



Bristol Rural News

Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Association of Church Bellringers

The Newsletter of Bristol Rural Branch Bellringers

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June 2017

Published on 4th Saturday

May Day Outing

The traditional Branch May Day outing actually fell on May Day this year. Our first tower was Lydiard Tregoze, a rather noisy 6 in a country park on the edge of Swindon. We next journeyed into the centre of Swindon to ring at St. Mark's, a superb going and sounding 8, and to me at least, easily the best tower of the day. From there we made a short trip to Christchurch, a nice going 10. Not having many 10 bell ringers in our party, we didn't really do the bells justice but sensibly we only tried things we could have a reasonable shot at. After lunch we rang at Wanborough, Wroughton and Royal Wotton Bassett. We had rung at the last tower on a previous May Day outing, but that was before it became a Royal town.

Thanks to Sue Elliott, who made the arrangements for us.
Chris Greef



Sue's Island Tour

As if one tour in month wasn't enough, Sue also organised an outing to the Isle of Wight. The plan was to ring all the bells on the island, but unfortunately Ryde bells were not available because their wheels were still at the bell founders for refurbishment after 7 months! (But see the postscript below!)

We started on a very wet Wednesday lunchtime at Freshwater, a good ground floor 6. Some ringers were a

little apprehensive at first because of the long draft, but this did not prove a problem in practice and we had some good ringing. Next stop was Shorwell, another 6, good to ring but relatively heavy going for their weight. The final tower of the day was Brighstone, only recently augmented to be an 8. They were light and fast going, something the group didn't find easy, but according to the tower contact we rang the first course of Stedman Triples on the bells.

The Thursday was somewhat better weatherwise and we started the day on the 12 at Newport, or at least we would have done except that the clappers of the front four were away for works. So we rang a nice heavy 8 instead, Plain Hunting, Grandsire Triples and Stedman Triples. From Newport we made the short trip to Carisbrooke, home to the famous castle. This was a 10 and we managed Plain Hunt Caters and Grandsire Caters. The last stop before lunch was Godshill, a tourist honeypot village with thatched cottages and all the trappings that go with being a honeypot. Still, there was a nice 6 and again we acquitted ourselves pretty well, ringing up to Cambridge this time. No doubt the sound of the bells ringing would have just enhanced the idea of what happens in a pretty English village, as far as some of the visiting tourists were concerned. We all made our own arrangements for lunch before ringing at Newchurch. I nearly put a jinx on things here by



commenting in the pub at lunchtime that everything on the tour was running OK, so what happened but the tower contact didn't turn up at the appointed time. Fortunately, a phone call from Sue brought him along not too late. The bells here were unusual, hung in a wood clad tower and rung from the church porch: I don't know how service ringing is organised, as the congregation have to walk through the ringers to get into the church. It was a light 6, relatively heavy going for the weight, and we rang a course of All Saints in honour of the church's dedication, and also



Arreton church

up to Norwich. The final tower of the day, Arreton, was another good 6, with tea and cake to provide sustenance for the ringing. Again we rang a good range of methods – Stedman, Grandsire, St. Simon's, St. Clement's, Cambridge and Norwich. Arreton churchyard has a table tomb with a brass plaque recording the illustrious ringing career of one William Rayner around the turn of 18th and 19th centuries – we saw his name on several peal boards in the towers we rang at.

without reason. The last tower of the morning was Shanklin, another tricky 8. After such easy bells on the first two days I was beginning to wonder what the rest of the last day would bring. I need not have worried though, as all the afternoon 6's, at Whitwell, Niton and Chale were delightful to ring. The first two were a bit noisy (and interestingly, Niton bells are in 3 tiers, which some of us saw) but Chale were magnificent – saving the best till last. There was an added bonus too – a lady delivered a plate of scones for us to eat, as she had been married at Mangotsfield back in the 1970's!

Sue Elliott's organisation of the trip was immaculate, everyone enjoyed themselves and we showed our appreciation with an appropriate gift, together with a message to keep on organising tours like this! Thanks are also due to John & Karen Payton, who kept the tea and coffee going during the outing.

