



Editor's Foreword – *Andy Clark*

Thank you for the contributions to this second edition of the quarterly branch newsletter. With the passing of Queen Elizabeth II on 8th September, it has been a busy couple of months for many ringers, and our Chairman Richard Knight has provided a summary of the ringing that took place in the branch on or around the day of the funeral.

Elsewhere, we have plenty to report on, both on tower bells and on the mini-rings – with Reg's portable mini-ring taking a recent trip to Nottingham. We also remember Tim Edmonds, father of Simon Edmonds who rings at St Mark's. Cara continues to keep up her sterling work in organising workshops for us and I hope you'll enjoy reading her report of the three recent training sessions.

If you've got an idea for an upcoming article, I'd love to hear it, so please email me direct at c72ad@aol.com, or via Barbara.

Finally, please see the table below for some key upcoming dates. Please keep checking the branch website in case some of these details change closer to the time.

Date	Location	Time	Notes
Saturday 19 th November	Swindon Village	15:30	Branch ringing, tea & AMG
Tuesday 13 th December	Charlton Kings	19:30	8-bell practice

Ringling to honour Queen Elizabeth – *Richard Knight*

The death of the Queen was unexpectedly sudden with some branch officers on holiday abroad. I would therefore like to thank Reg Hitchings for prompting us all to put on what turned out to be a really good display of ringing throughout the branch over the period of mourning and in particular on the day of the funeral. There are 23 towers within the branch and according to the information available to me as I write there was ringing at all but one of them (Elmstone Hardwicke are unringable). It would be wrong to list who rang and what was rung - although the Editor has put a couple of performances (there were quite a few) in print alongside this article. The important thing was that many ringers took part, some coming out of partial or full retirement - the youngest probably 12 and the oldest 85.

One performance does stand out - the three intrepid souls who managed to make Sevenhampton (3) ringable (just) and then decided to ring a peal on them.....I will not say more. Quentin will be writing us an article about this peal for our next newsletter.

Thanks are also due to Barbara Pettit for taking Reg's initiative and running with it. The spirit of co-operation was special and something that I would hope can be used again - which brings me to the real point of this article.

The date of the coronation has now been announced as Saturday 6th May 2023. In 1952-3 it took about 16 months to organise the event. Ideally I would like to surpass our recent achievement and perhaps aim to ring a quarter peal in each ringable tower within the branch to celebrate the event.

Thank you to everyone who has taken part so far and, hopefully, will wish to continue in this new age.



Best wishes and thank you. Please see the panel below for two performances of Grandsire - Caters at the Minster and Triples at St Mark's. The editor will upload these to the Cheltenham Branch Facebook page, or if you're not part of that group, feel free to email the editor to get the recordings direct.

<p>Cheltenham, Gloucestershire Minster Church of St Mary Sunday, 11 September 2022 in 54m (21-2-1 in Eb) 1296 Grandsire Caters Composed by Richard I Allton</p> <p>1 Isabel Hitchings 2 Chris Hickey 3 Cara Capewell 4 Mike Hartley 5 Pat Hickey 6 Mike Seagrave 7 Reg Hitchings (C) 8 Hilda Ridley 9 Andrew V Brown 10 Tony Natt</p> <p>Rung fully muffled with the Tenor open at Backstroke, in memory of HM Queen Elizabeth II who died on 8th September aged 96. Also in memory of Eileen Green, Reg's Auntie, who died this morning aged 97.</p>	<p>Cheltenham, Gloucestershire St Mark Monday, 19 September 2022 in 3h 9 (16-1-2 in F) 5040 Grandsire Triples Joseph J Parker (12-part, 7 obs)</p> <p>1 Hilda C Ridley 2 Mark Edwards 3 Michael J Seagrave 4 Richard H Knight 5 Quentin S A Jackson 6 Roman E Sadowski 7 Simon W Edwards (C) 8 Simon J Ridley</p> <p>Rung half-muffled following the state funeral of Her Late Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II. May she rest in peace and rise in glory. Following the peal, the tenor was tolled 96 times by Simon J Ridley.</p>
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Branch Notices – *Barbara Pettit*

There's more change at the top of the G&B with some resignations upcoming. The situation is:

- Chairman: Roger Haynes - willing to stand.
- Secretary: Fiona Hartley - willing to stand again for another year if no other nominations.
- Treasurer: nominations needed, as Philip Twentyman has decided that he wants to hand over the 'baton'!
- Peal Secretary: Simon Edwards - willing to stand.
- Ringing Master: nominations needed, as Tom Edgeworth has requested not to stand again.

