



*G & B Diocesan Association of
Church Bell Ringers
Cheltenham Branch Newsletter
December 2003*



Change of venue

Please note that the Branch Surprise Practice on 6th December has been moved from Bishops Cleeve and is now at **Winchcombe**. It will start at **1930**.

AGM News

Jenni Scruton, Mike Clifford and Pat Hickey resigned from their positions this year, many thanks to them for all the work they have done for the Branch. Your new Branch Chairman is Bob Bennett, and your two new Ringing Masters are Philip Abbey and Janet Covey-Crump.

St Marks

Simon Ridley has been given the support of the Branch to start fundraising for an augmentation to 8 at St Marks. Watch this space for developments.

January 2004 Ringing dates

We hope to have the 2004 programme to you before January, but for reference, the next branch practice is on January 7th at Winchcombe, and the next surprise practice is on January 24th at Prestbury.

Regular methods

Cambridge & Yorkshire will be rung at all surprise major practices. Cambridge & London will be rung at all surprise minor practices (provided there is a suitably experienced band).

Special methods at Branch Practices will be Double Norwich on 8 bells and Oxford Treble Bob on 6 bells leading to 1/4 peals in October.

Gloucester & Bristol Association Quarter Peal and Peal Festival

Never a year passes without the Festival having its own unique character, and this year's had a decidedly homely and folksy feeling to it.

"When I look again at the ones we got," writes Fran Johnson of the Bristol Rural Branch, "they are all by their own Sunday bands - albeit with a little help. There are several firsts, and no overlapping of ringers, so even though it was basic ringing, I feel really pleased with the result."

Absolutely! And that sums up the feeling of all the Branches.

Of course, there was a smattering of the exotic and the eccentric too, with a record number of handbell quarters, while in the Tewkesbury Branch a band, all aged 17 or less, rang one of Grandsire Triples.

So with 13 first quarters, a handfull of peals, 4 first pealers, and a huge bucketfull of firsts of all sorts of other kinds, it was yet another magnificent Festival.

Splendid!

STEEVCOLEMAN

Cheltenham, St Mary's. 26 Oct, 1254 Grandsire Cinques: Catherine Leach 1, Elizabeth A. Coke 2, Margery Wratten 3, Elizabeth Evans 4, Isabel Hitchings (c) 5, Sue Henderson 6, Bob Bennett 7, Mary Lynch 8, Hugh Evans 9, David Lynch 10, Tony Cox 11, Mark Davies 12. First Cinques 6. For Evensong.

Cheltenham, Warden Hill. 26 Oct, 1260 Plain Bob Doubles: Roy McBane 1, Isabel Hitchings 2, Reg Hitchings 3, Sue Henderson (C) 4, John Irving 5, Jane Williams 6. First on the treble. For Evensong. £1

Prestbury. 21 Oct, 1260 PB Minor: Owen Barraclough 1, Joan Barraclough 2, Janet Covey-Crump 3, Sarah Collacott 4, Peter Covey-Crump (C) 5, David Lyle 6

Cranham. 23 Oct, 1260 PB Minor: Janet Covey-Crump 1, Heather Cox 2, Owen Barraclough 3, Joan Barraclough 4, Peter Covey-Crump (C) 5, Tony Cox 6. First together inside to Minor - 3 and 4. 50th QP as Conductor.

Elkstone. 26 Oct, 1260 PB Doubles: Rosemary Hester 1, Owen Barraclough 2, Janet Covey-Crump 3, Peter Covey-Crump (C) 4, Jonathan Sweetman 5, Joan Barraclough 6.

Cheltenham, St Mary. 25 Oct, 1344 Bristol Max: Simon Webb 1, Mark Davies (C) 2, Catherine Leach 3, Claire Redstone 4, Andrew Wood 5, Liz Coke 6, Sarah Morgan 7, Carole Hurst 8, Conrad Warford 9, Roy Williams 10, Chris Phillips 11, Philip Abbey 12. £2.40

Cheltenham, Warden Hill. 21 Oct, 1260 Grandsire and Plain Bob Doubles: Jeremy Hitchings 1, Reg Hitchings 2, Isabel Hitchings (C) 3, Margery Wratten 4, Sue Henderson 5, Nathaniel Hitchings 6. 10th Birthday compliment and first on the treble 1. £1

Charlton Kings, 29A Sandy Lane. 20 Oct, 1296 Stedman Caters: Mark B Davies 1-2, Cara A L Davies 3-4, Ray J Talbot 5-6, John R Ridley 7-8, Philip A Abbey (C) 9-10.

Cheltenham, Warden Hill. 19 Oct, 1260 Plain Bob Minor: Reg Hitchings 1, John Irving 2, Bob Bennett 3, Ben Gooch 4, Nathaniel Hitchings 5, Isabel Hitchings (c) 6. For Evensong. 1st Minor 5, Circled the tower 6, 1st Minor on the Bells. £1.20

Cheltenham, 61 Galileo Gardens. 18 Oct, 1280 Plain Bob Major: Julia A Lysaght 1-2, Philip A Abbey 3-4, Mark B Davies (C) 5-6, Catherine M Leach 7-8. First quarter peal in-hand for 1-2.

