



Bristol Rural News

Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Association of Church Bellringers

The Newsletter of Bristol Rural Branch Bellringers

No 287

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Headlines

- 1 **Branch Practice—Alveston—30th July, 1900-2100**
- 2 **Branch Practice & Cream Tea—Syston—27th August, 1500-1800**
- 3 **Gloucester Cathedral Ringing - 18th September - 1320-1500**

August
-
September
2022

Editor's Note

The holiday season is upon us and maybe ringing goes a bit quiet, certainly there is not much news this time. We do have an item from Philip Pratt about Avon Ropes and Big Wilf's Bell Muffles—it's worth checking them out next time you need new ropes or muffles.

There are also opportunities to ring with the Branch over the next couple of months. We have a regular Branch practice at Alveston at the end of July and then a 'special' at Syston in August with a cream tea - sunny weather guaranteed? Finally we resume our annual pilgrimage to ring at Gloucester cathedral in September - well worth the experience if you've not been before.

Do let me know if there is any way in which the Branch can help your tower. Perhaps you would benefit from a training session on a particular method or you need some support on practice night—I've heard from a number of towers about the small numbers they get.

Chris Greef

Avon Ropes and Big Wilf's Bell Muffles

As a result of demand, I established a bell rope making business in 2007.

Over time the business has grown steadily and we now have bell ropes in towers throughout the United Kingdom, Netherlands, USA and Australia. In late 2011 we relocated to new premises in Bristol and the Avon Ropes brand was established as a result. In 2018 we became an incorporated company, Avon Ropes Ltd.

Since the outset we have started entirely from scratch. We have had to design our own machinery, learn our

own techniques and implement lean manufacturing to bring about a product everyone has come to love. We have worked hard to source natural materials and use traditional skills to produce high quality bell ropes. Our wool is sheared, processed, and dyed all without leaving the UK. We are a proud supporter of British Wool. We are able to supply bell ropes made from both Hemp and Flax fibre. Both our Hemp and Flax is sourced directly from mills in southern Europe. On all our timber products where we use air dried Ash, we undertake the felling, seasoning and processing of all of the hardwood timber. A couple of our team are competent and assessed to NPTC CS30/31/32, and we are insured to undertake all our own timber harvesting.

In 2018 we built another rope machine which we call our 'mini rope walk' and this enabled us to further increase our product range to include light pull bell ropes and mini ring ropes, something that is not possible on our larger machinery. We have worked hard with our suppliers to ensure that our pre-stretched polyester has the minimum stretch for bell ropes and have developed patent granted joint for Dyneema® ropes for the ultimate zero-stretch rope. In 2020 we pioneered our own top end rope, we call it UHMPP. It has very similar stretch performance and construction similar to Dyneema® top ends, but without the huge top end breaking strain of Dyneema® which is not needed for bell ropes.

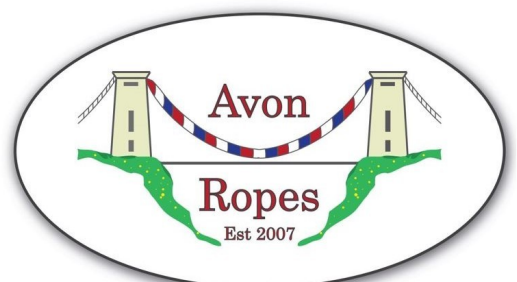
We have developed the necessary skills within the workforce and manufactured our own dedicated bell rope making machinery which is automated with state of the art computer controlled programming to ensure accurate and repeatable control over the manufacturing

Avon Ropes proudly sponsors Bristol Rural News

Contact us for bell ropes, light pull bell ropes, and a 2-week bell rope repair service.

Please see our website, www.avonropes.co.uk, our Facebook page or phone on 07946 605 963.

We're local too, based in Mangotsfield.



process. We pride ourselves on our quality of workmanship, our attention to customer requirements and our aim to meet our promises on deliveries.

In 2021 we acquired the Big Wilf's Bell Muffles brand (www.bigwilfsbellmuffles.co.uk), including the equipment, archive of all historic orders, tooling, design and have upskilled our workforce to continue to manufacture the excellent product. Additionally we have invested heavily in additional technology to assist in the manufacture of muffles, but the product remains unchanged. The additional technology enables us to manufacture other leather goods too in house, which you'll find on the Sundries page of our website www.avonropes.co.uk.

Philip Pratt

Branch Programme for 2023

I know it seems a bit early to be talking about this, but by the time of the next newsletter we will have had a tower captains' meeting to put together a draft programme for 2023. So put your thinking caps on and brief your tower representative with ideas. Next year will be a busy one for us, because it is our turn to host the Association AGM.

Chris Greef

Bells in Poetry

Bells don't generally get much attention outside ringing circles but the poet John Betjeman was clearly a fan. Here are extracts from some of his poems that refer to bells—there are others too:

No love that in a family dwells,
No caroling in frosty air,
Nor all the steeple-shaking bells
Can with this single Truth compare
That God was Man in Palestine
And lives today in Bread and Wine.

From Christmas

Tonight we feel the muffled peal
Hang on the village like a pall;
It overwhelms the towering elms
That death-reminding dying fall;
The very sky no longer high
Comes down within the reach of all.
Imprisoned in a cage of sound
Even the trivial seems profound.

Uffington

Your peal of ten ring over then this town,
Ring on my men nor ever ring them down.
This winter chill, let sunset spill cold fire
On villa'd hill and on Sir Gilbert's spire,

So new, so high, so pure, so broach'd, so tall.
Long run the thunder of the bells through all!

*From On Hearing the Full Peal of Ten Bells from Christ Church,
Swindon, Wilts*

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

For the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II

Tytherington - 240 Grandsire Doubles
Almondsbury - 1260 Plain Bob Triples
Frampton Cotterell - Call Changes and Methods
Bitton - 1260 Plain Bob Doubles - also first inside for Nigel Scudamore and to celebrate his 60th birthday
Wapley - 1260 Plain Bob Minor
Winterbourne - Call Changes
Mangotsfield - 5056 Spliced Surprise Major (2m)

Thornbury - 1320 Cambridge Surprise Minor

Big Wilf's Bell Muffles

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We have Velcro fitting Bell Muffles at over 1000 churches and we're now based in Mangotsfield. Please see our website, www.bigwilfsbellmuffles.co.uk or our Facebook page or phone 07946 605 963.