



MONMOUTH BRANCH NEWS



Llandaff and Monmouth Diocesan Association of Church Bell Ringers



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Busy Summer for Caerleon Ringers

Caerleon Bellringers have had a busy summer with some very crowded practice nights recently and plenty of weddings to enjoy. Thanks to our experienced (and less experienced!) visitors who have been helping our team to move forward to ringing more (for them) complex methods such as Plain Hunt and Plain Bob Doubles.



We also enjoyed a hot Caerleon Festival weekend and were excited to be able to introduce numerous Festival visitors to the



art of bellringing using the Charmborough Mini Ring of 6 bells. It was a very popular activity with all ages and raised the profile of St Cadoc's Church and the bellringing team as we chatted to local people. Many of the small children came back multiple times to ring those bells - future ringers when they grow a bit perhaps?



We are very grateful to the Monmouth Branch, the Llandaff and Monmouth Diocesan Association of Church Bellringers

and also St Cadoc's Church for providing funds to hire the bells, Thank you.

Thank you also to members of the Association who came to help us on the day, to have a ring and also to supervise members of the public. As a result of contacts made at the Festival, 15 people have shown an interest in learning to ring at St Cadoc's and another 11 people will have been contacted by other Association towers nearer their home.



BRANCH EVENTS



General Practices

Sat 21st Sept at Trellech 7 - 9 p.m.
 Sat 16th Nov at Caldicot 3 - 5 p.m.

8-bell Practices – at Usk

Thurs 12th September from 7.30 p.m.
 Thurs 10th October from 7.30 p.m.
 Thurs 14th November from 7.30 p.m.
 Thurs 12th December from 7.30 p.m.

6-bell Practices at Tredunnoc

Fri 27th September from 7.30 p.m.
 Fri 25th October from 7.30 p.m.
 Fri 22nd November from 7.30 p.m.
 Fri 27th December from 7.30 p.m.

Association Daytime Practices

Fri 27th Sept at Bedwelty (GF) from 10.30 a.m.
 Fri 25th Oct at Caerphilly from 10.30 a.m.
 Fri 29th Nov at Llantarnam from 10.30 a.m.
 Fri 27th Dec at Caerleon from 10.30 a.m.

Branch Training events

Sat 19th October
 Sat 21st December

All of these practices and events are open to all ringers.

Caerleon ringers are thrilled that there are now 7 new learners (with potentially more after the holidays), learning under the watchful eyes of Rev Jenny Mole and Phil Sergeant. Anyone else who would like to come and try bellringing would be most welcome to contact us. Practice night is Wednesday at 7:30 and we usually ring before the Sunday morning services.



Enjoyable Memorable Weekend + New Recruits = RESULT



Julia Jones

Pitman Trophy Striking Competition

On a fine sunny evening the Pitman Trophy Striking Competition took place on Thursday June 27th at Sully.

The judges were Becky and Hal Drysdale and their deliberations and presentations took place in the garden of "The Boat House" pub next door. The results were as follows:-

Call Change Section

- 1st - South Vale 67%
- 2nd - Llanedeyrn 63%
- 3rd - Merthyr 54%
- 4th - Shirenewton 53%



South Vale Band

Method Section

- 1st - Llandaff Cathedral 75%
- 2nd - Newport Cathedral 65%
- 3rd - Rumney 61%
- 4th - Cadoxton 51%



Llandaff Band

Well done to all and of special mention was the splendid effort by the newly formed Llanedeyrn band. An excellent performance and a great credit to them and their teachers! Finally best wishes to the Llandaff Cathedral band as they go forward to compete in the All Wales Striking Competition at Carmarthen.

Julian Parker



Living levels and the Taster Session



Members may be interested to know that the Branch is in partnership with the Living Levels organisation to provide bellringing Taster Sessions on 14th September. The event will be held at St Mary's Church, Nash, and the day will consist of two 2 hour sessions, each session being divided into four 30 minute segments. During each segment, Tasters will be shown demonstrations of ringing, watch the bells live on CCTV, and be given initial bell handling lessons by competent Teachers. Simultaneously the church will be open to visitors, with refreshments on sale.