A new Treasurer and a new Ringing Master will need to be found and the Secretary is happy to hand over the reins if someone else comes forward. If you have a great desire to fill one of these three posts, please do get in touch with anyone on our Branch Committee and we will put your name forward for nomination after our AGM on 19th November. For Officer duties please refer to the Rules in the Annual Report on Pages 64 and 65.



Branch Workshops – *Cara Capewell*

And so on to the next batch of Saturday training mornings. Neatly avoiding the August holiday season we headed straight into the September Sessions.

The first session was at the Minster, with an embarrassment of helpers and me as lead - and with the bells fully muffled for the death of her Majesty the Queen just two days before. Originally oversubscribed at seven students, two were unable to attend on the day. We had some good handling practice, had everyone on the treble in rounds for leading, a quick theory session on Plain Hunt, and then some static hunting, which I'd read about and had been itching to try out on someone.

Static hunting is where one bell plain hunts and all the others stay where they are apart from when they have to move aside for the hunt bell. If you make the hunt bell the treble, it has the advantage of being over the same bell as the place it is in - i.e. it's in 2nd place over the 2, 3rd place over the 3, etc. It can therefore be used as a stepping-stone towards Plain Hunt. It turns out to be quite tricky for the helpers as they have to know when the hunt bell is coming to them and it's quite easy to get it wrong! I have tried being a helper for this since, and found it helps me to count the hunt bell's places to myself, so if I'm the third I know I should be over the treble when I'm saying "2nd place"! It definitely pointed out to the students the calm and control they have to gain in order to Plain Hunt. It also made me see that I need to get more flexible as a teacher, as one student struggled with the quickness of it all, and as she pointed out I could have slowed things down for her by starting with whole-pull hunting.

I initially tried to avoid the 3rd Saturday of the month as I knew various usual suspects would be tied up in one of Mark Davies' regular Minster quarters, but somehow ended up booking Badgeworth on the 17th... Then procrastination and a lack of energy to write more than one email a day slowed me down, and by mid-August I was beginning to panic as I had no leader and very few helpers. I tried Pat Halls again, but she was off to Wales with her daughter from Australia. I tried Cath Jack in case she was pining away with her broken arm (she wasn't!). Thankfully, Barbara was able and willing to step into the breach, with not many helpers and four students.

This session was marred by an unfortunate shouting episode early on, which left one student upset enough to be unable to continue (I hasten to add it was not a student being shouted at). The shouter has since apologised to all concerned, and I do hope nothing of the sort happens again! Barbara concentrated on raising and lowering, with some rounds and call changes and place making, whole pull and stand and setting at backstroke.

The final session was at Tewkesbury Abbey again, and beautifully organised by lead Becca Meyer. Becca fielded her own helpers, which was marvellous for me (I briefly considered making all subsequent leads do the same!). Again initially over-subscribed, but with two sadly unable to make it on the day it meant more rope-time for the remaining five students - in fact each learner was ringing almost 100% of the time. Students were each assigned a one-to-one tutor to work with, with lots of focus on handling, and among other things raising and lowering and call changes were worked on. Afterwards, everyone was invited to a local mini-ring, David Bagley's "The Shed", which was a nice extra.

I'd like to thank leads Barbara and Becca, and all our helpers, without whom these sessions could not take place. If I've not asked you to help, and you are feeling left out, do let me know!



I'm planning a November batch concentrating on Treble-Bobbing. I already have seven potential recruits, but if you are at that stage and are needing a boost, please let me know. I should be contactable at deputyringingmaster@cheltenhambranch.org.uk.

I will of course be needing some stellar helpers for this...

Remembering Tim Edmonds (1944 – 2022) – *Simon Edmonds*

Tim was born in Tetbury, Gloucestershire in 1944. The eldest of three sons, he attended Sir William Romney's School and was a keen sportsman, representing the school in running, athletics, football and cricket. It was whilst at a school that he and a group of friends from Tetbury, including his brother John, decided to learn to ring the local bells.

The group are shown in the photograph below with their Tower Captain, Bill Lock, photographed outside St Mary's Church, Tetbury c. 1960. [Front Row (L-R): Bill Phillips, Bill Lock, John Edmonds; Back Row: Tim Edmonds, Wally Waters, Don Pride, Martin Smith, Mike Tanner]



Tim continued to ring with this group in Tetbury throughout his teenage years, whilst working at the Cattle Market in Gloucester and living in Stroud. In his twenties, Tim relocated through Devon and Dorset before finally settling in Somerset. When living in Somerset, Tim joined the ringing band at St John's Church in Yeovil.

Surprise Royal and Hiatus

Ringling in Yeovil, Tim's ringling progressed from the Grandsire Doubles of his youth up to Stedman Caters and Bristol Royal. Whilst ringling at St John's, Tim was pleased to support the teaching of new learners at his tower and ringling at many other towers in the wider area.