Swindon Village, 24 Oct, 1320 London S Minor: Catherine Leach 1, Hugh N Evans 2, Elizabeth Evans 3, Jo Elvey 4, Philip Abbey 5, Mark B Davies (C) 6. First in method 3&4.

The three following peals were also rung, but sent to the RW separately.

Mary Cheltenham 18 Oct, 5040 Yorkshire S Royal. First of Surprise Royal for David & Mary Lynch

St Mary De Crypt Gloucester 19 Oct, 5152 12-Spliced S Major Most Spliced: Julia Lysaght

St Mary Charlton Kings 21 Oct, 5088 3-Spliced S Major First of Spliced: David Greenaway, and rung by a past and present Sunday service band.

Wedding Anniversary Quarter Peal

Four members of the Branch (or two married couples I should say) will be celebrating their 30th Wedding Anniversaries next year. They are planning to ring a celebration quarter peal but need two to four more ringers who will also be celebrating 30 years next year. Could anyone who falls into this category please contact the secretary in the first instance. If there are no takers, then the parties involved may widen the entry criteria.

Learning Methods

Blue Lines

When you first rang Plain Bob, you probably learned the *order of work*: 2nds, 4-3 down, 6-5 down etc. Because the rest of Plain Bob is just plain hunting, there isn't much else to learn.

Some methods can be learnt entirely by what the treble is doing. For example, in Little Bob you always dodge in 5-6 position, up and down (or higher places e.g. and 7-8 and 9-10 depending on the number of bells), but you only dodge in 3-4 when the treble is leading. Since the treble only plain hunts to 4ths place and back, if you meet the treble in 3-4, you must not dodge with it.

Other examples are Kent and Oxford, where you dodge in all places except 1-2. If you are in 3-4 and the treble is below you, you 'make places', but if you meet the treble in 1-2, you dodge 1-2 and then do the front work (lead, 2nds etc until you meet and dodge with the treble again).

More complicated methods are different, and you'll have to learn the *blue line*, that is, the entire wiggly line that one bell takes through the plain course of the method, with all the dodges and places along it.

Making the transition from learning a method by a rule, like Plain Bob, to learning an entire blue line, can be difficult. These notes will try and help.

- **Place bells.** You should (almost) always learn a method by its place bells. This helps you learn the line because you've broken up the whole course into smaller, manageable chunks. As a bonus, it also tells you where each bell starts, and enables you to ring it in spliced! You can also put yourself right when someone else says 'lead end now' if you know what place bell you are about to become.
- **Building blocks.** It helps enormously if you can give names to "chunks" of work, such as "Treble-bob at the back", "Cambridge places in 3-4" or even just "three-pull dodge down". Many methods share similar pieces of work, and you'll save much arduous learning time if you can recognise them. (There is not space to provide graphic examples here but ask a knowledgeable person what a 'fish tail' or 'Yorkshire places' looks like.)
- **Symmetry.** Most methods are symmetrical – that is, the second half of the blue line is identical to the first half, just reflected vertically. Knowing this can help you learn the second half of the line. If you learn by place bells, they come in pairs, with one place bell being the reflection of the other. There is usually an "odd" place bell called the "pivot bell", which is its own reflection.

- **Practice.** Learning methods can be painful! But, the more you do it, and the more methods you know already, the easier it becomes. Practised ringers can look at the blue line for a complex Surprise Major method and learn it completely in about a minute. Ringers develop good memories, and good learning techniques!

- **Ringling Methods Reliably**

It's all very well learning the line, but how do you actually ring it in the tower for the first time without going wrong?

- **Practice at home.** Write the blue line out on a piece of paper – over and over again. Recite your place bells to a friendly ringer! Better still; use a computer program like Abel to practise with. It is essential to pay attention to detail and get every blow of the course correct with no guessing or hesitation.

- **Develop your spatial awareness.** The more you know about what's going on in the ringing around you, the easier it is to stay on the line. This means developing your rope sight and/or listening skills so that you can see beyond just your own bell. For instance, if you can pick out where the treble is this will help you a lot. Being able to see how other bells work with you also helps you stay on the line.

- **Learn more about the method.** The more you can learn about the method and its structure, the easier it will be to ring. For instance, learn where you pass the treble and what work you do afterwards. For dodges, places and points learn which blows are at handstroke and which at back. Learn what happens when the treble leads and lies – in most methods with 2nd's place made at the lead end, everyone else dodges. Learn what happens when the treble is not leading – for instance in St Clements you must do a triple-dodge on the front.

MBD 2003

Augmented by PAA Nov 2003

Any items for the newsletter will be welcomed. Please forward them to the Secretary.

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