Bath & Wells Diocesan Association of Change Ringers

Chew Branch

Newsletter: October 2025

A clean sweep for Chew Branch

in the Association Striking Competitions !

The two Association Striking Competitions were held on the afternoon of Saturday 27th September.

The 6-bell competition was held at St Bartholomew's, West Cranmore, an 8cwt six in the Frome Branch, while the 8-bell competition took place later in the afternoon at St Leonard's, Butleigh (19-3-5), in the Glaston Branch. Many of the ringers from the teams in both competitions then congregated in the nave of Butleigh church to hear the results and enjoy a sumptuous tea provided by local ringer Marilyn Backhurst and her team of helpers.

6-bell competition

As Portishead had won our Branch competition in May they represented Chew Branch in the Association 6-bell Competition. They had to make one change to their band: Annie Holland was on holiday at the time of the Association competition so her place was taken by Andrew Ball. As in our Branch competition, they chose to ring Grandsire Doubles as their test piece.

Judge: Robert Perry

General remarks about the ringing: Most of the ringing was of a high standard with no major faults. The test piece was 120 changes of any Doubles or Minor method.

Position	Faults	Branch
1st	11	Chew
2nd	12	Ilchester
3rd	13	Taunton
4th - joint	14	Bath
4th - joint	14	Frome
6th	16	Bridgwater
7th	20	Axbridge



Unfortunately we didn't get a photo of the complete band.
In ringing order, from left to right:
1 Gerald Skelly, 2 Jan Wyatt, [3 Andrew Ball, 4 Will Rogers], 5 George Wyatt (C), 6 Les Curwood.
[Those in brackets are not in the photo]



George Wyatt receiving the trophy and certificate from the Guild Master, the Rev Guy Scott

8-bell competition

The team for the 8-bell competition comprised members from several towers across the Branch. It was particularly pleasing that no ringer was required to ring in both the 6 and 8-bell teams – a tangible demonstration of the strength of ringing in the Branch.

For the test piece all teams were required to ring the same touch of 168 Grandsire Triples: a single at alternate leads.

Judges: Peter Harris and Toby Hicks

General remarks about the ringing: There were no major faults but many teams found it difficult to settle into a good rhythm. This was especially noticeable when the front and back bells came together. The judges felt that the practice time of 3 minutes was probably insufficient.

Position	Faults	Branch
1st	38	Chew
2nd	53	Glaston
3rd	68	Frome
4th	71	Ilchester
5th	79	Taunton
6th	125	Bath



District Ringing Master Rebecca Cox receiving the competition cup from the Guild Master, the Rev Guy Scott

As 5 of the team are Backwell ringers, the cup will be held in Backwell ringing room for the next 12 months.



Once again we didn't get a photograph of the complete band, but this time there is only one missing.
In ringing order, from left to right:
1 Ally Grieveson, 2 Lionel Smith, 3 Elizabeth Smith, [4 Lester Yeo], 5 Glenn Taylor, 6 Tony Cox (C)
7 Rebecca Cox, 8 Bernard North

Forthcoming Branch Events

You will find a welcome at all Branch events. The regular Saturday Branch Practices cater for all levels of ringing ability, from rounds and call changes to surprise methods.

Saturday 18th October. 7.15pm
Quiz Night

Yatton Chapter House (adjoining the church)

Information has already been circulated to towers.

15th November. 3.00pm – 4.30pm
Branch AGM: **Congresbury;** BS49 5DQ
Church car park.
8 bells; tenor 34cwt. Toilet.

There will be a short business meeting following the ringing. We hear reports from the year just finishing and elect our officers for the next 12 months.

Please make a note of the date in your diary and plan to attend. There is usually tea and cake! There will also be a book stall.

20th December. 3.00pm – 4.30pm
Abbots Leigh; BS8 3QU. Parking on road.
6 bells; tenor 11½cwt.
Christmas jumpers welcome!

