Ringing Round Leicestershire

Newsletter of the Leicester Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers

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Welcome to the November 2026 issue of the Guild Newsletter

I delayed the publication by a month, so that I could include a report about the Guild's 80th anniversary Firsts in October, which has been a huge success. It has been suggested that we continue to mark people's firsts, especially those that are in the steps before people achieve their first quarter peal. I have included these in the past as they have turned up on bellboard, particularly when ringing for special occasions, but I rely on you to either put them on bellboard, or to send me a note that I can include in the newsletter. Let's keep on marking these small wins!

We also have a very important article about the upcoming Ringing Census. In our changing world, it is important for those supporting ringing on a wider scale to know how to help, what sort of support towers and individuals need for ringing to continue and thrive. This census is being organised by the Central Council, and will not only give them the information, but will allow the Guild to know how to continue helping you the grass roots ringers. Please read the article and fill in a census return, and encourage others in your tower to do the same - whether you go out ringing every night, or rarely ring.

Rebecca Banner
newsletter@leicesterdg.org.uk

President's Message

Welcome to the last newsletter of 2026 and as the year draws to a close so does my term as President. It has been an interesting three years which has presented both challenges and opportunities but as we move on to 2027 it feels that the Guild is continuing to develop and respond to an ever-changing environment.

My LDG@80 initiative is also ending – I am happy to report that this has been successful in almost all of its aims:

District Secretaries and President have been moved off Personal PC's and email and onto an LDG controlled Google mail and tool suite which has done much to improve our GDPR compliance;

Membership and distribution lists have been reviewed and 'cleaned up';

The Syston District (which had not had a committee for over a decade) has been dissolved and our members and towers re-assigned to other Districts;

Our 80th Anniversary Ceilidh in June was a great success;

The 'Firsts Month' in October attracted such a wide range of performances from 'first rounds on 6' to 'Cambridge maximus' and has over 90 bellboard entries;

Our '80th Anniversary' merchandise was a very successful.

Many thanks to all the Guild Trustees and Officers who have helped me with this initiative and who work so hard to keep the Guild running. Thanks also to our members for their enthusiastic support and attendance at events.

I believe the Guild is in a strong position now with most of the Officer and Committee positions filled. As with all organisations, however, we always require and welcome new volunteers when the existing ones move on. If there is vacancy in your District Committee or a Guild position that you feel you could help with, please come forward to keep the Guild going and the bells of England ringing into the future.

Good luck to Jez Bowman who is taking over as President from me from 1 Jan 2027 and I hope you all have a great Christmas season and enjoy all the bell ringing that comes with it.

Peter Brown
LDG President.

Nominate Someone for an ART Award

Do you know someone who's making a difference and making things happen? Then don't be shy. Say thank-you by nominating them for an award, and if they win, they'll receive a substantial cash prize to spend on a ringing related activity or product.

It doesn't matter if they are an ART Member or have never even heard of ART, anyone can apply, anyone can be nominated and anyone can win. If you already have someone in mind, then fly over to: https://bellringing.org/art-awards/and download an application form. You have until 31 December 2026 to get your nomination in, so now is the right time to start collecting quotes, photos, statistics and testimonials, to show just how good your ringing hero is.

The Sarah Beacham Youth Award

Prize of £800 – sponsored by the Sarah Beacham Memorial Trust

An award for youth, school groups, and university societies who are successfully recruiting, retaining and developing young ringers. What's the ethos of the youth group, how are young ringers developed, and how is the transition from the group managed?

The Len Roberts Award for the Promotion of Ringing

Prize of £300 – sponsored by Len Roberts

For the person making a significant contribution to the promotion of ringing to the non-ringing community. What was done, what was the impact, and what were the benefits for ringing, ringers, and the local community? Was it targeted at specific groups, e.g. schools, scouts and guides, or local interest groups?

The ART Award for Band or Cluster of the Year

Prize of £400 – sponsored by John Taylor & Co.

An award open to any tower or cluster of towers that is focussed on improving ringing standards and developing the sustainability of ringing. Ringing level is unimportant − this award is equally open to those who ring call changes to those who ring Surprise Maximus. What is important is the band's commitment, drive and delivery. The judges are looking for bands who have delivered and grown over a period of years.

The ART Award for Excellence in Recruitment and Retention

Prize of £500 – sponsored by AbelSim

For an individual, tower or ringing cluster that has been successful in recruiting and retaining ringers. What's worked well, what's new and what lessons can be shared with the wider ringing community?

The ART Award for Inspiring Leadership in Ringing

Prize of £400 – sponsored by Talent Innovations

For those who have a long-term vision for their bell ringing community and give imaginative and inspiring leadership. What barriers and challenges have been overcome and what has made them successful? This award is looking for nominations of individual leader(s), even though they might well be working as part of a team.

Alan Jacques Award Winner – Jez Bowman

The Alan Jacques award was presented at the Guild AGM at Ratby on 31st October. The nominations for the award were:

Joseph Blake, Jez Bowman, Sarah Freer, Maurice Kirk, Cathy McNally

And it was presented to Jez Bowman

Jez's response to winning the award:

I was humbled to be awarded the Alan Jacques Award. Alongside my own nomination were four other nominees who have poured enthusiasm and effort into bellringing. Not the kind of bellringing where they are on the end of a rope (which we all love to be!), but the kind which works quietly in the background to plan, teach, encourage, guide and demystify our wonderful ancient art to those that want to learn, develop and progress. I know that alongside those four amazing, hardworking humans, there are many more across our guild that do those things with aplomb week in and week out.

That's why receiving the award was humbling. I'm incredibly grateful to receive it and want to thank my nominator and the judging panel for their support. It's wonderful that the family of Alan Jacques come to the AGM to present the trophy. I can only imagine what a character Alan must have been in this ringing community to remain so fondly remembered and respected after fifteen years. The award criteria is that the winner should be someone who "does their best and enjoys the ringing". I can wholeheartedly say that I strive to do both of these things!

