

CARY BRANCH

Issue 10

Summer 2026



Tower Captains' Meeting

The Tower Captain Meeting at Maperton in January provided a constructive forum to focus on one of our most pressing priorities: recruitment. With many towers facing similar challenges, there was strong agreement that proactive promotion is key to securing the future of ringing.

Several practical ideas were shared, including hosting open tower events to welcome the wider community and demystify what happens behind the ringing room door. Joe highlighted the benefit of social media to inform the general public as this can include more dynamic advertising such as videos.

Captains were encouraged to reach out to local youth organisations to offer tower visits, giving young people a hands-on introduction to bells and bellringing in a relaxed and informal manner.

A recurring theme was cooperation between towers. The meeting highlighted the importance of offering, asking for and accepting, help when needed—particularly for special events, Sunday services, and weddings. Sharing ringers not only supports individual towers but strengthens the Branch as a whole.

The meeting also looked forward to the addition of 8 new teachers within the Branch, after the ART course held in March; a significant boost to our collective capacity, with another course planned later in the year. This momentum provides a solid foundation on which to build.

Since the meeting took place, many of these suggestions have been acted on and evidence can be seen throughout this edition...

Toby and Catherine have been teaching a selection of new learners from around the Branch with 6 at Milborne Port, 3 at Henstridge and a further 3 shared with Stalbridge! They want to thank Janet Lowe for her very welcome assistance.

Wincanton has 2 new learners who are getting on very well and were ringing hand and back within a couple of lessons with Janet.

Sue in Batcombe has 2 learners in progress and another waiting to start.

Richard in North Cheriton also has 2 learners.



News from the Towers



The Spiral of Light festival in Bruton was opened by the bells of St Mary's in February



Batcombe played host to a varied and enthusiastic group of ringers drawn from across the Salisbury Diocesan Guild. Around 12–14 regular ringers, representing the East Dorset, Mere and Devizes Branches and travelling from as far afield as Blandford and Trowbridge, came together to enjoy ringing on Batcombe's much-admired bells.

The group includes ringers at a wide range of stages, from those learning Plain Hunt, to those who can treble to a method and others beginning to ring methods inside. Visiting different

towers each week gives valuable experience on a variety of rings, helping ringers develop confidence, improve handling, and refine timing and striking — all essential for producing good rhythm and sound.

Batcombe proved to be a particular highlight. As part of their regular programme of visiting towers, Jack Pease and members of his *Just Plain Hunt* group rang a selection of methods including Plain Hunt (with 100 changes rung to mark a 100th birthday), Plain Hunt Minor, Bob Doubles and Grandsire Doubles. The visitors all appreciated Batcombe's bells, which provided an excellent and enjoyable ringing experience for all involved.



Pen Selwood band held a "Try Bellringing" evening on Tuesday 17 March instead of their usual practice and were delighted to welcome 3 keen potential new recruits. The visitors were shown the heritage of the bells, before a quick tour of the bell chamber, and an explanation of how the magic happens on the model in the warmth of the ringing chamber! With the help of Karen Dunn, they were then given the opportunity to chime the bells and have a go at ringing.



Wincanton hosted the Wincanton Scouts in March. They listened to a bit of history about the bells and theory about how a church bell works using a model bell on loan from Milborne Port. They had a demonstration of Rounds and Call Changes to Queens and back before having a go at chiming the bells themselves. There were some big smiles!

After that, some of them tried ringing backstroke before having a go at handbells, moving places amongst themselves. They all got sent back with a quiz and a word search and encouragement to come back again on practice night.

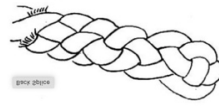
Courses hosted within the Branch

SPLICING AT CHARLTON MACKRELL - Jim Ebner

On a cold Sunday afternoon in January, thirteen volunteers representing around half a dozen towers in the Branch, gathered at Charlton Mackrell church bell tower. The aim was to learn how to splice bell ropes with Paul Wotton, who had kindly offered his time and expertise.

Paul firstly talked about his splicing toolkit; tape, knives, marlin spike etc and then went on to explain some basic skills that could be used for initial splicing practise. He demonstrated two different splices using just a single rope end, before creating the short splice:

The End splice from a crown knot



The Eye splice which created an end loop



The Short splice which is used to join two rope ends



The finished article, ready to go into St Peter and St Paul's church in Wincanton



Our grateful thanks go to Paul Wotton for sharing his skills and amusing anecdotes, to Pauline for providing refreshments and all attendees for their time.

