

Bridgwater Branch Newsletter

October 2026



Christmas Ringing:

This year the Christmas Ringing will be Ashcott, Saturday 12 December, ringing from 2 – 4pm.

We usually we have our Christmas get together in St Mary's Bridgwater, with a mix 6 to 12 bell ringing; unfortunately, due to various bookings we have had to change the venue this year.
An email with full details about the Christmas Ringing/get together will be sent out two weeks beforehand, make sure to put the date and venue in your calendars.





Hello fellow ringers,

At the time of writing, I am glad not to be outside as a 'hoolie' is blowing. We have seen some trees down but guess we have been more fortunate than some.

My mind goes back to our lovely picnic at Wembdon in July when we were thankful to sit in the shade of St. George's tower to eat our picnic. It was lovely to see so many of you there. We saw another beautiful day when the Association Striking Competitions were held at Ilton and North Curry. Keith and I sat on a bench behind North Curry church, with a cup of tea, and took in the most stunning view whilst listening to some pretty stunning striking as the-8 bell competition progressed. It was a very poignant moment of 'Englishness'.

So now, with autumn well upon us, shops full of Hallowe'en and Christmas, we look forward to our ringing despite the darker nights. Don't forget that the Christmas ringing, with mulled wine and mince pies will be at Ashcott this year and we look forward to welcoming as many as possible to share fellowship as we prepare to mark the end of the year. Hope you will be able to ring in the New Year, 2027 in good ringing style. You will be amazed how many people listen for the bells at New Year.



Very happy and blessed Christmas and hope to see you in a tower somewhere soon.

Freda
Branch Chairman

Bridgwater Branch AGM Notes



It was great to have 26 members at our AGM on Saturday 10th October at Woolavington. The service, tea and meeting were held in the church after an hour of ringing for all.

The meeting opened by remembering David Hewlett and Edwin Dibble, both of Woolavington, who died during the year.

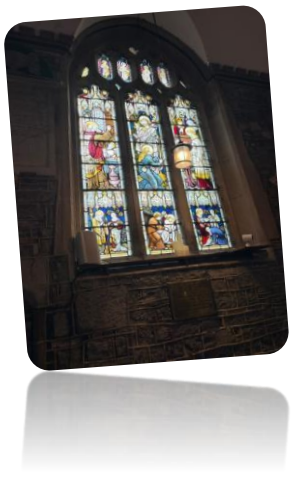
Mick Howes updated us on the results of the Association striking contests. The 6 Bell competition in Ilton had 9 teams entering Ashcott came 7th, Fiddington 6th. The 8-bell contest in North Curry resulted in Bridgwater coming 6th out of 7 entries.

The meeting agreed that by popular demand, Saturday morning practices will now start at 10am and run to 11:30.
To avoid Easter and school holidays, our branch striking contest next year will be held on 17th April 2027 – the third Saturday in April.
Next year's July ringing picnic will be at Cossington. Hopefully we will get the same large attendance and good weather that helped with this year's successful event at Wembdon.



The next practices are:
Fiddington – 7th November
Xmas practice 12th December. 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm at Ashcott
Chedzoy – 9th January 2027
Spaxton 13th February 2027
(full listing on page 8).

Officers: The following branch officers were elected for 2026/2027:



Chairman – Freda Prime.
Secretary – John Hallett.
Treasurer – Margaret Trimm.
Ringing Master – Mick Howes.
Assistant Ringing Master - Cate Ovington.
Education Officer – Chris Gaunt.
Newsletter Editor – Julie Preece
General Committee Rep – John Hallett
Bell Maintenance Contact – John Hallett.

New Members – The following four new members were elected to the Bridgwater Branch of the Association:

Zana Brown – Westonzoyland
Elaine Harris – Shapwick
Mark Lathwell – Othery
Janet Savva - Othery

Annie Suddaby of Taunton Branch was elected as a joint and unattached member of Bridgwater Branch.

ART Level 1 certificate was presented to Zana Brown of Westonzoyland. Well done, Zana.

