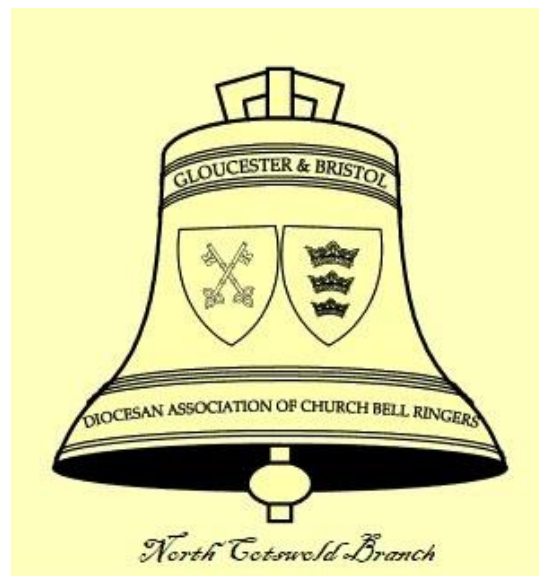


*Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan  
Association Of  
Church Bell Ringers*

*North Cotswold Branch Newsletter*



*Issue 2: Spring 2024.*

## **Branch Officers and Committee Members**

### **Officers**

Chair & MC* Rep	Martin Penny	Email: <a href="mailto:martinpenny99@btinternet.com">martinpenny99@btinternet.com</a>
Secretary	Ashley Ellison	Email: <a href="mailto:ellison.ashley@gmail.com">ellison.ashley@gmail.com</a>
Ringing Master	Jackie Hands	Tel: 01789 720802
Treasurer	Isobel Murphy	Email: <a href="mailto:isobel.murphy@btinternet.com">isobel.murphy@btinternet.com</a>

*\*G&B Management Committee*

### **Members**

Roland Greenhill	Email: <a href="mailto:roland.greenhill@icloud.com">roland.greenhill@icloud.com</a>
Tim Woodgate	Email: <a href="mailto:sarawoodgate@btinternet.com">sarawoodgate@btinternet.com</a>
Jess McCarthy	Email: <a href="mailto:jessmccarthy1990@gmail.com">jessmccarthy1990@gmail.com</a>
Phil Street	Email: <a href="mailto:phillip.street@btinternet.com">phillip.street@btinternet.com</a>

## **Dates for the Diary**

### **March 2024**

Wednesday 20 <sup>th</sup>	Branch Committee Meeting	Stow-on-the-Wold	6.00pm
Wednesday 20 <sup>th</sup>	Branch Practice	Stow-on-the-Wold	7.30pm
Thursday 21 <sup>st</sup>	FSG Mid-Week Tour	Southwest Oxfordshire	

### **April 2024**

Saturday 13 <sup>th</sup>	Croome Trophy/Penn Trophy/G&B AGM	Stroud Branch Area	
Monday 15 <sup>th</sup>	Branch Practice	Welford-on-Avon	7.30pm
Thursday 18 <sup>th</sup>	FSG Mid-Week Tour	TBC	

### **May 2024**

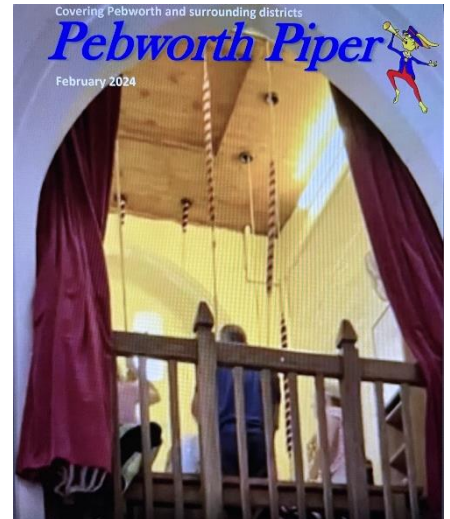
Wednesday 15 <sup>th</sup>	Branch Practice	Longborough	7.30pm
Thursday 16 <sup>th</sup>	FSG Mid-Week Tour	Evesham Area	

### **June 2024**

Monday 17 <sup>th</sup>	Branch Practice	Naunton	7.00pm
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# CONTENTS

Branch Officers & Committee Members	Page 2
Date for the Diary	Page 2
View from the Chair	Page 4
Report on Ringing Tour – Saturday 14th October 2023	Page 5
Report on Blockley Ringing Tour – Saturday 27th May 2023	Pages 6 & 7
In Conversation with Tim Woodgate	Page 8
Committee News	Page 9
Thought for the Day	Page 9
G&B Achievement of the Year	Page 10
In Conversation with George Tremlow	Page 11
Subscription Reminder	Page 12
Useful Links	Page 12
Mid-Week Tour	Page 12



## View from the Chair

Again it has been a busy Autumn & early Spring in the branch as we have continued to work on making the branch more vibrant and interesting.

