

BATH BRANCH NEWS

Bath & Wells Diocesan Association of Change Ringers

September 2026



Welcome to our new-look newsletter

Welcome to the first edition of our new Bath Branch quarterly newsletter.

The idea is simple: to share what's happening in towers across the branch, including forthcoming ringing, training and social events; to celebrate our ringers and their achievements; and to take a walk down memory lane.

We'd particularly like this to be a newsletter for everyone - from people who have been ringing for decades to those who have only recently started learning. Please send us some stuff!

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From our ringing master..

It has been great to see many of you at the Branch Practices so far this year. We've been to Bathwick, Queen Charlton and Batheaston and are grateful to the ringers at these towers for agreeing to host us. We aim to cater for ringers at all stages of their ringing journey from rounds and call changes to Stedman and Surprise methods, all of which have been achieved with very satisfactory results.

Please come along and we will try our best to accommodate all requests. Come and enjoy the opportunity to ring with people you don't normally ring with, on bells you don't normally ring on.

The practices are a friendly, social occasion with refreshments provided where space is available. Thank you so much to David Parfrey for providing the tray bakes at Queen Charlton.

If you are a learner and can confidently handle a bell, please join us. It would be great if you could bring along the person who is teaching you, as bells can feel very different at towers other than your own!

Karen Tyler, Branch Ringing Master.



Branch practice at Queen Charlton earlier this year

Around the towers

Bath Abbey

We said farewell to Will Beech, who has graduated from Bath University with a degree in Maths. A quarter peal of Stedman Caters was rung for his graduation service at the Abbey on 15 July. We wish him well and hope to see him again soon.

Bath & Wells Diocesan Association

Bath, Somerset

Abbey Church of St Peter and St Paul

Wednesday, 15 July 2026 in 52m (33-0-25 in C)

1299 Stedman Caters

Composed by [Daniel W Brady](#)

- 1 Jody A Wood
- 2 Maggie Willans
- 3 Michael J Stubbs
- 4 William Willans
- 5 Matthew W Goodship (C)
- 6 Lesley C Houston
- 7 Thomas G A Wareing
- 8 Matthew J Butler
- 9 Josh D P Jones
- 10 Nicholas C Field

Rung to congratulate Will Beech on completing his degree, immediately following his graduation ceremony in the abbey.

Corston

Congratulations to Philippa and her husband Matthew on the birth of their first child, Eliza Catherine Parfrey Baker, on 1 August, 7lb 2oz.

A quarter peal of mixed doubles was rung by local ringers at Corston to mark the occasion.

Bath & Wells Diocesan Association

Corston, Somerset

All Saints

Friday, 7 August 2026 (9-2-25 in Ab)

1260 Doubles (11m/v)

- 1 Nicki J Lang
- 2 Alan Jenner
- 3 Jody A Wood
- 4 Robert Perry (C)
- 5 Tim Leach
- 6 Virginia R Campbell

To celebrate the birth on 1st August of Eliza, daughter of (local ringer) Philippa and Matt Baker.

Weston

On the 26 June, we re-ran the very successful Bell Ringing Taster Day for Weston All Saints Primary School's Year 6, as part of their post-SATS wider curriculum sessions, before leaving to start secondary school. A group of eight of us ran the day, including my daughter Ivy, in Year 6. Eighty students were given a demonstration, a talk about change ringing, some plain hunt walked out on handbells, and finally a first lesson on the bells. It was massively enjoyable to see so many children having a go with real enthusiasm and asking such interesting questions.

A leaflet containing the CCCBR Learn to Ring website address and a list of places to learn to ring around Bath was handed out. Although we don't have a band at Weston, I feel strongly that we have significantly increased the chances of many of the students considering learning at some point in the future.

Thanks to everyone who helped, especially in the middle of that July heatwave! It also showed what a talented pool of ringing teachers and coaches we have in the Bath Branch.

By Tom Longridge.



Left to right : Rob Perry, Andy Manister, Nicky Lang, Maggie Willans, Innes Laidler and Ivy Longridge

What's on

- Association striking competition 26 September (teams have been assembled).
 - Next Branch practice, Bath Abbey. 28 September, 7.30pm
 - Bath Branch skittles night, to be confirmed! Information will be on WhatsApp.
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Ringer Focus

Mike Barker, who was not the oldest ringer in town

Some of us will remember Mike and his wife Judy, who rang in Bath during the 1980s before relocating to Scotland in 1989.

