

MONMOUTH BRANCH NEWS



LLANDAFF AND MONMOUTH DIOCESAN ASSOCIATION OF CHURCH BELL RINGERS

Number 126 August 2021

Forthcoming Branch Events:

All Branch and Association practices and events are on hold until further notice due to Covid-19 pandemic. However, this may change so keep an eye on the Association email lists for information about events. To subscribe to the mailing lists, head to:

[https://
www.llanmon.org.uk/
mailing-lists](https://www.llanmon.org.uk/ mailing-lists)

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Monmouth Branch Picnic - 17 July

With the relaxation of Covid-related restrictions, a Branch picnic was organised for Saturday 17 July. The venue was Tredegar House and it turned out to be a fine evening for sitting out and catching up with other ringers, most of whom hadn't seen each other for over a year. Handbells were rung but generally it was an evening of eating, drinking and chatting in the sunshine.

Many thanks to Debbie Turner for organising the event and to everyone who came along. Lets hope that we can have a ringing-based Branch event in the near future.

Matthew Turner



Association Master's Mutterings

Firstly, I hope that everyone is well and enjoying the summer weather. Since my last Master's Mutterings we've seen a relaxation in the restrictions and this has allowed the resumption of some Branch activities. In July, both branches held outdoor picnics, which was great to see. I was fortunate to attend both and enjoyed catching up with ringers that I'd not seen (or not seen in 3D) for many months.



In August, the Welsh Government relaxed the restrictions further which has allowed the resumption of ringing, albeit with a few restrictions remaining. Key points to note are that there are still three legal requirements that affect ringing:

- Organisations must undertake a written coronavirus risk assessment of their premises and activities and take reasonable measures to minimise exposure to, and the spread of, coronavirus based on that risk assessment.
- Everyone must still self-isolate for 10 days if they test positive for COVID-19. If you are a close contact of someone who has tested positive and you are not fully vaccinated you must also self-isolate for 10 days as instructed by the Test Trace Protect system.
- Adults and children over 12 must (with limited exceptions) wear face-coverings in indoor public places (including churches and halls), with the exception of hospitality settings such as restaurants, pubs, cafes or nightclubs.

Risk assessments must be approved by PCCs or Ministry Area Councils. The full guidance that has been agreed with the Church in Wales is available here:

<https://cccbr.org.uk/coronavirus/wales-guidance-moving-to-alert-level-0-from-7-august-onwards/>

This is welcome news and means that we can cautiously, and subject to the three requirements noted above, start to return to ringing in a more meaningful way. At Rumney, we have restarted Sunday ringing on all 6 bells and held our first practice last

week. We are limiting the numbers in the ringing room, maintaining good ventilation and, for a few weeks, limiting the length of our practice to an hour. We're conscious that we need to get the neighbours used to the sound of the bells again but, fortunately, the return of the bells has been well received thus far.

I would encourage all towers to get working with your PCCs to agree a risk assessment and then, as long as everyone feels safe to do so, get ringing again!

Good ringing!

Matthew

Training Coordinator's Cogitations

Unfortunately, since the last newsletter, we in the Monmouth branch at least, don't seem to have been able to progress any further with ringing for longer and with more ringers than we would have liked. We are by and large still restricted to Sunday morning ringing. This is somewhat disappointing when we have people ringing to the east of us in Gloucestershire and Herefordshire, and a certain amount of extended ringing to the west of us at some towers in the Llandaff Branch.

Despite detailed Risk Assessments having been submitted to the Archdeacon for approval by several towers in the Monmouth Branch, approval has not yet been granted to be able to hold practice nights or ring for longer periods of time.

Therefore, that left us in the Monmouth branch in a position where we were unable to organise any branch practices or training events.

The new set of Welsh Government rules and guidelines that came into force on 7th August still require us to wear face masks indoors even though the limit on the number of people that can meet indoors has been lifted. We will have to wait and see what that means for ringing within the branch, and what the Church in Wales and the Archdeacon will deem allowable.

When it becomes clearer what we are allowed to do, and what the branch should sensibly do over the coming months as we readjust to the current situation, the branch ringing events will need some careful considerations before we start back up again as we used to know it, or possibly in a slightly different format going forward. The Branch Committee will send out information via the Association mailing list to those who are on the Monmouth Branch mailing list.

