

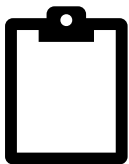
Welcome to the Easter Newsletter, we hope you all have a wonderful Easter Break. We received some lovely positive feedback to the first edition, so let's continue to share our news together. Please let us know if you have any news or pictures you would like to submit.



Although we can find a lot of news on Bellboard it does not tell us about all the good work and achievements that happen week in/week out at practices and service ringing, so please let us know what you have been doing.

Once again, we're asking that you consider printing out a copy of this newsletter to put in your tower, or to share with ringers who don't receive emails or WhatsApp messages.

## FEBRUARY 2024 ROUND-UP



February saw the launch of the **District Survey**. The survey has been launched by the District Committee to find out what our members like and don't like

about the District, **and to find out who might be interested in more training or help from the District.**

We've received a good number of responses, but they have mostly come from members who do already attend District events. **The majority of members don't regularly attend events, and we would really like to hear from them now.**

### Please consider completing the survey

- You can remain anonymous, no email or contact information is collected unless you willingly provide it
- You don't have to answer all the questions
- The survey can be found on the Guild Website at <https://hdgb.org/?district=hereford>
- If you, or someone you know does not have internet access but would like to complete the survey please contact Kris Perruzza or Fran Watkins

**Ringing Weekend** a group of 14 Burghill ringers and friends went on a ringing weekend to North Wales, they rang at 10 towers and had a really enjoyable time together.

**14 quarter peals** were rung in District towers during February with several other attempts that didn't quite make it! Even the attempts that were not successful offered a great opportunity to get some invaluable experience ringing with a steady band for an extended period, and in several cases also provided a band for Sunday Service ringing— it's all good 😊

From the footnotes there were a good number of birthday compliments, a quarter was rung for a Christening, and several people achieve more 'Firsts'. Congratulations to Ian Thornewell who rang his first quarter peal of Minor, Susannah Peppiatt who rang her first of Treble Bob, Tyler Edwards who rang his first blows of Reverse Canterbury, and Jason Walker who conducted his first of Plain Bob Triples.

**Tower AGMS** – Many towers are holding their AGMs at this time of year. It is a good time to talk about the year ahead and what is working well in the tower.

At the February Burghill AGM Liz and Mary were presented with flowers to thank them for their valued work over the last 34 years as Secretary and 4 years as Treasurer respectively.

- If any of the contacts are changing for your tower please do let Barbara (District Secretary) and Nick (Webmaster) know so that we can keep contact details up to date.

## MARCH 2024 ROUND-UP

**Quarter Peals** - To date 11 quarter peals have been rung during March by members within the district. Ian Thornewell rang his 25<sup>th</sup> quarter peal, and there were more 'firsts' amongst the footnotes, notably the 'First on 10 bells' for Lewis Ashton, Susannah Peppiatt and Tyler Edwards who all rang together in a quarter peal of Plain Bob Caters at Hereford Cathedral on 24<sup>th</sup> March.

### SKITTLES EVENING

The District Social Skittles Evening took place on 26<sup>th</sup> March at The Barrels. The central location in town meant that everyone could choose their own takeaway to be delivered (fish & chips and pizza being the favourites). More than 20 competed for the trophy, but the results were 1<sup>st</sup> Wendy, 2<sup>nd</sup> Michael, 3<sup>rd</sup> Mark.



## GUILD COMPETITION DAY

**WOW** We are so proud of all the district members who took part in the Guild Competition Day. There were teams from Wellington & the Cathedral in the Novice Challenge, and both a District Call Change and a District Method ringing band.

We had great success!

- the Cathedral band were awarded **Gold**, and the Wellington band were awarded **Silver** in the Novice Challenge.
- The District Call Change Team were the first ever winners of the new trophy – **The Osbaldiston Shield**.
- The Method band acquitted themselves very well despite not winning, they were certainly the youngest band taking part, and the band included Noah who has only been ringing about 8 months.
- Special mention is due to Tyler who rang in the Novice, Call Change and Method sections, and his steady tenor ringing at a good pace was definitely a contributing factor to the Call Change win.



DISTRICT CALL CHANGE TEAM

WELLINGTON NOVICE

CATHEDRAL NOVICE

Vicki from the Cathedral team has written about how she found the day:

### NOVICE ROUNDS CHALLENGE KINGTON 2024

When asked if I would be interested. I'm sure my first thoughts were the same as the other novices asking myself should I join in?

Am I really good enough?

Will I let my team down?

Followed by telling myself, why not, I have been asked therefore they believe I can do it, right?

I'm so pleased I said yes, because I met other novices who are on the same journey trying to learn how to make the loudest instrument sound good and importantly sound in the right place. We had taken on the new hobby after Covid hoping to learn a new skill and meet new people who have become our friends.

