



Shropshire Association of Church Bell Ringers

Newsletter – December 2025

Hello,

Some happy news for Advent. We are delighted that the new Archdeacon of Salop, the Ven Nick Watson, has agreed to be our President. We look forward to welcoming him to our special anniversary year ahead!

Happy ringing, and all good wishes for a joyful Christmas and a happy New Year.

Gill Glover, Editor



Training morning 1st Nov

We held a busy and enjoyable practice for seven students at Edgmond, on 1st November. We started with a warm-up of rounds and call changes on eight bells, literally a warm-up as there was an issue with the church heating. Luckily, Paul provided several plug-in heaters which helped a lot. It was good to see our all-ladies group of students catching hold on bells of various weights all around the circle.

After this there was a brisk move towards the coffee, cakes and biscuits. For the rest of the morning students took turns to work at their current challenge, while most of them also had a go at covering. Requests varied from hunting the treble, through Plain Bob doubles to touches of Plain Bob minor. The treble ringers, in particular, made good progress from plain hunt to Plain Bob, Grandsire and Reverse Canterbury.

Time went by swiftly, as ever on these mornings, and it was after 12.30 when the helpers enjoyed a course of Stedman triples, before ringing down in peal.

The **next training event** will be on **Saturday 24th January, from 10 – 12.30, at Oswestry**. Places are limited; to book yours contact training@sacbr.org.uk

Gill Glover

Young Ringers - 8th November

On Saturday 8th November, eight of our under-18 members met at Meole Brace; together with parents, grandparents, and some adult ringers. Some of us were so keen we arrived at 2 pm instead of half past: I really need to read the newsletter more carefully...

Ringling began with a complete youth band tackling rounds and call changes on the back six, with everyone trying several different bells and some taking charge of the calling. Later, the older folk were employed to fill in for plain courses and touches of Plain Bob Doubles and Minor. A refreshment break was enjoyed at half time – many thanks to Andy Digby for supplying the making of hot drinks, and also (much appreciated!) Coca Cola and doughnuts.

The afternoon finished with rounds and call changes on the eight. All our young members, representing Meole Brace, Dawley, Shrewsbury St Chad and Bicton, made progress and are keen for more. Thank you, Gill, for your organisation, and Michael for acting as host. Our **next meeting** will be at **Dawley, at 2.30 on Saturday 28th February**. In March, we are planning a half day outing to three towers, plus a picnic. Any SACBR under-18s and their supporters are encouraged to join in.

Biff Patterson

Quiz - 8th November

Universally Challenged

Quiz nights are always a mixed bag - but thanks to Vicki Sivess this one was great fun. She single-handedly found the venue, managed the committee to set it up, welcomed the groups (whether they had told her they were coming or not!) and organised the bar and the catering. A tour de force! She was ably assisted by a blend of Meole and Committee members on reception, and in the provision of a buffet to see us through the evening in high spirits, with a friendly mix of humour and rivalry.

Vicki segued seamlessly into the role of question master. If you were used to a Jeremy Paxman style sarcastic delivery, an Amol Rajan swift-fire attack, or the wry remarks of Clive Myrie then you were in for a pleasant surprise. We were gently encouraged to discuss a wealth of subjects in our teams by a presenter who was challenged herself having had her voice box nobbled by some seasonal virus. We

strained to hear at times - but it was worth the listen as she repeated herself in dulcet tones - a mix between Rula Lenska and the whispering Bob Harris (Showing my age here!).



The varied questions were divided into rounds: Geography, History & Politics, Science & Nature, Sport, and Entertainment. We were subjected to a blend of the obscure, the unheard of and downright fascinating trivia. Entertaining it certainly was. In between her well-researched examination Vicki encouraged us to tackle the picture rounds set before us on our tables. British garden birds were followed by more challenging photos of the rear ends of various animals. We were also vexed by vexillology, as being asked to identify country flags was very much a challenge for most of us.

I learned loads. Who knew that the biggest population of ducks (wild and domestic) was to be found in China? Which of you out there could remember the last Wimbledon champion to play with a wooden racket? Could you be confident on the Latin names for British Islands, the former currencies of Euro nations or indeed the holder of the record for the oldest football player still in service (they seem to give up before us bellringers!)

By some mathematical mystery the final score was out of 103. The marks were really close – all the teams finished with scores over 70 -so we all went home not feeling too stupid! Winners were the Bicton Boffins with a score of 86. Congratulations to all. THANKS VICKI, who also delivered the most suitable prize of a 3D printed bell for all members of the winning team and a chocolate or two to sweeten defeat for the other teams.

We all paid an entry fee which in this case more than covered the costs of catering and the room hire. Surplus revenue will be banked in the general SACBR fund and is a welcome boost to ensure the smooth running of the society in the run up to our 100th year celebrations.

