



Bristol Rural News

Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Association of Church Bellringers

The Newsletter of Bristol Rural Branch Bellringers

No 306

Website: <https://bellsgandb.org.uk/bristolrural/> email: bristolrural.branch@bellsgandb.org.uk

Headlines

- 1 Association Training Day—11th October—see below
- 2 Peal/quarter/firsts fortnight—11th-26th October
- 3 Branch practice—Tytherington—25th October—15.00-1630
- 4 Branch AGM—Almondsbury—22nd November—14.30-19.00

October – November 2025

Association training day

The association autumn training day is only a couple of weeks away but if you haven't signed up to go on one of the courses or offered to help out, now is your last chance.

Website News

You can see the very latest news plus details about upcoming events on our Branch website. You can also search for items of interest, checkout recent Branch entries on BellBoard and read a growing list of bell ringing articles contributed by members.

www.bellsgandb.org.uk/bristolrural/

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

Last time I talked about the three now unringable bells at St Michael's Church, Stoke Gifford. This time I describe the digital bell system installed in their place. The bells of St Michael's Church were probably last tolled around 2009 and had not been pealed for well over 50 years. In 2015 the bells were declared unsafe and therefore unable to be rung. There was little hope of them every ringing again due to the high cost of renovation. So the tower fell silent until, in 2018 following a three year project, a new *digital bell system* was installed and sounded for the first time on 8 December 2018 for the annual Christmas Carol Service.

The digital bell system produces the sound of bells through four loudspeakers mounted in the belfry facing north, south, east and west, and directed slightly downwards towards the louvres. Initially the speakers

were simply tannoys, but the sound clarity was poor. They were subsequently upgraded to high quality horn speakers and the sound was much improved. The bell sounds are not those of actual bells. Instead they are sounds created by the system designer using optimised recordings of bell sounds from many different sources. In practice they sound very realistic. The ringing is controlled by a dedicated computer and supporting electronics installed in the Church Vestry on the ground floor. The system, now five years old, was manufactured by John Smith and Sons of Derby, the famous British clockmaker company founded in 1856.



The sound of the bells is heard every Sunday for service, and occasionally for weddings, funerals and other special occasions. St. Michael's has never had a tower clock, but thanks to the new digital system the bells can be now be heard striking the hour.

Gerry Anniss

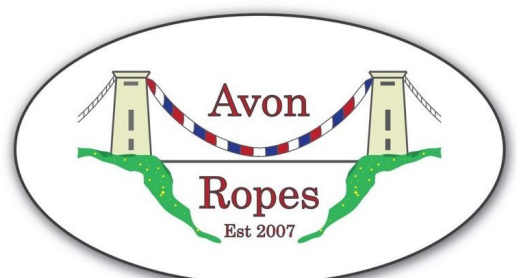
A fuller version of this article with more pictures can be found on the Branch website.

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.



Ringling World National Youth Contest 2025

Every Ringling World National Youth Contest brings a new set of challenges and this year was no exception.

The event was hosted by Birmingham and the ringers of the St Martin's Guild of ringers did a truly fantastic job accommodating 37 teams of enthusiastic young ringers and their supporters.

The G & B Youth Team prepared well for the contest despite a few late drop-outs. The late withdrawals confirmed the wisdom of opting to enter two teams of six rather than a team of eight and of six, so that our party of youngsters finally numbered 13.

The youngsters had practiced monthly since September and usually this involved ringing on eight bells; it was only in the last couple of months that we focussed on ringing six and the exact formation of the bands and choices of what to ring were not decided until the final practices.

The Morning

The method band rang at Edgbaston and entered with confidence. As the judges' comments confirm, our team rang well and, listening outside, we were enjoying what we were hearing until . . . ! The "fire-out" happened suddenly and, despite the best efforts of our conductor, the mistake was irrecoverable. Unsurprisingly, emotions ran high, but there were no recriminations but simply tears of disappointment and sadness – what could have been.

The Judges' Comments

You got off to a confident start, ringing at a good speed and the odd-struckness of the bells was dealt with well. It sounded like this was going to be a really strong performance, and the first half was great to listen to! Unfortunately, a method mistake in the second half meant this piece wasn't completed, despite a very commendable effort to correct it. We really hope you have better luck next year!