If you are not already on the Monmouth Branch Communication e-mail list and would like to be, then I would encourage you to visit <https://www.llanmon.org.uk/mailling-lists> to register for updates through the "Monmouth Branch Communications" option.

You will also find options for groups such as "Monmouth Branch Newsletters" and "Monmouth Branch Training Communications" amongst others, which may also be of interest to you as well.

Andrew Phillips
MonmouthTraining@llanmon.org.uk

Llanedeyrn

With lockdown restrictions further lifted Llanedeyrn can once again return to 6 bell ringing and have up to 8 in the tower. The risk assessment has been approved and for now we will be able to ring for up to 90 minutes. Training our 2 new ringers Dee and Paula has been continuing for the last 2 months and both are doing extremely well. Both are ringing rounds with the band and are perfecting their bell handling and timing.

Over the last couple of months some of the band have assisted at other towers and have rung at Mynyddislwyn and will ring at a wedding at Llanover. Some of you will remember when Llanedeyrn reformed we had our first demo and lesson at Mynyddislwyn.

Weddings are once again returning and we have our first wedding of the year at Llanedeyrn on Saturday 21st August. It will be lovely to have all 6 bells ringing and to see the bride arrive at the pathway leading into the church. There are further weddings

planned this year and hopefully a lot more in 2022.

Although we are going to be wearing masks for the foreseeable future we are going to work hard at getting back to ringing as a band as we were pre-covid. This sounds easy enough in theory, but as soon as we start we will all understand how out of practice we are.

We are looking forward to the branch dinner with meeting up with friends and welcoming back experienced ringers in the tower so our training can continue.

Martin Gilbert

Llantilio Pertholey

Last year, the church got a request from the insurance company to have an inspection take place. A company from the Bath area came to inspect the building. After the report came in, it said that the tower lightning conductor and other things needed attention. All this was completed last year by G&S Steeplejacks Ltd.

We found them to be very good. For other towers wanting the same, their email address is:

graham@gnsteeplejacks.co.uk
Tel 07974184449.

After a risk assessment, it was found that we could have 4 ringers in the tower. I talked with Father Julian about this and agreed for practice nights only to start with. There would be 4 ringers in the tower, plus one person from the PCC at the church door to check us for track and trace reasons and to make sure we carried out the risk assessment.

We started back, on Thursday evenings, on the 1st July, 7 30 to 8 30 and have been going well since, with Plain Hunt on 3, with number covering. Plain hunt on 4 was also done in whole pulls and it has also been a good chance to practice ringing up. All is good after such a long time. Ringing down will come later.

Gwyn Sayce

Michaelston-y-Fedw

Readers may recall that, in the last issue, I reported on the damage to the ropes caused by squirrels in the tower. Since the last newsletter, the hole where the squirrels were getting in has been blocked and there have been no further sightings.

A number of the Rumney ringers volunteered to learn how to splice and so, once restrictions allowed, we had several evenings of splicing in the garden. This was both very useful and also very sociable and the ropes were spliced in quick time.



The repaired ropes were returned to the tower and refitted in July. At the same time, the ringing room was cleaned and all left tidy for the next band.

As it turned out, there was a wedding on 7 August and as it looked likely that restrictions would end, a band was organised and we rang for the wedding. I'm pleased to report that all the splices stayed intact and the bells went well. The new ringing room carpet that had been fitted before the lockdown has made a noticeable dif-



ference to the sound levels in the ringing room.

Matthew Turner

Rumney

Since the restrictions started to ease, we have taken advantage of the ability to meet in groups outdoors. Initially, this was in small groups which, happily, coincided with the need to undertake some rope splicing as noted above. Once we were able to meet in larger groups, we have met every Monday (apart from the rainy Mondays!) in a garden. This has been very enjoyable and good to get in the habit of going out on a Monday night again.

Once it was announced that the majority of restrictions would be eased, we worked to update our Risk Assessment and this was in place and approved ready for us to ring on Sunday 8th August. It was so good to be able to ring all the bells again and we thoroughly enjoyed it. We are fortunate to have three windows and the west door open to ventilate the ringing room. We are also limiting the number of ringers in the ringing room at any one time.