The Luxon (Improvers) Trophy was awarded to Rodney Young, from Chedzoy. Congratulations Rodney.

John

Certificate presentations



Zana Brown from Westonzoyland receives her ART stage 1 certificate from Chairman Freda Prime. Thanks to Mick Howes for carrying out the one-to-one training.



Rodney Young from Chedzoy was the worthy recipient of the Luxon (Improvers) trophy this year. Presented to him by Freda Prime at the AGM.



Zana Brown from Westonzoyland pictured here receiving her new member pack from Freda Prime at the AGM.

New member packs were later presented to Elaine Harris (Shapwick), Mark Lathwell (Othery) and Janet Savva (Othery) in their towers.

Edwin T Dibble



Edwin (Eddie) Dibble passed away Monday 29th June, aged 86.

Edwin was the long serving Tower Captain at Woolavington but has been in care for the last few years due to illness.

He learned to ring when he was 13 years old and was a member of the B&WDACR for 69 years and he was made a Member Emeritus.

Bell Board records that he rang 14 peals and 159 quarter peals, most of them with his lifelong friend Alan Kent. He also rang in many of our cathedrals around the country

Ed's other great passion was cricket, being a long-time member of Somerset County Cricket Club. He followed the England team around the world, including New Zealand, Australia, South Africa, Sri Lanka and the West Indies. He combined these trips with bell ringing wherever he could.

Ed worked hard for Woolavington Church and Tower, including helping to raise money to rehang the six and augment to eight bells in 1987. The tenor bell from Charlinch was obtained and cast into the two new trebles.

Eddies funeral at the Sedgemoor Crematorium on 23rd July and the gathering at Pawlett Club afterwards, were well attended and well represented with bellringers.

There was a quarter peal of Grandsire Triples rung at Woolavington in the evening to celebrate Edwin's life on the 8 bells he looked after for decades. A fitting tribute.

Bath & Wells Diocesan Association
Woolavington, Somerset
Blessed Virgin Mary
Thursday, 23 July 2026 in 48m (10–2–24 in F♯)
1260 Grandsire Triples

1	Nancy Routley
2	Margaret Johnson
3	Cate Ovington
4	Henry Routley
5	Margaret Furner
6	Charles Pipe-Wolferstan (C)
7	Ben Routley
8	Chris Gaunt

Rung to celebrate the life of Edwin Dibble. Tower captain at Woolavington for many years. Alan Kent associated with organising this quarter

You like this



In ringing order left to right *(Image: Henry Routley)*

Picnic in the Sunshine ~ 11th July 2026



I suppose the heatwave in July will be a distant memory by now, but this year's ringing picnic was blessed with the glorious blue skies and soaring temperatures.
Arrangements at Wembdon were perfect and the picnic and non-ringing gatherings were in the blessed shade of the tower and the churchyard trees.













Many thanks to Jackie and her team for making everything available and welcome. Thirty-one ringers and family turned up. Really nice social gathering.
Ringing was warm work and it was clearly even hotter up in the bell chamber where the clapper bearings gradually tightened giving some an excuse for poor striking.
Thanks to Mick for organizing the ringing.
Something for everyone including call changes and plain hunt for some of our budding learners. Stedman and minor for some old hands and much in between.
A good day out. Look forward to next year and seeing what challenges the weather will give us at our 2027 ringing picnic.

John

Ringing Master's Report-2026



Another year, another AGM, and my thanks to all for once again being elected as your Branch Ringing Master. As most of you will know this has been a difficult year for me, and I thank everyone for their support and thoughts during this time.

Recruitment:
This year has seen an upturn in recruiting new ringers and also in returning ringers. The main focus for new ringers is to ensure we can retain them which, as I know from experience, can become frustrating. It is really gratifying to recruit younger ringers and see them coming along, usually learning at a much faster pace than, the 'later' generation, only to lose them when they move on to college or further. In these cases, all we can hope for is a return to the fold later on.

