

Sponsored Bob Doubles Challenge for the Lytchett Ringers (Matravers and Minster)

What We Did

On a chilly December day, 7 Lytchett ringers began their sponsored Bob Doubles ring to raise funds for the Bell Restoration at Lytchett Matravers and also to gain experience ringing Bob Doubles which they were unable to get in their own towers.

We started with trepidation but were comforted to have around 6 helpers each month who gave up their time to join us and stand or ring depending on what we were doing. Over the 8 months we had the privilege of ringing with 21 experienced ringers.

We rang at 22 East Dorset Towers and tasted the local cuisine at 7 pubs. Coffee and biscuits were supplied by our ringers but we were grateful for refreshments offered at one of the towers we visited.

Our Grand Finale was on August 3rd when we rang at both Lytchett towers giving our supporters a rest but they did enjoy ringing something more taxing so giving US a rest! This was followed by a lunch supplied by our ringers. Sadly both towers are now only ringing 5 bells with both missing bell 5 so for the first time we had to ring Bob Doubles without a tenor to lead off. We rang Bob Doubles for the Sunday service at Lytchett Matravers on August 4th.

Our thanks go to Jack Pease who, with his knowledge of local towers advised which ones to ring at and which ones to avoid – being too difficult for a novice band. Jack also created our original flyer. Along with Jack, the sponsored ring was originally set up by Debbie Phipps, Tower Captain at Lytchett Matravers who continued to oversee the planning but each visit was organised by one of the ringers so if they were doing 50 Ringing Things they have been able to tick off one 'thing' in organising an outing but also to take part in a sponsored ring.

We have had great fun, forged friendships, benefitted from the experience of some of our best East Dorset ringers, improved the ringing in 2 East Dorset towers and raised a small amount for the bell restoration at Lytchett Matravers. The sum we have raised will be funding one of the new clappers.

But it is not all over... Lytchett Minster will soon be starting the same idea focussing on a different method, Reverse Canterbury – really to give our well suffering helpers a bit of a change. They have been SO supportive and we could not have done this without them.

Our thanks go to:

Alan Bentley, Jack Pease, Gillian Richards, Ben and Rosemary Duke, Steff Smith-Cooper, Ross Bradley, Paul and Kathryn Tyson, Ed and Stella Warren, John Close, Phil and Trish Stephens, Richard Picker, Hilary Childs, Kate Brice, Alan and Alison Butler, Jane and Nigel Pridmore and Peter Basil Murdock- Saint.

How Did We Progress

Cathy started having done a fair amount of theory but had not had much opportunity to practice so really benefitted by these long sessions and by the end had the confidence to ring on a different bell, ring well to a Plain Course on bell 2, can ring a touch with support, has rung a Quarter Peal on Tenor, a 600 on Tenor and a Quarter Peal on Treble.

Gordon had done very little and was really only at Plain Hunt stage so started off learning to cover which he managed well for the first couple of months. By April he had started to ring Bayles on bell 4 and covered to a Touch of Bob Doubles. Sadly he then had an injury and has been out of action for the last 4 months but keen to get back in to it as soon as possible. He will move on to learn to treble as he will only want to ring a light bell.

Viv has been ringing for many years but never had the opportunity to ring beyond Plain Hunt. When Lytchett Matravers started teaching new ringers through the ART scheme Viv seemed to become more inspired and took on learning Bob Doubles. She has always been a good treble and tenor ringer but really dug in to learning an inside bell. Viv had to take some time out due to pressures of work but we hope to get her back on track in the future.

Sarah is an inspiration. Having joined our band through the ringing Remembers initiative she picked up ringing really quickly having rung as a teenager and despite the big time gap. She started the challenge by ringing treble to a Plain course and has been able to do this by sight and without counting places. She has been encouraged to count places and is now able to ring to a touch. She has also learnt to cover and by April was ringing Bayles on Bell 3 followed the following month by Bayles on Bell 4. She is now ready to start Bob Doubles on an inside bell and has her first Quarter Peal planned in the coming months.

Chrissie started the challenge being able to confidently ring a Plain Course on bell 2 and was able to thoroughly understand the theory. She moved on to ring a Plain Course on bell 4 followed by a touch on Bell 3. She rings treble confidently and has rung her first Quarter Peal on treble. She has become much more confident.

Maureen had already done a Quarter Peal on treble but was learning to ring and inside bell. Her comfort bell was Bell 2 but she soon moved on to ring on other bells. By April she was ringing a Touch on Bell 2 soon followed by a Touch on bell 3.

Debbie had already done a few Quarter Peals before the start of the challenge so had the opportunity to start to learn Plain Bob Minor and Grandsir with the experienced ringers. She moved on to learning how to call a touch as she realised if we were to achieve our goal of having a full Lytchett Band ringing Bob Doubles one of us would have to call it! She has called herself unaffected on Treble and Bell 5 and tried to call herself affected. This is still work in progress.

What Did Our Ringers Say?

“I am so grateful to Debbie for coming up with the idea, and to all our experienced ringers who gave up their time each month to help us achieve our goals. It certainly has been a very worthwhile project.” **Cathy Neyland**

“Though I have already completed my 50 Ringing Things I was keen to do a Sponsored Ring so this gave me the opportunity to do this but also to complete ringing at 50 towers. I had reached a plateau with my ringing and needed to get some extra concentrated ringing in so this proved a great way of doing it. We were going to make each outing a full day but having stopped and enjoying lunch on the first month we were exhausted as we were ‘learning’ as well as ringing so we made the decision to ring at only 3 towers followed by a long sociable lunch. We had such fun.” **Debbie Phipps**

“From a complete novice to being able to ring a plain course of BD’s is a journey that I feel I have been taking for many years. Over the past few months with the help of some very dedicated helpers I think I’m on my way to conquering the infamous BD’s. Its been hard work, frustrating at times but completely rewarding and enjoyable. I’m so very grateful to have had the opportunity to be part of this project and greatly appreciate all the advice from our willing helpers and to Debbie for setting us the challenge!” **Maureen Kirkham**

“The Bob Doubles Challenge has been a great endeavour and I am so grateful to Debbie and Jack and all our helpers plus the intrepid band who have made it all possible. We have had great fun, explored new towers and bells, the Dorset countryside and country pubs and improved our skills and gained confidence and enjoyed good company. We’ve also battled through various illnesses and injuries and come through smiling. A big thank you to everyone” **Chrissie Hibbitt**

What Did Our Helpers Say?

“The session I was involved in showed all the ringers to be very enthusiastic and hard working. Their determination to crack Bob Doubles has been admirable and I congratulate them on their individual achievements and yourself on organising and coordinating this marvellous project.” **Jane Pridmore**

“The progress you have all made makes me proud to be Ringing Master of the Branch. Always been my favourite thing to do, teaching and helping ringers grow, and it’s been a total pleasure to attend all the mornings, and to lead the teaching with Debbie.” **Jack Pease**