



# Bristol Rural News

Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Association of Church Bellringers

The Newsletter of Bristol Rural Branch Bellringers

No 308

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## Headlines

- 1 Branch Quiz—Thornbury—14th February—18.30 onwards
- 2 Branch Practice—Pucklechurch—28th February—15.00-16.30
- 3 Association Spring Training Day—14th March
- 4 Branch Striking Competition—21st March—14.00-16.30
- 5 Branch Practice—St. Ambrose—28th March—15.00-16.30

**February-  
March  
2026**

## Don't Forget the Quiz

If you haven't yet booked your team a place for the Branch quiz this year, don't delay, now is the time to do it. The booking details are on the poster at the end of this newsletter.

## Six months in Almondsbury)

Ringing 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 before – Grandsire, Plain Bob, Stedman, Cambridge and Norwich Surprise Minor, with the addition of Primrose Surprise Minor, Kent Minor, St Clements Minor, Spliced St Nicholas and Winchendon Place Doubles, and April Day Doubles. 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> anniversaries of VE and VJ day. On the latter we attempted, but did not quite master, VJ Bob Minor. A 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

## Syston Ringers

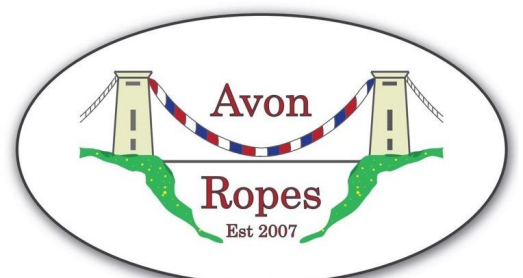
Our final Friday morning practice of 2025 didn't take place at Syston but instead at All Saints Church, Littleton Drew. One of our visiting ringers, Jennie, is a homeowner in the village which entitles her to invite Bands to ring there; the only constraint being that ringing is limited to one hour due to local sensitivities. Consequently, on the morning of 19th December twelve ringers assembled at the Church and ringing commenced at 10:30. The six light bells (the tenor is 7 cwt) proved to be a very nice ring and everyone enjoyed their time on the ropes. We kept things moving along briskly, no time for chatter, unless you were sitting out of course. After the ringing we repaired, on Jennie's kind invitation, to her home in the village where a selection of festive comestibles were laid out together with nibbles and hot drinks. You may know that the Syston practice on Friday mornings is often held at St. Nicholas' Church in Kelston, near Bath. This is a legacy from the time when the Syston bells were out of action long term due to a cracked bell and we were seeking to maintain the practice by using alternative towers. The Church Warden at Kelston very kindly allowed us to ring and continues to encourage us to do so since there is no resident Band. His gratitude for that, and for the maintenance inspections we have undertaken, was expressed with the delivery to my door of two large presentation gift packs of Bath Soft Cheese from that well known establishment in the village. These were shared at

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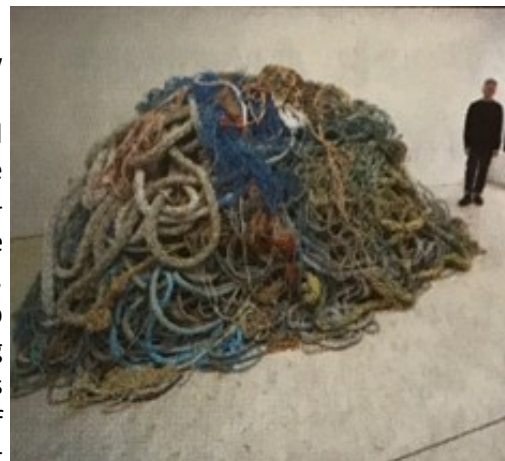
the get together at Littleton Drew and, judging by how little was left at the end, was very much appreciated by the Band. For this correspondent the final practice of 2025 was one of the most enjoyable ringing experiences of the year. I look forward to more in 2026.