ART LEVEL 1 AT PITCOMBE - Sue Wade

On 14th March 11 students attended a level 1 course covering the teaching of bell handling. Claire Penny explained how the skilled activity of bell ringing can be broken down using the whole-part-whole approach, with an emphasis on planning lessons, tracking progress and tailoring teaching to individual learners. We were given tips on becoming a good teacher, with probably the most crucial tool we could have in our toolbox being developing our observation skills (and finding something to praise!).



The theory sessions were filled with tips and anecdotal examples and were balanced by practical sessions throughout the day, taking turns in becoming teacher and student which gave us insights into how to develop teaching skills and knowledge as well as experiencing tasters of what it feels like to attempt to teach someone.

The ART programme is fully supported and well resourced providing an organised structure for teaching new ringers which allows students to progress at their individual pace, with clear achievable goals that build on previously learnt skills. For me as a potential teacher, being able to access such resources will enable me to plan each lesson in advance and makes me feel much more confident, hopefully transmitting confidence to my future learners and enable their better progress.

Would you like to be more involved in teaching future ringers? Would you like to attend an ART level 1 course, learning how to teach bell handling? Or an ART level 2 course, learning to teach foundation skills for change ringing. Contact me at carybranch.secretary@bath-wells.org

Be careful what you wish for!

Andrew Moore, North Cadbury

In common with many towers, North Cadbury was seeing the ringers getting older and a lack of new blood coming along.

Many conversations in the streets of the village would elicit fine words about the quintessential sounds of the church bells ringing but also an infinite number of reasons why that individual could not become a ringer.

Then the stars aligned... a teacher at the CofE Primary School in the village was married in St Michael's and, quite rightly, had the bells rung for her. Our co-tower captain, Mary Gruner, is a reading assistant in the school. A few encouraging words to the newly-married teacher resulted in an invitation being sent to the parents of year 5 and 6 pupils to come to a practice night.



The following week a dozen children marched up the stairs eager to have a go! Fitting them all into the ringing chamber was the first challenge. They each had a turn at chiming a bell and ringing back stroke and our usual practice was abandoned for the night! After that practice we did wonder just what we had unleashed on yourselves!

Thereafter, our one hour practice became two, with the first hour dedicated to new ringers... A couple of years on, six of those original visitors are still ringing with us joined by others encouraged by their friends and families.

We continue to build our relationship with the school in the hope of welcoming a new group each year.

Could your local school help you find new ringers?



Have you signed up for the Great Cary Branch Ringing yet? It takes place on 17th May this year... Bell Sunday when the Cary Branch will attempt to ring (or visit) ALL the bells in the Branch. We will need as many ringers as possible to achieve ringing in all 44 towers.

Watch out for more information on how to get involved. Join the Cary Branch Facebook page or check with your Tower Captain for emails.

Lydford ringers held a successful Open Tower morning on March 21st, with some lovely ringing by those attending. Several members of the public had a go, thanks to John Dunford for his help. There was a good atmosphere in the hall, with attendees enjoying bacon butties, all helping to raise just over £1000. Many thanks to everyone who attended and contributed—it is very much appreciated. With these donations and grants, we are now in a position to commission the work, which will start after Easter. Many thanks to you all and happy ringing. - Ralph



What's happening in your tower?

Do you have anything you would like included in the next newsletter? Will you ring on your summer travels? Would you like to write a short article about a workshop or ringing experience? Photos and copy to be with the editor by 5th July please. carybranch.news@bath-wells.org

Branch practices & Workshops



North Cadbury: Simon, Roy, Toby, Vicky, David, Rob, Emma, Ollie, Jenny, John, Cathy and Aaron

Branch Practices have been well attended with approximately 12-16 ringers at each fortnightly event and even some visitors from other Branches. Toby has kept the bells ringing out with a variety of methods to suit the number of bells, as well as **Call Changes** for those who prefer this. Methods have included: **St Clements Minor, Reverse Canterbury, St Simon's, April Day, Plain Bob Minor, Plain Bob Doubles, Grandsire Doubles, Stedman Doubles and Triples, St.Simons Triples and Single Oxford Bob Triples, Plain Hunt Doubles and Triples** and an attempt at **Plain Hunt Major**.

On the 5 bells at Corton Denham, we were able to ring a good selection and some new methods for many: **Call Changes, Plain Bob Doubles, Grandsire Doubles,**



Ashford Little Bob (plain course and a touch), **Plain Bob Minimus, S t e d m a n Doubles, Plain Hunt Doubles and Double Bob Minimus**. Not bad for 14 people and an hour and a half!