This event will provide an opportunity for anyone to be given an insight into ringing, and initial elementary instruction for anyone who is interested. Places **MUST** be booked via the Living Levels website, so please do **NOT** simply turn up on the day, but have any potential recruits register themselves at

www.livinglevels.org.uk

During the course of the day, those Tasters who express an interest in becoming serious learners will be invited to provide their contact details so that they may be put in touch with the most appropriate tower for them. It is hoped that two further Taster Sessions will be arranged nearer to the extremities of the area of the Gwent Levels.

PSB

Llanedeyrn Tower News



First prize in call changes – May 2019 - Shirenewton

Over the last 15 months our newly formed band has achieved a great deal. We have had an amazing time so far and we, bravely, entered the Call Change Section of the Branch Striking Competition in May at Shirenewton. Andrew Philips gave us extra lessons on a Sunday and took some of the band to Shirenewton on the Friday before the competition to give us a go on their bells. This was well worth a trip as the bells are not the easiest to ring especially for beginners. Andrew along with Catherine Bleach took us back to basics with good pull offs and stands and made sure the striking was as good as it could be. The band consisted of Amanda and Martin Gilbert, Amanda and John Smith, Catherin Bleach on tenor and Andrew Philips on Treble/Conductor.

We went into the competition expecting to come last and consoled ourselves there was a buffet and we could eat loads of cake. To hear the results that we had won was more than a shock. It made the extra hours of practice worthwhile. We were also shocked to be awarded a new prize in the shape of a teddy bear for the band that has made a difference to bell ringing over the last 12 months. It felt like a massive honour and we were truly humbled. We named him Ed after St Edeyrn's Church.

We were then told about the Pitman (inter Branch) trophy and the look of shock on Amanda Smith's face said it all. We continued to practice on a Sunday evening in the build up to that competition. Georgia Emmott, who is a member of our band, rang this time instead of Catherine. The competition, held at Sully, soon came round and, yet again, we did really well coming in second place.



The Editor Writes

There is a lot in this edition of your Branch Newsletter about recruitment. This is something we all need to be constantly engaged with at a local level in our towers. The best recruiters are those of you who already ring! Your neighbours will see you going out at the same time each week when you go practice or to ring for Sunday service. They will be curious about what you are doing. So talk to them (and your friends) about ringing and invite them to come to a practice night and see what it's all about. BUT – a word of warning – if you talk and talk and talk about the technicalities of ringing then the person are trying to encourage will probably think you are obsessed with it and they will be completely put off – for ever!



You will read in the write up of the Charmborough Mobile Belfry that 26 people showed an interest in learning more about ringing. All were put in touch with their nearest tower with ringable bells and, at Caerleon, we are now teaching 7 people to ring and we are hoping that another 'returning ringer' may join us as well on Wednesday evenings. Also, at the recent Open Day at Llanedeyrn there was another potential recruit identified for that tower and one who has been put in touch with the tower where they live. Hopefully, the Living Levels bell ringing Taster Sessions will also encourage some more people to try ringing.



Our main purpose for ringing is to ring before the Sunday morning service at St Edeyrn's Church. Since Christmas we have rung as a band without asking for support on a Sunday, but for weddings we still like to have a couple of experienced ringers as the bride and groom are paying for a service. We can now ring Plain Hunt at weddings.

It was a different experience to ring on the mobile belfry recently at the Caerleon Festival and lovely to try something different. At first it felt like I was milking a cow, but soon got into it and before long we were ringing rounds with call changes and plain hunting like we had been doing it for years. We loved it.

John and I recently attended Module 1 ART Instructor's course. Because we have followed the Learning the Ropes syllabus, despite finding ourselves on the other side of the rope, everything was familiar to us. We are now looking for someone to train so we can complete the course after passing the on-line test. It was an enjoyable day and we both learnt a lot, but I will let John be the senior instructor as he has more patience than I do.

Martin



As always I am grateful to those people who have contributed articles for this edition but I would still like to have much more news from towers in the Branch. Believe me, whatever you write will be of interest to someone who will read it and think, "That's just like it is at our tower". There are few of us who aspire to greatness but the enjoyment we get out of ringing is what keeps us engaged with this hobby.