And the postscript? Well, we heard through the grapevine on Friday that Ryde's wheels had at last been returned. They were refitted on the Thursday and Friday and a special practice had been organised for the Friday evening to check them out. Sadly, a number of the tour party had left the island by then, but the 8 of us staying overnight all turned up and had a go. And what a good set of bells they were! We've now bagged the lot on the island.

Chris Greef

The weather on Friday was great, sunny, clear blue sky and breezy. The first tower was Swanmore, a steel 3 and joker of the pack. We were told that it wasn't possible to raise in peal but decided to have a go anyway. They were light enough but all the bells sounded the same and the clappers swung around apparently at random, so there was no correlation between pulling the rope and striking, with plenty of double clapping going on most of the time. We all had a laugh! The young man who let us in



Tower access at Brading

said that they use a simulator at the normal practice and this eliminates all the odd struckness. And to their credit they are teaching a group of youngsters who then transfer to some of the 'proper' bells on the island without any problem. Next was Brading, an 8 accessed via an exterior ladder. Not at all easy, with some of the bells tending to drop

Quarter peals in the last month

Several quarters were rung to celebrate St. George's day:
 3 Doubles at Warmley
 Grandsire Doubles at Tytherington – Harry Pitcher's first quarter
 Grandsire Doubles at Mangotsfield
 Plain Bob Doubles at Dyrham
 Plain Bob Doubles at Bitton – Tom Turner's first quarter
 Plain Bob Doubles at Pucklechurch
 Grandsire Doubles at Abson.

There were also several rung to commemorate soldiers who fell in WWI
 Grandsire Triples at Thornbury, in memory of Pte. William Gale (d. 30.4.1917)
 St. James Bob Doubles at Iron Acton, for Patronal Festival and in memory of Percy George Thomas (d. 9.5.1917)
 Grandsire Triples at Olveston, in memory of Pte. Frank Baston (d. 5.5.1917).

Other quarters:
 7 Doubles at Dyrham, in memory of Mervyn Cox
 Anniversary Bob Doubles at Warmley
 3 Doubles at Winterbourne
 4 Doubles at Alveston

Striking & Listening Course

On Saturday May 13th we held a striking and listening course at Frampton Cotterell. It was run by Steve Coleman and by his very nature guaranteed that we would have both an educational and entertaining morning.

There were 12 members from the Rural Branch and 3 from Wotton Branch. Everyone had a go at setting bells both Hand and Back stroke in succession, we did change ringing and some people were invited to whisper criticisms in the offender's ear. We all rang facing outwards to gain some sense of rhythm. We rang Twinkle Twinkle Little Star and London Bridge, which ensured some bells had to stand after 1 stroke. We practised Whole Pull and Stand for funerals, and we had a go at "Firing", a very old tradition for weddings which seems to have largely died out. Perhaps it's something that could be re-introduced at weddings, but it has to be done right. The morning concluded with the usual tea and cakes. Steve was thanked and applauded for a really interesting 2 hr. lesson. My thanks to Frampton for hosting it.

Alan Coombs

Branch Practice at Syston

Our Ringing Master Alan Coombs writes:
Although the BBQ was cancelled this year there was still a branch practice at Syston, I am very disappointed to say that it was attended by just 5 people. These practice meetings are held for everyone's benefit to ring methods that they may not be able to do at their own tower due to lack of numbers. Some time ago I stopped having a "Method of the Month" as I thought some people were discouraged from coming by thinking that is the only method we would be ringing. Perhaps I ought to re-introduce it next month at Thornbury? But I emphasise it is a Branch Practice and that means **everyone is** welcome regardless of your capabilities. We will cater for you.

Alan Coombs

Training Day

The next Training Day on Saturday June 3rd will be held at Dyrham from 10am - 12 noon.

It will be focused on Grandsire Doubles, both for those who are struggling with a plain course, and for those who wish to learn bobs and singles. Please let Alan Coombs know ASAP if you would like to sign up, or if you can help.