Since the new Committee was elected a year ago, the branch has seen some excellent progress, becoming more active and improving communication with you as individual members. We have also seen some changes to the Committee with Jess McCarthy and Phil Street joining in March 2024 and Chris Povey standing down as MC Rep (see article).

The number of paid up members has increased and the branch has established a new website to keep you updated with information about branch activities and other items of interest. Home Page - [Home Page - North Cotswold G&B \(pebworth.icu\)](#). Also included on the website are new links to ringing resources and other local ringing groups which border or overlap the branch area.

The Branch Committee has held three meetings since March 2023, expertly organised and minuted by our Secretary Ashley Ellison. The Committee has continued to support monthly branch practices, mostly at Blockley; with our ringing master dealing with a wide range of abilities from beginners through to surprise ringers. We looked at ways to broaden the appeal of these practices and are trying a new format for 2024 where we are looking to support local bands on their practice night as well as holding a branch practice.

The branch held its Annual Striking Competition and AGM at Bourton-on-the Water on 25th November 2023. The judges were Roger Haynes and Fiona Hartley, whose feedback gave detailed comments on each team, including “a very nice piece of ringing”, “a real pleasure to listen to” and “a high to finish on”.

The list of winners was:

1st Mickleton; 2nd Longborough; 3rd Great Rissington; 4th Stow; 5th Blockley

The Curate Hannah presented the Jack Webb Rose Bowl as first prize to Mickleton, thanking all for lifting the spirits of untold numbers of listeners, and enjoining us to keep the art alive. The ringing master, Jackie Hands, made the decision to award the Les Joynes Salver to Longborough, being the team which had shown notable activity and progress over the year.

The branch has also been instrumental in supporting several other towers in training and progressing their bands – in particular at Blockley, Naunton and Broadwell, as well as being successful in the annual G&B Achievement of the Year Competition (see article).

Looking ahead as a branch we are planning to reintroduce the annual ringing at the Cathedral in the late Spring and also consider ideas about a branch quarter peal weekend and/or outing (more details to follow).

This edition of the newsletter also sees the start of a series of articles that we have called “In Conversation with ...” – a chance to get to know more about some of our branch ringers and their lives inside and outside ringing.

As always, we welcome feedback from all our members. Please feel free to contact any member of the Committee with questions or ideas.

Keep Ringing!

Martin

## **Report on Ringing Tour – Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> October 2023 (Organised by Tim Woodgate & Phillip Street)**

Eleven Ringers rung at the following 6 towers, in which we catered for all level of ringers, including Rounds, Call changes, Plain hunt, Method (Cloisters, Reverse Canterbury, Grandsire, Plain Bob Doubles, Steadman) and some with touches.

- 1) Great Tew St Michael & All Angels – 8 Bell tower – Tenor 22-0-10 – Dated 1709.
- 2) Church Enstone St Kenelm – 6 Bell Tower – Tenor 10-2-14 – Dated 1981.
- 3) Chipping Norton St Mary the Virgin – 8 Bell Tower – Tenor 14-1-14 – Dated 1907.
- 4) Long Compton St Peter & Paul – 6 Bell Tower – Tenor 12-0-22 – Dated 1731.
- 5) Shipston-On-Stour St Edmunds – 6 Bell Tower – Tenor 9-2-01 – Dated 1754.
- 6) Tredington St Gregory – 6 Bell Tower – Tenor 16-1-20 – Dated 1622.

Tea/Coffee & Cake was provided and gratefully received by Tredington Tower.

The weather was kind to us with just one small burst of rain.

This was a great opportunity for all ringers to experience a wide range of bells, as each tower was unique both in weight of bells & rope draft.

Some stunning architecture, stained glass windows and masonry/joinery skills, as the attention to detail in some Churches was overwhelming. Special mention for Great Tew as this was my favourite Church and Ring of the day. Well worth a visit as you will not be disappointed.



