



S A C B R 1926 – 2026

Newsletter - February

This month I include a lengthy report of the AGM day at Meole Brace. Snow did its best to make life difficult, and, in view of the long list of apologies from those who couldn't make it on the day, I hope the detailed account will be welcome!

We also have details of our first Centenary Challenge – we hope as many towers as possible will take this on.

Happy Ringing!

Ed.



AGM, Meole Brace

Saturday, 10th January

Despite the Arctic weather, about fifty members of the Association made it to some part, or all, of our AGM day. This was a very happy and friendly affair throughout: we thank our hosts, the Meole Brace band, for all their efforts in kitchen, dining hall, church and ringing room. Our visitors also contributed with warm good wishes for our Centenary; these were

the Mayor of Shrewsbury, Councillor Alex Wagner, and the Ven Nick Watson, the new Archdeacon of Salop, not really a visitor as he is our new President.

Nik Galton ran a very busy ringing room, a challenging job since not only was it packed with ringers, but we also had several media people coming and going, wielding cameras and microphones. One of the results was a very nice piece on ITV Central News on Saturday evening. Two of our young ringers, Harvey Jones and Ryan Hayes, spoke up brilliantly. Coffee and biscuits were served throughout at the back of the church.



Ringing at Meole Brace. Picture courtesy of MyShrewsbury magazine

Ringing finished with a service touch of Grandsire Triples. The Archdeacon led the service, newly modified by Michael Carding: inclusivity and fellowship were themes throughout. In his address, Ven Nick emphasised the joy of church bells, both to those listening and to those ringing. For some, they express the joy of the Christian faith; for others, they express joy in creation. Picking up on the reading from Philippians, which calls for humility, he remarked that there is little room for ego in a team of bell ringers: 'If you stand out, it will be for the wrong reasons!'

During the lunch hour Paul Lewis gave Mayor Alex a lesson in bell handling, which was eagerly snapped by a Shropshire Star photographer. Then Ven Nick agreed to have a go, although it is thirty years since he last touched a bell rope. Assisted by Paul he was able to ring in rounds on 6 with some of the young ringers.

Meanwhile, in the Trinity Centre next door, lunch was served by the Meole Brace team, led by Ann and John Peppiatt. The Mayor congratulated us on the Association Centenary. In his position he visited many charities, and noticed how surprised they invariably were to be thanked for their service to the community. It is clear that we enjoy our activity and the fellowship within the group.



Councillor Alex Wagner, Mayor of Shrewsbury, tries a rope, guided by Paul Lewis.

Picture courtesy of MyShrewsbury magazine.

Meetings

We moved back to the church for the formal meetings, chaired jointly by Ven Nick and Tony Freemont. After the election of a healthy number of new members, long service awards were presented for 25 years, to Edwina Smart (Baschurch), Paul Roberts (Bicton), Chris Yates and Judy Yates (High Ercall), Brian Cope (Hinstock), Jad Bienek (Myddle, Baschurch and Shrewsbury). A long service award for 50 years was presented to Gill Glover (Shrewsbury). Tony Freemont then presented the St Alkmund's Cannons to Gill Glover, for leadership on training and work with young ringers.

David Beckwith explained the reasoning behind some changes to the Bell Restoration Fund Rules. Ann Williams had given a donation of £10,000, and specified that this should be used to purchase a bell, whether new or recast. Changes to Rule 7 were to clarify the position of this sum, which is ring-fenced from the remainder of the Fund. Any church awarded this money would be eligible, also, for normal grant aid from the Fund. The change to Rule 10 reflected the increased costs of bell restoration projects, and the expense involved in obtaining a second quotation for smaller projects. In future, the second quotation would be required for projects in excess of £4,000. Both alterations were passed by the Meeting.