Obituaries

Sadly, two ringers who will have been known to Rural Branch members have recently died:

Mervyn Cox, 82, died on 25th April after a fall. He had recently been attending the monthly Kelston practice and had been tower captain at Compton Dando from the early 80's. He was also the organist both at Compton and Chelwood and spent countless hours keeping the churchyards in pristine condition, and when he was not outside working he was cleaning and polishing inside the church. He will be missed by many people especially Christine Jones his ringing "Soulmate".

Eric Sutton from Christ Church Swindon died on 3rd May of a heart attack, having rung the treble to Yorkshire Royal at Christ Church the previous evening. He was an Honorary Life Member of the Association and was frequently seen on Far-cited and Dodgers' Outings. His funeral is at ChristChurch at 12.30 on 6th June.

RIP

Let's Ring!

Attached is a second chapter about the learning journey of an enthusiastic group of young ringers at Stone. There's food for thought here – maybe this is the way to go if you want to get some new young ringers for your tower?

BBC Music Day

Also attached is information about the 3rd BBC Music Day on 15th June – your chance to take part and possibly get a mention on the radio!

Notice Board

Bristol Rural Branch

June 2017

What's on this month in the Branch

FarCited Ringing

Thursday 1st June

10.30-11.15 Bradford on Avon Christ Church 8 (12 cwt)	BA15 1QL	ST827613.
11.30-12.15 Bradford on Avon The Wilderness Ring 8 (0-2-21) GF (5 minute Walk from CC)		ST823612
12.30-2.30 Lunch Venue The New Inn Westwood	BA52 2AF	
2.30-3.15 Westwood St. Mary the V 6 (4 cwt)	BA15 2AF	T812590

Branch Ringing

3rd June

Training Day - it will be Grandsire Doubles at Dyrham - 10 till 12.

8 Bell Practice

17th June

Warmley 10.00 - 11.30

15th June

BBC Music Day see posters

24th Branch Practice

Thornbury
19.00 - 21.00

Kelston Ringing

3rd June 1st Saturday 14.00 - 16.00

Chipping Sodbury Ringing

23rd June Third Friday 19.30 - 21.00 "Note Change"

BBC MUSIC DAY



Bellringers in the UK and around the world are being invited to take part in the third annual BBC Music Day on **Thursday 15th June**, with the theme this year being “the power of music”.

The sound of bells, with their power to bring communities and generations together, was a feature of last year’s BBC Music Day, with many ringers taking part.

This year, BBC Music Day will be even larger and BBC would like to build on last year’s success by inviting tower and handbell ringers from the UK and **around the world** to showcase this kind of performing arts by ringing at 7pm their local time.

You could ring only for a few minutes or for much longer. The BBC will select performances to include in their coverage and in a special programme which is being considered for BBC Radio 4 on Music Day itself.

How to take part :-

- □ Agree with your venue, plan your band, what you will ring and any special event or dedication associated with your performance. If possible, arrange permission from your band and venue in case the BBC ask you to video or record your ringing on the day.
- □ Email the BBC Music Day team at BBCMusicDay@bbc.co.uk as soon as possible to let them know you’ll be taking part with the subject heading “RINGING EVENT - <Your Location> <Your Country> and include in your email :-
 - A contact email and mobile phone number
 - Who will be ringing and what will be rung
 - Details of any event, story or dedication associated with your performance, which will be of interest to the BBC’s audience.
- □ Ring, starting at 7pm local time on Thursday 15th June.
- □ The BBC may invite you to submit a video or audio clip of your ringing on the day. If so, they will contact you using the email or phone number you have provided.



This year, BBC Music Day will be even larger and the BBC would like to build on last year's success by inviting tower and handbell ringers from the UK and around the world to ring out at 1900 their local time.

BBC Music Day Producer, Rebecca Sandiford, comments *"Church bells are a wonderful symbol of community cohesion and since BBC Music Day is all about uniting people through music, bell ringing is going to provide a fantastic unifying moment. This year we'd like to make this even more special by inviting ringers around the globe to join us, ringing at 1900 local time, to show how the power of music can unite people around the world."*

Ringers are being asked to ring only for a few minutes or for longer if they prefer. The BBC aims to select performances to include in their coverage.

