



Bristol Rural News

Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Association of Church Bellringers

The Newsletter of Bristol Rural Branch Bellringers

No 281

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Headlines

1 All Branch ringing events cancelled until further notice

Summer 2021

Editor's Note

The government's latest advice on Covid has lifted all the legal limitations whilst at the same time advising caution in what we do. This leaves it down to judgement and common sense, as is reflected in the most recent Central Council advice (see the table at the end of this newsletter). It is the responsibility of the church minister to determine the precautions to be followed in all church activities, so I urge you to discuss any proposed return to ringing with him/her.

As a Branch, we will be carrying out a survey of towers in the near future to find out whether ringing has been resumed. After this, we will also be seeking views on when we should be restarting Branch activities.

Chris Greef

Bitton's Ellacombe Chimes

I wrote about the forthcoming bicentenary celebrations of the Ellacombe chiming apparatus in the April newsletter. A very successful celebration weekend was held at Bitton church at the end of June accompanied by a wave of Ellacombe chimes ringing around the world. The bicentenary also featured live on BBC



Points West (and ITV). All good publicity for ringing!

Chris Greef

Frenchay Bells

Alan Freke has produced a book about the installation of the Frenchay bells, which we are selling at £5 for Tower Funds (+£1.50 p&p.). David Cawley has written a review for the Ringing World, copied below. To obtain a copy of the book email frenchaybellringers@gmail.com.

Edna Cause

The Bells of Frenchay Church

The Story of the first new ring of bells in the Diocese of Bristol since the 1930s

Alan Freke

This delightful little book, profusely illustrated with photographs, tells of the results of a series of coincidences which resolved themselves into the newest (and lightest) ring of bells in the Diocese of Bristol since before the Second World War. For the purist, the subtitle may seem inaccurate: rings had been created at Bristol Cathedral (Temple Church bells) and St Paul, Southville (St Luke Bedminster bells). The six at Frenchay were however either new bells or single bells from elsewhere, restored and hung in a tower which had hitherto held only one conventional bell.

A fine photograph of this bell adorns the Introduction: on the facing page is a typical English scene. Cricket on Frenchay Common, in front of St John's Church is as Arcadian an image as one could wish to see. When the photograph was taken there was no equally Arcadian sound of English change-ringing. Parishioners and friends were to complete the image. This is their story.

A story should begin at the beginning. In the case of Frenchay, it starts with the mother parish of Winterbourne with its heavy 1757 William Evans six. Indeed, the story of Frenchay's new bells could well be said to commence in that tower, where an "ambitious DIY project" of the 1980s showed what could be done by determined villagers with enthusiastic leadership. It was Terry Jefferies, driving by, whose throw-away comment, "You know, you could put a nice little ring of bells in that tower" gave birth to the Frenchay bells project. It was the first of a number of coincidences.

The best laid plans have always to take account of other projects and needs. In Frenchay's case it was the matter of £100,000 for re-ordering the church, together with several other "significant updates" which would make the church more accessible. However, Frenchay was blessed with a supportive PCC (so long as the bells didn't impact on the major plans). Fr Roger Thomas turned out to be an enthusiastic Rector. The DAC Bells Adviser was also a supporter, and it was he who – in days long before Keltex – suggested acquiring existing bells that were no

longer used. He carefully avoided saying that the acquisition might be “less than straightforward”.

There ensued in the following months a tower grab with a difference, the end of which saw Frenchay with eleven bells on the floor and its prospective tenor above in the old wooden six-bell frame provided when the church was built in 1834. Any thought that the latter would safely accommodate the proposed new ring were quickly dispelled, for reasons apparent in a photograph on p.34. The primary object was to acquire the bells and the following six chapters show in detail (and illustrate) how this was done.

The second coincidence – a piece of falling masonry and subsequent scaffolding of the tower – resulted in a set of four clock bells (Taylor 1892) acquired from seemingly impossible conditions at Almondsbury Hospital. A third coincidence was the posting of an alcohol license application from the 2-bell (Warner 1878) belfry of the old Prince Street Mission in Bristol. Alan Freke, working nearby, saw the notice by chance and was thus able to identify and contact the owner. Also, by coincidence, Alan’s firm was moving and had a “cherry picker” to hand whereby the tricky job of removing the bells was accomplished. Elsewhere in Bristol, the former St Saviour’s Church had two bells even higher up than the two at Prince Street Mission. Now in Pentecostal use, the church suffered a coincidence of major proportions when The Hurricane struck in October 1987. During repairs, the Trustees were only too glad to extend their scaffolding so that the Frenchay volunteers could rescue the two bells (Taylor 1957). A small bell by Thomas Hale of Bristol “...so awful when it was chimed” was acquired from another St John’s, at Hallen, but never made it to the Frenchay “pot” as Taylors purchased it and put it into the Bell Foundry Museum. It can be seen (and heard) in the Furnace Gallery.

A very good bell, Taylor 1908, ex St Lawrence, Byker, was purchased from The Revd Peter Newing for scrap value. This was the only bell which was paid for. The eleven others (including the Frenchay tenor) were acquired free. The smallest Almondsbury bell, not being required, was given to the new church at Patchway. Likewise, the smaller Redland bell was hung at St Luke, Barton Hill, the larger having been given to Frenchay in exchange for a container of supplies sent to Romania. The Almondsbury 2nd and Princes Hall bells were cast into two new trebles. The Redland bell became the 3rd of the new ring, the Byker bell is Frenchay 4th. Almondsbury 3rd is the 5th and Frenchay’s original bell is the tenor.