The point I wanted to make, and it's a great time to make it, was that I've only been ringing for three years and I've been a member of this guild for slightly less time. Guilds and associations where people have been involved for many years are often difficult for newcomers; often initially welcoming but full of unintended cliques! This guild is far from that; beyond the initial welcome I've found genuine friendships, care and encouragement that in other spheres would take years to foster. Part of that inclusive welcome is the very nature of bellringers everywhere but this guild is littered with special people who create an environment where that welcome and engagement is supercharged.

The result? I've felt supported and valued in stepping into the role of chairing the education and recruitment committee, getting involved in the annual ringing course and helping, in my own small part, shape what the guild is and does. I've felt supported to teach new starters and to start practices up in towers which didn't have one. These are all things which have contributed to winning this award.

So, for that reason, the final thanks have to go to each and every one of you - whatever your role in the guild, president to member. If you hadn't been so inclusive, welcoming and encouraging then I couldn't have achieved the things that I have in such a short space of time.

We should all be rightly proud of this guild, what it seeks to achieve, how thriving it is today and what a bright future it has for tomorrow.



Every Ringer, and Every Tower Counts to take part in Census Week

From 16 to 22 November 2026, bellringers across the country are invited to take part in Census Week and help build a picture of ringing today. Whether you ring every week, join in occasionally, or are just beginning your ringing journey, your experience is part of the story.



Every Ringer

Every ringer who can ring a bell independently is invited to take part in the Ringing Census, whatever their age, experience or location. Whether you ring regularly, from time to time, or are still relatively new to ringing, your response will help. Taking part is voluntary, and you don't need to belong to an Association or Guild.

During Census Week, towers are encouraged to record the ringing that takes place and invite ringers to share their own experiences. The Individual and Tower Census questionnaires will be open from 23 November to 6 December, giving everyone time to submit their responses after the week itself.

Please complete the individual questionnaire and help make sure that a tower questionnaire is completed for your tower. The two questionnaires provide different perspectives: your individual response tells us about your ringing, while the tower response helps record what happened locally during Census Week.

Taking part is voluntary, but every response helps create a fuller and more accurate picture of ringing across the country. The information gathered will help us understand the people and towers that make up our ringing community and support the future development of ringing.

Every Tower

Your help can make it easier for every ringer in your band to hear about the Census and take part.

Before Census Week

• Tell your band about the Census. Share the dates, 16–22 November 2026, and the link to the CCCBR Census page.

2026 Ringing Census Printable PosterDownload

• Encourage every ringer to take part, whatever their age, and whether they ring regularly or occasionally.

• Make the information easy to find. Share it by email or your usual messaging group, and display the overview in the tower.

2026 Ringing Census - OverviewDownload

• Check who will be the tower contact for any Census correspondence, and make sure their contact details are up to date.

During Census Week

• Remind ringers to complete the online questionnaire about their ringing activity during the census week, once the survey is open.

• Encourage everyone to respond individually, even if they have already heard about the Census from their Association, Guild or another tower.

After Census Week

• If your tower is contacted by an Enumerator, please respond to their message and complete the Tower Headcount Survey.

• If you are unsure what to provide or need help, ask the Enumerator for support.

• If your tower cannot provide a return, let the Enumerator know. Recording this helps the Census team understand the status of towers in the target sample.

• The Individual and Tower Census questionnaires will be open from 23 November to 6 December, so you can report on what happened during Census Week.

You do not need to complete the Census during Census Week itself. The links to complete the Individual and Tower Censuses will be made available towards the end of Census Week and will remain available into the following week, so that you can report accurately on what happened between 16 and 22 November.

Enumerators will be assigned a group of towers from the Census target sample and will carry out most of their follow-up after Census Week. This sample is part of the Census method; it does not limit which ringers can complete the individual questionnaire.

Find out more at https://cccbr.org.uk/census/

80th Anniversary Celebrated in 96 Performances

October's Firsts month, celebrating the Guild's 80th anniversary, has been a great success. People have worked hard, had fun, tried something they never thought they'd do, and above all, achieved a whole range of firsts. We've had the whole gamut of ringing experience, from several ringers achieving their first rounds, up to a first quarter of maximus for a couple of ringers. We've had first ringing a ships bell, followed by first on the North Sea (on a ship I add!); first handbell gestures at a Rugby match; first wedding ringing; first ringing for a Sunday service; a few first ever ringing of a method or variation on tower bells; and quite a few notes of first quarter on that bell! Oh, and the clocks changing towards the end of the month meant it was also possible to ring in two different time zones, whilst still staying where you are - a first for the whole band.

There are 96 performances listed on Bellboard (https://bb.ringingworld.co.uk/event.php?id=24173) but these represent more than 96 firsts, as many of the events have included more than one achievement. I invited a selection of people to write about their experiences:

My October First – Ringing a Ton Tenor!

What a great initiative from the guild to celebrate 80 years, record a first in ringing.

As was the objective ‘Ring something for the first time’, It didn’t need to be a quarter or full peal, or conducting a complex method, just something you’ve not done before, simple!

Well, I’d proudly managed to ring for a wedding, at St. Peters Whetstone; and Plain Hunt on 6 from the Treble, again at St. Peters (this one being thanks to John Cook and the earlier ringing course I’d attended) but, one that I will remember for a long, long time is ringing a ton tenor.

The majority of ringers I know fall into two categories. The first being very happy to ring a tenor irrespective of its weight or those that master the skill of allowing those in the first category to take the rope, quietly I fell into the second bunch!

All was to change. An invitation was extended by Andrew Preston to those interested in ringing the tenor at All Saints Narborough. However, the tenor at Narborough is 20-0-16 in E, and for those that don’t know, those numbers indicate its weight in hundredweight, quarter hundredweights and pounds so, it calculates to one ton and sixteen pounds.