Keep up the good work!

Jenny Mole

Association Master's Mutterings

It has been a busy three months since my last Muttering. We have had both respective Branch striking competitions and also the Association Pitman Trophy competition. Having been a judge of the Llandaff competition, a participant in the Monmouth Branch competition and then organiser of the Pitman Trophy competition, I can certainly say that I've had my fair share of competitions so far this year. Very well done to all the bands that entered each competition. There were some excellent performances this year – particularly by the Llanedeyrn band who have only been ringing for just over a year. They won the Monmouth Branch call change section and then came second in the Pitman Trophy call change section. A remarkable achievement and a tribute to the hard work that the Llanedeyrn ringers have put in over the year.

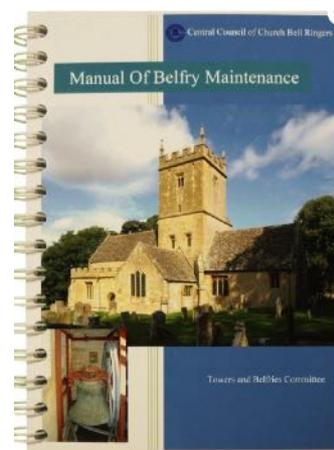


Are you Maintaining your Bells?

Like any piece of machinery, it is important to make sure that bells and their fittings are properly maintained. Not only will regular maintenance prolong the working life of ropes and other moving parts, regular maintenance almost always makes bells significantly easier to ring. Bells, fittings and ropes should be checked at least every two months, if not more often if you have a lot of ringing in your tower.

The Association Management Committee is keen to make sure that bells within the Association's area are being well maintained and I offer this article as a quick overview of belfry maintenance. For more detailed information, I would refer all steeplekeepers to "The Manual of Belfry Maintenance" which is published by the Central Council and available here:

<https://cccbr.org.uk/product/manual-of-belfry-maintenance/>



Also, do remember that help is close at hand. If you need advice on a maintenance-related issue then do contact one of the Association officers or the respective Diocesan Bell Advisor for assistance.

Safety

Before attempting any maintenance in the tower, it is important to remember the following:

- Do not work alone in the belfry.
- Ensure that someone else knows you are in the belfry and how long you are likely to be there.
- Always leave a warning notice in the ringing room.
- Never work on bells which are up.
- Ensure all lights are working and you have sufficient light to work safely.
- Disable any clock chimes to save a loud surprise later.
- Record all actions taken and observations made and inform your PCC of any issues.

Ropes

Ropes should be regularly checked for wear – at least every two months, if not more often. Pay particular attention to the garter hole (where the rope passes through the wheel), wherever the rope runs over pulleys (particularly the main pulley(s) in the



Thanks also to Julian Parker for his help in making the arrangements for the Pitman Trophy competition. Details of the All Wales competition in September can be found elsewhere.

As many people will know, I'm a big fan of striking competitions. They provide an excellent focus for improving a band's ringing over a sustained period. The ringing on the day of the competition is less important than the practicing in the preceding months (and it should be months – not a quick 5 minutes in your practice night before the competition). Choose a 5-minute party piece – something that you can ring on a Sunday morning, for weddings and other occasions, and ring it over and over on every occasion that you ring. It can be 5 minutes of rounds, call changes or whatever method you ring in your tower. Use a mobile phone to record the ringing so you can see progress and also use the recordings to help you improve. I'm delighted that the ringers from the Association will be entering the South West 12-bell competition in October and hope that this will provide a good focus for improving the quality of our 12-bell ringing in the area and, potentially, a future entry into the National 12-bell competition.

June saw an Association of Ringing Teachers Module 1 (Teaching Bell Handling) course take place at Cowbridge. It was good to have a full course and a good range of towers represented. A full report appears elsewhere but many thanks to those that came along and to the Cowbridge ringers for their assistance in hosting the course.