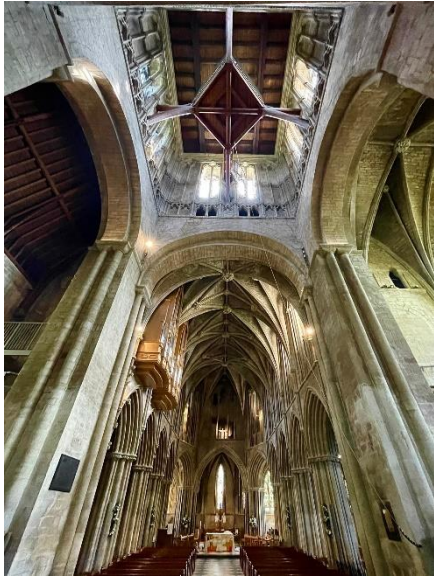
***The ringers at Great Tew***

***Author: Phillip Street***



## Report on Blockley Ringing Tour – Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> May 2023

Ringers from Blockley and the FSG went on tour on 27 May, hopping on the Hedgehog Bus from Blockley with the first stop at Pershore Abbey.



The Abbey itself is beautiful, resplendent with its new organ. For those who had not seen it before, the elevated ringing platform was a sight to behold. The circuitous route up the stairs, through the roof, then a (very) narrow tunnel, more stairs and finally across the bridge to 'the cage', was an experience in itself. The 72' drop immediately behind you certainly adds an extra element to ringing.



After negotiating the way back to ground level, it was across the road (literally) to St Andrews Tower to ring the lovely 8 there.

Back on the 'hog to St Giles, Bredon. A beautiful church with a lengthy draft to a delightful, central ground floor ring. Handily, lunch was at the Fox and Hounds, a stone's throw from St Giles'.

Finally to Tewkesbury Abbey. Another spectacular route to the ringing chamber (which, as an added benefit, has a 'peregrine-cam' of the nesting falcons on the tower). The largest Norman tower in existence did not disappoint and all the visiting ringers enjoyed the experience hugely.

Many thanks to all those who facilitated this wonderful tour.

**Author & Photography: Matthew Wilkinson**





Ringling at Bredon



Enroute to ringing chamber, Tewkesbury



Ringling at Tewkesbury Abbey



## IN CONVERSATION WITH ... ONE OF OUR MOST EXPERIENCED RINGERS - TIM WOODGATE

Tim has a special way with bulls, as well as with bells. Like his father before him he was a herdsman, and very proud of his 50 years working with animals. At the age of 13 he reared his first bull, which he called 'Thing', and the last was a Friesian called Tiger, a breed known as temperamental but he was of course well-behaved for Tim. In Sussex he walked a Guernsey bull five miles down the main road to a show and won first prize. What you need to give them, he says, is quality time and lots of patience, and eventually you earn their respect. So, rather like bells then...



On his first day at school aged 5 he decided he didn't like it, and it was discovered at lunchtime that he had left and walked home. About this age too he started to play crib, or cribbage, a game he plays now in pub teams at the Horse & Groom in Bourton-on-the-Hill and the Coach & Horses in Shipton.

When asked about particular memories, he recalls a Lancaster flying so low over the farm that it left with a branch of beech tree hanging off the rear wheel, and another Lancaster flying magnificently four times over the Rollrights. More poignantly, when communing with Nature very early one morning by the river at Tewkesbury, he saw clearly a huge black panther-like cat 100 yards away, which luckily turned away and was never seen again.

Ringling started for Tim at the age of 12, when his voice broke and he was thrown out of the choir in Upham by the vicar and told to ring bells instead. And so began a life-long interest which took him to ring at Winchester, Rochester, Chichester, Wells, Taunton, Coventry, Gloucester and countless other towers around the country, a Bell Grab in Cornwall ringing at 15 towers in one day, many quarter peals, lots of doubles methods, as well as teaching at least 150 new ringers along the way. He's

moved many times in life, from Surrey, to Kent and Hampshire, and nearly went to Libya and New Zealand. Nowadays, from his home in Great Rollright, he regularly rings at Blockley, Longborough and Stow, plus 6 or so other towers when needed, for 2 evenings every week, plus Sundays - a greatly valued and much appreciated member of every band he rings with.

He met Vicky, his beloved wife of 48 years, at Pontins and they moved in together after only a week, along with 4 young children. When she passed away very recently, he says it was Dixie his collie who saved him, and he has the firm support of his family with 7 grandchildren and 4 great-grandchildren, plus twice daily visits to Enstone to look after their daughter Sara's horse Reg and keep an eye on the farmer of 97 along with his chickens and ducks.

He has passed on his expertise to Sara, taking her from the age of 10 to several towers a week, and now she can ring any bell, peals and quarter peals, and slips back easily into ringing when it can be fitted in with her job driving HGVs. Although she left home long ago, she still has a bedroom in Tim's house, which he will get around to clearing out to make space for his train layout.... one day....