Sharing our experiences of feeling like we have taken 1 step forward, 2 steps backwards then 1 step forward again and laughing at our over pulling and wishing we could push rope.

Everyone did amazing in the tower and the ringing sounded great. The support for each other was encouraging.

I will share in the build up I misheard that there would be a Womble. I questioned Womble? and was told yes. I thought ok, that's a little out there, that Great Uncle Bulgaria would be in attendance however okay. Further in conversation Great Uncle Bulgaria would be helping people visiting experience what ringing a bell feels like. Okay I thought that sounded like a fun. Later I found out that the Womble was a wombel. A simulator bell in a frame to practice bellringing. I also experienced it was a lot lighter than a Hereford Cathedral bell.

Team at Kington Church were excellent hosts, a huge thank you for everyone who made great tasting refreshments, I definitely tried the cakes...maybe too many!

A big thank you to those who arranged the challenge Fran, Nicky, Tim, John (Kington Tower Captain) and Gareth Jones (Judge) and all those who give up their time to coach us novices, who are all trying our best.

I had a fun day with lots of laughs and encouraging support and the cherry on top of the day was Gold and the icing sugar of top was winning the raffle.

Thank you novices and I'm sure we will see each other again soon.

Vicki Hereford Cathedral 🛎

### BIG SPRING CLEAN



Why not take the time to give your ringing chamber a Spring Clean? You could invite members of the church and community to help take part. It would be a great way to let them know what we do, and you may get some new recruits, or lapsed ringers to come along too.

If you need some advice on maintenance it can be found on the Central Council Belfry Upkeep website: <https://belfryupkeep.cccbr.org.uk> There are also some suggestions for how to keep a record of what you find: <https://belfryupkeep.cccbr.org.uk/docs/150-maintenance-schedule/>



**BELL MAINTENANCE AT ST PETER'S CHURCH, PIPE-CUM-LYDE**

If you have ever rung at Lyde Church, you will know that the bells are definitely a challenge, especially the 5th! With a pulley wheel that didn't really move, handstrokes were definitely interesting. Eventually, in November 2023, we decided to take the pulley wheel out and see what we could do with it. Lewis' grandad, being an engineer, very kindly said he would have a look at it, and within a couple of weeks we had a lovely restored pulley. We couldn't believe how much a difference it made to the bell, it actually felt like a bell! We approached the church to see if there were any funds that could allow us to have the other 5 done, luckily we had the go ahead in December 2023 and by the joint benefice service in January 2024 we had all newly refurbished pullies back in. The bells certainly ring better now, and we are looking forward to ringing on them a little more in the future! We are always happy to welcome visiting bands, so if you fancy a challenge, get in contact and book the bells for an outing or a quarter!

JW

**DISTRICT EDUCATION OFFICER**

Education Officer... what does it mean?

In my mind, the role of education officer is to be a point of contact. Someone who can offer advice and support and can co-ordinate training in a way that benefits as many district members as possible. I don't have all the answers, but I am willing to help.

The biggest issue we have with such a big district, is finding out what people need/want and managing the limited time of those people who are willing to help as tutors/mentors/helpers to deliver training that will make a big impact.

Training can be delivered in a variety of ways, as district wide events or concise tower practices and as well as tower-cluster training events. Initially I will be using the information provided from the Survey that was sent out by the committee. I would also invite anyone to contact me by email with any training enquiries they may have.

I look forward to working with you all.

Kris Perruzza - Education Officer

Email: [hfd\\_education@hdgb.org](mailto:hfd_education@hdgb.org)

**QUARTER PEALS**

There are many ringers in the district who do not often get an opportunity to ring quarter peals. If you would like to ring a quarter peal but need an experienced band, a conductor, or just a couple of extra ringers to help your tower out, please do get in touch with any of the District Officers and we will be happy to try to help. The reason can be for a special service, a village or church occasion, for personal development, or just because you want to!

We often choose to ring quarter peals as they usually take about an hour (including ringing up and down) so are not too intrusive for neighbours and are a good length for ringing for service etc. but if you also have an ambition to ring a peal, then please let us know.

In August the Guild will be holding a **Quarter Peal Festival**, so now might be a really good time to get some practice in, include more ringers, and lay the foundations so we can make the most of the event, maybe achieving some tower 'firsts' and making a real impact in the summer.

### APPRECIATION

After a recent quarter peal one of the ringers met their neighbour who said that:

*he had sat at the top of the churchyard ,in the sun, listening to the entire quarter. He said it was a wonderful experience and how lucky the village was to have such lovely bells and skilful ringers.*

It is so good to hear that our ringing is appreciated by those who hear it, and it is an important reminder that we should always do our best to make sure that the very public sound we make is as good as it can be.