Invite accepted for two reasons, firstly to visit and ring at All Saints. I must admit shame on this one as I only live 1.3 miles from the tower, but I’ve never been there in almost two years of ringing. Secondly, and the main reason was to ring, or have a go at ringing the ton tenor.

During the short drive there I was thinking that if there was an earthquake, nuclear attack or the rope on the tenor snapped, I wouldn’t have to ring it, I’m sure there would be another opportunity at some point – how silly, but I was very apprehensive and a little nervous. However, all was to change as I climbed the spiral staircase and entered the ringing room to be greeted by a band of known and friendly faces and joined their practice session. Andrew was, as always calm and relaxed as he asked if I’d like to ring up the second. At 7-0-5, this was still a heavy bell to me but, successfully raised and stood, I was ready to commence ringing some rounds and call changes. Andrew then passed be the rope for the fifth, which at 13-0-15 is the heaviest bell I’ve rung but, as they say, the night is young. With Andrew standing in front of me, calmly offering me advice and encouragement, I was ringing my heaviest bell to date but, this was just a warm-up. The fifth was stood and Andrew passed me the tenor rope. All he said was ‘’long smooth pulls, it’ll be okay’’ And it was. A few pulls to adjust my catch point on the Sally and adjust the tail end length but, there I was ringing the tenor, a ton tenor.
https://bb.ringingworld.co.uk/view.php?id=2026492

What a great experience but, it’s a bell. Heavy, yes, but a bell. Like ringing smaller bells, you need a few pulls to get the feel. Its set, the rope etc, etc. So not just a first but a massive lesson, I now feel happy about ringing a tenor and proud to promote myself into the first category of ringers I described earlier.

A massive thank you to the Guild for their 80th year initiative and Andrew Preston for his offer, support and endless encouragement.

John Scott
Saint Michael and All Angels – Cosby

Keep on Trying

I have been ringing on and off from approximately since I was 8. It was only this year where I did have the feeling about doing bellringing again, in part because of Tom Scott's bellringing video, reminding me about it.

For October firsts, my goal was to ring rounds unassisted. Which was confusing to me, especially when I wasn't fully sure on how to ring a bell at the right speed, while also thinking about which place that I'm supposed to be in and how much to pull. It was because of another ringer explained how to ring the bell in a different way to how I thought, which made it so that I understood how to, and it allowed me to ring rounds unassisted, with someone standing by just in case.

Previously, I could ring rounds with help. And one of the main reasons to why I find it hard to ring a bell, is because I panic, and I don't know what to do about it. I have worked out that I am in fact, allowed to panic while I am ringing, as long as I am in control of the bell.

On the most recent practice I had, I was able to ring a bell, in rounds, without anyone standing with me. Which is a huge accomplishment for me. At the time of writing this, I am still processing that I was able to do that. It was partly annoying that it was just two days out of October!

A part that did help was my mum, telling me that this is the best that I have ever been at bellringing. Which is true.

Anyone can do anything, as long as you put your mind to it.

Heather Banner
Desford

Plain Hunt: Plan A achieved - Just!

"Let's do Plain Hunt for your first in October!" was the enthusiastic suggestion from Rebecca and Mark earlier this year.

October? That sounded perfectly achievable in one of my rare and fleeting "glass half full" moments. Looking back, this was perhaps optimistic.

To put things into context, I enjoy ringing, but generally work on the principle that if anything goes wrong in rounds or during call changes, it was probably me. Rope sight remains wrapped in mystery somewhere between advanced physics and wizardry, and my sense of rhythm can best be described as "enthusiastically absent".

Nevertheless, Plain Hunt it was.

There followed plenty of practice: ringing slowly, ringing quickly, changing place at handstroke and backstroke, and receiving a huge amount of support from the rest of the tower. Remarkably, this started to feel like something that might actually happen.

Then came September.

First, two weeks battling a particularly unpleasant bug. Then, two weeks with 24 unnamed visitors at work (for anyone wondering, I work in a Further Education College). Before I knew it, October was already half over and my grand Plain Hunt ambitions were looking decidedly wobbly.

The final two weeks were a blur of practice. We worked on Plain Hunt on four bells, called one row at a time, albeit with lots of questions such as:

"Which place are you in now?"

"Which bell are you following?"

Then came the last Monday in October: PH Day!

Spoiler alert: there is, indeed, a Bellboard entry. https://bb.ringingworld.co.uk/view.php?id=2026204

That achievement, however, comes with my heartfelt thanks to the rest of the band. To say there were a few meaningful looks, several timely prompts of "me now", and the occasional ‘Lead ..now!!’ would be something of an understatement. There is still plenty of work to do, but somehow, amongst it all, there were genuine moments of Plain Hunt.

So, from someone who describes themselves as the world's slowest bell-ringing learner, who still often clangs bells and can sometimes get lost on the way up to the back, take heart: there is hope!

Trust the process, trust your fellow ringers, and keep turning up.

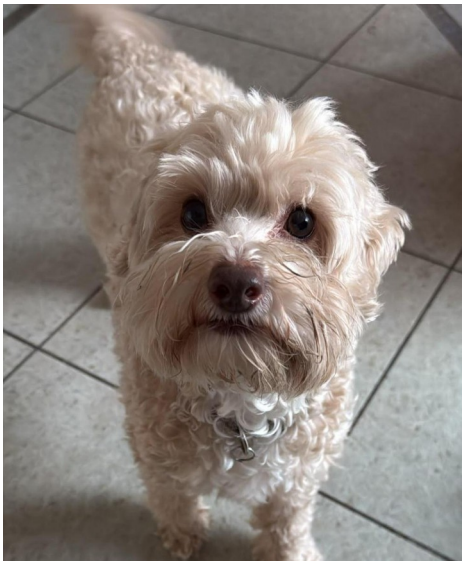
As for me, I've asked Santa for the gift of rope sight this Christmas. If he can manage that, 2027 could be spectacular.

