



# Bristol Rural News

Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Association of Church Bellringers

The Newsletter of Bristol Rural Branch Bellringers

No 291

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## Headlines

- 1 Holy Week—3rd-9th April
- 2 G&B AGM in the Rural Branch—22nd April—see attached poster
- 3—St George's Day—23rd April
- 4—May Day Bank Holiday Outing—1st May—see attached poster
- 5—Coronation of Charles III—6th May
- 6—Branch Practice—Winterbourne—27th May, 1430-1630

April—May  
2023

## Editor's Note

It's a busy couple of months ahead for the Rural Branch. I would particularly highlight the G&B AGM which this year is in the Branch. The detailed schedule for the day is on the attached poster—there are two towers for the striking competitions, a number of towers open for general ringing and then a service, meeting, tea and ringing all at Coalpit Heath. Please do support this event by making visitors from other Branches welcome.

## Branch Quiz

Our annual Branch quiz resumed this year after a Covid break. We had about 60 people present, organised into 8 teams. Almondsbury were our quizmasters as winners of the last pre-Covid event and they set us a really good quiz—enough of a challenge to make us think but not so hard that any team came away without a respectable score. We had fun trying to identify the seaside resorts from postcard pictures but I don't think anyone could recall the name of that volcano in Iceland or attempt to pronounce it.

Sue Elliott master-minded the cooking, and towers produced a range of desserts and a pile of raffle prizes.

At the end of the evening Winterbourne Boilers were declared winners by half a point from Frenchay Clangers, and The Scarves (Coalpit Heath and friends) drew the short straw to organise next year's quiz questions.

Overall, an excellent evening, thanks to all who helped or came, and I've booked the date for next year.

Chris Greef

## Syston

In the last newsletter I reported on the retirement of Mervyn Gibbs as tower captain at Syston and the appointment of Glenn Laurence as his replacement. Sadly, this time I have to report that the 4th bell has been declared unringable following the discovery of a crack during an inspection. An extract from Bryan Hardwick's report reads:

"While attending to the No. 4 clapper it was found that there were cracks in the crown of the bell. The first crack



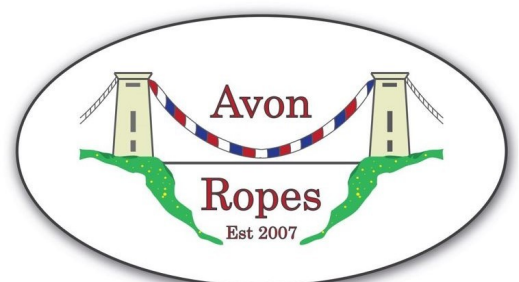
The crack in the crown of the Syston 4th

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originates in the crown and runs down over the shoulder, into the inscription band and around approximately one quarter of the circumference of the bell. The second crack is a vertical crack through the argent to the crown staple bolt. A view up into the bell from below confirmed that the first crack is full thickness and visible on the inside.”

This is obviously very bad news for the Syston ringers. However, Glenn has been very active in seeking ways to deal with the problem. The band is now practising alternate Fridays at Kelston 10.30-12.00 and Wapley 10.00-11.30. He is also exploring the best way of dealing with the cracked bell. Favoured options at present are to weld the crack or to get a replacement bell from the Keltek Trust but all this is subject to discussions with the various stakeholders.

Chris Greef

### Striking Competition

Our striking competition this year was held at Clapton in Gordano on a lovely spring day. The bells are ideal for a competition and we were treated to an excellent tea by the Portishead ringers, who are raising money to repair a cracked tenor bell.

Eight teams plus a scratch team took part in the competition and at the end of the afternoon the judge David Parfrey made some very helpful comments. He said that the standard of ringing was good throughout and he had awarded only a very few full faults, most issues had been with minor hiccups and hesitations. He commented that some teams had rung too briskly, which had the effect of highlighting any slight speed irregularities. He also noted the importance of ringing at the right speed, both for the bells and the ringers.

The final ranking, in reverse order, was:



The winning team with the judge

- Wapley—26½ faults
- Bitton—25 faults
- Warmley—20 faults
- Westerleigh—19½ faults
- Thornbury—13½ faults
- Frampton Cotterell—10 faults
- Almondsbury—10 faults
- Coalpit Heath—7½ faults.

Congratulations then to Coalpit Heath, who go on to represent the Branch at the Association AGM striking competition and thanks to our Ringing Master Matt Johnson for organising a very enjoyable event.

Chris Greef

### May Day Outing

Another returnee post-Covid is the ever popular May Day Outing. Geoff Pick has finalised details for this and we will be ringing at towers near to Devizes in Wiltshire—see the attached poster. Put the date in your diary and hope for a beautiful Spring day.

