

Headlines <http://www.bristolrural.co.uk>

1. Association AGM the minutes can be found on the web
2. May day outing report X 2
3. Copy of the reading at the Association AGM
4. Annual return 2009 all towers have now sent in a return

### Farcited Ringing 1st Thursday

June 4th

No information to date

### Branch Ringing June

Note the branch event scheduled for the 6th of June has been moved to the 13th June

13th June Branch Event

### Listening and Striking

at Wapley, for information see the poster sent out by Chris our chairman, it will be on the web by Wednesday the 20th May

### 20th June Branch Practice

Syston 19.00 - 21.00



### Association Ringing

27th Nibley trophy (young persons striking competition) Wotton Branch details to follow

### Chipping Sodbury Ringing

3rd Friday 19.30 - 21.00

Can I give you an early warning that the August Branch Practice at Berkeley (10 bell) the time will be 19.00 - 20.30 not 21.00 as advertised in the branch program.

### G & B Association AGM

25 April 2009

It was the Bristol Rural Branch's turn to host the Association AGM this year and I'm pleased to thank all the Branch members who contributed to such a successful day. Fourteen of the Branch towers were open in the morning for general ringing or for the Association striking competitions, and some of these towers offered refreshments to the visitors. In the afternoon, Coalpit Heath made their church and hall available for ringing, the AGM service, the tea and the AGM itself. There were about 120 people at the meeting, so it was quite cosy in the hall. The catering team did a first class job: Mary York asked every tower to produce a loaf of sandwiches and a cake, everyone provided what was asked and more, so there was a huge spread, with surplus cakes being sold off at the end of the day. Chipping Sodbury in the Wotton Branch hosted evening ringing after the meeting (this was to keep the amount of ringing at Coalpit Heath within reasonable limits) so thanks are also due to their ringers.

It was a good day, and even the weather was reasonably kind – the one shower occurred when I was marshalling cars into the car park at Coalpit Heath! The Branch teams also rang well in the striking competitions – no major mistakes, with Thornbury coming 8<sup>th</sup> out of 11 teams in the six bell competition and the Branch 8<sup>th</sup> out of 10 in the eight bell

(and the team hadn't all practised together before the event).

I enjoyed the day and I hope you did too, in whatever way you contributed.

Thank you again – we did ourselves proud!

Chris Greet  
Branch  
Chairman



### May Day outing to Cheltenham

The annual branch outing was most enjoyable again - nothing went badly wrong (2 stays broken at Warden Hill but I guess that was to be expected!) There were no lock-outs and the weather was quite kind to us. 30 people joined the outing - 14 for the whole day and 16 for parts of the day.

See picture at Warden Hill below.

Rosemary Morgan Ringing Master

I had two reports on the training day so I have put them both in.

### May Training Day

We ran a training morning today (May 9<sup>th</sup>) at which we concentrated on Plain Bob Minor, Little Bob Minor and Splicing the 2 methods together.

15 people attended (that's helpers and students combined), and I hope all felt that they gained good experience from the course.

Thanks to Sue Alexander for providing and serving refreshments during the morning.

Rosemary Morgan Ringing Master

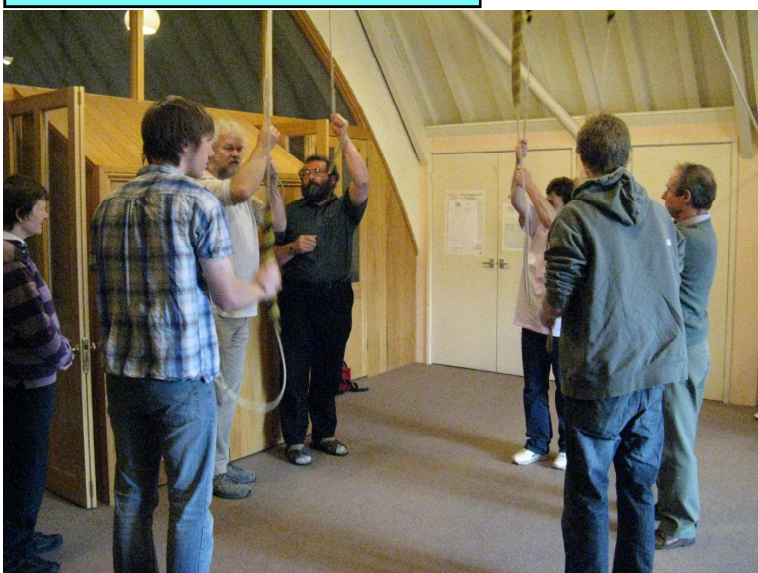
### Branch Training Day two

Plain and Little Bob Minor

9th May at Frampton Cotterell

There was a good turnout for this training day, with 14 ringers turning up to improve their skills. Some wanted practice in Plain Bob calls, others wanted an introduction to Little Bob, but by the end of the morning most had a go at splicing the two methods. Everyone benefited from the opportunity to focus on one theme with other helpful ringers in support.