Good teaching of new recruits is vitally important, particularly when we have an Association aim

belfry), where the rope runs through any bosses or floors and the tail end where it hits the floor. If the rope is worn down to half its original diameter, it is frayed or if the different strands are not visible then it needs changing or splicing.

Bearings

Modern, closed, ball bearings are very unlikely to require any lubrication or maintenance and are best left alone unless they rumble when the bell is swung. In which case, professional assistance from a bellhanger is probably required. For older-style plain bearings, these should be lubricated regularly – probably once a month. Preferably there should be a felt pad within the bearing housing and pressing down on the gudgeon to retain the oil. If you can get it, use castor oil. If not, use a light gearbox oil. Do NOT use car engine oil – it has detergents in it which attract moisture and can cause pitting on the steel gudgeons.

Pulleys

Pulleys are frequently the cause of a poor going bell and should be checked regularly – do it every two months when you check your ropes. Check that ALL pulleys spin freely and are not deeply grooved or oval (if wooden). They should make little or no noise when spun by hand – any noise implies that the bearings in the pulley are worn and might need replacement.

Clappers

Check that all the clapper assemblies are tight in the headstocks and the locking mechanism

(split pin or lock nut) is in place. Check that the clapper swings freely and is correctly aligned so that it swings at exactly 90 degrees to the line of the bearings. Also check the amount of sidewise and vertical movement from the clapper. If there is more than one inch of sidewise movement the clappers may need rebushing by a bell hanger.

If the clapper has a greasing facility (grease cap or nipple) check to ensure there is grease at the clapper pivot point. Motor cycle chain grease spray can ease clapper movement if no greasing facility exists.



to recruit a large number of new ringers over the next couple of years. I was delighted to attend two excellent events recently that have shown ringing in a positive light to the general public and, hopefully, generated some new recruits. Firstly, in July the Caerleon ringers arranged to hire the Charmborough Ring, a mobile belfry, for use at the Caerleon Festival. This proved enormously popular with people of all ages and there was lots of interest. Secondly, in August I attended the open day at Llanedeyrn church where the tower was open and ringing demonstrations were given. It was great to see a number of people from the new St Edeyrn's community attend and to take an interest in the church and bells. Well done to the Caerleon and Llanedeyrn ringers for being proactive and arranging these opportunities. I'm convinced that there is no shortage of people who would be willing to learn, if they are introduced to ringing in a way that makes it accessible to them.

In that spirit, I would draw your attention to the planned national ringing to mark the 75th anniversary of VE Day on 8 May 2020. Could this be another "hook" to attract new ringers to your tower?

Good ringing!

Matthew

**The next
Branch
Newsletter**



We hope to get the next Newsletter out at the beginning of December. Deadline for copy will be **Friday 15th November**. Please let me have articles before that date if possible. Thank you. **Jenny**

Stays and Sliders

Check all stays and sliders to ensure that none of these are cracked, damaged or have worm damage. If, when you set the bell, it does not bounce but feels 'spongy' then the stay or slider may be damaged and need replacing. Check that all stay bolts (and nuts) are in place and tight and the slider moves easily.

If you have Taylor's design "Hastings" stays these need to be exactly the right length and positioned correctly to ensure correct working. Any slight misalignment can cause the stay to bind and either be difficult to set or be hard to pull off when starting to ring.

Wheels

Check that the wheel is tight on the headstock and that all bolts and nuts are in place and tight. If any of the outside rim (the shrouding) is loose or missing then this needs repairing / replacing. Check for signs of rot or woodworm / beetle attack and seek further advice if any is found.

Tower Roof and Louvres

Check that no water is coming in through the tower roof or belfry openings and that the netting on the openings is stopping all birds from getting into the belfry. If belfry openings are allowing water to enter then some weather protection needs to be fitted.

Dirt and Rubbish

Clean out the belfry and all intermediate rooms and the ringing room to ensure that any build-up of dirt, rubbish and unwanted clutter is removed because it is a fire hazard and may also hide another problem.

Summary

A very quick summary of bell maintenance is:

- If it should move, make sure it can move freely (bearings, pulleys, clappers, sliders).
- If it is not meant to move, make sure it does not move (frame, clapper crown staple, bell bolts, wheel bolts).