The book contains a large number of good quality illustrations, among them photographs of the former homes of the foregoing bells. The second part of the narrative deals in detail with the design and building of the new steel frame and creation of the new ringing chamber. In tandem with this, the old bells were tuned and the two trebles cast at Loughborough, where new fittings were made. Clearly, the work in the tower was

greatly expedited by the experience gained a few years before at Winterbourne. There is a useful (and amusing) chapter on fund raising, which includes a line or two on an unsigned cheque and divine intervention! A chapter on the clock (and its hemispherical bell) will be of interest to horologists

The project ends with the creation of the beautiful ringing chamber, the hallowing of the bells, and their subsequent installation and dedication. The continuing project, the training of ringers, and some notable “firsts” brings us right up to the present. This delightfully told, well-illustrated and inexpensive book captures the story of the way in which a very active and successful band of ringers came into being, acquired and hung its bells and continues to this day.

David Cawley

The Charmborough Ring—a Plea for Volunteers

Now that Covid restrictions are gradually being lifted, we have seen a surge of interest in hiring the Charmborough Ring over the autumn period. Sometimes more than one group wishes to hire the ring on the same date, but we have a shortage of operators who can help us take the ring out and about.

The ring is currently based at New Alresford in Hampshire, and we have one other local operator Andy Mead based at Douling Beacon in Somerset. Ian Kerwin from Essex recently retired from the Trust as his circumstances have changed. We are very grateful for the support he provided in the period up to Covid.

Between us, in 2019 we took the ring to 19 different events, and we would like to make even greater use of the ring in the future. Therefore, we would like at least two more local operators to come on board in order to share the workload. The ring is predominantly used at weekends during the summer months, although we are keen to take the ring into schools and shopping centres throughout the year to help with promoting ringing post pandemic.

Ideally volunteers will live in Southern England or South Wales, preferably somewhere near the M4 corridor, the M25, or the A34. The ring and its trailer weighs 2.1 tonnes, so volunteers should have a vehicle capable of legally towing that weight (Beware that different models/years of the same car often have different towing capacities). If you do not have a towbar, we may be able to help you purchase one, depending on how often you are willing to take the ring out. We also pay travelling expenses, currently 50p/mile when you tow the ring. If you passed your car driving test on or after 1 January 1997 you will also need to have passed the [car](#)



and trailer driving test.

We usually transport the ring from area to area during the week, between events, so you will need somewhere reasonably secure to park the trailer when not in use, either in the open air, or inside. It measures 4.53 m long x 2.08m wide and is 2.20m high

We will provide training on how to erect and dismantle the ring. It is currently booked for events in Devises on 4th September, Abbots Langley on 18th September, Roehampton on 19th September and New Alresford on 2nd October, so these might be good opportunities. We also have other enquiries which we are trying to fit in.

If you would like to help with taking the ring to events, please contact Roger Booth roger@charmborough.org or 07411 181583 for further information.

Roger Booth

Ringling Books Available

Tony York 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—new price £4.

Tony York



SUMMARY RINGING GUIDANCE (England)

Version 2.0 published 16th July

Protection	Current guidance from CCCBR	Basis for guidance (from 19 th July)	Practicalities
Facemasks	Expected if ringing with unvaccinated ringers, e.g. youth groups, when teaching face to face, and if your band contains people with impaired immunity	Facemasks are no longer required to be worn in Places of Worship by law, but they do offer protection to others (and you). Face to face / close contact teaching, for longer periods of time in the context of exponentially increasing cases, gives a very strong case for facemasks.	FFP3 masks offer the best protection both for the wearer and in preventing transmission, but they need to be fitted properly.
Ventilation	Ringling rooms should be well ventilated with external airflow	It is well established that good ventilation decreases the risk of virus transmission	Ideally you should feel a draught. Good ventilation makes longer periods of ringing safer.
Number of ringers	No legal limit but avoid crowded badly-ventilated ringing chambers	Legal restrictions have been removed but government is still urging caution in minimising the number, proximity and duration of social contacts	Ringers are more likely to feel comfortable where ringing rooms are not too crowded and are well ventilated.
Social distancing	No longer legally required	Legal restrictions have been removed	
Duration of ringing sessions	Ring for as long as the band is comfortable ringing for	Personal judgement is the basis for deciding how long to spend with others in an enclosed space	Ringers are likely to feel more comfortable in well ventilated spaces
Hand sanitiser	Still encouraged as it adds protection	Scientific evidence that transmission by touch is not the main cause of transmission (aerosol is a greater cause) but the risk has not gone away. Sanitiser is an additional precaution.	Remember that sanitiser needs to dry to be effective
Lateral Flow Tests	Take them if you are going to mix with unvaccinated ringers	UK Government recommends LFTs in order to protect unvaccinated people from those who may be asymptomatic.	Definitely if you are running youth practices – parents will expect it. Not necessary for groups of fully vaccinated adults (i.e. two vaccinations).

Place of Worship Guidance Pending

Overall Government Guidance <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-response-summer-2021-roadmap/coronavirus-how-to-stay-safe-and-help-prevent-the-spread>