David Beckwith delivered the Treasurer's Report, observing that the finances were similar to last year. Our contribution to the Central Council was set to increase substantially, but we could maintain the current subscription rates for another year. Currently, the General

Fund held £3,939.75. The Bell Restoration Fund stood at £47,699.45, of which £10,000 was ring-fenced. David pointed out that, owing to the timing of the AGM, the Accounts had not yet been audited. With this proviso they were accepted by the Meeting.

Gill Glover gave the Training Officer's Report. She reviewed briefly the New Members' morning last February, four training mornings, four Young Ringers' practices, a Tower Leaders' morning and an ART day course led by Paul Lewis. She observed that the success of training events was thanks to the support of many experienced ringers and the enthusiasm of the students.

Gill followed this with a short Librarian and Archivist's Report. (See separate item below). Sue Dancey, on behalf of Vicki Sivess, read a resume of social events in 2025.

Paul Lewis reported on the Central Council meeting last September in Sheffield. The Council was forging ahead with its plans for Ringing 2030. This was to focus on recruitment and retention, with particular emphasis on young people. Some work groups needed more volunteers to help fulfil their briefs. The Ringing World magazine was viable, financially, but readership was very low. Of an estimated 35,000 ringers, only 2,000 now subscribed.

Biff Patterson gave a summary of the activities of the Lichfield Diocesan Mobile Belfry, which is jointly owned by the three ringing societies in the diocese. The belfry had more outings in 2025, and the financial position improved. We were reminded that next August the belfry will be at Shifnal: an opportunity for all members who haven't previously seen it to have a go on the bells.

Next on the Agenda was the election of Officers for 2026. All the present Committee were re-elected on block. Two positions were vacant. Nobody put themselves forward for Committee Member (without portfolio). Nik Galton was elected as our second CC Representative.

The Meeting discussed the 100 Club, which had lapsed, after being a valuable source of funds for the Bell Restoration Fund for many years. It was agreed that this should be re-started, and Andrew Gordon would take over as administrator.

Michael Carding ran through the plans for this year's Centenary Celebrations. The details are all in the members' cards distributed at the meeting.

The Raffle raised £145, for the pot that supports Young Ringers' activities. Winners of the many prizes were: John Maclean, Andrew Gordon, Madeline Harris, Will Lander, Alan Glover, Jad Bienek, David Beckwith, Kathey Fitchew, Natalie Grimmette, Cordelia Warr, Kathryn Greaves and Jacqui Barden.

In Any Other Business Jan Snowball asked the Committee to consider moving the AGM to the April Quarterly, because of the frequent bad weather in January. Andrew Gordon sought sponsorship for a Snowdon climb, for charities to include SACBR Bell Fund. The

Meeting agreed that we should support the Central Council's application to UK Government for Unesco Intangible Cultural Heritage status for English call change and change ringing.

Nick Watson then closed the meeting with thanks to all. Some of us settled down to a quarter peal of Plain Bob triples to mark the occasion.

Training Morning Saturday, 24th January, at Oswestry

Six students came to the first training morning of the year, and worked hard at Plain Hunt, covering, Grandsire Doubles, Plain Bob Triples and Cambridge Surprise Minor. Everyone made noticeable progress, and tutors and students alike felt the morning had been very worthwhile. Many thanks to the experienced ringers who filled in, and 'stood behind' to guide learners. Thanks also to Jan Snowball and her helpers who provided very welcome hot drinks, cake and biscuits.



Students and tutors in the ringing room at Oswestry

Margaret Rowley 1932 - 2025

The Association has lost one of its most longstanding members, with the passing of Margaret Rowley, who died on Christmas Day, aged 93.

Margaret was tower captain at Holy Trinity church, Dawley from 2004 until her retirement in 2020. She had taken over that role from her husband, Ted, after he died but she began her ringing life at Malinslee church, a mile or so away.

This was in the early 1950's and when the couple married they moved to a house just a stone's throw from Dawley church. Here they raised 4 daughters, 3 of whom learned to ring.

Margaret stayed in that house, and kept her connection to Holy Trinity, for over 70 years . She had an unflappable temperament in the ringing room, and will be much missed.