10–Bell Practice

7.30pm – 9.00pm

on 1st Saturday of month, alternating between
Wrington (36cwt) – November etc
and **Backwell** (17cwt) – December etc
(changes to programme are occasionally necessary)

Grandsire Caters to Surprise Royal
Those attending should be competent on 8 and looking to broaden their experience

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Surprise Major Practice

7.30pm – 9.00pm at Yatton
on 2nd Saturday of each month
from Cambridge to Spliced Surprise

Welcome

Two ringers were elected to Branch membership at the Branch Practice at Barrow Gurney on Saturday 20th September.

Michelle Hibberd
Rob Watson

both from St John's, Clevedon

Tower News

Clevedon, St John

On Saturday 13th September the ringers from St John's, Clevedon, set out in the sunshine for their "Sometimes we don't wander far from home" 2025 Ringers Outing .

The aim had been to ring at all the towers in Clevedon during the afternoon but unfortunately St Andrew's wasn't available. So 14 ringers met at 13:30 to start the activities at All Saints. We were mainly St John's ringers plus one from Tickenham, a visitor from Norfolk and our youngest son over from Wales for the afternoon. Our two youngest ringers, Edith and Poppy, were on their first ringing outing (as they are both pre-teens they bring our average age down very nicely!). A swift phone call located the person with access - mending their shed roof…never mind we didn't lose too much time. Rounds, call changes, and some Grandsire saw us off to a good, if noisy, start.

Then to a tower most of us know well, though I don't think our Tickenham ringer had rung at St John's before; he handled our light bells well for some Plain Bob Doubles. There were more light bells at St Mary's before heading off to Nailsea for our last tower. Three of our less experienced ringers rang their heaviest bells to-date here: well done to them! It's such a long time since I last rang there I'd forgotten how nice they are. As has become customary on our outing a 'ladies band' (who often produce some of the best striking of the day) was called for and they rang some call changes before we left for our final venue: the Old Farmhouse, where we were very well looked after for the rest of the evening.

We didn't ring any treble bob or surprise methods, in fact as I recall we only rang one touch of minor, but all present enjoyed the afternoon and gained in confidence by ringing in different towers, to the extent that one of our young ringers is now ringing 'solo' and has joined the Sunday service band.

Thank you to the towers we visited and to the people who gave up some of their Saturday afternoon to let us in and to lock up after us (and to be persuaded to ring with us too!).

Nick Dixon

Congresbury

A quarter peal of Grandsire Triples was rung at Congresbury on Saturday 30th August in celebration of local ringer John L Dunster's 90th birthday earlier in the month. John has been a stalwart of Congresbury ringing for the past 40 years.



From left to right: Teresa, Christine, Russell, Glenn, John Dunster, Peter, Lesley, Tobias, Lisa

1260 Grandsire Triples in 52 minutes
1 Lisa Parker, 2 Lesley Chandler, 3 Russell Toogood, 4 Teresa Humphrey, 5 Christine Hill, 6 Glenn Taylor, 7 Peter Hill (C), 8 Tobias Viney

(Apologies: this should have been in the September newsletter – my error! Editor)

Kingston Seymour

Although Kingston bells are sweet-toned, and they also go very well, the ropes are very wayward. This is because of the long distance without guidance below the ceiling of the ringing room. This has made it particularly difficult to teach our new recruits, hence the ringers have got the Parochial Church Council to agree that we need a rope guide to help with this and our normal ringing.

As a first step to financing it, the ringers organised an Open Day on Saturday 13th September, which many of the villagers and friends attended. We are grateful for their support, which, along with related donations, raised a total of £500 towards the overall cost of £3750.

Visitors had the opportunity to ascend the tower, see the bells, and get a view from the top. In addition, and for those not able to do that, there were displays showing the bells in action, historically annotated photographs of the individual bells, literature in use by bellringers, a computer simulator for teaching change-ringing, various damaged items, including an old clapper from the tenor bell, which surprised people who felt its weight, and even the chance to have a first lesson in handling a bell rope.

In addition, the famous Kingston Seymour cakes with tea or coffee gave everyone a chance to relax and chat, making it a real social occasion.

The bellringers are now looking for further ways to increase the funding so that it does not present a major burden to the church.

