



Bristol Rural News

Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Association of Church Bellringers

The Newsletter of Bristol Rural Branch Bellringers

No 296

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Headlines

- 1 Branch Quiz - Iron Acton - 10th February, 1900 onwards
- 2 Branch Practice - Westerleigh - 24th February, 1430-1630
- 3 Association Spring Training Day - 9th March
- 4 Branch Striking Competition - 16th March
- 5 Branch Practice - Thornbury - 23rd March, 1430-1630

**February-
March
2024**

Branch Quiz

The Branch quiz is at Iron Acton again this year, on 10th February. Attached to this newsletter is a poster to advertise the event in your tower. Get your team together for what is always an enjoyable evening. I have these important messages from Bryan Hardwick:

Please let Bryan know your food order by Saturday 3rd February. The menu options are on the poster.

More volunteers are needed to help with the catering. Again let him know if you can provide a dish as soon as possible.

As usual, please bring a dessert and a raffle prize from your tower.

Chris Greef

St Anne's, Syston - bell replacement (Phase 2)

Following the completion of phase 1 works to relocate the existing defective number four bell that took place in November, on 18th December work began again, this time to take delivery of and install the replacement bell which was being brought up from Dorset by Nicholson's Engineer. Once again, the services of our two volunteers, Chris Greef and Robin Shipp were employed to assist Nicholson's in this task.

Some minor preparatory work was necessary in the morning prior to the arrival of the bell. In the early afternoon the bell arrived as did more volunteers to help with the task of hauling the bell on its trolley up from the car park into St Anne's church. With some difficulty it was manoeuvred around the font and into the space below the ringing room. Since the church floor had been lowered at some point in the past, a temporary timber



platform had to be laid to get the bell across two small flights of steps. Once below the ringing room the access hatch in the floor was removed and

the bell lifted using heavy duty chains that had been installed for the purpose. At the end of the first day the bell was resting in the ringing room, and probably the hardest part of the job physically was complete.



The following day work began at 8 o'clock in the morning. The number four bell at St Anne's sits above the other bells in its own framework on

top of the main bell-frame, consequently it was necessary to lift the new bell up through the others. It was thought that at least one of the bells would have to be taken out and temporarily moved aside to permit its transit, however, thanks to the enterprise and experience

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of the Bellhanger employed by Nicholson Engineering he, Chris and Robin, were able to 'thread' the 300kg bell up through them, thereby saving a lot of additional work. By 7:30 in the evening the replacement bell was installed, the old bell secured firmly in place, the re-bushed clapper to the treble fitted, and new ropes

to all the bells installed.

Finally, the bells were rung up to test that all was well. After all the hard work it was reassuring to hear that they sounded fine, the new bell ringing harmoniously with the rest. However, for now at least, the new ropes are proving to be extremely 'springy'.

Whilst there is still work to do in the tower, namely to install bird and rain proof netting in the Belfry openings, and to improve access into the Belfry, this now concludes the work on the bells themselves and ringing can recommence.

A big THANK YOU goes out to all those individuals who have generously donated money and/or their time to this cause and helped bring it to fruition in a relatively short period. It has been truly a TEAM EFFORT. It was only at the end of February 2023 when Bryan Hardwick discovered the cracked bell and all ringing at the tower stopped.

Also to the Siston PCC, Frenchay tower, to the G&B Association and Bristol Rural Branch for their grants, to Malcolm Taylor for his advice and guidance, and to the Bristol Diocese. Particular mention should also be made of the Keltek Trust who sourced and donated the replacement bell without cost, and to our two volunteers, Chris and Robin, who gave up their time to assist Nicholson Engineering and thereby save significantly on the cost of the project.

Glenn Laurence

Mid January Update

Following an inspection by Jon Storey on behalf of the Association that was necessary before grant monies could be released, the clapper bushes in bell number 3 and the tenor were found to be very worn. Furthermore, after hanging heavy weights on the ropes for a week

their springiness remained undiminished so it was decided not to attempt to ring the bells until the ropes and clappers had been properly sorted.