*In conversation with Ashley Ellison*



## Committee News

We have seen some changes on our branch committee over the last few months. At our March 2024 Meeting we welcomed two new members, Jess McCarthy and Phil Street. Jess is relatively new to ringing but has already been following the Association of Ringing Teachers programme and recently passed her first level for becoming a certified ringing teacher. Phil comes to the Committee with a wealth of experience and rings at a number of branch towers as well as helping with the teaching of new ringers. We welcome them both to the Committee and look forward to their ideas and input going forwards.

We have also seen Chris Povey stand down as our G&B Management Committee Rep and Martin Penny has taken on that responsibility along with his Chair & Newsletter Editor roles.

We thanked Chris for his time as the MC Rep and we thought that members would be interested in his reply:

*"Dear Ashley.*

*Thanks for the thanks. It's very nearly 60 years since I became a member of the G&B, at Ebrington in June 1965, where I learnt to ring. At that time the Cheltenham Branch included the Campden Rural Deanery area. The North Cotswold Branch came into existence three or four years later, when the Campden Rural Deanery part joined up with the then Stow-on-the-Wold Branch.*

*My first job after graduation was at Wotton-under-Edge, so I joined the G&B's W-u-E Branch. My wife and I went to live in Tetbury for almost 4 years, and therefore I joined the Chippenham Branch. A job at Tewkesbury in 1977 followed that, so I chose to re-join the NorthCots Branch (even though I currently live in the Cheltenham Branch area). I've been a member of four different G&B Branches.*

*I became the NorthCots secretary 1979-1981, after which I've been involved with the Branch Committee in some form or fashion ever since. I've been a member of the G&B Belfry Advisors for about 25 years (although I resigned my membership last year on deciding there was a conflict of interest in being the DAC bells advisor). I suspect many ringers believe I'm a FSG person first and foremost, but I've been longer with the G&B (although I did help in relaunching the FSG).*

*Am I disappointed at cutting ties with the NorthCots Committee after so long? No, not really. It needs a new injection of enthusiasm (and I've given my bit in the past). I have different 'bell-pastures' to explore now, and these are taking up a lot of my time.*

*My best wishes,  
Chris"*

## Thought for the Day

Our new tower captain, or 'head-man'  
Said he wished he could meet Mr. Stedman.  
As he struggles with Google  
A young person named Dougal  
Had to tell him that Stedman's a dead man!  
(Author: adapted from 'Anon')

**\* Fabian Stedman (1640–1713) was an English author and a leading figure in the early history of campanology, particularly in the field of method ringing. He had a key role in publishing two books Tintinnalogia (1668 with Richard Duckworth) and Campanalogia (1677 – written solely by him) which are the first two publications on the subject. \*Google & Wikipedia**

## **G&B – Achievement of the Year**



The Branch made three submissions for the 2023/2024 Achievement of the Year Award. One was on behalf of the branch as a whole and individual submissions were made from Naunton and Pebworth Towers.

At the Association meeting in Gloucester on 2<sup>nd</sup> March the results were announced and Pebworth were voted as the runner-up. This means that Pebworth will be presented with the Littledean & Purton Trophy at the Association AGM in King's Stanley on 13th April.

Congratulations to Neil Garner, Tower Captain at Pebworth. For information a copy of his submission is shown below:

### **G&B ACHIEVEMENT OF THE YEAR AWARD 2024 SUBMISSION FOR PEBWORTH, NORTH COTSWOLD BRANCH By Neil Garner, Tower Captain**

Can I suggest Pebworth as a possible contender for the new website we have...it was featured by the Ringing World in October because it has lots of learning resources for people to use, including aural games and tests to help develop the listening ear of ringers. We believe it is quite unique in this respect. The Ringing World team was certainly very enthusiastic about it!

The website has been developed over the past year or so and went properly live in October. It contains 70+ pages (and growing) of content. A small number relate to our tower and team, but the vast majority are learning resource based, from general articles about terminology, sound, changes, etc. to striking and why it can be difficult ...plus lots of method learning pages with help for learning lines, calls and compositions, and all the listening games where there are hundreds of clips using Pebworth's own bells, complete with their individual rope sounds and multiple choice answers in a graded progression to develop listening skills.

The aim is to provide a bright and appealing site with lots of pictures and diagrams to make learning fun and interesting, whilst the writing style is to make everything accessible to everyone, by keeping explanations simple and straightforward. The general pages aim to raise our understanding and underpin knowledge, the method pages will help us develop our memory of lines and enhance our ability to identify the pitfalls and successfully ring them, whilst the activity pages will develop aural skills... which are so important in the world of change ringing.