Her funeral is on Monday 16th February at 1.30pm at Telford crematorium.

Simon Rice



A photograph of Margaret, early 1950s, third from left, front row.

John Jackson

We have heard from his son, Alex, that the former ringer at Hodnet, Moreton Corbet, Stanton and other local towers, John Jackson, died last week. The funeral will be at Hodnet, 10th February, at 12 noon.

In February

Challenge for the month: do a new ringing thing

For the whole of February we are challenging all members to attempt something new. This can be a ringing achievement, a calling achievement, or something else linked to ringing, such as changing a rope or planning an outing.

This will be an easy one for all our recent beginners: you are trying new things all the time. It may be your first rounds with your band, first Sunday service ringing, or first time joining in an Association activity (see below). For improvers with a bit more experience, how about calling your first call changes, or covering for the first time, or even your first quarter peal. Those of us who have been ringing for many years are going to have to think a bit harder to come up with something different!

If 100 members all do one new thing, that will be a great way to mark 100 years. We may even beat the target – we have about 300 members, and there's nothing to stop you submitting more than one achievement! We would like you to send all your 'firsts' straight away to Gill: newseditor@sacbr.org.uk We will make sure they are published asap on the website, on our facebook page, and of course, in the March Newsletter.

New Members' Morning Saturday 14th February, at Lilleshall

PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF VENUE

There is a major problem with the plumbing and heating at Edgmond, so we have had to move this event a few miles to Lilleshall.

It is an informal occasion, running from 10.00 to 12.30. All new members are warmly invited to come along and meet the Association Officers, and other members. Have a chat over coffee and cakes, have a go on the bells. There will be badges, clothing and books to buy or browse. Experienced ringers are encouraged to bring their learners and ring with them. We look forward to getting to know you.

To help with catering, if possible, let us know how many are coming from your tower:
training@sacbr.org.uk

Young Ringers' Practice

Dawley, Saturday 28th February, 14.30 – 16.30

We hope our young ringers are keen to get together for another practice, and we look forward to welcoming some new faces to grow the group. We generally do handling tuition for beginners, rounds, call changes, plain hunt and method ringing – something for everyone. Parents and tower leaders are, of course, very welcome too.

Gill Glover

SACBR Centenary Year

Centenary Dinner

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

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

TICKETS ARE GOING FAST

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.

Tickets are £36 per head. Don't delay – only about 30 remain.

It is 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

Do you have any interesting ringing memorabilia in your ringing chamber? At the centenary meal next May, we are planning to display items and pictures related to the last 100 years of ringing in the association. We are particularly short of pictures of ringers.

If you have anything you think might be suitable and would be prepared to lend for the occasion, please can you let me know on socsec@sacbr.org.uk? It would help if you could provide the following information, which I can then compile into a list: a brief description of the item; approximate dimensions; location and date or era it pertains to.

Vicki Sivess

Further Ahead

100 Club

The SACBR 100 Club is back. After discussion at the AGM, it is clear that a lot of members are willing to support our own 100 Club, which is a valuable source of funds for the Bell Restoration Fund. Membership is for adult members of the Shropshire Association only, and costs £12 for the year. There are usually four draws a year, at the Quarterly Meetings, with four or five cash prizes, depending on how many people are participating.

Full details, and the application form, will be in the March Newsletter.

March Challenge – Youth month

From Central Council to grass roots, we all know the future of ringing depends on getting the younger generation interested. All sorts of initiatives have started in the last few years, and most local associations now have a youth group. We are marking this month with an outing for all young ringers in the Shropshire Association.

Do have a think about whether your band can do something to raise the profile of ringing in your village or town. It may be giving a talk. It may be inviting a local youth group – Scouts, Guides, school or church group – to visit. It may be inviting your own family members along to meet the band, watch some ringing and maybe chime a bell. Many people, myself included, learned to ring because the whole family was learning.

Gill Glover