

Bath & Wells Diocesan Association of Change Ringers: Glaston Branch

Branch Newsletter No: 16

February 2026

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



Thank You Mike

As you may already know **Mike Palmer** has retired as our Branch Secretary and Association Representative. I think we, as a Branch, owe a great debt of gratitude to him for working behind the scenes to organise meetings and events.

There have also been changes to the workings of the Association, which **Mike** has ably coped with. It has been good to have Mike next to me at meetings to keep an eye on things ensuring that I keep to the agenda and providing me with relevant information.

Over the last few years, **Mike** has also been the Tower Captain of St John's Church in Glastonbury and so we wish him well as he continues with this new responsibility.

Thank you, Mike

Geoff Walker

Branch Chairman

A Note from the Association Central Council Representative

As well as being the Branch Education Officer I am also one of the Association Central Council Representatives.

What the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers (CCCBR) does is a mystery to many grassroots ringers. Here I will highlight an initiative the council would like ringers to support. I will also outline how I would like to provide more development opportunities for those who have been attending training sessions at Street and for others.

The CCCBR is a charity whose members are regional and other ringing societies. The Bath & Wells Diocesan Association of Change Ringers is one such member. The rules of the council are agreed by its member representatives and include its charitable objectives. As topics for this article, I will explore some of the objectives in more detail, but for now let's just look at the overriding one which is:

“To advance the practice, heritage and appreciation of bell ringing as an enjoyable mental and physical exercise and unique performing art for the public benefit of both church and community.”

Clearly this is something ringers do at local, branch and association level too. The council is the body that does this at national and international level. In 2024, the UK joined many countries in supporting the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH). The first step is to create inventories of living heritage. The Department for Culture, Media and Sport is creating these inventories and has set up a website for this purpose on which bell-ringing is given as an example. To get on the inventory needs the support of the communities, groups or individuals, that's us as ringers. The benefits of being on the inventory come in the form of recognition and will probably make it more likely that future funding applications will be approved. There is more information at <https://cccbr.org.uk/heritage/>

Now ...

Paul Wotton

Branch Education Officer and Association Central Council Representative

... Back to Branch matters ...

The training courses we have been running at Street have resulted in real benefits. I now want to consolidate progress and find ways to share these benefits with those who can't make the mid-week day-time practices I run. I will be seeking towers and helpers for regular monthly Saturday day-time practices that will range from call-changes to a variety of more advanced plain methods. To further consolidate learning I will arrange Quarter Peal attempts as individual ringers become ready.

Finally, here is advance notice of the Association Young Ringers Festival on Sunday 13th September at Chilcompton. Please encourage all our young ringers to attend and meet other young ringers from around the association.

Paul Wotton

Branch Education Officer

News from our Branch AGM on 17th January 2026

Branch Committee

Re-elected Branch Officers

- **Chairman:** **Geoff Walker**
- **Vice-Chairman:** **Beverley Perry**
- **Treasurer:** **Graham Darke**
- **Ringing Master:** **Helen Brown**
- **Assistant Ringing Master:** **Graham Darke**
- **Education Liaison Officer:** **Paul Wotton**
- **Branch Newsletter Editor:** **Norma Anselm**

A new post of **Branch Website Officer** has been created to administer the new website. **Graham Darke** was elected to this post.

Secretary: **Mike Palmer** stood down from this post after nine years and to date no-one has come forward. Anyone interested should contact **Geoff Walker**, Chairman, in the first instance. *Since this meeting **Norma Anselm** has kindly offered to take on the role.*

General Committee Representative: **Mike Palmer** stood down from this post after five 5 years, and **Marilyn Backhurst** was elected to the post.

Tower Maintenance Officer: **Phil Kitcher** is standing down from this post after ten years' service. While there is no-one yet to replace him, the Chairman suggested that if any towers required advice on maintenance issues, this is available through the Association Tower Advisor and his Assistant.

BRANCH PROGRAMME 2026 – Please make a note of these dates in your dairy now!

- Six Bell Competition: 18th April, possibly at Pylle or Wookey. Two different competitions, one for method ringing and one for call change ringing. Rules to be established and circulated. *Since this meeting Wookey has been confirmed as the venue.*
- Association AGM: 9th May
- Branch Outing: 27th June. Two or three local towers. Details to follow.
- Branch Event: 21st November 2.00 to 5.00pm, Croscombe
- Monthly Surprise Major Practices at Pilton, by invitation
- Improvers Group Practices: contact **Paul Wotton** (Branch Education Officer) for details

Mike Palmer

Branch Secretary

Valedictory Letter

Dear Friends

It's with some sadness that I'm leaving the role of Branch Secretary after nine years and the Branch's Association General Committee Representative for five. I thought I'd make it to ten, but also being Tower Captain of Glastonbury, St. John's for the past three years has proved too much on my time commitments and energy reserves. I've thoroughly enjoyed being involved in the running of our Branch for all this time, and have learned a lot about what makes a Branch and the Association "tick", and how important the support and commitment of Committee colleagues, tower contacts / captains and members are to providing all our events through each year. As the smallest Branch in the Association (both members and towers) we've proved that "small is beautiful" as well as viable and we do just as well, and sometimes better than, larger branches at attracting support for our events, meetings and AGMs, and involvement in the Association. As well as keeping the routine running of the Branch going, there have been a number of more major projects and developments that I'm particularly proud to have been associated with during this time:

- Organising the Association's 6-bell ringing competition with 12 teams entering, just after I took on the role in 2017, and the recent 8-bell competition last September.

- Leading the group which planned and established the Branch Training Centre at Holy Trinity, Street which, with **Bev & Les's** enthusiasm, has introduced quality handling, ringing rounds & call changes to 12 new learners since November 2023 and provided a facility for towers to use for special practices and courses.
- Introducing the Branch Newsletter and re-establishing it under the Editorship of **Norma Anselm**.
- Linked with the development of the Training Centre, introducing the annual Tower Captain's Meeting to discuss major Branch activities and act as a forum to discuss issues and ideas to support best practice in our towers.
- Attended five annual Association General Committee meetings to act as the Branch's representative, including heading up the Branch's response to the Covid pandemic in 2020.

As I said in my Annual Report to the AGM, none of this would have been possible without the unstinting support, enthusiasm and commitment of all committee officers, tower captains and members, and I should like to personally thank you all. I simply couldn't have done it without you! See you at the next meeting - but from the other side of the table!

Mike Palmer

Past Branch Secretary

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

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