How to take part :-

- □ Agree with your venue, plan your band, what you will ring and any special event or dedication associated with your performance. If possible, arrange permission from your band and venue in case the BBC ask you to video or record your ringing on the day.
- □ Email the BBC Music Day team at BBCMusicDay@bbc.co.uk as soon as possible to let them know you'll be taking part with the subject heading "RINGING EVENT - <Your Location> <Your Country> and include in your email :-
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BBC MUSIC DAY

is coming !

BBC Music Day is returning for its third year on Thursday 15 June 2017, celebrating music's ability to unite communities across generations, and this year bell-ringers have been asked to play an even bigger role.

The sound of bells, with their power to bring communities and generations together, was a feature of last year's BBC Music Day, with over 200 bell-ringing groups taking part.

This year's theme is the power of music, and the day will feature broadcasts on BBC TV, Radio and digital services from 6am to midnight.

Bob Shennan, Director of BBC Radio and Music explains:

"BBC Music Day is a unique opportunity for people to celebrate music and musical talent, whether attending one of the many events taking place or tuning in at home."

Last year's BBC Music Day was supported by a number of stars including Duran Duran, Izzy Bizu, Laura Mvula, and Nile Rodgers, who performed at the Eden Project in Cornwall on BBC Music Day.

Meanwhile, BBC Local Radio (in partnership with BBC Outreach) marked BBC Music Day 2016 with Take it to the Bridge: musical collaborations on over 40 bridges around the UK, both large iconic bridges such as the Tees Transporter Bridge in Middlesbrough and smaller, quirkier bridges like Bishop Bridge in Norwich.

Award-winning Scottish band and BBC Music Day Ambassadors Travis performed live with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra at the Barrowlands in Glasgow.

In the evening, bells from over 200 church towers across the UK rang out simultaneously throughout towns, cities and villages, from cathedrals such as Bristol and Manchester to smaller parish churches like Saint Francis Xaviers in Liverpool.



The Power of Music – Ringing at Manchester Cathedral for BBC Music Day 2016

Another fun and fabulous week for *Let's Ring!*

Stone, Gloucestershire.

After the resounding success of our half-term holiday ringing course for beginners (see 24th March edition of Ringing World) our youngsters had been looking forward to getting together again to hone their developing ringing skills. The Easter school holidays presented the ideal opportunity for another week's course for our improvers and Jeremy Sargent and Catherine White-Horne were once again opening the tower of Stone Church to the life and laughter of our young ringers.



Team *Let's Ring!* Left to right: Alistair and Ben White-Horne, Taya Green, Ed Miller, new ringers from nearby Almondsbury: Madeleine and Caleb Jefferis, Zoe Bonnett, "Arch" Andrews and Jeremy Sargent

Objectives of the Course:

To further improve and polish our improvers' handling skills and work on good listening and striking. Our target was for all our learners to acquire sufficient bell control in order to plain hunt. In addition we planned to enable all our youngsters to raise a bell with confidence and control as well as to start work on lowering.

Course Structure:

Many established ringers from across the region offered their time and expertise to provide our learners with a steady band for well struck rounds and hunting practice. Homework was issued beforehand and armed with a well-stocked sweet jar the scene was set once again for *Let's Ring!*

The course took place over the six mornings following Easter Day, with the sessions extending by popular demand from one and a half to two hours as the week went on. With the skills they have acquired during the Beginners' Course in February, our students were able to ring together most of the time, meaning more rope-time for everyone. They could also learn by observing each other's progress as they began to plain hunt with an established band. Our little ringing room was full to the brim with students and helpers every day and the sessions acquired something of a party atmosphere as the week progressed.

Let's Ring! goes Tie-Dye:

Activities extended into the afternoon on a couple of the days with the *Let's Ring!* team getting together to create unique but matching tie-dye T-shirts. These are themed red, white and blue just like our sallies and proclaim to anyone behind us that "I learnt to ring at Stone!"