Association Maintenance Grant Scheme

As part of the 2018/19 Affiliation Scheme, the Association has introduced a small grant scheme to assist parishes who subscribe to the affiliation scheme with the cost of a





VE Day 75th Anniversary

The following statement has been distributed by the Central Council:

“The 8th May 2020 marks the 75th anniversary of the end of the second World War in Europe. It provides us with an opportunity to remember the sacrifice made at home and abroad which heralded the arrival of peace, despite conflict still taking place in other parts of the world.

The UK Government has moved the early May Day Bank Holiday from the Monday to Friday 8th May so that as many people as possible can take part in the celebrations that day.

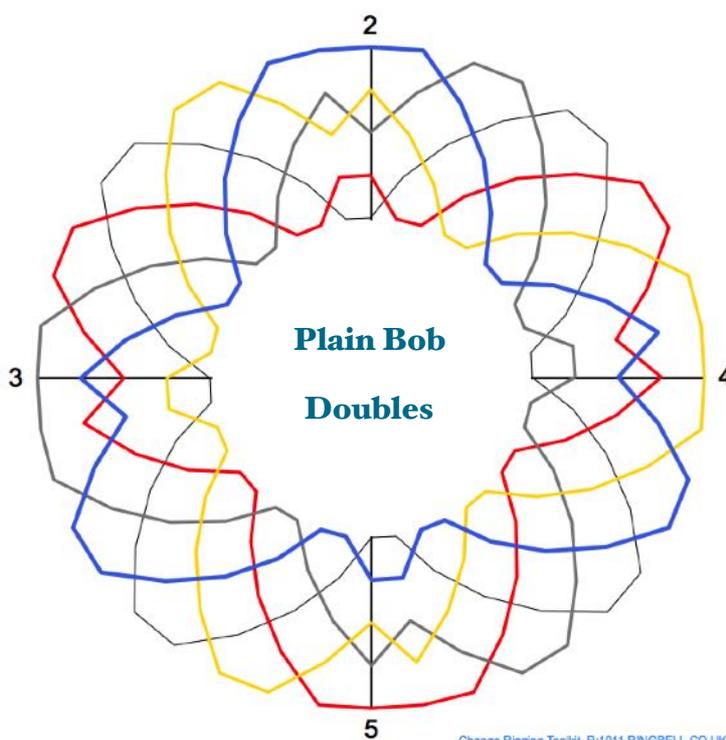
At 7pm on 8th May 2020 church bells are invited to ring out for peace. The Central Council encourages all ringers to respond as they see fit, taking into account the wide variety of local circumstances.

Ringling open at 7pm (local time wherever you are in the world) is the ideal and recommended option, but any time that afternoon / evening, and indeed throughout the weekend of events planned, is also supported.

maintenance visit from a professional bellhanger. For parishes that would like to make use of this scheme, the following important points should be noted:

- Only parishes which participate in the Association’s Affiliation Scheme will be eligible for a grant towards the costs of a professional maintenance visit;
- The grant offered will normally be two-thirds of the cost of a professional maintenance visit up to a maximum grant of £200;
- The maximum amount held by the Association for the entire scheme is £5000 and this will be allocated on a “first come, first served” basis. Once the £5000 is exhausted then the scheme will cease;
- In order to help the Association manage the demand for the scheme, parishes intending to make use of the scheme should contact the Association Treasurer by email (treasurer@llanmon.org.uk), ideally in advance of a bellhangers visit being arranged;
- Grant payment will be made in arrears upon the receipt of a copy of an invoice by the Association Treasurer;
- Only maintenance visits from a recognised firm of church bellhangers will be eligible for the grant. A suggested list of church bellhangers can be found here: <http://www.keltektrust.org.uk/bellhangers.html>.

Matthew Turner



A full programme of planned events is listed on the VEDay75 website and to register your intention to ring go to <https://www.veday75.org/register/> which takes you to a Ringing Out for Peace registration page. In due course there will also be a Bellboard event set up where you will be able to register and from where you will be able to download a Certificate of Grateful Recognition to record your ringing on the day.