Kate Wright
Desford

New Alliance Methods

For a while now, the Leconfield handbell group have been ringing quarters using different lead end callings to get to musical changes more quickly. ‘Complib’, where compositions are recorded, also provides a musical score for each quarter. In June, we created some new Alliance methods to further enhance the music, ringing Plain Bob but with the treble, after lying behind, turning round in 3rds or 5ths place. The big advantage of this was that it enables you to keep the 4 bell roll ups together in a short space of time and jump to other combinations quickly. The first quarter was rung in June, with Alliance methods named Leconfield and Lola's Treat. Lola (Judith's dog) is always there for a treat and to enjoy the ringing! Quarters have since extended to Royal with the addition of Hedgehog (7ths), named after Alison's successful fortnight caring for her next door neighbour's pets! Here are links to two of these quarters (and you can follow links from there to the composition and the methods):
https://bb.ringingworld.co.uk/view.php?id=1985126
https://bb.ringingworld.co.uk/view.php?id=1987345

For Leicester DG Firsts in October, we ventured onto tower bells for the first time at Hathern (https://bb.ringingworld.co.uk/view.php?id=2023138) and also attempted a cyclic part end quarter of Royal at the Bell Foundry, together with handbell attempts at Leconfield, which sadly were not achieved. This composition includes Tomato, with the treble turning round in 9ths place, named after Alison’s very productive tomato plant which enabled all of us to share the produce! More, hopefully successful, attempts will follow! We also named Lola's Treat and Lola's Lead, rung for the first time in a Minimus QP https://bb.ringingworld.co.uk/view.php?id=2026916



We are looking forward to further Alliance adventures and you might like to give some of these new methods a try! Hint: they are quite easy to ring if the conductor helps out by calling ‘3rds’ or whichever just before the treble makes the place and turns round – the bells below the place dodge and those above just keep plain hunting.

Tim Peverett

12 Ladies at Lockington

So, after a comment I read on Facebook from a certain LDG Octogenarian the thought was planted in my head. Luckily running the local progressing 12 bell practice in Leicester helped me to get started with my arranging, testing the waters and jotting down a few possible names.

The first eight names on my list all replied positively. I wanted all 'resident' Leicester Guild Ladies and hopefully not only a footnote of first ladies 12 bell attempt but as this is our 80th year as many first footnotes as possible.

The morning arrived and due to our 12 bell towers in Leicester city centre not being suitable for the band, we visited our most northern 12 bell tower of Lockington. Nobody was confident conducting cinques so Cambridge S Maximus was the method chosen.

The band in place set off after a little set back from a local and the first course and a half went without a hitch. After a sticky patch we pulled ourselves together and finished with a good last half course. https://bb.ringingworld.co.uk/view.php?id=2022702

I am sure I wasn't the first one sighing with relief as I called 'that's all'.

So what's next!

Gail Harrison



From the Districts

Melton District

Since the last newsletter Melton District has had meetings at Ashby Folville, Twyford, Long Clawson and Waltham on the Wolds. All were well attended and a big thanks to our Ringing Master & Deputy, Jackie and Annette, for putting on a varied program at each tower to suit all abilities culminating in Cambridge and Yorkshire Surprise Major at Long Clawson - which I'm told has the 2nd longest draft in the country making them exciting to handle!

Congratulations to one of our District members, Philip Shipman, who on the 19th September, came second in the Horse Ploughing class at the Collingham show with his heavy horse 'Lancaster' and team. To mark the occasion and advertise the next ploughing match at Flintham, an LDG band rang the first ever quarter of a New Grandsire variant called (unsurprisingly) 'Ploughing Match' at Harby, on the 20th of September.

Melton District has had some great firsts for the LDG@80 'firsts' month.

Twyford had the first quarter - starting at 9am on the 1st of October - with Jo Perry ringing her first quarter away from cover, on the treble. The quarter also featured the current LDG President Peter Brown and the current VP Sally Brown.

We had two of our new learners, Julie Raynor and Tracy Belcher, ringing their first rounds on 6 unaided at Gaddesby on the 4th of October

Ratcliffe on the Wreake hosted the first ever quarter of the doubles method 'Aga Woman'. The team included the outgoing President Peter Brown and incoming President Jez Bowman.

A quarter of Cambridge major was rung at Bottesford on the 9th of October which was the first quarter peal of Surprise Major by an all-Melton District band

A quarter of Bob Major at Ashby Folville which was a first quarter inside for Annette Tudor-Brown. (Many thanks to Garry Mason for coming out to ring and conduct it for us). And finally,

Twyford hosted the last quarter of the month, on the 31st, with Emma Lovegrove ringing her first quarter of minor on the treble and a first for Sophia Stonehouse conducting a quarter of minor.

The next meetings for Melton District are at Gaddesby (21st November which is the District AGM) and Bottesford, (19th December). Full details on the LDG website.

Peter Brown,
Melton District Secretary.

Firsts From Bellboard

Our regular round-up of the firsts in Leicestershire, as recorded on Bellboard, for the months July to September. For the firsts in October, please see the separate article.