Originally from Yorkshire, Mike learnt to ring in Darlington and continued to ring at York Minster as a student, before arriving in the Bath area in the late 1970s. He was an excellent ringer, a very good backender, and must have been a great asset to the ringing community at the time. He was also a talented musician, and together with Judy, he was often found playing folk music in Bath's pubs. He and Judy were regular and dedicated ringers. Bellboard records some of his achievements, including a peal of 52 Spliced Surprise Minor and a peal of Grandsire Caters which I think he conducted, in 1988. He also played a part in teaching me to ring at St Michael's (yes, his style was tidy too).

Mike passed away all too soon, in 2021. With Judy's permission, I'm sharing some verses

that he wrote for a well-known tune because they are simply brilliant and capture what many of us oldies are thinking today.

By Jody Wood.



Mike Barker - picture kindly supplied by Judy Barker

Bath & Wells Diocesan Association

Bath, Somerset

Abbey Church of St Peter and St Paul

Saturday, 19 March 1988 in 3h 15 (33-0-25 in C)

5021 Grandsire Caters

Composed by George J Hawkins

- 1 Michael J C Cannon
- 2 Bernard S Gambrill
- 3 George J Hawkins
- 4 Eric Naylor
- 5 Julian R Lees
- 6 Stephen A Rossiter
- 7 Judy A Barker
- 8 Reginald T McKenzie
- 9 Michael G Barker
- 10 David J Kelly

First peal on 10: 2, 5 and 7.

First caters away from cover 9.

Sadly this was the last peal for George J Hawkins. He first called this composition here on 20th November 1947.

Bath & Wells Diocesan Association

Marksbury, Somerset

St Peter

Monday, 9 May 1988 in 2h 42 (9-0-9 in G)

5040 Spliced Surprise Minor (52m)

1) Arley, Claverdon, Bilton, Shilton, Church Lawford, Harbury, Whichford, Wolford, Napton on the Hill. 2) Westminster, Allendale, Fryerning, Luton, Ripley, Broomfield, Rhyl, Fyfield, Thorne. 3) Wandsworth, Soho, Pentonville, Brixton, Waterlil, Holloway, Cambridge, Beighton, Redcar, Pattiswick, Appleby, Terling, Hatfield. 4) King Edward, Queen Mary, Cambridge, Primrose, Bourne, Hull, Ipswich, Norfolk. 5) London, Wells. 6) Lightfoot, Wearmouth, Rossendale, Stamford, Netherseal, Annable's London. 7) Beverley, Surfleet, Berwick, Hexham, York, Durham.

- 1 Catherine R Taylor
- 2 Robert Perry
- 3 David A Huxford
- 4 Michael G Barker
- 5 George W Massey
- 6 David J Kelly (C)

Most methods -2,4,5. Farewell compliment to Mike and Judy Barker, who are leaving for Scotland. First peal on the bells since 31/3/73.

(Adapted by Mike Barker from "The Oldest Swinger in Town" by Mike Harding)

*When you chat up a student in the ringers bar
You drive her home in your sporty little car
Then you find you learned to ring with her ma and pa
You're the oldest ringer in town*

*You won't let them move the box when there's too much rope
You tell them gruffly that they'll just have to cope
And you'd like to turn the tenor but you fear you'll have a stroke
You're the oldest ringer in town*

*There you go, with your jeans so tight
Your expanding waist and failing sight
Another easy going tenor now takes all of your might
You're the oldest ringer in town*

*You prefer the debate at the association meet
You won't ring in winter in a church without heat
And when you walk into the tower, they offer you a seat
You're the oldest ringer in town*

*You censure the ringers who turn up late
When striking's mentioned you lead the debate
And talking during ringing is the thing you most hate
You're the oldest ringer in town*

*When you prefer a light 8 to a heavy 10
You've said yes to a peal but you can't remember when
And you tell a funny story....then you tell it again
You're the oldest ringer in town*

*You've got to stay over when you travel far
Your pride and joy is your flashy German car
And you prefer the Little Chef to the public bar
You're the oldest ringer in town*

*Your ringing career has more lows than highs
When they call for 8 spliced you retort "is that wise?"
'Cos you prefer a course of Stedman to a touch of surprise
You're the oldest ringer in town*

*There you go with your jeans so tight
Your expanding waist and failing sight
And you've got to pace yourself if you hope to last the night
You're the oldest ringer in town*

Where in the Branch..



The answer will appear in the next issue. If you have a photo of a tower in the branch for the next issue, please send it in. We don't want it to be so easy!

Next issue

We're looking for tower news, photographs, ringing achievements, historical photographs, forthcoming events, interesting stories and memories relating to Bath and its ringers, peal board histories - anything really! Let's make this newsletter a good read.

Send contributions and photographs to Jody at BathBranch.Web@bath-wells.org or via WhatsApp.

Deadline: 31 December 2026.