Any further advice received about plans for the weekend will be publicised when they become known.”



BACK TO (some) BASICS

A very successful training session was held on the 29th June at the Priory Church of St Mary, Usk. Andrew Phillips with the aid of some very experienced ringers provided the theory and opportunity to practice raising and lowering the bells **in peal** for our ringers from St Nicholas, Trellech. This was a “tower-based” training need identified by Trellech and requested via the Branch training programme.

Because of the broad range of ringing abilities within the Trellech band, it was not possible to achieve the planned training as envisaged - a few fundamental skills were lacking. However, all participants were given 1:1 coaching on raising and lowering with a paired bell which identified

Dr Anthony D. Griffiths **1937 – 2019**

Dr Tony Griffiths was born in the village of Cefn-Coed-y-Cymmer. He knew he wanted to be a doctor from the age of 14 so his career in life was set. He went on to achieve his dream and eventually becoming a Consultant of Paediatrics at Nevill Hall Hospital, where he founded Nevill Hall's Children's Ward and Special Care Baby Unit in 1969 and remained there until his retirement in 2002.



After his placement at Nevill Hall Hospital he and his wife, Ann, moved their family, Rachel, Heidi, and William to Abergavenny. Tony loved this area. He enjoyed many things and had many hobbies other than bell ringing, amongst them, fly-fishing in the River Usk, mountain and canal walking, gardening, painting and poetry writing.

Tony regularly rang bells at Llantilio Pertholey and after a while he became Tower Captain at St. Mary's Abergavenny in 2000, which he was very proud of; until poor health saw him leave this position in 2011. After his illness, Tony came back ringing and was a supportive ringer to churches in the area.

A quote from the local newspaper : “I have been Tower Captain of the best bells. I had the Brecon Beacons to walk in, the River Usk to fish in. What more could you want?”

On a personal level I have found Tony to be good friend, both on the mountain side and in the ringing chamber. He was a true gentleman with a good sense of humour, always a smile and kind word to anyone he met.

His daughter, Heidi, said it well, 'A life well lived'. And I agree.
May he Rest in Peace and Rise in Glory.

Gwyn Sayce



key development areas both for individuals and for the band as a whole.

Andrew kindly provided a package of learning points which is now with the Trellech band to refer to on our Monday practice evenings. This will entail 'parking' our progress with method-ringing for a while and focusing on basic handling, striking and listening skills until the band as a whole can move forward. Although this might appear to be a backward step the band recognises that this development is a necessary precursor to successful call-change and method ringing.

A demonstration followed by a practice session designed to improve our listening and striking ability was also provided. This again proved very pertinent to the main goal of raising and lowering in peal.

A follow up course with the trainers to check progress has been offered.

Nigel Morris

News from Caerleon Tower

On Wednesday 7th August six ringers from St. Edeyrn's Church, Llanedeyrn joined nine of the regular Wednesday nighters and one visitor from Ballymena at St. Cadoc's, Caerleon for a joint practice. We extended the practice time by starting at 7 p.m. and then, despite the heat in the ringing room, we put the bells to good use until 9 p.m.

Both of the bands are of about the same standard – learners who have the basics and who hope, in time, to progress.

The Bell Ringer's Lament

I'll really have to concentrate
To get this method right.
It might take half an hour,
It might take half the night.
Should I double dodge again
Or should I follow you?
Now I'm getting lost again,
Please tell me what to do.

I should have learnt the Place Bells,
I did try with all my might,
But however hard I practised
I could not get it right.
I know I made 3rds place last time
But now they've called a Bob,
I'm getting very desperate
I'd really like to sob.

Should I stick to pure Plain Hunt
I couldn't get that wrong,
Or should I ring the tenor bell
Just stay behind and 'Bong'.
I dreamt I rang three times a week
In towers near and far,
And even Cambridge Maximus
No longer was a bar.

I'd learnt all the basic methods
And even called a Peal
I did it all by Place Bells
I'd really got the feel.
I knew then when to double dodge
And when to follow you,
Oh, when I wake tomorrow, Lord -
Please let it all come true.