General ringing

First blows in Surprise major

Sam Escott ringing half a course of Cambridge S Major at Oadby on 25th August

Quarter Peals

First Quarter

Sean Wilson ringing treble to Pain Bob Minor at Claybrooke on 8th September

First of Minor

Sally Watts ringing treble to Plain Bob Minor at Great Easton on 9th September

First Quarter Inside

Claire Thompson ringing Plain Bob Doubles at Desford on 5th July
Barnaby Davis ringing Plain Bob Doubles at Thurcaston on 26th August

First of Minor inside

Alex Hopwood ringing Plain Bob Minor at Wanlip on 13th September

First quarter on 12

Rebecca Bullingham ringing Grandsire Cinques at the Cathedral on 30th August

First Multi-method quarter on the treble

Sarah Hale ringing mixed doubles at Packington on 7th September

First quarter in more than one method

Adam Baker ringing mixed doubles at Packington on 4th July

First of Surprise Inside

Lisa Gammon ringing Cambridge S Minor at Packington on 10th August

First in method

Valerie Baxter ringing Cambridge S Major at Barrow Upon Soar on 3rd July
Dexter Deakes and **Stephen Hamby** ringing Stedman Triples at The Cathedral on 5th July
Jethro Woolley and **Mark Banner** ringing Stedman Caters at the Bellfoundry on 29th July
Nicky Carling and **Marion Pegge** ringing London S Major at Anstey on 17th August
Jeremy Bowman ringing Superlative S Major at the Bellfoundry on 26th August
Rebecca Lee ringing Grandsire Cinques at the Cathedral on 30th August
Kath Eastwood-Paramore ringing Plain Bob Minor at Barrow Upon Soar on 30th August
Jeremy Bowman ringing London S Major at Barrow Upon Soar on 11th September
Rebecca Bullingham ringing Stedman Cinques at St Margarets on 20th September

First in Method as Conductor

Alex Johnson ringing Stedman Caters at the Bellfoundry on 29th July

First Quarter of Surprise Minor ever rung at the tower

at Harby on 4th September



The band for the first quarter of surprise at Harby after their augmentation to 6.

Handbells

Methods named

Lola's Treat Alliance Royal, and Hedgehog Alliance Royal on 6th July

St Simons Bob Royal on 27th July

Leconfield Alliance Royal on 27th July

Garnet Bob Major on 24th August

First in Method

Alison Godfrey, Robert Watson and Judith Godfrey ringing Cambridge S Royal on 6th July
Alison Godfrey, Alistair Smith, Robert Watson and Judith Godfrey ringing Lincolnshire S Royal on 20th July
Alison Godfrey, Robert Watson and Judith Godfrey ringing Windsor TB Major on 3rd August
Tim Peverett, Alison Godfrey, Alistair Smith, Robert Watson and Judith Godfrey ringing Swindon S Royal on 10th August
Alison Godfrey, Alistair Smith, Robert Watson and Judith Godfrey ringing Vermuyden S Royal on 7th September
Tim Peverett and Alison Godfrey ringing Crawford TB Minimus on 23rd September
Tim Peverett, Alison Godfrey, Robert Watson and Judith Godfrey ringing Turramurra S Major on 27th September

Guild Ringing Course

This year's ringing course was held in September, and as ever was a great success. Here are a few experiences and photos of the weekend.

LDG Ringing Course – My experience.

Wow! What a fantastic weekend. As a new ringer just commencing plain Hunt, I was encouraged to attend and I'm so glad that I did. From the Friday evening introduction talk right through to the end of the course on Sunday afternoon encouragement was in abundance from all ringers. From peers, tutors, helpers and organisers, what great support was on hand to make the learning so very enjoyable. Like most newbies to plain hunt I had that little devil on my shoulder whispering either 2,4,5,3, lead lead, well you know, those numbers that really must be forgotten. Having spent a long time previously trying to understand 'rope sight' I was convinced I'd never get it despite wonderful teachings of the 'card and block' games by my very patient teachers and TC's. A massive thank you to them as they had clearly laid solid foundations. So, the course began. One of the first remits from our excellent tutor, John Cook, was to forget the numbers. You could clearly feel the dread that oozed from the students as we headed to the first tower.

St. Leonard at Swithland was our first tower, where we were joined by some familiar faces and others that were new to me, but as I said earlier, the encouragement was in abundance. Quickly the nerves settled and the focus was on handling different bells, which I thoroughly enjoy anyway but, once that part was well underway, John Cook explained how to look for our places. Better still, well for me it was the key, was the instruction to say out loud our places. Some might find it silly but, saying "second place", "third place", etc is so much easier to remember than all those permutations you would need to try and remember if using the numbers. Saying my place out loud or, quietly muttering it (which I've noticed experienced ringers do) really did help solidify my place following the blue line.



For me, the time on the rope was great to put this excellent advice into practice. This, along with honing bell control with speed changes, really made me feel like a ringer ringing plain hunt. John Cook's teaching, which was a combination of clear explanations with loads of support, encouragement and good humour was excellent. Also, as the format was always one student and five helpers ringing at a time, this gave us a wonderfully strong band around us to help us practice. The time off the rope gave us equally good time to 'stand behind' any bell and practice our places and this new-found phenomenon of 'Rope sight'.

For anyone learning plain hunt, numbers are a crutch to guide us initially while getting to grips with bell control for speeding up and slowing down, but places are key and don't be afraid to say them out loud; it works for me. I went to bed on Friday night counting places not sheep!

So, I can only praise the ringing course; I found it a major learning success from start to finish. Visiting new towers and ringing different bells; attending the brilliant social evening on Saturday, but best of all, being surrounded by friendly encouraging ringers of all abilities assisting me progress in my ringing journey, it was a fantastic course, so roll on the next one.



A massive thank you to everyone who attended and made it such a great experience, but clearly, it would never have happened without the brilliant organisation of the committee and the efforts of the tutors and helpers who worked so hard with us.

Clearly far too many individuals to name, but a sincere thanks to my tutor John Cook and my fellow students Terry C, Jane C, Rachel T and Anne F.

And remember, Places, they are the future. Ask any bellringer, they will tell you.

John Scott
Cosby & Whetstone



Learning to Hunt

Our course tutor was Stephen Bennett. We were all aiming to get a grip on plain hunt, and learn our places. My fellow learners were Jayne, Zena & Andrew. Unfortunately, I didn't take photos on the Friday evening, I think I was too nervous. Friday we rang at Markfield, St. Michael & All Angels. Saturday was at Ibstock, St.Denys. Sunday at Hathern, St.Peter & Paul. From my personal perspective, I really enjoyed the weekend. It was intense & tiring, but I definitely came away with a better understanding of places. Now I just need to remember.