On the 11th January Robin Shipp and John Payton took down the ropes and attempted to remove the two clappers. After three hours of struggling it was agreed that professional help would be needed and Isaac O'Shea was contacted. The following week Isaac, John and Robin tried again and after a further three hours eventually the two clappers were out of the tower and ready to be transported to Isaac's workshop for re-bushing. The original ropes will be refitted but one new rope is needed and an order for this has been placed with Avon Ropes. Since it could be up to eight weeks before this is available, Avon have kindly lent the tower a rope to use in the interim. It is hoped that regular practice ringing on Friday mornings will resume from the beginning of February.

Glenn Laurence

STOP PRESS MESSAGE!

WE HAVE OUR BELLS BACK!!

Yes, we've got six bells, SIX!, with clappers, and ropes, and everything! even a rope warmer!!

Yesterday John spent the morning installing the ropes. This morning John and Robin helped Isaac install the two re-bushed clappers. At the end we rang the bells up and then rang Grandsire on five with Isaac ringing two bells..... discombobulating me who went wrong almost immediately; so he not only rang two bells but put me right too.

So we can re-start Friday morning practices, the first being a week today (*that means 2nd February*) starting at 10 o'clock allowing us to have biscuits and coffee, tea, hot chocolate afterwards in the hall like we used to. I'll bang out a call to arms on Wottsup next week.

Glenn Laurence

Many Congratulations to Glenn for masterminding the Syston project and getting the bells back into a ringing state so quickly!

Ed

When Did You Last Do It?

Tidy the ringing room and tower .

Your answer might be about a year ago, instead of a practice, if your annual spring clean is in Holy Week when many bells are left silent. It is a good time to clear out unused items, update information on notice boards and make sure that access and exits are clear of hazards. Spare ropes and tools should be stored ready for use,

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rather than bundled in a corner. Electrical equipment, lighting and heaters, fire extinguishers and first aid boxes should be in good condition, where appropriate checked and up to date. A clean and tidy ringing room is more welcoming for new recruits as well as for those who have been ringing for some time. More information about ringing rooms is available here: <https://runningatower.cccbr.org.uk/docs/ringingroom/>

From the Stewardship and Management Workgroup of
the Central Council

Ringling Books Available

Bill Liebow has some books and badges available at cost as below. Please contact him if you are interested:

The One per Learner Book (the little yellow book, ideal for learners for logging progress in early stages) - £1 each.

Ringling Circles (gives the blue line and details of what happens at calls for some standard methods) - some left at £3.50 each.

Branch Ringling Achievements

(This list is compiled by searching Bellboard under the G&B Association. If you don't put your ringing on Bellboard and attribute it to the G&B I won't find it. Ed)

Almondsbury - 1260 Plain Bob Triples

Rung by an all-resident Almondsbury ringers band before the Licensing and Welcome Service for the Reverend Anjali Kanagaratnam.

Filton - 1260 Grandsire Doubles

Rung on Christmas Eve prior to the Christingle service.

Almondsbury - General Ringling

2023 rung out. 2024 rung in. Happy New Year!

Thornbury - 1280 Cambridge Surprise Major.

Pucklechurch - 1260 Bourne Surprise Minor

Rung in memory of Nigel Smart, family friend and Pucklechurch ringer.

BRISTOL RURAL BRANCH QUIZ

Quiz masters - Coalpitt Heath & friends

IRON ACTON VILLAGE HALL

SATURDAY 10th FEBRUARY

7pm

Come as a team

or as an individual & make up a team

£7 (Juniors £3)

Bring your own drinks

Please order your food choice (see over)

To order your choice of food

please contact

Bryan Hardwick no later than 3rd February

bryan.wingreen@gmail.com

Sweet and sour chicken

Beef chilli

Vegan/vegetarian option

All with rice or baked potato