**Tony Griffiths
Abergavenny**



We rang rounds and call changes on the 8 bells (the first time on 8 for some of the Llanedeyrn ringers) and we did Plain Hunt on 7.

We used the back 6 bells to ring rounds for our current Caerleon learner and then the Llanedeyrn band demonstrated their Striking Competition party piece and also continuous Mexican Wave to show the Caerleon ringers how that is done.

During the practice there was much climbing up and down the ladder as those not ringing went outside for



some fresh air.

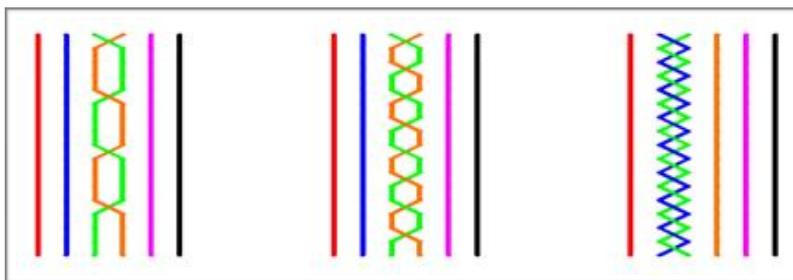
At 9 p.m. 13 of us adjourned to The Goldcroft for a welcome drink in the cool of the garden at the back. The evening was enjoyed by all and we hope to repeat the exercise with Caerleon ringers going to Llanedeyrn at the end of September.

New recruits

Following on from having the Charmborough Mobile Belfry at the Caerleon Festival in July, there are now 7 keen recruits at Caerleon tower. Two are being taught by Tower Captain, Phil Sergeant, and the other five are being put through their paces by Jenny Mole.

After a couple of weeks of intensive tuition, they are all making steady progress and one lady, who learned to ring at Penhow when she was aged 10, was surprised and pleased to find that she hadn't lost the knack of handling the rope safely.

Have you tried kaleidoscope ringing?



Once a learner can ring rounds successfully, they are often moved onto Call Changes. Obvious to us, but for the new ringer (who is using at least 90% of their brain concentrating on handling their bell safely and keeping it in sync with everyone else) there's not much processing power left to remember the order of the bells, translate a verbal instruction to the whole band into a specific one for them (do I or don't I move place, if so do I need to move up or down and who will I follow) and then think about what they need to do with the rope to make the bell make that move ... all in less than 4 seconds. And that's without the occasional conductor who decides to mix calling up and down!

This is where kaleidoscope ringing can help – a series of changes all made within two places. Perhaps not an immediately helpful definition so in this case I think a picture speaks a thousand words. And the benefits:

Breaking the learning into small, easy understandable steps.

Kaleidoscope ringing allows the learner to practise moving their bell up or down a place without having to remember the order of the bells or knowing which bell is following which as they are always moving from rounds.

It is easier for a learner to hear their bell and correct their striking.

Kaleidoscope sequences move out of and back into rounds all the time. Because the sound of rounds is familiar it is easier for the new ringer to identify their bell, listen for gaps and clips and correct their striking.

It can sound nicer. Bands with insufficient ringers to ring methods can make up their own sequences (even naming them after people e.g. Sheila's Shuffle) and ring them for service making a more pleasing sound than Call Changes gone wrong or Plain Hunt struck badly.

Kaleidoscope ringing can grow with the band. Long places (four blows) lead onto short places which lead onto dodges or dodgy places, all of which can start at handstroke or backstroke. Then why not more complex sequences such as the bells in 2-3 making long places whilst the 4th stay in fourths place and the 5th and 6th make short places?

Why not introduce kaleidoscope ringing into your practices?

More information about kaleidoscope ringing is available at www.ringingteachers.org/resource-centre/teaching-tips



2020 Calendars



What costs £6 and lasts a whole year? The 2020 Llandaff and Monmouth Diocesan Association of Bell Ringers Calendar, what a mouthful! The calendar contains line drawings of a selection of churches with bell towers found throughout the Association, including : Llandaff, Abergavenny , Ebbw Vale, Caerphilly, Llantwit Major, Penarth and more....

