

Bath & Wells Diocesan Association of Change Ringers: Glaston Branch

Branch Newsletter No: 14

September 2025

Website address: [Bath & Wells DACR](#)



The Compton Dundon Bells are Ringing ... nearly there!

After the sweat and toil involved hauling the grillage, bell frame and bells up the tower we finally had the bells in place. We had the struggle again of getting the old tenor through the church door, which had to be taken off its hinges and tilted at an angle to fit through the gap. It then proved a great test to haul the old tenor up into the auxiliary frame above the ringing bells. Extra beams were required on top of the installation's girders to gain height for the lift of the old tenor. The extra baulks of timber were left in place until the staging up to the tower roof door has been installed and they could be safely retrieved.



The first try out of the bells was on Tuesday April 22nd with the first quarter on Sunday April 27th when there was a huge sigh of relief that the job had turned out so well! We were pleased that the quarter included [Dave Kelly](#) from Keltek Trust, [Mike Hansford](#) and others who supported Compton Dundon ringers and installation of the bells.

The Dedication Service was on Sunday 8th June when [Bishop Michael](#) came to Compton Dundon on his first visit. It was a wonderful service with the Church full and much rousing singing. We rang the bells during the service following the dedication with a 60 of Grandsire Doubles which brought much applause.



Prior to the service we didn't think we would have media attention but on the Thursday before the service the e-mails started and the phones were ringing. First, we had Radio Bristol asking us to make an appearance on [Andy Bennett's](#) morning show. This is the one where a clue is given and listeners must get the right answer. The question to identify Compton Dundon was "Where did people gather to watch the Battle of Sedgemoor?" After several listeners answered Westonzoyland Church tower we finally got the right answer, "Lollover Hill in Compton Dundon." I ([Geoff Walker](#)) then had an interview

with **Andy** about the bells and the service that morning, I did mention that ringing was a mathematical exercise, following a blue line and if you were to go wrong it would cause chaos and you get shouted at!! We also had coverage from BBC National News and Radio 4 news. ITV attended with a cameraman and we featured on News from the West Country. Further to this publicity, the restoration work has been mentioned on an early day motion in the House of Commons having been tabled by our MP and supported by 7 others. So, there have been broadcasts far and wide!

The service was followed by a reception in the churchyard and we left feeling a sense of achievement having accomplished the task. On the Dedication Day we rang a quarter of Cambridge which was the first of minor in the tower and on the bells.

Since the Dedication, we have welcomed many visitors who now know where Compton Dundon Church is and have enjoyed the experience of ringing the bells.

Our next task is to await the permission to install the sound control on the 3 open sides. We have installed temporary sound control on the east side of the tower to lessen the noise over the road. We hope this will enable us to carry on welcoming visitors and ringing quarter peals however we need to wait to install the full sound control and do some publicity before we think about ringing for longer lengths.

Geoff Walker

Glaston Branch Chairman

Compton Dundon Bells on Social Media

Below are Instagram & Facebook links to a short video created by **Mike Dennis** (**Gill Dennis's** son) of the Compton Dundon bells in action.

Instagram link: <https://www.instagram.com/p/DLVNYTOojnG/?hl=en>

Facebook link: <https://www.facebook.com/share/r/1AxTTqjDPp/?mibextid=wwXlfr>

Mike is a prolific YouTuber, demonstrating his various master craftsman skills. He'd be delighted if you'd follow him on any of these media with the address: [mike_dennis_craft](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCmike_dennis_craft).

8-Bell Ringing Competition - 27th September

Glaston Branch is hosting this year's Association 8-Bell Ringing Competition on Saturday 27th September commencing at 2.30pm. St. Leonard's, Butleigh has already been selected to hold this, and the judges will be **Peter Harris**, Gloucester & Bristol Association Ringing Master, and his wife. A joint meeting of the Branch Committee and Tower Captains met in June to discuss a number of issues, this being the main one. Catering, car parking, competition rules, tower management, judge location, set piece, cash management, and raffle arrangements were all discussed. A smaller committee meeting was held in mid-August to flesh out the details and identify areas where we need volunteers.

The Association is planning to hold its 6-Bell Competition during the same afternoon (details to finalised at the time of publication) and a joint presentation at the end of the day is anticipated. Once these are known we'll be seeking volunteers for various roles to ensure the day runs smoothly. **Put this in your diary now!**

Mike Palmer

Tower Captain St John's Glastonbury and Branch Secretary

South-West Ringing Course Update

Our last Newsletter featured details of the upcoming South-West Ringing Course at Millfield School that we are heavily involved in organising. While the overall organisation is through the Central Council, **Bev Perry** has been very busy organising all the towers required for 8 groups each having 6 sessions throughout the three-day course. All towers potentially involved are being assessed for their weight, chamber size, accessibility, car parking, toilet facilities, etc. to ensure a suitable ringing environment for all those on the course.

All towers are being notified about when they will be participating.