Concert!

Our new ringers nearly all come from non-ringing families so we're particularly grateful for the support and commitment of the parents who reorganise calendars and ferry their offspring to practices. A special event was called for to celebrate our youngsters' achievements and to involve their parents in our venture. On the last day of the course we laid on a ringing concert so that our youngsters could show off all the new skills they have learned and their parents could share in the pride, enthusiasm and success of *Let's Ring!*

One family at a time were invited to climb the tower and welcomed to take a seat in our little ringing chamber. Their youngster chose what they wanted to ring and which skills to show off, such as to plain hunt or to demonstrate a dodge. The assembled ringers both new and established took hold and the performance began to the familiar cry of "Look to!". Our concert was greatly enjoyed by all; the ringers received regular applause and much appreciation from their families. Tea and biscuits were laid on in the church for our guests to enjoy as the families got to know each other.

In this way we showcased our new ringers, quite a contrast to the rather anonymous nature normally associated with ringing, where the ringers are generally hidden from view. We demonstrated to our new recruits how much their commitment is appreciated and – this is really important - it helped their parents to feel a part of this new venture.



Zoe's family brought a delicious home-made sponge cake for everyone to share, still warm from the oven.....

Achieved!

Great progress was made by all our learners as the week went on. The rounds and called changes had improved markedly by the last session and all our youngsters could confidently plain hunt from the treble with minimal correction, demonstrating that they understood the method as well as have acquired the necessary bell control. One or two progressed on to hunting from an inside bell. All our learners were able to cover to plain hunt too, even when the method went a bit wobbly! Everyone was able to confidently raise a bell and progress was made on lowering. Fun times were had by all, teachers and helpers included.

Secrets of Success:

Youngsters today have many competing demands on their time ranging from exam pressure and homework to music commitments and social media. Ringing as a hobby needs to be fun and rewarding in order to attract and retain our young people. *Let's Ring!* provides the fun environment; a happy, relaxed and supportive tower borne from good leadership where kids of similar age learn together. Progress must be swift and celebrated in order that the new hobby feels worthwhile in our youngsters' competitive world. The intensive course format provides fast results in an environment which appeals to our youngsters. Issues and difficulties encountered by every learner can be resolved quickly by giving extra time to that individual because coaching is focussed entirely on our beginners. This fosters confidence in our new recruits and prevents disillusionment.

Looking forward:

For future *Let's Ring!* holiday courses we plan to visit neighbouring towers to gain experience on heavier and more challenging bells and to have fun together taking *Let's Ring!* on tour.

Watch out at towers near you for the arrival of **Team *Let's Ring!***



Left to right: Ben White-Horne, Anna Scott, Zoe Bonnett, Madeleine Jefferis, Taya Green, Ed Miller, Catherine and Alistair White-Horne and Jeremy Sargent.

Once again, the last words on another fantastic week must go to our students:

Zoe: I most liked the aspect of coming together and having fun whilst learning new exciting things

Taya: I liked the freedom in that if u said u wanted to do something then everyone would help u to work towards it even though it was a bit ambitious xtx

Ed: The thing i liked the most was learning plain hunt and ringing every day made me much more confident handling different bells

Caleb: I looked forward to going each morning and meeting new people, practising every day for a week meant I got much better much more quickly than practising once a week.

Madeleine: It was better (than I expected) because it was fun to ring with lots of young people. There are only 2 at my tower

by Catherine White-Horne
Stone, Gloucestershire.
01454 416155

If you are motivated to run your own *Let's Ring!* week and would like to know more about what we did and have learnt from running these courses then feel free to get in touch.

With huge thanks once again to Jeremy Sargent and to all our ringing helpers: Ben and Alistair White-Horne, Ed Sargent, "Arch" Andrews, George Collett, Denise Farr and Rachel Parker. Also to the parents who chauffeured our students to and from Stone and to all our understanding neighbours for whom our ringing was their daily backing-track once more.