Our first practice back was on Monday 9th August. We are limiting our practice time to one hour to start off with, both to get ourselves and the neighbours used to ringing again. I'm pleased to say that there have been several appreciative messages on the local Rumney Facebook groups, which is reassuring. We've also been having some tied bell sessions for those who haven't rung for over a year in order to build up confidence.

Matthew Turner

Trellech

We are slowly getting back to normal working within the guidelines given as far as possible. We have the advantage of a tower with windows facing on three directions and a door into the church roofs-pace on the fourth so with all open we have a good draft blowing through. We have therefore cautiously returned to normal practice

nights with 6 ringers. We have also returned to ringing Sunday mornings twice a month.

We have a spate of weddings, we had 2 already (though one was cancelled as one of the Wedding Party tested positive the day before) and 2 more in September.

We have one new ringer and he is currently having individual tuition before he joins the practice evenings. We also have a couple of other interested potential ringers so Trellech tower is slowly moving back to normal.

Peter Mossman

Association Bell Restoration Fund

There has been much activity on repairs and maintenance of bells and fittings in the Llandaff diocese during the pandemic with PCCs and ringers taking advantage of grants available from the BRF. Two towers have benefitted from grants during the last three month period.

Baglan has completed a major overhaul including clappers, pulleys, bearings, frame painting and the installation of weather shutters and sound proofing, A grant of £4000 has been paid.

Penmark has started a program of important bell maintenance of which the initial work has been completed to rebush all the clappers and replace all the pulleys. A grant of £800 has been paid.

The Trustees are aware of further grant requests in preparation and expect expenditure in 2021 to considerably exceed income.

David Moore (BRF Trustee)

Association 200 Club

June Winners

First Prize (£30) - Caerphilly Tower
2nd Prize (£15) - Nevil James
3rd Prize (£10) - Paula Park
4th Prize (£10) - Frances Younson
5th Prize (£10) - Zoe Ward

July Winners

First Prize (£30) - Julian Parker
2nd Prize (£15) - Chris & Joy Kipling
3rd Prize (£10) - Alan Bartley
4th Prize (£10) - Catherine Walsh
5th Prize (£10) - David Slater

August Winners

First Prize (£30) - Lesley Sheppard
2nd Prize (£15) - Jasmine Willicott
3rd Prize (£10) - Marion Bennett
4th Prize (£10) - Philip Williams
5th Prize (£10) - Nye Brown

Please note, 1st prize has increased as membership has passed the 175 mark, next increase will be at 190 members, please let me know if you'd like more details, or like to join us, individually or as a tower, or even if you'd like to take out another number, (a few people have two numbers). A cheque for £1250 was recently passed to the L&M BRF.

Email address is 200club@llanmon.org.uk

Anne Hayman

Monmouth Branch Dinner

As it stands, the Branch Dinner on **Saturday 11th September 2021** is **going ahead**. From the 7th August, the Welsh Government lifted restrictions on the number of people that can meet indoors, with hospitality venues being exempt from mandatory mask wearing indoors for those attend hospitality events.

Currently I have 22 people who have said that they would like to attend the dinner, and it would be nice to see that number increased further. It will be a great opportunity for us to meet up again after such a long time and swap stories.

If you would **like to attend** the dinner and **feel comfortable** with the new guidelines for meeting indoors, **then please contact me ASAP to obtain tickets**. The ticket price for the dinner will be £33 per person.

For those of you that have not been to the Three Salmons function room before, it is a large room with a very high ceiling that is well ventilated and is capable of seating well over a 100 people (in the old social distancing days at least), so there will be plenty of room for us to spread ourselves out to be able to maintain sensible social distancing. Just because the rules will have changed to allow hospitality venues to be exempt from wearing face masks, it does not mean that you must remove your face mask, so if you would still prefer to wear one (other than eating and drinking of course!), then that will be absolutely fine.

So, if you would like to come to the dinner, then either -

- a) **E-mail me now** using the Monmouth Branch training e-mail address listed below, with your name(s) and the number of tickets that you would like
- or
- b) Check your inbox for an e-mail sent out via the L&M e-mail lists, specifically from the Monmouth Branch Communications list and reply to that e-mail.

If you contact me via e-mail, I will then send you details of how to pay for the tickets etc.