Quarter Peal in Memory of Brian Mountjoy

A quarter peal of Bob Doubles and Grandsire Doubles was rung in memory of **Brian Mountjoy**, Tower Captain at St. John's, 2011-2023, at 3pm on Friday 18th July, his birthday. **Brian** gave long and faithful service in this capacity, nurturing the ringing team and teaching newcomers in his quiet and experienced way. He was also widely recognised in the ringing world as having a long and distinguished ringing career of 60 years in Devon & Cornwall before moving to Somerset. He not only rang regularly in local towers but in many others, ringing 1,340 peals of @ 3 hours, of which he conducted 540. He was also a talented composer, credited with 30 compositions. We remember him with fondness and admiration. The band was Treble: **Les Perry** 2: **Beverley Perry**, 3: **Penny Hooper**, 4: **Harry Dudden** 5. **John Schmidt**: & Tenor: **Mike Palmer**

Mike Palmer

Tower Captain St John's Glastonbury

Towers around the world



From Christiansborg suburb of Copenhagen. Some towers (well spires to be accurate) have their staircase on the outside - but only clock bells.

Andy Bond
Baltonsborough



Improvers Group Progress

Our improvers group has been going nearly a year now. Most, if not all, of our starting group have made great progress and are starting to master plain hunt to Doubles methods at their own and other towers. The work the group has done on the foundation skills of good bell control and situational awareness, i.e. using a full range of senses, is a key enabler of this.

The last session of term today included a teaching experiment that went extremely well, and bears witness to the progress made. Over the last term we have practiced rounds ‘facing the wall’ several times.* That is ringing rounds by ear, rhythm and feel. Perhaps surprising, perhaps not, the resultant rounds have often been better than those where following a bell by sight was available and it would seem dominated. For an end of term special we tried ringing the Short Places and then the Dodging Kaleidoscope exercises the same way after first doing them facing into the circle. Once again, the striking was as good if not better than the into the circle practices. As well as developing key skills, being able to do this with relative ease showed the group that what they would have previously thought beyond them was perfectly possible. It should enable our improvers to realise that ropesight is just one of the situational awareness skills available to ringers and should definitely not be the dominant one if you want good ringing.

I will be publishing a Winter Term programme as soon as I can. We have some graduates from **Bev** and **Les’s** Bell Handling group joining us next term. By Summer 2026 we should have more recent recruits able to ring up this standard and above, helping to keep ringing healthy in more of our towers. I also aim to get existing Improvers group students ringing Quarter Peals plain hunting the Treble to Doubles methods.

** Ringing facing the wall is a not a new idea. Indeed it is one of the ART Learning the Ropes 2 Listening Exercises. I can find no specific mention of combining it with Kaleidoscope exercises.*

Paul Wotton

Glaston Branch Education Officer

Branch Secretary

After 9 years, **Mike Palmer** has decided not to stand again for the post of Branch Secretary and Branch Representative with effect from the next AGM in January 2026. All those interested in finding out more about this rewarding position, please contact **Mike** at GlastonBranch.Secretary@bath-wells.org or **Geoff Walker**, Chairman at GlastonBranch.Chairman@bath-wells.org

Thank you, **Mike**, for supporting us all and doing such a sterling job.

SAFEGUARDING ... TOWER CAPTAINS ESSENTIAL READING ... ALL READ PLEASE

Safeguarding was an important item on our April meeting agenda, but as only 6 Tower Captains were present, it was thought that these extracts from our own Association’s Safeguarding Policy

should be published to remind everyone of the importance of meeting our requirements, both to the Association and the Church of England.

Safeguarding Policy (Bath & Wells Association)

Introduction

Safeguarding those involved in bell ringing activities from abuse or allegations of abuse is crucial, whether that is young people or adults. It is the responsibility of all members to ensure that our towers and ringing activities are safe for children, young people and vulnerable adults. **Child** means any person aged under 18 years. **Vulnerable Adult** means any person aged over 18 years who is, or may be in need of community care services by reason of disability, age or illness; and is, or may be unable to take care of or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.

Our Association is committed to ensuring that our procedures comply with the safeguarding guidelines issued by the CCCBR, the Dioceses, and legal requirements. The guidance provided on this page includes direct references from these sources.

In the case of both known offenders and potential offenders it must always be remembered that the incumbent and churchwardens have ultimate sanction in allowing access to the tower. All ringers should appreciate that there is no automatic right to ring bells in any tower controlled by the church.

Each Benefice has a Safeguarding Officer who is the main contact point for any safeguarding issues or enquiries by Tower Captains.

Safeguarding training

It is up to each Diocese to decide which bellringers should complete safeguarding training, and to what level. **The Bath & Wells Diocesan Safeguarding Manager requires that all ringers will need to complete the Basic Awareness Course and in addition all Tower Captains the Foundation Course.** Both of these can be completed online (see below). For those unable to do courses online, you will need to inform your Parish's Safeguarding Officer that this is the case, along with notifying the Association Safeguarding Officer.

It will be up to each Parish's Safeguarding Officer to ensure that the correct level of training is completed, so please contact them in the first instance about your training needs. Please note **Tower Captains only need to complete leadership training if their role involves training children or they work in one of our larger churches, such as Wells Cathedral or Bath Abbey.**

Basic Awareness Safeguarding Training (known previously as C0).