We had intended staying a while at Edgbaston – The Birmingham University Students had done a brilliant job at preparing refreshments for everyone and, in different circumstances, we would have stayed so that we might have treated ourselves to second helpings of the marvellous selection of cakes. In the event, we needed a change of scene to recover from the disappointment and so moved on to Erdington for the Call Change competition.

The G & B call change team, despite what had happened earlier, were extremely relaxed and, quite clearly, intended enjoying themselves. The chilled atmosphere within the team, together with a determined attitude from the joint conductors, led to a very pleasing

performance.

The Judges's Comments

This team quickly found its momentum, and produced the fastest piece of ringing of the day, with strong rhythm and pace. This team did lose momentum about halfway through the test piece, but we were incredibly pleased to hear this pick up again to a strong finish. We'd recommend working on the rhythm at the front of the change, to lock everything in. Well done to this team, they should be very proud of their performance.

The Afternoon

With the contest ringing completed, we moved into central Birmingham. The events of the morning had brought the whole group closer together and the collective response was one of determination to make the most of the day. Our young ringers took full advantage of the hand-bell workshop at St Martins and the mini-rings at St Paul's. All of them rang on 16 bells at St Martins with several of our group being invited to ring the tenor. At St Pauls, our youngsters rang the ten as a team and, at both towers, we received some great feedback about the quality of their ringing and especially their ringing styles which are so tidy. Alfie and Toby also received personal invitations to ring for a service at St Philip's Cathedral and they were buzzing about the quality of striking they experienced whilst doing so.

Conclusion

The Ringling World National Youth Contest provides a focus for Youth Team ringing across the country and it is no different for the G & B Youth team. However, the contest ringing is such a small part of the overall experience. Fundamentally, being involved in the G & B Youth team is about developing ringing skills and knowledge whilst creating strong and lasting friendships. This is certainly the case for the youngsters, but also for the adults who help and support them along the way. We came away from Birmingham with a sense of pride – not because we won, but because of the way we all (youngsters and adults alike) overcame together the disappointment of defeat.

What Happens Next

It was announced at Birmingham that the RWNYC 2026 will be at Nottingham on July 4th.

The G & B Youth Team, will commence monthly practices in September and we also hope to have several special events along the way. All of the current team, who are eligible by age, plan to continue to be involved but we hope that there are other young G & B members who would like to join.

Sadly, we have to say goodbye to Daisy Judson and Jacob Coates who are now too old but, hopefully, they will get

Big Wilf's Bell Muffles

proudly sponsors Bristol Rural News

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.

involved in the ringing at the university towns they will be joining and, as with all G & B Youth Team graduates, they will always be welcome to and join in our activities when they come back home.

Cream Teas and Ringing Galore at Thornbury

The traditional Bristol Rural Cream Tea Practice found a new venue last month as St Mary's Thornbury opened its doors and extended a warm welcome to 20 ringers from around our region. Our wonderful new servery was admired and put to good use providing everything we needed for perfect refreshments in style.



Relaxing over a cuppa and a chat

My call for volunteers had been answered by many and we had home-made scones and jam plus a scrumptious cake to make the event extra-special. Many thanks to all those who got baking and making and special thanks to Mary York and Rosemary Morgan for looking after the catering on the day.

We look forward to welcoming everyone again next year!

Catherine White-Horne

Books Available

The Central Council has just published a new guide to better striking for beginners. I expect there are some useful tips for more experienced ringers too! It's available from the Central Council for £4.50.

BELLRINGING Central Council Publications
Over 50 titles to support your ringing Shop.cccbr.org.uk

A beginner's guide to better striking **NEW ARRIVAL**

A6 pocket sized booklet giving basic advice on the importance of good striking and how to achieve it
Covers relative importance of visual, aural and rhythmic approaches to striking

Central Council Publications **Priced at £4.50**
Inc P&P UK mainland

For more information please visit our website
Shop.cccbr.org.uk Publications@cccbr.org.uk

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.

Ringling 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)

North Nibley—1320 Surprise Minor (Norwich and Cambridge)

Thornbury—720 Cambridge Surprise Minor

Rung on the back 6 as part of St.Mary's Autumn festival
Five Branch towers also rang for VJ Day on 15th August