If you are not on the L&M e-mailing lists, then I would encourage you to visit <https://www.llanmon.org.uk/mailling-lists> to register for updates through the "Monmouth Branch Communications" option. You will also find options for groups such as "Monmouth Branch Newsletters" and "Monmouth Branch Training Communications" amongst others, which may also be of interest to you as well.

As part of the booking of the function room with the Three Salmons Hotel, they have reserved allocation of the bedrooms for people attending the Dinner should people wish to stay over.

If you want to reserve a room for the night, then please contact the Three Salmons Hotel reception **yourselves** on **01291 672133** and say that you will be attending the Monmouth Branch Bellringers Dinner which will enable you to get the reduced room rate (approx. £95) for the function (breakfast included in the room rate).

Please mark the date your diaries / calendars / mobiles etc and hope enough people will have been vaccinated twice to allow the event to go ahead. Should the Covid situation drastically change before the end of August, then we still have the option to postpone the dinner until another time.

Andrew Phillips
MonmouthTraining@llanmon.org.uk

Ringing to celebrate the centenary of the Monmouth Diocese

16 and 17 October 2021

The Diocese of Monmouth, which forms our branch of the Llandaff and Monmouth Diocesan Association, is 100 years old this October.

This seems like a very good reason to celebrate in the best way ringers know how! The centenary date is St Luke's Day - 18th October and so the branch committee are planning a weekend of ringing around the Diocese to mark the occasion on Saturday 16 and Sunday 17 October.

The aim of this event will be to get bells rung at every church in the Diocese, if we can manage it. Inclusivity is key to this endeavour - as with some of the previous events we've held (some may remember "Ring in 2000," "Ringing Remembers/Battle's Over" and, more locally the "Wave of Bells" which marked the quarter-centenary of the 1606/1607 Severn Flood). It would be great if as many ringers as possible were able to take part in some special ringing over that weekend - and record it for posterity on Bell-board.

We will be in touch with towers to determine which bands can organise some ringing over that weekend themselves and which towers may require some assistance. We will also be seeking volunteers to help make up bands and visit the towers where there are no resident ringers. This is a great opportunity for us as ringers to draw attention to the churches across the Diocese as they start to return to some sort of normality after the pandemic. It would be wonderful to have all the bells in the Diocese rung or chimed over the weekend to celebrate the centenary; forming an excellent "Good News" story for PR purposes.

If anyone has suggestions for helping to publicise the event then please do get in touch. Similarly, please do get in touch if you'd like to volunteer to help with the ringing that weekend. You can contact the organisers (Matthew Turner and Nick D Jones) by emailing:

Master@llanmon.org.uk

Nick has provided a selection of centenary-themed suggestions for things that might rung over that weekend and these are printed below. Of course, what actually gets rung for the Diocesan Centenary doesn't really matter - the important thing will be get every tower ringing at some point over that weekend. These touches may also provide a useful "focus" for practices before the event.

Nick D Jones
Matthew Turner

- Ringing blocks of 100 rounds or some other musical change (little tip - to get someone who is not ringing to count 50 hand-strokes).
- "Firing the bells" (striking them all together - that which we usually try to avoid) 100 times - for best effect, separate the "salvos" into blocks interspersed with rounds or other musical changes).

I know that firing isn't everyone's cup of tea, but for a more musical effect try splitting the ring into arpeggios (e.g. 135 and 246) and firing a whole-pull of each in quick succession

- excellent handling practice and it sounded quite impressive on a keyboard set to "Carillon."

- 100 call-changes - write out your favourite sequence - repeat until you get near to 100 - then add a block to make up the difference.
- 96 changes of Minimus (howsoever produced) - together with the following "extra bit" of 4 changes;
1234
2143
2134
1243
- 100 change 5-bell touches - 10 leads of Plain hunt on 5
- 100 Grandsire Doubles (psbs psbs pb)
- 100 Plain Bob Doubles (ppbpb x 2).

If you'd like to reflect the fact that the Diocese was founded on St Luke's Day, then you could try ringing St Luke Doubles, which is a Doubles variation comprising Winchendon Place with a Grandsire Single.

Those feeling very adventurous may like to attempt an extended quarter-peal - a date touch - comprising 1921 changes to mark the year that the Diocese was founded;

The easiest way I've found to achieve the length is shown below.