We have even managed to persuade Worcestershire County Council to sponsor the site for 3 years. The site needs to be viewed to get an idea of what we produced, so please take a look...

<http://bells.pebworth.icu>

(NB – The other submissions can be read at [Achievement of the Year \(bellsgandb.org.uk\)](http://bellsgandb.org.uk))

## IN CONVERSATION WITH ... ONE OF OUR YOUNGEST RINGERS – GEORGE TWEMLOW

When George was wondering what skill to learn for his Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Award, his mum, out of the blue, suggested bell ringing. It wasn't until later that they learned this went back several generations. Ringers include his great-aunt Joan, great-grandmother Ida, great-great-uncle Fred and great-great-grandfather Albert, who once heard the bells ringing from the garden when visiting family in Welford, thought they could do with a hand and went along, after which they sounded much improved!

So with the skill no doubt tucked neatly in his genes, the 14 year old George began to learn ringing in Longborough in November 2022, with Denzil Spear teaching him the basics, and Phil Street taking him through the next stages, until today when he can ring anything from Plain Hunt, through St Martins to a touch of Grandsire. Natural aptitude and youth have helped him reach this standard so rapidly, but also a steady attendance in the evenings, on Sundays, several tours, ringing for the Coronation and 2 Striking Competitions, in a total of 32 towers. All made possible by the taxi of mum and dad, for whose support he is hugely thankful.

When asked for his favourite tower, he immediately answers "Lower Slaughter", closely followed by "Longborough", of course. And particularly memorable was tackling the 27-2-24 tenor at Stow for a couple of minutes this January, which "nearly gave me a heart attack"! Asked why he rings, George says it's fun, he enjoys going to new places and learning about the bells, and he can earn money at weddings. But not something his best friend is tempted by, sadly.

And does he have any time left for other interests? Oh yes, on Thursday evenings he attends Aikido classes in Naunton sporting a Gi (or loose white jacket to you and me).

Occasionally he takes countryside walks to Winchcombe from his home in Toddington, with no dog for company, but he did own a Black Moor fish called Wren (they have big goggle eyes, a double tail and lots of fins), which outlived its fellows in the tank and died at the grand old age of 7.

But with science in the blood (dad Tom is a GP, his grandmother was a computer programmer in the late 1960s, and a great-great-grandfather was involved with the Manhattan Project to produce the H-Bomb), George's GCSEs this year, followed by A levels in Maths, Further Maths, Computer Science and Physics will form a basis for eventual application to study Software Engineering at Imperial College in London. Once there he hopes to ring at St Paul's, naturally! But before that, he aims to complete a quarter peal in Longborough this summer – which will make Phil and Denzil very proud, I'm sure.

*In conversation with Ashley Ellison*





## Subscriptions for 2023/2024

Subscriptions are now due for the financial year starting on 1st November 2023:

Subscription rates:

**Senior: £15** (of which £12 goes to Bell Repair Fund (BRF), £1.50 to General Fund and £1.50 to the Branch)

**Junior\*: £2.50** (of which £1.50 goes to BRF, 50p to General Fund and 50p to the Branch)

\*Under 18

**Associate (non-Ringing) Members: £10** (of which £9 goes to the BRF, 50p to the General Fund and 50p to the Branch)

**Tower Affiliation Fee 2023/24 - £20**

Please pay by BACS to:

Lloyds Bank - G&B North Cotswolds

Sort Code 30-95-75

Account Number 01676906

For other payment methods please contact the Treasurer

The Branch has funds available to make small grants towards repairs. In the first instance please contact the Treasurer.

## Useful Links

G&B North Cotswold Branch - <https://pebworth.icu/G&B/>

The Gloucester & Bristol Diocesan Association of Church Bell Ringers - [www.bellsgandb.org.uk](http://www.bellsgandb.org.uk)

The Four Shires Guild of Bell Ringers - <https://www.fourshiresguild.com>

Dove's Guide for Church Bell Ringers - <https://dove.cccbr.org.uk>

## Ringling Resources

Pebworth Bells – Ringling Resources and Links - <http://bells.pebworth.icu>

Association of Ringling Teachers – Ringling Resources and Learning Materials - <https://ringingteachers.org>

### FSG Midweek Tours

There is a monthly midweek tour within the Four Shires Guild area. For more information please go to <http://www.4shiresmidweek.org.uk/html/bracket.htm>

All ringers are welcome to attend. In order to achieve the most, attendees should be able to control a bell and ring rounds and changes as a minimum. Support is given to learners, but they must appreciate that all standards will be accommodated and therefore rope time will be limited. Ringers are reminded that they should not consistently attempt to ring beyond their capabilities.