### WHAT'S ON?

#### *Dates for your Diary*

**Thurs 25 April 2024, 7:30pm – 9:00pm** - Open District Practice at Withington

**Sat, May 11<sup>th</sup> 2024** - Guild AGM at Eardisland

**Sun 12<sup>th</sup> May 2024** - Bell Sunday, bellsunday.org

**Sun 19<sup>th</sup> May 2024, 3:30pm-5:00pm** - District Practice at Preston on Wye (with tea and cake)

**Thurs 6<sup>th</sup> June 2024** – Ringing Out for Peace, cccbr.org

**Sat 8<sup>th</sup> June 2024** – District Outing to South Wales area

**Sat 27<sup>th</sup> July 2024, 3:00pm – 6:00pm** - Summer Meeting, Fownhope

**10<sup>th</sup>- 25<sup>th</sup> August 2024** – Guild Quarter Peal Festival

**Sun 15<sup>th</sup> Sept 2024** – Striking Competition & Barbeque

**Sat 2<sup>nd</sup> & Sat 16<sup>th</sup> November 2024** – District Training

**Sat 7<sup>th</sup> Dec 2024** – Practice and Bring & Share Christmas Party at Burghill

**Sat 25<sup>th</sup> Jan 2025** – District AGM at Woolhope

*What events would you like to see? Let us know by contacting any of the District Committee*

### HOW DO YOU LIKE TO KEEP IN TOUCH?

*There are many ways to stay in touch with what is going on in and around the HDGB.*

- *District Secretary emails, if Barbara doesn't have your email address and you'd like to receive the updates please contact her (barbara.fox54@btinternet.com)*  
*If you need printed versions, please contact us, you should have received a District Calendar of events for your tower*
- *Visit the Guild Website at **hdgb.org***

*You can follow us on*

- *Facebook Hereford Diocesan Guild of Bellringers*
- *X @HDGBells*
- *Instagram @HDGBells*

*Or join the District WhatsApp group, message to **07806 621514** with a request to join.*



**NEW CHAT** - The WhatsApp group has a chat facility, we'd like to encourage everyone to use this to let people know about what is happening in their tower. For example if you need an extra ringer or two for a wedding or special service, or if you have to cancel a practice, why not pop a message on the chat to let people know. It will be a good way for us to work together and share our availability.

To submit news for the next issue please email [watkinsfran2@gmail.com](mailto:watkinsfran2@gmail.com)

Getting to know... **Chris Braxton**

Each issue we ask ringers to tell their ringing story in 10 Questions. In this issue **Chris Braxton**, who is a ringer at Hereford Cathedral, and the District Management Committee Rep., tells us about her ringing experiences.

Here's what she had to say:

**How long have you been a ringer?**

I started ringing in January 2022.

**Where did you learn to ring?**

I learned to ring at Hereford Cathedral.

**Who taught you?**

Nicky Aubrey taught me.

**What made you decide to learn to ring?**

I have always loved the sound of church bells, but never had the opportunity to ring, until now !

**What is your favourite part of a Ringer's Tea?**

The company and conversation.

**Have you been on a ringing holiday?**

I love ringing days out and holidays. I have done a few days out, an open tower day of 12 towers was the hi-light last year, and a ringing 'long weekend' this year was amazing.

**What is your favourite number of bells to ring on?**

I love to ring on 10 the most, it's what I learned on.

**Where in the world would you like to ring, that you haven't?**

My ambition is to ring everywhere I travel, both in the UK and abroad. I have the confidence now....finally, to contact the relevant tower captain and ask permission. I narrowly missed ringing in Pennsylvania last year, they couldn't find enough others to make up a band.

**What is your favourite method?**

Being older coming in to ringing I find it harder to learn methods etc, I have watched 'youngsters' overtake me in the process, but I don't mind as I don't have burning ambitions, I just love ringing bells !

**What do you enjoy most about ringing?**

The most enjoyable part of ringing for me are the new friends I have made, such lovely, welcoming and helpful people. And having access to such history and tradition that most others never get to see and appreciate.



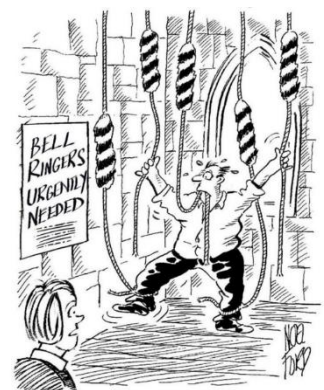
## NEW MEMBERS

Let us know how you are getting on in your tower, we'd love to be able to welcome any new recruits and look forward to meeting them when we are out an about.

Ideally we can work together to share good ideas, support recruitment and help each other out, sometimes a few more experienced ringers might make all the difference when ringers may be trying to get through a 'sticky patch'.

We hear that there are quite a few ideas in the pipeline to encourage teaching and recruitment, so we'll keep you updated.