### The Coronation

I hope all our Branch towers are planning some ringing for the Coronation on Saturday 6th May. There are no specific suggestions on the Central Council website as yet, because a detailed schedule for the day has still to be announced. If there are any particular guidelines, we will circulate them but the important thing is that the bells are rung at some point during the day.



### Another Date for the Diary

Put Saturday 19th August in your diary, as it represents a once in a year opportunity to ring the bells at Imber on Salisbury Plain. Imber is in the middle of a military training area so is rarely accessible. Geoff Pick has booked the bells and will also try to arrange for some other ringing on the day. Cars are not allowed at Imber so transport will be by old London bus from Warminster ([www.imberbus.org](http://www.imberbus.org)). More details will follow in due course.

### Some Ancient Bell History

I found this article about some notes left in an Almondsbury parish register by the then vicar John Paul at the end of the 16th century. There are various subjects, including descriptions of great river floods along the Severn in 1483, 1563 and 1606 (the last of these is quite well known and the causes still debated). There is also reference to two incidents affecting bells, which I

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paraphrase here:

“Thursday 28th November 1605: at a quarter to twelve in the morning there was a great thunderclap and fearful lightning with a storm of hail, in which the tower of Olveston church was rent, the steeple covered with lead was set on fire under the ball of the weathercock, and the steeple consumed, the lead and five sweet bells melted, the chancel burnt, and the body of the church hardly saved. It is thought a thousand pounds will not repair the sudden loss there.”

“The tenor bell of our church of Almondsbury was broken by ringing 1573; and was cast by old Jeffreys at Bristol 1574 but failing in sound was by him and his son cast again 1575. And with hewing(?) continued in some good sort unto the year 1603 and then with chiming did rend. Whereupon by Mr. Chesteres means John Long of Cirencester cast the bell twice in the year 1604 and both times bad to the sorrow of the parish. Then Purdy (who should by bargain first have cast the tenor) the year 1605 did at Bristol cast the same as he now is but nothing so sweet in sound as he was 40 years before. William Bewall the best ringer in the parish at both mishaps being at the rope.”

We can be grateful that modern bell casting techniques are much more reliable than then, and our lightning conductors provide good protection against damage from lightning strikes.

Chris Greef

### **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**

Filton—1260 Grandsire Doubles

Rung for Evensong & Benediction

Filton—1260 Plain Bob Minor

Rung on the feast of St. Polycarp and to mark the beginning of Lent. First inside for Alex M Bickley

Filton—1260 Doubles (Reverse Canterbury, Plain Bob and Grandsire)

Rung on the first Sunday of Lent

Thornbury—1260 Plain Bob Doubles



The Gloucester & Bristol Diocesan Association  
of Church Bell Ringers  
AGM

Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2023  
Bristol Rural Branch

Programme for the day

09:00 (Start) - 6 bell competition at Frenchay

10:00 (Start) - 8 bell competition at Warmley

With Open ringing:

10:00 till 12:00 Almondsbury

11:00 till 12:00 Frampton Cotterell

12:0 till 1:00 Wapley

1:00 till 2:00 Westerleigh

The service & AGM will take place at Coalpit Heath:

13:45-15:00 - open ringing

15:00-15:45 - service

15:45-16:45 – meeting in the hall adjacent to the church

16:45-18:00 – tea in the hall

followed by further ringing till 20:00.

There will be a charge for Tea on the day.

# MAY DAY OUTING

## Monday 1st May

10.00-10:45—All Cannings—6—14 cwt—SN10 3PF

11.00—11:45—Bishops Cannings—8—15 cwt—SN10 2JZ

LUNCH 12.00—13.30

13.45—14.30—Potterne—6—17 cwt—SN10 5LZ

14.45—15:30—Marden—6—12 cwt—SN10 3RQ

15.45—16.30—Chirton—6—10 cwt—SN10 3QT

16.45—17.30—Urchfont—8—19 cwt—SN10 4QP

There is a large scarecrow festival in Urchfont on May 1<sup>st</sup>.

As the time for lunch is limited you could book somewhere in advance. We will be passing Devizes between Bishops Cannings and Potterne so lunch options include the Silk Mercer (Wetherspoons) in St John's Street, SN10 1BL or a number of other pubs and restaurants in Devizes.

Alternatively, The Lemon Plaice (Fish and Chips) SN10 1DN

Pubs in/near Bishops Cannings are The Crown, SN10 2JZ, (which has a cheap lunchtime menu) and The Bridge, SN10 2JS

The pub in Potterne is The George and Dragon, SN10 5PY