rung five years earlier as a 5070) had a bell slip wheel after an hour. A second attempt is planned later in the year, before I reach 76.

5080, God willing, in 2012 will be worth ringing if I can find a ground floor ring, not many, if any, in Oxford Guild territory, plenty in Hampshire; Fareham, North Stoneham and, nearer home now, Whitchurch, or a new one for me, on the Hampshire Surrey boarder, Haslemere. Five years to go, will I still be ringing peals then?

Geoff Dodd

200 Club Results

May 2007

£15	The Durhams	Bucklebury
£10	Charlie Weaver	Chieveley
£7	Mike Till	Thatcham
£5	Mrs Prateley	Thatcham

June 2007

£15	M Robinson	Thatcham
£10	Rebecca Payne	Newbury
£7	Lesley Park	Newbury
£5	Susan Cox	Hampstead Norreys

August 2007

£15	J Sturt	Peasemore
£10	Sarah Chatters	Hungerford
£7	Diana Bridle	Midgham
£5	Roy Prateley	Midgham

September 2007

£15	Diana Bridle	Midgham
£10	Mike Cock	Newbury
£7	Zoe Cleal	Newbury
£5	Cathe Fittell	Hungerford

October 2007

£15	Rod Brown	Chieveley
£10	Alistair McOran-Campbell	Bucklebury
£7	Jane Johnson	Lamborn
£5	J Lewis	Chieveley

December 2007

£55	Mike Till	Thatcham
£30	Mike Cock	Newbury
£25	Ange Harbour	Newbury
£15	Kintbury Bellringers	Kintbury
£10	Mrs J McDonald	Aldermaston
£5	Mr & Mrs P Brown	Chieveley

*Please can you let me have material for the next newsletter by **Friday 18th April.***

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As most of you will have noticed, this newsletter is now being distributed electronically. If you would like to be put onto the mailing list then please let me know your e-mail address.

The advantages of electronic copies are:

1. *Being able to see the images in colour*
2. *Receiving it earlier than those requiring a paper copy*
3. *Saving the branch printing and postage costs*
4. *Active web links*

Electronic copies make it easier to keep in touch with members who have moved away, if you know of anyone who would like to receive the newsletter then please ask them to get in touch.

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