John Pilkington



The Kingston Seymour ringers

Publow

A quarter peal of Grandsire and Plain Bob Doubles was rung on Friday 19th September at All Saints Church, Publow, to remember and celebrate the life of our colleague and friend, Stephen Rogers, who sadly passed away 12 months ago. Steve was Tower Captain at Publow for 25 years, as well as supporting the ringers at Compton Dando.

Afterwards the band were treated to tea and cake, kindly provided by the family and friends of Steve, who came to listen to the ringing on the splendid heavy ring of six. This was also a special occasion for Olivia, who was taught by Steve to ring, as it was her first quarter peal.

Pete Rogers



The band, anticlockwise from front left: 1, Olivia Sweet, 2 Lorna Swan, 3 David Wilford, 4 Dawn Bond, 5 Andrew Ball (C), 6 Pete Rogers

Stanton Drew

Not a lot has changed since our last report. On 3rd October we had a band of Backwell ringers and friends to ring a quarter peal of Cambridge Surprise Minor. On 4th October a Team from Keynsham also rang a quarter peal.

St Mary the Virgin is one of the venues for this year's "Chew Valley Arts Trail" on 11th and 12th October. We will be ringing on the Saturday morning and providing Tower Tours if pre-booked. Coffee and cakes will also be available in the Church all weekend.

Despite the atrocious weather during the Stanton Drew Flower Show we did have quite a few visitors to the Tower. The camera/screen setup showing the bells went down well with the visitors as they were able to see a bell move when they pulled the rope (bells down of course).

We have been advised that the yew trees obscuring the tower / clock are to receive a haircut! This will make things much more visible.

We are still struggling for ringers as previously mentioned and now we have 2 ringers out of action with "back" issues. Hopefully they will be returning soon.

Shirley Edwards

Congratulations to . . .

Will Rogers on ringing his first quarter peal on 10 bells (tenor to Grandsire Caters; Berkeley; 20th Sept)

Olivia Sweet on ringing her first quarter peal (treble to 2 Doubles methods; Publow; 19th Sept)

Branch Bookstall

There will be a bookstall at the Branch AGM at Congresbury on Saturday 15th November. Selling a range of books published by the Central Council and the Ringing World, they will help you develop your ringing skills and progress in method ringing.



Some of the most popular include:

Ringing Circles (£5.75), giving a short, simple explanation of commonly rung methods with diagrams, including the *blue line* and circle of work.

The Little Green Ringing Book (A6 version £7.00; A5 £8.50). A guide for beginners explaining ringing terms and the basics of call changes and simple method ringing. It introduces a range of methods on 3, 4, 5 and 6 bells.

The Little Purple Ringing Book (A6 version £7.00; A5 £8.50). Progressing beyond basic ringing, this gives details of dozens of methods on 4 to 10 bells, with diagrams and explanations

The Voice of the Church (£7). An excellent book to give to your vicar. Written by ringing clergy, it explores the history and theology of ringing and its relationship with the Church of England.

Payment on the day by cash or bank transfer (account details available at the time).

Association Shirts

Bath & Wells shirts are available in a variety of colours, with a tower name added if required. Other items of clothing also available – sweatshirts, fleeces etc.
Delivery time around 2 weeks.



Contact Jan for further details
Jan Wyatt; 07779388114;
janwyatt@live.co.uk

Next Newsletter

You may have noticed that this is an additional newsletter. In September I announced that the next one would be in November, but we seemed to have sufficient news to make this extra edition worthwhile!

It is hoped to publish the next newsletter in early **December**, after the Branch AGM. But don't wait until then; please send your news, and accompanying photos, to the editor as soon as you have any.

Contact Details

Newsletter Editor: Elizabeth Smith
lizandlionel43@gmail.com

Branch Chairman: Glenn Taylor
ChewBranch.Chairman@bath-wells.org

Ringing Master: Rebecca Cox
ChewBranch.RingingMaster@bath-wells.org

Deputy Ringing Master: George Wyatt
ChewBranch.DepRingingMaster@bath-wells.org

Secretary: Lesley Chandler
ChewBranch.Secretary@bath-wells.org

Treasurer: Shirley Edwards
ChewBranch.Treasurer@bath-wells.org