To do this course go to 'Church of England Safeguarding Training Portal', <http://safeguardingtraining.cofeportal.org> then once you have registered for an account, 'Online Training courses', and follow the links for Basic Awareness. **This course needs refreshing every three years if it is your highest level of safeguarding training.**

Foundation Safeguarding Training (known previously as C1)

To do this course go to 'Church of England Safeguarding Training Portal', <http://safeguardingtraining.cofeportal.org> 'Online Training Courses', and follow the links for

Foundation training. **This course needs refreshing every three years if it is your highest level of safeguarding training. (You will not be mandated to refresh levels below this.)**

Leadership Training (previously C2/C3)

The diocese are now using Eventbrite for all training bookings - this allows you to browse live availability, book your place online and amend your bookings. The system will also send you confirmations, reminders and post-course information. If there is an issue with you booking the course direct please contact the Safeguarding Administration Assistant at Bath & Wells, email training.safeguarding@bathwells.anglican.org

As with other training, this course needs refreshing every three years if it is your highest level of safeguarding training. (You will not be mandated to refresh levels below this.)

DBS Checks

DBS checks are required for Tower Captains who have ringers under the age of 18. If you require a DBS check and are having difficulty obtaining one through your local Benefice Safeguarding Officer (BSO), you can obtain one through any other BSO as long as they are in the same Deanery. Any ringer who is required to have a DBS or Leadership training needs to inform the [B&WDACR safeguarding officer](#), Penny Hooper. This is in order to comply with the latest published guidance from the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers.

This is YOUR Newsletter. Contributions are always welcome from all towers, about events, news or people. Send to: GlastonBranch.News@bath-wells.org.

Please remember: photos including people should have the permission of anyone in them for data protection and confidentiality reasons.

Ringing World Article (re-published with kind permission of the Ringing World)

Awakened from its slumber: Compton Dundon

by Geoff Walker

St Andrew's church sits at the heart of the community of the small village of Compton Dundon, on the main road between Street and Somerton in Somerset. The church was founded in the thirteenth century and the existing building dates from a little later, in the fourteenth century. In the churchyard stands a much older yew tree, estimated to be about 1,750 years old. The fifteenth century tower is built of the local Lias stone and is plain compared to other Somerset towers. There were originally five bells, of which two were cast by the Austen family in the village in 1663 and 1680, and are listed. The other three were cast by the Bilbies of Chew Stoke in the eighteenth century.

The bell fittings had fallen into disrepair and ringing probably ceased about 1910. By 1935 the bells were hung dead and an Ellacombe system fitted, but even that was rarely used, and until recently the bells had been silent for over a century. In 2018 a report was given to the PCC following an inspection, suggesting that the cast-in staples should be removed from the bells. This prompted the decision that, as the bells needed to be removed, they should be restored to full circle ringing, and that this would be an opportunity to augment them to six.

The villagers raised £160,000 for the project through a variety of sponsored events and applications for grant funding. There are also a few new learners from among the local community.

The bells were removed by Nicholson Engineering in November 2024 and transported to Bridport by lorry. The Compton Dundon ringers visited in January to see work in progress. Because the old treble (now the third) was an untouched Austen bell, they could not remove the canons nor tune it, so the ring has been tuned around it. However, the other listed bell, the old second (now the fourth) had been roughly tuned and the canons had been removed.

The tenor of the ring of five was retired and rehung for stationary chiming as a tolling bell. Two second-hand bells were



The bells ready for dedication

sourced by the Keltek Trust: the treble from Church Kirk, Lancashire and the third from Lindfield, Sussex, which has become the second of six. The bells have been rehung with all new fittings in a new frame. The original (1729) third bell by Thomas I Bilbie was cracked and has been welded, and is now the fifth of the six.

The bells returned in April 2025 and lined up in the nave for the Service of Blessing performed by the Rector and Curate. A quarter peal of Grandsire Doubles celebrated the occasion.

The bells were previously rung from the ground floor. A ringing gallery has been installed above a new servery in the base of the tower.

The Rt Revd Michael Beasley, Bishop of Bath and Wells, came to St Andrew's to dedicate the refurbished bells and the new ringing gallery on Sunday 8th June. The Church was full when the community



and benefice came together to celebrate the event, and the event made the national news. A quarter peal of Cambridge Surprise Minor marked the occasion.

The ringers are grateful to Nicholson's and to the Keltek Trust. Compton Dundon now has an easy-going ring of six, which will be an asset to the local branch, and a chime has been awakened from its slumber.

Compton Dundon, Som. 27 Apr. 1260
Grandsire Doubles: Beverley Perry (C) 1, Dave Kelly 2, Penelope I Hooper 3, Graham Darke 4, Michael C Hansford 5, Harry A Dudden 6. Believed to be the first Q in this church. £6
Compton Dundon, Som. 8 Jun. 1296
Cambridge S Minor: Penelope I Hooper 1, Beverley Perry 2, Geoff Walker 3, Paul Wotton 4, Louis Marsh 5, Leslie E Perry (C) 6. Rung after the dedication service. £6
Both reprinted from p.569



The new gallery ringing chamber visible above a packed church. (photos courtesy Geoff Walker)