After some 35 years of regular ringing a brief hiatus of some 20 years was taken. Tim thought his bell ringing days were behind him, until his son, Simon, took up the activity at St Mark's, Cheltenham in 2018. This piqued Tim's jealousy and it wasn't long until he was timing his visits to coincide with Sunday ringing so he could have a sneaky ring. This spurred him on and he started supporting his local towers again ringing for weddings and services in Yeovil, Hardington, West Coker and Montacute over the last few years, before illness stopped him earlier this year.

A last request



In the last few weeks of Tim's life, thoughts turned - as they do - towards his final send off. Tim only had two requests for his funeral: a specific poem (Death is Nothing At All by Henry Scott-Holland) and that the bells rang out to greet people, specifically Grandsire Doubles, the sound of his youth. His funeral was to be at Yeovil Crematorium, so he charged his son, Simon, with sourcing a recording suitable for use.

Simon spoke to his tower captain at St Mark's, Simon Ridley, who sprang into action.

The ringing of the Bells

Simon Ridley quickly booked the bells at Didbrook and organised a "crack band" (as Tim would have said) to take the best recording they could for the occasion. The recording was fantastic and drew many warm and positive comments after the funeral. Thank you to all involved.

Andy Clark writes: I was very pleased to be asked to join the band for a recording of Grandsire Doubles at Didbrook. Recently rehung (and with an article on the rehang to follow in the Q4 newsletter), the anti-clockwise ring of five bells is lovely. We rang a total of three 360s of Grandsire Doubles, and each time we rang it, the striking improved. Therefore, in total, we very nearly rang a quarter peal! I was pleased to read that this ringing was very well received at the funeral, and thanks to Simon Ridley for putting in place the arrangements.

Movement for Goods Awards – Becca Meyer

Ecclesiastical Insurance insure many of the churches we ring at each week. They are a company made unique by their charitable ownership - Ecclesiastical is owned by the Benefact Group, which gives all its profits to the Benefact Trust (formerly Allchurches Trust). Ecclesiastical prides itself with being the fourth biggest corporate donor in the UK, having given over £150 million to charity in the last five years, and has set a target of giving over £250 million in the next five. Benefact Trust's General Grants Programme supports projects that demonstrate an impact on people and communities, including churches, cathedrals, denominational bodies, Christian charities, and schools and educational institutions.

For the fourth year running, Ecclesiastical and Benefact are giving away over £1 million to charities through their Movement for Good Awards. 1,500 charities have already benefited from the awards this year. A further 120 £1,000 grants will be given away in December and £500,000 will also be given in larger grants later this year. Anyone can nominate a charity to receive a donation - the more times a charity is nominated, the more chance it has of being selected, so share far and wide, and encourage everyone to get nominating! Please visit <https://movementforgood.com/ecclesiastical> and nominate a charity today.



A Pleasant Afternoon of Cars & Bells – *Andy Clark*

The Stanway Sunday Service Band was asked to ring the bells on Saturday 17th September for a Classic & Vintage Car Show at the adjacent Stanway House. It was a glorious autumn afternoon, with barely a cloud in the sky for much of the time.

We rang the five bells for two slots – between 2 & 2.30, then again between 3 & 3.30. This gave the band, and our resident mascot, Kinsey the dog, time to enjoy the cars and also to see the fountain in action (I've only ever seen it in the distance before). Ringing ranged from rounds and call changes, through to Stedman Doubles. We also rang some Double Court Minimus with a tenor behind, which required lots of concentration given the six blows on the front and on the back!

The photograph shows the fountain, which is gravity fed, and well worth a visit. The other photograph shows an immaculate Rolls Royce Silver Shadow. Three cars back from this Rolls Royce was an American Buick with a 7.5 litre, V8 engine. I heard the owner discussing this car with a group of interested observers. He explained that it should do 8 miles per gallon (mpg) but drive it carefully and it will do at least 10mpg! This is clearly not a car for the modern era and today's petrol price!

We received lots of positive feedback on the day and also via a follow-up card from the organising committee. If you wish to ring at Stanway, I am sure Simon Ridley, who organises the ringing, will be very happy to add you to the mailing list. Ringing there is once a month, with the same frequency, but on a different Sunday, at nearby Didbrook.





Visit to the 2022 Central Council of Church Bell Ringers' Ringing Road show at Nottingham – Reg Hitchings

The story began in January 2022 when we received a telephone call from Simon Edwards of Swindon asking if, following our successful visit to Yorkshire Grand Day out, we would be prepared to take our mobile mini-ring to the CCCBR Road show in Nottingham. We thought about it a bit and then decided that as it's a significant development in ringing, it would be worth showing it off to the main ringing world.