All proceeds from the sale of the calendars will be placed in the Training Fund and will be used to support and develop new ringers. The calendars will be on sale from October onwards. To order your copy **contact Mrs DJ Turner Tel: 029 2062 8933**

Association Clothing



with customised logos available from £10.00 + delivery.

For more details [click here](#) or email: clothing@llanmon.org.uk

Branch Training Update



Since the last Newsletter, there have been two training events.

The first of these was a tower-based event for the Trellech ringers, who requested some practice at ringing up and down in peal, as well as a session on listening and striking. This session was carried out on a Saturday morning at Usk, using tied (silent) bells whilst rising and lowering. This allows people to practice ringing in time with the bell in front without anybody worrying about the sounds made when it doesn't work out. During the second half of the session, the simulator was used for listening and striking practice.

The second event was a session on Doubles which was held at St Woolos, again using a simulator. The simulator was used in this instance to reduce the amount of external ringing allowed, as there was also a wedding that needed the bells to be rung as well.

I would like to thank the tutors and helpers that have helped at the sessions so far, as without these people, the sessions would not be possible.

Over the coming months, I plan on running another tower-based event during October for a tower that has requested help of this nature. For the December event I will try and put on a session for advanced methods that have been requested. If anybody has not replied to my initial request in February for training needs across the Branch, then please do not be afraid to do so at any time. If you feel that you, or your tower, have a requirement for any aspects of ringing, be that handling, listening, striking, plain hunt, methods etc, then please do not be afraid to contact me.



Andrew Phillips
MonmouthTraining@llanmon.org.uk





Monmouth Branch Officers

Chair:	Peter Bennett
Ringling Master:	Debbie Turner
Secretary:	Jenny Mole
Treasurer:	Jen Mundy
Training Coord.:	Andrew Phillips

Committee Representatives

John Hopkins
 Nye Brown
 Gwyn Sayce
 Jonathan Lewis
 Catherine Bleach
 Martin Gilbert
 Matthew Turner
 Pip Penney



Website:

www.llanmon.org.uk



Facebook Group:

Llandaff & Monmouth
 Diocesan Association of
 Church Bell Ringers

Editor

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Chair's Chat

Within the Branch there are 40 towers which contain a ring of 5 or more bells, hung for full circle ringing. They contain a total of 283 ringable bells. Many years ago I heard or read the view expressed that for a tower to have an adequate band of ringers such that the band is self sufficient, and able to ring whenever required, the number of ringers in the band should exceed the number of bells in the tower by 50%. If one accepts that view, then there should be within the Branch 283 plus 142 ringers, a total of 425. Currently the Branch has 213 members. There may be a few ringers about who are not members, unlikely to be more than (say) 10/12 in my opinion, which would make the total number of ringers in the Diocese no more than about 225. So we are significantly under resourced, a view which is supported by the degree of difficulty in organising bands to ring for weddings, and the number of bells which are silent on Sundays.



Elsewhere in this Newsletter you may read a report of the use of the Charmborough Ring at the recent Caerleon Festival. This mobile belfry was hired in and used as an attraction for two days of the Festival. Many people saw the ringing, some had a go, and about 25 people handed in their contact details with a view to arrangements being put in hand for them to be taught to ring at an appropriate place for them. If only 10 or 12 of these people stay the course and become practical ringers the workforce will have been increased by 5%. The Caerleon ringers are to be praised for this initiative and it is to be hoped that their numbers are suitably increased.

A few months ago I was approached by the Living Levels organisation, and our help was sought in arranging a bellringing Taster Session. Various discussions have taken place and an event is now arranged for Saturday 14th September, as you may see elsewhere in this Newsletter. Living Levels is funded by a Heritage Lottery Fund grant so the Branch will incur no expense. Also, as they have professional staff and an active organisation, they can take care of publicity, safety and insurance issues as well as the expenses involved. My challenge to the Branch is to arrange similar events across the Diocese to recruit more ringers, and to develop an infrastructure of trained teachers of ringing to train them. CAN WE DO IT?

Peter Bennet