This time next year there will be a celebratory ceilidh - also organised by Vicki so please get the date in your diary NOW : 10th October 2026. Nothing like planning ahead! SACBR socials are a chance to connect with other ringers including friends and families and spend time together that does not depend on ropesight, bell handling or remembering a fiendish method. Makes us almost human!

Sue Dancey

Newport Fashion Show, 28th November

The fashion show held by the ringers in Newport as a fundraising event was hugely enjoyable, with 60 tickets sold and some good prizes donated by local businesses for the raffle. It is thought that about £800 has been raised towards the proposed improvement work to Newport's bells. Female members of the band bravely acted as catwalk models, each choosing several outfits from the many rails of clothes on view and managing some quick changes behind the scenes, while the men provided liquid refreshment and sold raffle tickets. After the modelling everyone was free to browse the hundreds of items from many familiar retailers and buy quality clothes at excellent prices. Well done Newport band for putting on such a successful evening.

Biff Patterson

ART course, 29th Nov

The ART course held at Edgmond on 29th November was well attended and well received. Eleven students discussed and then practised techniques for teaching bell handling to beginners. Thanks go to Paul Lewis for leading this course, and to Matt Lawrence and Alan Glover for their assistance. Biff Patterson ran the kitchen, providing hot drinks, cakes and biscuits throughout the day. We hope to have a full report on the day in next month's issue.

Gill Glover

We learn that long-standing member, **John Williamson**, affectionately known as 'John the Post', has died at 85 after a long illness. He rang for many years at Cheswardine, Newport and Edgmond. A Service of Thanksgiving will be held in St Nicholas church Newport from 2.45 pm on Thursday 18th December, with ringing details to be confirmed.

Biff Patterson

Looking Ahead



SACBR CENTENARY EVENTS

January

AGM, Saturday 10th January

Meole Brace, from 11 am

Our **Centenary AGM** will kick off a year of looking back and looking forward, with ringing events, social activities and challenges galore throughout the twelve months.

The programme for the day starts at 11 am, with ringing on the light 8 at Meole, followed by a service at 12 noon, lunch at the Trinity Centre at 12.30 and business meetings at 13.30. We combine the Quarterly and Annual meetings for efficiency. In addition to the elections of new members and officers, we will have reports on this year's achievements, long service and other awards to present. We will also explain our plans for the coming months, and will have printed programme cards for the year, to hand out to all members.

This will be a great occasion to welcome our new President, Ven Nick Watson, who will address us during the service and chair the afternoon meetings. We are also looking forward to the visit of the Mayor of Shrewsbury, who has agreed to have a go at ringing. This should provide some welcome publicity and raise the profile of our special year.

We are hoping for a bumper turn-out for this occasion: it will be brilliant if some representation from every active tower can be present.

Training morning

The **next training event** will be on **Saturday 24th January, from 10 – 12.30, at Oswestry**. Places are limited; to book yours contact training@sacbr.org.uk

SACBR Centenary Year

Centenary Dinner

Friday, 15 May 2026, 6:30pm for 7:15

**Hawkstone Park Hotel, Weston-under-Redcastle,
Shrewsbury, SY4 5UY**

The Centenary Dinner at Hawkstone Park Hotel promises to be a joyful occasion where we will meet up with friends to celebrate the achievements of the Association over the last hundred years and to look forward to the future. The keynote speaker is Simon Linford who, I am certain, will keep us entertained. The following menu will be provided.

One starter from:

Tomato, red onion & basil soup (gf) (df) (vg)

Chicken liver parfait, red onion marmalade, toasted brioche (gfa)

One main course from:

Chicken stuffed with garlic cream cheese wrapped in smoked bacon, potato fondant, seasonal vegetables, cream sauce (gf) (dfa)

Silverside of beef, horseradish mash, seasonal vegetables, Yorkshire pudding, gravy (gfa) (dfa)

Mushroom, butternut squash & leek pie, spring onion mash, seasonal vegetables, mushroom & thyme gravy (vg) (gf)

One dessert from:

Sticky toffee pudding, toffee sauce, vanilla ice cream (gf)

Baked gingerbread cheesecake, rhubarb compote, honeycomb ice cream

Caramel Tart, Chocolate Vegan Ice Cream (V)

Tickets will be £36 per head. At the end of December, we will be contacting all towers who responded to our initial survey and offering them the chance to buy tickets from January 3rd. Ticket sales will then open to everybody from January 10th.

It will be vital that individuals contact me directly (socsec@sacbr.org.uk) to order tickets for themselves or for themselves and a partner, rather than tower correspondents sending in a group order. This is to help me organise individual place settings, with menu requirements, on the night. When you contact me, I will allocate you a ticket number and let you have payment information. Once you have paid, I will issue you with a ticket.

Vicki Sivess