We then watched with interest the progress of the event, perhaps expecting it to be better advertised and promoted, which clearly it wasn't. Even though we had confirmed our attendance in May we never appeared on the promotional website. Was this really going to happen? There seemed some concern but having submitted information on the ring and completed the required Risk assessment we got ready to go on Saturday 3rd September.

At 8:30 on the Sunday morning (4th September) we arrived at the venue - Nottingham Trent University campus, south of the city. We unloaded at the appropriate point and wheeled the complete assembly to the main reception desk. The on-site organisers were unaware of any mini-rings attending, so allowed us to find our own pitch. We were outside - luckily it didn't rain - with the few commercial companies attending located inside. Unfortunately, compared with previous Roadshows it was poorly supported both by the trade and attendees.



We had a large number of visitors (106) throughout the day, many intrigued by the concept and arrangement of bells at ground floor level. Most coped well with lots of rounds but we also managed some method ringing including Plain Bob Minor.

The photographs show the mini-ring fitting neatly in the car (above left); Isabel located alongside the ring (above right) and a band of ringers enjoying their experience (overleaf).



We did manage to ring at three new rings - Stallpits, Mobile 2, and Trevor Arnold's Maypole bells (dumb bells). Our thoughts were that it need better organising and advertising as most people were CC reps, although with that said, the Young Ringers Association did have a big presence and I understand the talks organised during the day were well-attended.

Risk Management in the tower – *Becca Meyer*

To most church members, bells tend to be out of sight and mind. Because of this, maintenance of both the bells and the skills of ringing may not always be at the top of the PCC meeting agenda. To avoid loss of skills and the bells falling short in maintenance, churches are encouraged to maintain a good relationship with the ringers, to encourage ringing by supporting local and national events, and to include bell ringing in funding and fundraising efforts.

In return, bellringers themselves are advised to increase their visibility in the church at a local level, by working closely with the church and potentially even being represented on the PCC. Ringers are advised to develop working relationships with church officers to ensure an open, two-way channel of communication. Having the church on board with the ringing gives support in times of conflict or complaint and makes it easier for both parties to negotiate times for ringing - be that visiting peal bands, or inconvenient midweek baptism service ringing requests!

It is also important to review working practices regularly, to enable you to introduce suitable measurements to manage any hazards identified.

Thoughts for next practice night:

When was the ringing room heater/vacuum cleaner/fan/laptop charging cable last PAT tested? This should be done as part of the church's periodic PAT testing programme. The church officers may not even be aware that you have portable electrical appliances in the ringing room.

When did you last check over the bells? A regular visual inspection of ropes, stays, etc, can reduce the likelihood of anything going wrong with the installation whilst the bells are being rung by giving advance warning of any developing issues, and can offer peace of mind to ringers and clergy alike. Checks should



always be done by a competent person and there should be more than one person present at all times. Risk assessments should be done to identify and manage risks. Many bell hangers offer a professional maintenance service. It is important to liaise with the PCC before undertaking any major works so that everyone is clear about what, how and when work is being done.

When did you last review the precautions you take when leaving the bells up? Sometimes it is convenient to leave the bells up overnight, for example when there is service ringing the morning after a wedding. It is important to ensure that suitable precautions are in place to protect injury to people when this is the case - is the rope spider secured? Are the bells themselves inaccessible, i.e. behind a locked door? Are there notices up warning ringers and others that the bells are set up and are potentially dangerous?

When did you last visually inspect the tower for slip and trip hazards? You should work in liaison with the PCC to manage the risk of slips and trips. Are all the steps safe and sturdy? Is the handrail properly attached? Is the staircase well lit, or do some of the bulbs need changing? Are all your boxes in good health, or do some of them need some attention? Are low doorways marked with hazard tape or protected with padding? Do you have any trailing cables in the ringing room, and is there any way these can be secured down or run around the edge of the room? If you ever visit the church roof, for example when undertaking tower tours, is the parapet or railing secure? Note that tower tours should always be raised with the church insurer prior to the event.

When did you last invite the Vicar or Churchwardens to join you on a practice night? You might be surprised how much or little they know about ringing, and they might be surprised by what really goes on up there! Nurture this important relationship.

Further Guidance

Ecclesiastical Insurance's guidance on bell ringing can be found at the following links and is as relevant to ringers as it is to the church officers:

- <https://ecclesiastical.com/documents/bell-ringing-guidance.pdf>
- <https://ecclesiastical.com/documents/bell-ringing.pdf>
- <https://www.ecclesiastical.com/documents/church-tower-tours.pdf>

Note

Please note that this is not formal insurance guidance. Details of insurance cover for ringers will be dependent on the specific policy cover in place, and any concerns or queries should be directed towards your PCC.