Branch Picnic:
Year four for the Branch Picnic, and after three years of wet picnics and having to seek shelter, it was wonderful to have a really proper summer's day, albeit perhaps a little too hot for some. Nevertheless, the turnout was really good, and it was great to have families and friends attending too. There was plenty of ringing, until the heat became too much for a couple of the bells that decided to stop ringing. This was due to the clapper bearings becoming swollen, expanding in the heat! How come warnings on weather forecasts never mention this as a problem? For 2027 Cossington will be the venue, fingers crossed for another good summer.

Association Striking Competitions:
This year we managed to enter both the 6 and 8 bell competitions, with two teams for the 6-bell.
The two teams for the 6-bell were Ashcott and Fiddington, and the 8-bell team selected members from across the Branch.

The results were:
6-Bell, ringing in Ilton a total of 9 teams from the Association entered; Ashcott came 7th, Fiddington 6th.
8-Bell, ringing in North Curry, 7 teams from the Association; we came 6th so at least not last.

As I explained at the AGM, for next year I would like to have more from the branch to try out for next year's 8-Bell Competition, with practices throughout the year. I also want to use these practices to further general 8- Bell ringing in the Branch so please consider coming forward to join in this, even if not specifically wishing to take part in Competition ringing.

2027 Branch Practices:

I am currently working on next year's program, but please note that the times have changed as agreed at the AGM, now 1000-1130hrs;
the first two practices will be:
Jan 9 – Chedzoy
Feb 13 - Spaxton

My thanks to all Branch Members for your continued support throughout this year and I look forward to continuing to have lots of great Practices and attendance for 2027.

Mick Howes – Bridgwater Branch Ringing Master

Ringing Workshops



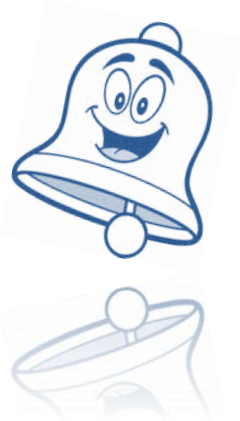
We have run several Plain Bob Doubles workshops over the past couple of years and hopefully the new ringers who came on those courses are now confidently ringing plain courses from any bell, and "rope sight" is coming along.

Learning to ring your first method is perhaps the hardest thing you will do in bellringing and so If you feel that you are now ready to "move on", perhaps learning what to do when "BOB" is called, perhaps tackling a new method, or even trying your hand on higher numbers of bells (remember those 'Stage Names' I mentioned…Minor (6 working bells, Triples (7 working bells), Major (8 working bells) etc.

Whatever you choose it's always best if it is something you can practice afterwards in your home tower, so have a chat with your tower captain about what is possible for you and I will be happy to set up a workshop to give you some intensive practice.
You can contact me through the B&WDACR website, or email me via bridgwaterbranch.educationofficer@bath-wells.org

Chris Gaunt ~ Education Officer

2027 Branch Practices and Meetings:



9 Jan - Chedzoy (6-Bell)

13 Feb- Spaxton (6-Bell)

13 Mar - Bridgwater (8-10 Bell)

17 Apr- Goathurst (6-Bell) Striking Comp and Meeting

8 May – Over Stowey (6-Bell)

12 Jun — Woolavington (8-Bell)

10 Jul — Cossington — Picnic and Practice

14 Aug - Bridgwater (8-10 Bell)

11 Sep — Durleigh (6-Bell)

9 Oct — Ashcott - Open ringing- Service — AGM (TBC)

13 Nov — Nether Stowey (6-Bell)

Dec — Bridgwater Christmas 12-Bell — TBA Branch

Practices 1000-1130hrs
AGM Open Ringing from 1400-1500 followed by Service and Meeting
10 July Picnic (bring your own food etc.) Open ringing from 1100-1430 If the weather is fine, we can picnic in the churchyard - bring your own chairs or blankets

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Please send any local news and items for the Newsletter to
BridgwaterBranch.News@bath-wells.org