**If you would like any support or advice to begin a recruitment campaign, please get in touch.**



"Ready when you are, George..."

### PAUL'S FIRST PEAL

We're very pleased to see that Hereford District Ringers have been published in The Ringing World\* again, here is Paul Ebery's account of his first peal experience:

#### THE TRANSFORMATIVE POWER OF RINGING

In 2017 the bells in my local church, St Michael's in Michaelchurch Escley, were being refurbished and augmented with a new treble to make a ring of six bells ready for the centenary of the end of the first world war. The treble is dedicated to the memory of the fallen soldiers. The bells had not been rung for some time and there was a drive to form a new band from scratch. I was asked if I would like to learn to ring, but I turned the offer down as I was commuting for work and thought that I would not have the time to spare.

After the passing of my wife in 2019 and Covid lockdown in 2020 I was living on my own and feeling a bit isolated. I was asked again if I would like to try bellringing in September 2021 with the added temptation of meeting new friends and a trip to the pub! This has transformed my life. At first, I was just interested in the social side but as I learnt to control the bell and started Plain Hunting I began to enjoy ringing bells. I was soon attending three different practices a week and helping out ringing for Sunday services, weddings and funerals.

I attended the Hereford ringing course last year on the Bob Doubles group, which was a fantastic experience, meeting new people and ringing in different churches. I managed to get my first quarter peal for the King's coronation, which was a great honour. I have since completed five more.

In October last year, I visited Australia for work. I had the opportunity of ringing for Sunday Service in Brisbane, in both St Andrew's Church (6, 7-2-21) and the Cathedral (12, 16-1-17). It was a great experience and the ringers made me feel at home.

My first peal attempt came about unexpectedly. The peal had been organised for some time but one of the ringers had to pull out at short notice. Nick Cooper-Tomkins asked me at Thursday night practice before the peal on the Saturday. Luckily, Libby Davis, my tower captain, had forewarned me in the morning. My initial reaction was "no way"! But I had time to think about it before Nick asked me. I thought that this is an opportunity to try a peal, which I wanted to do at some point – I just didn't think it would be so soon. It was only ringing at the back for a doubles method and in my home tower on familiar bells.

The night before at the Friday practice I was being given advice such as: "make sure you have a drink to keep hydrated, but don't drink too much," and "eat a banana before you start and

take some paracetamol before the peal!" This I found slightly unnerving!

Anyway, I took all the advice on board and set off nervously. We met up and I was thinking I was bound to mess it up, but at least we would have tried and they wouldn't have been able to do it if I hadn't said yes. There was a small amount of pressure because this would be a second attempt for Libby to ring a peal inside. Her first attempt had been going very well until, about two hours 20 minutes in, a clapper fell out! So I knew that this was important for Libby but she was very good at playing it down, saying that it doesn't matter if we don't make it.

So we rang up and had a few rounds before starting. We set off at a much faster rate than I was used to and I had to concentrate hard to keep my striking right. We kept going and I managed to get in to a rhythm with an occasional word of help and encouragement from Mark and Nick. The next thing I knew, I looked at the clock and saw that we had been going for about two hours. The next 40 minutes just seemed to take an age but I was so relieved when "That's all" was called.

Walking afterwards was more difficult than it should have been! Standing in one spot for two hours 40 minutes had made me very stiff, even though I had been shuffling my feet occasionally during the peal. It has to be said that I was a bit numb and stunned. Everyone was congratulating each other and shaking hands etc. I couldn't believe that we had done it. I had expected my hands to be sore but I had got to the point where I could ring to the balance reasonably reliably and so I was not having to put too much effort in. The tenor is very light (5-3-10) so it is relatively easy to handle.

Once we could walk again, we set off for a meal at a local pub. So that was it. I am so glad that I plucked up the courage to accept the request to ring it. I always thought that ringing for that long was madness and thought it would take me years to get to that point. It just goes to show that being positive and taking opportunities when they arise can be a good thing

#### HEREFORD D.G.

MICHAELCHURCH ESCLEY, Herefs,  
St Michael  
Sat 30 Dec 2023 2h39 (5)  
**5040 Grandsire Doubles**  
(1 x Pittman's 240, 40 extents, 10 callings each 4 times)  
1 Rhiannon F Pugh  
2 Nick Cooper-Tomkins  
3 Libby Davis  
4 Nick J Chapman  
5 Mark Pugh (C)  
6 Paul T Ebery  
Rung in memory of Helen, wife of the tenor ringer, who died on 09/09/2019. Paul and Helen first met 44 years ago this month.  
Also rung in celebration for Rhiannon's parents, Brian & Sylvia Jones 64th wedding anniversary, boxing day.  
First peal for tenor ringer and first inside for No 3. £6

\*First Published in The Ringing World No. 5886, 16 February 2023 page 158.

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