16 doubles-extents gives 1920 so we need one change more! Starting a touch of Grandsire Doubles at backstroke with a single adds in the extra change required.

132456 - b
312546 - h
321456 - b

Carry on ringing Grandsire Doubles calling the 5th as half-hunt bell - PBPBPS.

The above gives a touch of 61 changes, following this with either of the "standard" 60s of Grandsire (BPBPBP or PBPBPB) (or, indeed a plain course of Stedman) gives a

touch of 121 with no change rung more than once more than any other - the standard "truth-metric" for a quarter of Doubles. Call any 15 suitable extents of doubles (or even include 720 or 1440 Minor if you so desire) and that's 1921!

For completeness' sake, on the higher numbers - for those who like to mark occasions with appropriately named methods there's St Luke Bob Triples, St Luke's Surprise Major, Monmouth Surprise Major, Gwynllyw Surprise Major and Newport Surprise Major and Maximus. Finally of course; there is (the still unpealed) Bishop of Monmouth Place Triples!

A visit to the London Festival of Bells

On Saturday 31 July, Debbie and I made our way to London, for the first time in what feels like ages, to take part in the City of London Festival of Bells. This was organised by Dickon Love, working in partnership with the Lord Mayor and Archdeacon of London to mark the re-opening of churches in the City after the pandemic. All of the ringable towers (and a couple of the chimes) were to be rung during the day as part of a mix of peals, quarters and general ringing.

Debbie and I were invited to take part in a quarter of Stedman Cinques at St Sepulchre-without-Newgate in the morning. Having not rung on more than four for the best part of 18 months, it's fair to say that we were a little nervous about the prospect. Fortunately, there was some open ringing programmed at the same tower directly before our quarter so we were able to join in with that. Although, it consisted of just a few pulls of rounds it gave confidence that, yes, we could still ring on 12. Sadly our quarter attempt was unsuccessful but we enjoyed the experience of ringing on 12 again and meeting some old friends.

After ringing at St Sepulchre, we walked down to the river, past St Paul's and over the Millennium Bridge. Whilst on the Bridge, we could clearly hear the enthusiasts ringing the three-bell chime at St Andrew-by-the-Wardrobe. After strolling down to Borough Market for lunch, we headed

Want to find out what's going on?

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<https://www.llanmon.org.uk/mailling-lists>

and subscribe to Association and Monmouth Branch-related mailing lists.

Another good source of information is the Association Facebook Group which is available here:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/LlanMonDACBR/>

Thanks to following contributors to this Newsletter: Andrew Phillips, Martin Gilbert, Gwyn Sayce, Peter Mossman, Anne Hayman, David Moore, Nick Jones.

THE DEADLINE FOR MATERIAL FOR THE NEXT NEWSLETTER IS 1 NOVEMBER 2021.

Articles should be sent, preferably by e-mail, to Matthew Turner:

monmouthnews@llanmon.org.uk

back into the City and stopped at the nominated pub for the day - the excellently-named Walrus and Carpenter. Whilst sitting outside and listening to the end of a peal at the nearby St Magnus-the-Martyr, we were pleased to catch-up with former Cardiff resident, Simon Farrar.

A quick browse of Facebook alerted us to the fact that Craig Brown and Pam Watts from Blaenavon were also in London for the day. Debbie and I then headed up to St Katherine Kree for some open ringing, where we enjoyed some well-struck call changes with a group of ringers from Essex. We bumped into Craig and Pam as we were waiting in the queue to ring and it was great to see them.

We then walked down to St Paul's for one of the highlights of the day. This was the ringing of Great Paul, the largest swinging bell in the UK, housed in the South-East tower of the Cathedral. Although, weighing in at a hefty 16 tons, Great Paul is reasonably quiet outside as it sits behind the clock face. However, it has a beautiful, sonorous tone. After 15 minutes or so of Great Paul, the distinctive ring of 12 in the North-East tower joined in, creating a cacophony of sound. Great to hear and appreciated by the crowd of people, both ringers and non-ringers, who had gathered outside the Cathedral to listen.

Debbie and I then headed to St Magnus-the

-Martyr for some open ringing at to meet some friends from Reading. After some call changes on this relatively modern 12, we headed back to the Walrus and Carpenter for drinks and to make plans for dinner.

An excellent day out and we were pleased to be able to join in.

Matthew Turner