Ringing Master: Toby Doar



In one of the February practices, North Cheriton bells were rung up and Call Changes were begun... and then the clapper fell off the third ... so ringing was suspended for a quick relocation to Charlton Horethorne where we rang **Grandsire Doubles and Triples, Cambridge, Stedman Triples, Bob Minor and Call Changes**, thankfully without further incident. Thank you to Richard at North Cheriton, Nigel who offered us Maperton bells and Catherine from Charlton Horethorne.



Watch out for the evening practices now that the days are getting brighter (highlighted in blue on the list to the left).

BRANCH PRACTICES		
+ APRIL		
MONDAY 6TH	SOUTH CADBURY	7-8.30
SATURDAY 18TH	EVERCREECH	2.30-4
+ MAY		
SATURDAY 2ND	WEST CAMEL	2.30-4
MONDAY 11TH	CHARLTON ADAM	7-8.30
SATURDAY 16TH	MARSTON MAGNA	2.30-4
SATURDAY 30TH	STRICTLY COME STRIKING HORSINGTON	2.30-4
+ JUNE		
SATURDAY 6TH	QUEEN CAMEL	2.30-4
MONDAY 15TH	PEN SELWOOD	7-8.30
SATURDAY 20TH	BATCOMBE	2.30-4

Red pathway practices continue by invitation. Can you already ring Cambridge? Are you able to ring other Surprise Minor Methods but never get the chance? Please contact Cathy if you would like to be included for Red Practices: catherine.civill@btinternet.com



On Saturday, 14 February 2026 in 43m

Pitney, Somerset
St John the Baptist
Tenor: 8-2-2 in A

1260 Plain Bob Doubles

- 1 Helen Donnelly
- 2 Leslie E Perry
- 3 Jenny Alderson
- 4 Penelope I Hooper (C)
- 5 Beverley Perry
- 6 Lawrence C Bignell

First quarter peal at first attempt - 1
Circled tower - 2



Bath & Wells Diocesan Association
On Wednesday, 11 February 2026 in 43m

Barton St David, Somerset
St David
Tenor: 9-3-10 in A♭

1260 Plain Bob Doubles

- 1 Trevor Lewis
- 2 Jenny Alderson
- 3 Cathy Civill
- 4 Lawrence C Bignell (C)
- 5 Penelope I Hooper
- 6 Beverley Perry

First on Treble 1
Birthday Compliment to Cathy
Circled 9 times 6



Bath & Wells Diocesan Association
On Wednesday, 4 March 2026 in 43m

Compton Dundon, Somerset
St Andrew
Tenor: 10-1-21 in F#

1260 Plain Bob Doubles

- 1 Vicky Baillon
- 2 Viv McIlele
- 3 Cathy Civill
- 4 Susan Irvine
- 5 Penelope I Hooper (C)
- 6 Simon Tremewan

First Quarter at first attempt:1

Quarter Peals

Quarters have been ramping up this Spring with several firsts achieved, and a variety of different towers being utilised.

Congratulations to Michelle Rechka, Helen Donnelly and Vicky Baillon for their first Quarters and Trevor Lewis for his first Quarter on the treble.

Georgina Muir is now working with Chris Thomas as a Quarter Peal coordinator to enable more ringers from Chris' Ding Dong group to achieve their 'firsts'.



Bath & Wells Diocesan Association
On Monday, 23 February 2026 in 44m

Templecombe, Somerset
1260 Plain Bob Doubles

- 1 Michelle Rechka
- 2 Anna Joyce
- 3 Annette Organ
- 4 Simon Tremewan
- 5 David P Hammonds
- 6 Toby Doar

First Q 1.
Sending Paul Reeves a Get Well Soon.



Simon, Toby, David, Anna, Annette and Michelle

If you are interested in Call Changes, and would like to be added to the Call Change Collective Whatsapp group run by Simon, please get in touch with him at simon.tremewan@gmail.com

He has organised very successful monthly outings this year. Marston Magna and Maperton in January; Motcombe and Zeals in February and Somerton and Compton Dundon in March. Everyone is learning to ring and call "Sixty on Thirds".

On March 5th (St Piran's Day) we rang a Call Change Peal - 120 Roll up Doubles Call Changes at Haselbury Plucknett.

Well done to Karen Dunn, for calling her first Sixty on Thirds.



Bath & Wells Diocesan Association
On Thursday, 8 January 2026

Marston Magna, Somerset
Blessed Virgin Mary
Tenor: 13-1-22 in F#

66 Call Changes
Sixty on Thirds

- 1 Karen Dunn (C)
- 2 Jenny Alderson
- 3 Helen Donnelly
- 4 Simon Tremewan
- 5 Ralph Berry
- 6 Rob Backus

First Sixty on Thirds as conductor 1.