Our course tutor, Stephen Bennett was so lovely, kind, patient, understanding & knowledgeable. Julie Bennett was also great during the course, helping us with any questions we might have had & supporting us throughout. Overall, I had a great time and will definitely be applying next year. Hopefully moving on to something a little more challenging. Would definitely recommend the course to anyone wishing to learn a particular method.

Karen Lorrin Laffar



Ringing Handbells during the social on Saturday night



Minor group at Desford

Central Council Annual Meeting

Friday. Ringing routes started in Leicestershire, N Warks and south and finished in Rugby. They were open to both members and non members of Council. This was followed by an introduction to team Coventry, collecting hard copies of paperwork for bed-time reading, eating and socialising. It was interesting to note that three members of team Coventry learned to ring in Leicester.

Saturday. The first time I have been to a CC meeting by bus!

Ringing World AGM

The minutes of the previous AGM, accounts and chairman's report were approved as published.

The Director who wished to stand again was re-elected. Bob Crighton and Elva Ainsworth retired and were thanked for their work. There is always space for more directors – someone with publishing experience would be useful.

The 15th RWNYC was reported. It attracted a record number of entries; 43 teams from 32 associations competing in five striking competitions at three contest towers. There were mini-rings, other activities and each team had their own itinerary for the day! The organiser and the host committee were thanked and congratulated. The 2027 contest is in Guildford area on 3 July with HQ at Guildford Cathedral. The RW is looking for additional sponsors and future venues are volunteering to host. For those who want to get involved the future is GOOD.

The RW forward plan is to become more digital and new website is due.

Dorothy L Sayers Society Award for young leadership. (P30-31 of meeting papers) Entries by video or written had been requested from any young ringers demonstrating leadership qualities by the closing date of March. The judging committee were looking for young people showing skills useful for cv.s and personal statements.

Luca Greenslade of Sussex and Daniel Holmes à Court of W&P were highly commended with Francis Gilmuth of Yorks being the winner. He was awarded the £500 prize.

The **Westley Award** for Bell Maintenance & Improvement. Nominees should have taken up maintenance activity in the last 7 years. Pauline Goring of N Wales and Iestyn Lewis of Swansea and Llandaff were highly commended and Kathryn Price-Feraud of Solihull and Elizabeth Rennert of USA were the winners.

The Meeting Papers were distributed in a 58 page supplement which can be downloaded from www.cccbr.org.uk/about/annual-meetings/2026-annual-meeting/meeting-papers/

The first 7 items of the agenda proceeded without hitch and with no changes to published material.

Item 8 The Accounts. An anomaly had been found in the published accounts and updated accounts circulated a few days prior to the meeting. However, this was insufficient time for them to be independently examined, passed by the trustees and presented for adoption. A third set of corrected accounts will be presented and notice given of an extraordinary general meeting on 31 October at 10am by ZOOM. Your CC reps may be late for the Guild AGM!

The Workgroup Reports were presented. Most went through without discussion or questions. It was noted that The Young Ringers for 2030 (P48-9) hub is now LIVE.

How are we measuring up to Ringing 2030 Recruitment and Development (P38)? The forward plan is 10000 new ringers by 2030 50% of whom are under 30. We do have a ringing teachers database! But need more marketing.

Ringing Census (P28) for details. The census is for individual ringers, tower reps and target areas. It will not be possible to identify an individual from the data collected which will be broken down gradually. The survey will take 5-10 min to complete and ALL ringers are requested to do it. 500 towers will be targeted. Enumerators are required and there are ZOOM briefings about their role 21 Sept – 15 Nov. The census week is 16-22 November.

The 2026-7 budget is not complete.

The Motions were passed. This has implications! Membership numbers must be accurate at 31 Dec to calculate the payment due. Membermojo or similar are recommended to do this. 55p per mile is the standard mileage rate without tax being liable and it can always be gifted back.

Trustees and Stewards were appointed with progression plans developing. Future meetings were announced. The next roadshow is 5th September 2027 at Uttoxeter Racecourse.

Safeguarding. The report produced as part of the History and Archive Workgroup (P51) was adopted. Our safeguarding co-ordinators will report on any information coming from the safeguarding forum. Due to the itinerant nature of ringing/ringers a meeting has been convened with the National Safeguarding Team (and ex-lead Bishop) with a view of discussing uniformity of training and especially the leadership pathway . The team are hoping for more consistency and less emphasis on theology and the CofE in the level 3 training. [As a PSC I have met with PH and I hope our safeguarding dashboard is user friendly to ringers.]

Climate Change. A question was asked about the effect of climate change on our aging infrastructure. This is being monitored by projects based at the University of Birmingham.

The evening social was held at a local Masonic Lodge. After the meal socialising continued in the Temple. The gathering were led in song by Amy, a non-ringing parent of one of the Coventry Spires.

As 2026 was not a roadshow year a bell-related Service was held at Coventry Cathedral and Council members were scattered across Warwickshire to help local Guild members achieve their quarter peals goals.

As the 2025 accounts were not completed in time for adoption at the meeting, notice was given of an extraordinary meeting on 31st October. The revised accounts were circulated in advance of this meeting; they were adopted and uploaded to the Charity Commission on time.

The remainder of the meeting gave an update on the forthcoming census.

CNJF

We’ve Got Rhythm!