Glenn Laurence

### Money for Old Rope

This item was found in a newspaper by Catherine White-Horne—a new marketing opportunity for old bell ropes?

Money for old rope (£1M plus VAT to be precise) was the premise of David Shrigley's latest exhibition at the Stephen Friedman Gallery in London in the Autumn, said Anny Shaw in The Art Newspaper. "The Turner Prize-nominated artist has collected around ten tonnes, or 20 miles-worth, of rope from major seaports, climbing schools, tree surgeons, offshore wind farms, scaffolders and window-cleaning firms." The rope was then cleaned to stop it smelling of dead sea creatures and dumped in piles in the gallery. Calling the price a provocation, the artist said that even so, he thought £1M was good value pound-for-pound relative to comparable works. "Piles of discarded rubbish have been a common sight in art galleries for decades, but this is the first time it has been done so sarcastically and knowingly," said Eddy Frankel in The Guardian. It's a bit close to the bone, with the art market in recession but it's certainly "dismaying and charming".



### The First Electronic Simulator

Adapted from the guidebook to the church of St. Julitta, Lanteglos by Camelford.

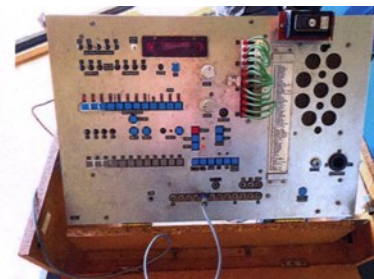
When engineer Peter Cummins retired to Cornwall in the 1970s, his wife took up handbell ringing. Cummins, a decorated war hero who defused German bombs and later worked with Barnes Wallis at Vickers, used his electronic skills to develop a simulator to help his wife practise. This led to the world's first electronic simulator for church bells, in Lanteglos, all previous simulators having been mechanical.

The simulator enabled a ringer to practise ringing a bell with a tied clapper, so no

sound was heard outside the tower. The machine

generated the sound of the tied bell and also all the other bells. The machine could be programmed to ring various methods, including bobs and singles.

The 'Lanteglos System' worked by fixing a small piece of reflective hardboard to the side of the bell wheel. This triggered an optical sensor that sent an electronic signal down to the simulator in the ringing chamber each time the sensor picked up a change in the light reflection. The tower retains the reflective hardboard on the wheels and also some of the tangles of wire. Some of the equipment is now preserved in Taylor's Foundry Museum in Loughborough.



### Tower Open Days

If you are planning a tower open day this year, don't forget the Branch has a CCTV system that can be borrowed and set up so that visitors can see what is happening in your bell chamber when the bell ropes are pulled. Contact me (cgreef@btinternet.com) if you are interested.

Chris Greef

### 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

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contributed by members.

[www.bellsgandb.org.uk/bristolrural/](http://www.bellsgandb.org.uk/bristolrural/)

Details of the new Association membership system Membermojo can be found by following the links from the home page.

### **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.

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 ringling on Bellboard and attribute it to the G&B I won't find it. Ed)

Nothing to report this time!

### **A Cryptic Clue—the Answer**

If you spent your time thinking about last month's clue while digesting your Christmas dinner, here is the clue again as a reminder and also the answer:

*Caught northern Spice Girl draped in curtain, making church music (6,7)*

Change ringling.

# **BRISTOL RURAL BRANCH QUIZ**

**Quiz masters - Thornbury**

**ST. MARY'S CHURCH HALL  
Eastbury Road, Thornbury, BS35 1DR**

**SATURDAY 14th FEBRUARY  
6.30pm**

**Come as a team (six is ideal)  
or help make up a team with others**

**£10 (Juniors £5)**

**Bring your own drinks**

**Please provide numbers by 7th February  
(via [www.bellsgandb.org.uk/bristolrural](http://www.bellsgandb.org.uk/bristolrural) or to  
[cgreef@btinternet.com](mailto:cgreef@btinternet.com))**

**Please can each team bring  
a pudding to share and a raffle prize.**