



# Bristol Rural News

Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Association of Church Bellringers

The Newsletter of Bristol Rural Branch Bellringers

No 305

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## Headlines

- 1 Branch Practice and Cream Tea—23rd August - details to be confirmed
- 2 Gloucester Cathedral ringing - 21st September - 1320-1500
- 3 Branch Practice—Warmley—27th September—1500-1630
- 4 Association Training Day—11th October—programme to follow

## August – September 2025

### Lundy Island 15<sup>th</sup> May 2025

On a bright sunny Thursday morning, 17 ringers and one non-ringer had an early start to catch the boat from Bideford to Lundy. The two-hour crossing was perfectly smooth, which made for a great start to the day. We discovered that some of the other passengers were also bell ringers, and one was able to ring with us.

We'd rung at three churches the previous day (Calverleigh, Rackenford, Bishop's Nympton) on the way down to Bideford, and we were excited as we arrived at Lundy and the prospect of ringing on Lundy bells.

After climbing the path to the top of the island, coffee was in order and a chance to catch our breath and admire the beautiful scenery.

We then made the short climb to the ringing room, which is open to the elements with plants growing in the windows! The ringing room is not large but all 17 of us fitted in. The 10 bells were easy to raise and we started with call changes, moving on to Grandsire Caters, Little Grandsire Caters, plain hunting on 9, Plain Bob Royal and Stedman Caters (which didn't come round but, hey, we enjoyed trying). We then broke for lunch and some of us headed off to look for the elusive puffins. Unfortunately, no joy, as they were all out at sea keeping cool, or maybe they'd heard us ringing earlier!!

After lunch we had a second session of ringing before heading back down the slope to catch the boat back to Bideford. Another smooth crossing, with some of us spotting three dolphins swimming a short distance from the boat. After a final photoshoot beside the boat, it was time to eat before the final two towers the next day (Swimbridge, Filleigh) as we travelled home.



By the Lundy ferry

The Lundy bells are available all day for a maximum of 6 hours ringing and are well worth the trip. (You do need to book them in advance.)

The Island is stunning, and visitors are given a warm welcome. We all had a fabulous day I would thoroughly recommend visiting to ring and view the island.

Sue Elliott

### A far-cited birthday outing

The July outing took the far-cited group to the Weston-super-Mare area, with ringing at Compton Bishop, Loxton and Uphill. The latter is very aptly named since the church stands isolated on top of a steep hill. The weather was fine and the day happened to be the birthday of both Peggy Collett and Will Fox. Many happy returns to them both and I hope they enjoyed their day!

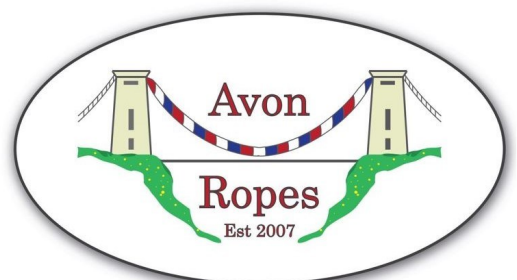
Chris Greef

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**The climb to Uphill church**



**The far-cited ringers**

**Three months in Almondsbury (July 2025)**

Ringling continued healthily with all eight bells rung at Monday practice. We occasionally rang all eight for Sunday service but generally only rang six. Methods were as in the previous quarter: – Grandsire, Plain Bob, Stedman, Cambridge and Norwich Surprise Minor. We continued to have room for any visitor wanting to ring these methods and continue able to support any early stage ringer wanting to ring rounds and call changes. Advanced visitors would enable the band to ring touches of Stedman Triples, Cambridge Surprise Major, Beverley, Surfleet and perhaps other Surprise Minor methods. The band rang for the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of VE day. The Somerset band which enjoyed their quarter so much in January duly returned to ring a peal of Bristol Surprise Major in May. They were followed in July by a band of

Cumberland Youths who rang a peal of Coniston Bluebird Delight Major.

Adam Mead

**The bells and digital bell system of St. Michael’s church, Stoke Gifford**

It all started with a pub conversation, “Does anyone know anything about the bells at St Michael’s Church, Stoke Gifford?” Marcus Booth, our Tower Captain at Almondsbury, knew who to ask. He introduced us (Gerry Annis and Stephen Crane) to Martin Allen and Mike Pearcey, which led to us visiting on Friday 25 April 2025 and offering to document what we discovered. Well, there are bells - three in fact, but it’s unlikely they’ll ever ring again. Instead there’s a ‘digital bell system’, which rings every Sunday and other on occasions. But there’s no practice night and no longer a band. Here’s what else we discovered.



**St. Michael’s church**

**Part 1 - The Bells**



**A bearing**

Martin Allen unlocked the tower and Mike Pearcey accompanied us up into the tower. Marcus joined us later. The three listed bells are out of the frame and sitting on timbers above. The wheels are off and stacked in a corner. The stays have been cut off but the remains are still bolted to the wooden headstocks. The pictures (more on the Branch website) show strip gudgeons with hoop mountings onto timber headstocks with badly worn rusty gudgeon pins. Simple plain brass bearings are mounted directly into the bell frame. Wooden rope pulleys are

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enclosed in mounting boxes and there are latchet type sliders in runners. There are only three bells in the tower but Martin Pearson of Lyndenlea visited some years ago and recorded that there were once four bells. The missing bell, the 2nd, he estimated was over 6cwt and 30 inches in diameter, and tuned to C. The tenor was added in 1620 with the bell frame being modified to suite at that time. He also conjectured that it was an anticlockwise ring.

The three bells are intact, complete with cannons, headstocks attached, with clappers inside but badly corroded with iron oxide (rust). The bell frame is in poor condition due to weather. Fortunately, a nice new timber roof with lead cladding has recently been installed which should stop any further damage to the frame and fittings.

Gerry Annis

A fuller version of this article with more pictures can be found on the Branch website. Part 2—the digital bell system—will feature in the next newsletter.

### 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.

Ringin' Circles (gives the blue line and details of what happens at calls for some standard methods) - some left at £3.50 each.

### Ringin' in the Stroud valleys

We have an unsung author and historian in our Association. Ian Bucknell has spent many years researching the content for this book and I know it will be an eye opening read! This is an essential book for all tower bookshelves! Ian would like all our G & B members to be aware of the launch his book.

*On Their Shoulders We Stand and Ring. A Social History of Bell Ringing in the Stroud Valleys.*

Please contact him if you would like to order a copy of the book and also if you would like to attend the launch event which is at the end of August. See the attached cards.

You can contact Ian on "[ianbucknell3@gmail.com](mailto:ianbucknell3@gmail.com)".

### Branch Ringing Achievements

(This list is compiled by searching Bellboard under the G&B Association. If you don't put your ringing on Bellboard and attribute it to the G&B I won't find it. Ed)

Thornbury—1260 Plain Bob Doubles

Catherine and Ben White-Horne had a fabulous commemoration of the tenth anniversary of their starting to ring with a festive quarter peal around a glitter ball. The ringing accompanied the church's celebrations with baptisms at Pentecost



### Thornbury's glittering quarter band

Mangotsfield—5040 Double Norwich Court Bob Major Rung in memory of Douglas Gardner, father of Ruth Beavin, who used to be a member of the Mangotsfield tower band of ringers

Filton—1260 Plain Bob Doubles  
For the St Peter's Summer Fete

North Nibley—1260 Norwich Surprise Minor  
1st of Norwich - 6 Steve Crane. In memory of Paul Mounsey

Stinchcombe—1320 Cambridge Surprise Minor  
Rung by the Rural Branch Penn trophy practice band