Part 2 of the "Let's Sort This Striking Out!" article. Part 1 of this article can be found here: https://newsletter.leicesterdg.org.uk/2026/07/04/lets-sort-this-striking-out/

As I discussed in the first part of this article, the art of achieving good striking is a combination of the skills of listening and rhythm, and using them to be able to anticipate what is coming. Although I started this article in the previous part looking at listening, I consider rhythm to be the most important skill needed to strike well, though it works in tandem with listening. Hopefully the first part has helped improved your ability to actively listen to ringing, not just hearing the sound of the bells, and we need to use these skills to hear what the rhythm of the ringing is and assess our place within it.

We are playing a musical instrument where the sound happens seconds after we have pulled the rope, so for that sound to happen in the correct place we have to trust that the rhythm of what has gone before will continue into the future (hopefully until the end of the touch!). This is where team work comes into it, as a single ringer generally doesn’t create the rhythm on their own. Even where there may be exceptions to this, the whole band is adjusting their ringing to fit in with that single ringer. The rhythm is still achieved by consensus.

Team work

To achieve good striking the whole band needs to be working with the same underlying rhythm. This is quite an impressive feat when you think about it, as most of the time it is being agreed upon without a conscious effort, based on a whole range of factors. Unlike an orchestra, where every member is watching the fall and rise of the conductor’s baton to tell where the beats of the rhythm are, each individual in a band of ringers is analysing what the speed of the rhythm is depending on (amongst other things):

- the speed the bells are physically capable of turning,
- how many bells are being rung,
- the ability of the ringers on the heaviest bells to move their bells around,
- if the bells are difficult to ring and the ability of each ringer to place their bell correctly,
- the initial gap between the treble and 2nd as they pull off setting the pace, (and also a judgement on whether that initial gap is accurate or not)
- assessing on a continual basis which bell is wrong e.g. is the treble leading too slowly or is the 2 ringing too closely?,
- the occasion of the ringing – is it better to fudge the rhythm a little to avoid a crash, or do we want metronomic quality and tolerate the odd hiccup.

This does make it sound as though it should be impossible!

A band that is used to ringing together will find it easier and quicker to slot into a rhythm as they are used to each other’s abilities. The most challenging pieces of ringing can be when members of the band don’t agree on whether to wait for an inaccurately placed bell or to keep the rhythm steady. You may be able to ring impeccably on a simulator where the computer is providing the other bells, but it can be much harder to ring in the real world as you have to adjust to the rest of the band.

So what can we do to learn how to ring with rhythm?

I am going to assume that improving striking is something that the whole band wants to work on, and the following games and practices are intended to be used with you working together. Some of the games require the tower bells, and can take place on a regular practice night, while some don’t need the bells, and use clapping, handbells, or ringing simulator software such as Abel, and can take place either in the tower or in the comfort of a cosy home!

As with the listening exercises, I have arranged them in approximate order of difficulty, but don’t be put off if you find one of the games difficult. Keep trying some of the others and come back to it later. You may find that picking up skills from the other games will help when you try it again.

Notes about special equipment.

A set of toy handbells can easily be purchased for much more affordable cost than traditional handbells (search on Amazon or Ebay for coloured handbells, but I would recommend not picking the cheapest option as the reviews indicate they are not always in tune).

Ringing simulators don’t need to be hooked up to a bell or dumbbell to be used for these games. Abel is the most commonly used ringing simulator, and BelTutor is an almost free piece of software which from its website should be able to be used for most of the games I have described – https://www.beltower.co.uk/tutor.htm. These both require a computer, but a version of Abel for Android and Apple phones – Mobel – is also available, though with more limited capabilities.

You can find an online metronome at https://metronome-online.com/, or other websites. Online metronomes can often be configured to have an emphasis on the first beat of the bar, so you can set it to e.g. 6 beats per bar, at 120bpm, to simulate the beats for ringing six bells.

Games that don’t need tower bells

Rock on!

The first game is a bit of fun really! I’m sure most of you are familiar with the Queen hit “We Will Rock You”, recordings of it can easily be found on YouTube. Start off by getting everyone to join in with the stamps and clapping. You could add in a raised fist salute for the fourth beat if you’re feeling adventurous, or have a second clap.

Then assign different people to each of the four beats (stamp 1, stamp 2, clap, fist salute or clap 2 – you can stamp for the first 2 beats, or just clap). Only doing one beat out of four is more tricky than when you’re marking every beat, but having the music track there helps. Think about how you are coming in at the right time because you know the music, the rhythm is steady, and you can anticipate when you need to stamp/clap.

Clap with a simulator

Using a ringing simulator to ring all of the bells, set it up to ring rounds. As with Rock On, you can start by getting everyone to clap every bell beat. You may want to start with only 4 or 5 bells ringing.

You can then try having everyone clap in a certain place – e.g. tell everyone to clap in 3rds place. This is also good for helping learners about to move on to plain hunt to start thinking about places rather than who you are following. Whilst still clapping along, the conductor could then ask everyone to clap in a different place, and eventually work towards clapping plain hunt. You don’t need to set the simulator to ring plain hunt, here we’re thinking about rhythm, not the sound of the notes. Learning rhythm is not just about being able to hold your bell in the rhythm in rounds, but how to use it in methods too.

If you don’t have access to a simulator, you can substitute it with a metronome, though there will be no handstroke gap. You can still use it to learn some of the same skills. Set it to 120 bpm and set the number of beats to 6 to have the metronome marking each bell in the row for 6 bells. See below for another game using a metronome.

Rounds without tower bells.

This can be done either with people clapping, or using handbells. The basic idea is for each ringer to have one bell each and ring rounds. This highlights how we often use the natural swing of the bell to stay in the correct place. Without that, it is up to each ringer to fit their bell into a split second gap. Concentrate on ringing with rhythm, anticipating when to ring rather than waiting for the bell in front to ring first. IMPORTANT: If someone misses their slot, keep going without them, otherwise you are still ringing by watching, not rhythm.