There are three more training days planned across the Branch this year. The first is an addition to our published annual programme, with Steve Coleman leading a session on Listening and Striking at Wapley on 13 June. You should already have received information about this, but it is not too



late to sign up – it is designed for ringers of all standards, with no distinction between students and helpers. There are two other dates scheduled, 12 September and 7 November – just let your local ringing representative or a member of the Committee know what you would like to have the opportunity to practise and we will try to organise it: anything from the basics upwards.

*Chris Greef Branch Chairman*

### **2009 Annual Return**

Congratulations we had all our returns in before the Association AGM on the 25th April at Coalpit Heath. Only just though, I had the last cheque and form about three hours before the AGM took place. Anyway it was a struggle but we achieved it Well done.

### **May Branch Practice and BBQ**

Saturday May 16th the branch practice and annual BBQ were held at Abson. We weren't swamped with ringers but there enough to make it a useful and enjoyable practice. Collins farm made the perfect venue for the BBQ even though the weather was quite cold and occasionally wet as Mary Taylor kindly opened up her house for us so we could all sit inside to eat, drink and chat. Martin and Bryan did a magnificent job on the BBQ in the door way of a barn close to the house.

There were probably about 30 people there at one time or another and there was a very good atmosphere and excellent food. I think young and old alike enjoyed toasting marshmallows and bananas on the BBQ after the cooks had finished cooking the first courses.

Thank you to all who contributed to the success of the occasion. In particular our thanks go to Mary for inviting us to use her property.

*Rosemary Morgan*  
Ringing Master

### **An Extract from 'Akenfield, a portrait of an English village', by Ronald Blythe**

Handel called the bell the English national instrument and still, in a great loud web of percussion, there are the hundreds of bell-ringing societies, guilds and associations which unite town with village from one end of the country to the other. The societies are ancient but those belonging to

them are invariably called 'youths', and there is something in the tensely permutating atmosphere of the ringing chamber, the dozen or so reaching out figures, the leaping ropes and the blindingly passionate clamour above, which suggests the climatic ascension of young blood. The ringers are utterly absorbed. Such a total absorption takes over their mortgaged, class-bound, year-measured lives that these conditions of existence are temporarily cancelled and the Self revels in noise, logic, arithmetic and a kind of intoxicating joy which accompanies the striking of one's own particular bell in the deafening harmony.

The ringing men must reach stages of exultation which are on a par with those of cannabis, but if this is so there is no outward evidence to prove it. The less extreme degrees of pleasure derived from the art of campanology are similar to those derived from chess. Yet, perhaps because all bells are feminine and are 'raised' or 'turned over' by the neat strength of the bellmen to 'speak' their Pleasures, Tittums, Superlatives and Surprises, something less entirely cerebral than chess causes the contentment. The towers literally rock and the peals can be so overwhelming for those living near the church that the belfry windows are louvred so that the sound can be cast out at the highest level.

Ringing is an addiction from which few escape once they have ventured into the small fortress-like room beneath the bells, and the sally - the soft tufted grip at the end of the rope - leaps to life against the palm of the hand like an animal. There then begins a lifetime of concentration, of perfect striking and a coordination of body and mind so destructive to anxieties and worries of all kinds that one wonders why campanology isn't high on the therapy list.

The bells tumble through their paces with hypnotic precision. They are incredibly old and vast, with the names of saints, princes, squires, parsons and merchants, as well as rhymes and prayers, engraved on

their sides. The ringing men know them both by parish and individually, and will travel from tower to tower across the county in pursuit of a particular sound. The world to them is a vision of belfries. Some part of the general fretfulness of humanity seems to be soothed by this vision. Theology is put to the count. Lost in an art-pastime-worship based on blocks of circulating figures which look like one of those numeric keys to the Great Pyramid's secret, the ringing men are out on their own in a clashing sphere of golden decibels. The great changes are mesmeric and at half-way through the 'attempt' the ringers are drugged by sound and arithmetic. Their shirt-sleeved arms fly with the ropes and, because their whole personality bends to the careening mass of metal above, they often look as if they had lost their will, and as if the bells were in charge of them. They are famous for avoiding church services. They keep in touch by means of a weekly magazine called *The Ringing World* which, to the outsider, presents a scene of extraordinary fantasy. The ringing men are indifferent to all the usual 'craft' or ancient art talk and are a different race altogether from Morris Dancers, say. They just walk or drive to a given tower - the fact that the building is a church is always a secondary consideration - and ring. The curious thing is that the sweet uproar of change-ringing is so integral a part of the village sound that it is often not consciously heard. When listened to by the non-ringer, the general effect is soothing, bland, a restoration of God to his heaven and rightness to the world. The reality of what is occurring is known only to another ringer. Bellringing is one of the most claiming activities imaginable.

*This was the reading at the Association AGM service read by our Ringing Master  
Rosemary Morgan.*