Metronome

Clap or ring handbells to rounds with a metronome keeping beat. You have to learn how to keep in time with the metronome rather than waiting for the ringer in front of you. I would recommend setting it to 20 bpm to have it make one beep for the whole row. Set off with the treble ringing at the same time as the metronome, and everyone needs to fit in before the treble rings again. Note: it does mean that there will be no handstroke gap. The idea is that the strict beat of the metronome means you have to keep to a rhythm, and can’t gradually spread out as you would if you wait for the bell in front.

Faster and Slower

Now you’ve learned how to clap in time with a simulator or metronome, learn how to listen to the flow of the ringing and adjust to keep in time. Each ringer is clapping in their assigned place, now change the speed of the ringing or metronome to be slightly but noticeably faster or slower. The ringers have to listen to the whole row and change their rhythm accordingly.

This is not something you would ever expect to happen on tower bells, the purpose of this practice is so that ringers can learn to listen and adjust, rather than expecting the speed to be the same each time they ring. Learning to ring with rhythm means knowing how to adjust your own ringing to fit the rhythm of the band. Its also a useful skill to have if you visit other towers, where the bells may ring at a different speed to your own tower, or ringing with different people who might set the pace differently.

Pick up Bell

Fans of the radio show I’m Sorry I haven’t a Clue, will be familiar with the game where the contestant starts singing along with a song, and has to continue when the music fades out, with the aim to be in time with the music when it fades back in again. Now you too can do the same!, but instead of singing you’re going to be clapping in time with a simulator, or a recording of ringing. Try to keep in time as the volume is turned down. Are you still clapping in the same place when the volume is turned up again? A single person can clap all the beats, or just in one place, and for a group each person can be assigned a place to clap in.

Using tower bells

(a lot of these games are using a combination of listening as well as rhythm skills)

Missing bell

Ringing rounds, one of the ringers is asked by the conductor to stand. The rest of the band need to keep the rhythm the same, leaving a gap for the bell that is missing. Don't fall into the empty space in front of you. The ringer that stood joins in again, and should be able to slot in flawlessly if their gap has been left for them, and another bell is asked to stand.

Black card/red card

Using playing cards, create a hand of cards one less than the number of ringers. All of the cards need to be black suits apart from one red card (it doesn't matter what value the cards are). The ringers apart from the tenor ringer each choose a card, keeping it a secret. Everyone grabs hold to ring. Pull off in rounds, but the ringer who had the red card doesn't pull off(extra points for good acting here!). The bell behind the non-ringing bell still has to pull of in rounds in the correct place. This teaches people about pulling your bell at the correct time without waiting to see the bell in front actually pull.

The Lottery

(From ART https://artonline.bellringing.org/)

You can use playing cards again, this time cards with numbers 1 to however many bells you are using. The ringers choose a card at random, keeping it a secret. The number on the card is the place that you pull off in. Try not to look for the bells pulling off in front of you, but learn to pull at the correct time in the change. If ringers are looking for which bell to follow, this takes extra time, the result being that not all the bells have pulled off by the time the bell leading rings again. Aim for the very first change to sound even and not falling away into the start of the next change. This is another way of learning to pull at the right time without needing to see the bell in front of you to follow.

Diminishing rounds

(From ART)

Start by ringing rounds and stand one bell at a time, starting with the treble. As you get fewer bells you need to leave a larger gap between each bell. The conductor can call when each bell needs to stand, which means you can have more time to get used to the new number of bells, or you can agree on a set time before the next bell stands ie at every handstroke. (This is also quite an effective piece of ringing to end funeral or remembrance day ringing, or at the end of the old year.)

Putting out the fire

(From the Whiting Society https://whitingsociety.org.uk)

This game makes a racket, so not one to do if you think you might gets complaints from the neighbours!

Create a hand of cards with the numbers one to however many bells you are ringing. Each ringer draws a card at random and keeps the number a secret. You can either start by firing the bells (ringing all bells at precisely the same time) or you can ring rounds and be called into firing. When the conductor calls change, the ringer with the highest numbered card moves one place out of firing (it will sound like "crunch, dong"). When change is called again, the ringer with the penultimate number (ie 5 if ringing on 6) moves one place out of fire, the bell that had already moved out moving one place further ("crunch, ding, dong"). Keep on doing this until you have put out the fire. Use this to learn how to place your bell without worrying too much about which bell number you are following.

Facing outside the circle

An old favourite! Assign a ringer to stand facing outside the circle and ring rounds without looking at any of the other bells. We usually allow the ringer to take a sneak peek at the bell next to them when pulling off, because when exactly the treble ringer pulls in relation to "she's gone" varies between ringers, and even with good rhythm it is difficult to judge this initial pull.

Unseen changes

Once a ringer is capable to staying in rounds whilst facing outside the circle, start to add in some changes. It might help if they have already tried out all the variations of Clap with a Simulator above. Ideally start with the ringer who is to face outside the circle ringing the treble. Once they have settled into rounds, call them into seconds place. They need to move their bell by rhythm, and listening to check they are correct. Some ringers might find this easier at first if you use a small number of bells e.g. 4 bells ringing. See if you can call them all the way to the back and back down to lead again.

Listening, Rhythm and Anticipation

Hopefully you can now see that achieving good striking requires all three skills to work together. You need to be able to listen to ringing, with skills enough to be able to pick out the beat of each bell, tell where the handstroke gap is, and know where the start and end of each change is. Rhythm is what is used to enable you to pull a bell so that it strikes in the correct place a couple of seconds after you have pulled it, with listening again playing a part as you assess at each stroke whether you have placed your bell correctly. Trusting that the rhythm is going to keep going is where anticipation comes in, as you pull your rope not necessarily based on what you see, but from the feedback you received from your last pull, and the sound of what went before.

As individuals we all need to put effort in, so that our striking is as accurate as we can make it, but we also need to work together as a band to achieve the best performance possible. This sums up what it is to be a change ringer, whether talking about striking, or learning new methods, or just creating the best sound we can.

Rebecca Banner