

Shropshire Association of Church Bell Ringers

Newsletter – July 2025

Hello,

I thought you might like this portrait of Reverend Straw, one of the characters in our village scarecrow trail. The well-populated trail was on show for the whole month of June.

No doubt there will be all sorts of local events going on in our villages through the summer: fetes, garden parties, shows and the like. Perhaps some of these will be accompanied by bells; if so, do send us your stories and photos.

Happy ringing,

Gill Glover, Editor



Dates for your Diary

Quarterly Meeting, Saturday 12th July

Our next open ringing practice will be at **Baschurch**, from **7 – 9 pm**. Members of all levels of experience are warmly invited to join us at this good six bell tower. We expect to ring a wide variety of methods, as well as rounds and call changes. Ringing will be followed by a short business meeting.

Training Morning, Saturday 19th July

There will be another opportunity for some intensive ringing practice on **Saturday, 19th July**, at **Moreton Corbet**, from 10 am till 12.30 pm. We can assure all less experienced ringers that these are very nice, easy bells to handle. Three places remain. To book your place, email training@sacbr.org.uk

In June

Young Ringers Practice, Saturday 14th June

We held a happy afternoon practice for our young ringers at Upton Magna on June 14th. Everyone enjoyed ringing on these easy-going bells. Practice ranged from one-to-one coaching of handling to touches of Plain Bob doubles. It was a delight to see how much progress all the young people have made since our last get together. We are hoping to meet again in September: detailed information will follow in next month's Newsletter.

SACBR Summer Outing, Saturday 21st June

Social Secretary, Vicki Sivess, organised an excellent day out for us on June 21st. A group of about twenty visited six rural towers in west Leicestershire. It was a scorching hot day, but all the churches were cool, and the bells mostly light, and pleasant to handle. We started with the eight bells at Measham, where ringing included call changes, Grandsire, Plain Bob triples, Cambridge and plain hunt.

Nearby Packington has a rather snug ringing room, with the treble rope falling over the trap door. We took it in turns to ring, operate the trap door, and explore the church downstairs.



Most of the group outside Orton church

Coleorton is an estate church, surrounded by trees and perched high above its carpark. The ringing here included Stedman and Plain Bob triples. Then on to Belton, where the all-important lunch was booked at the Queen's Head. This turned out to be a very good choice, with a variety of ample platefuls brought out quickly and piping hot. After a jolly interlude we crossed the road to the six

bells at Belton church, where we were welcomed with tea and home-made cake. Those who had indulged in puddings were considerably challenged. The bells are rung from a modern gallery inserted at the back of the church. We rang Grandsire, Plain Bob and Primrose Surprise here.

From Belton we returned towards the south. Our next tower was at Orton, a peaceful conservation village with an interesting old church. This was our third six of the day. Methods included St Martin's and St Simon's doubles. Our final tower was Polesworth Abbey, with its beautiful Norman nave. We were welcomed by the vicar, and enjoyed ringing on these sonorous bells.

The day was voted a great success, with warm thanks to Vicki for her meticulous organisation.

Gill Glover

Further Ahead

SACBR Striking Competition

Last year's striking competition at Calverhall was a great success, with many teams, a delicious tea and a very sociable occasion. We hope for another bumper turn-out **at St Martin's** this year. The date for your diary is **Saturday, 13th September**.

Calling all Tower Leaders and Teachers

The Central Council is currently discussing the topics of recruitment and retention. Given the age profile of many ringing bands, they are rightly concerned that there will be a shortage of ringers to take over the running of towers in a decade or so. Our experience at St Chad's has been that it is quite easy to recruit, but much harder to retain the learners that you have invested so much time and effort in. It strikes me that there may also be a shortage of ringers confident to teach bell handling. And what about calling call changes and service touches?

With this in mind, I would like to organise two events this autumn. The first, in October, would be a half day get together for tower leaders and teachers. This would be an opportunity to exchange ideas and spread the word about good practice that has worked for you. If there is sufficient interest, I will ask some experienced leaders to each talk about a specific topic for 5 minutes, before general discussion. Topics can range from ideas for recruitment to problem details when teaching handling, or how to call an extent of bob doubles. We will also do some demonstrating and ringing, and of course enjoy informal chat over coffee and biscuits.

In November, we hope to offer an ART new teachers' day course. This would be run by Paul Lewis, and is a great way for more recent learners to gain the confidence and knowledge to begin training the next beginners. To become a formally qualified ART teacher, you need to follow the day course by teaching a student, with mentoring by an experienced leader. However, the course is well worth completing in its own right, for the ways in which it will extend your own skill set.

If either of these get-togethers interests you, do please let me know, so that I can advance the planning.

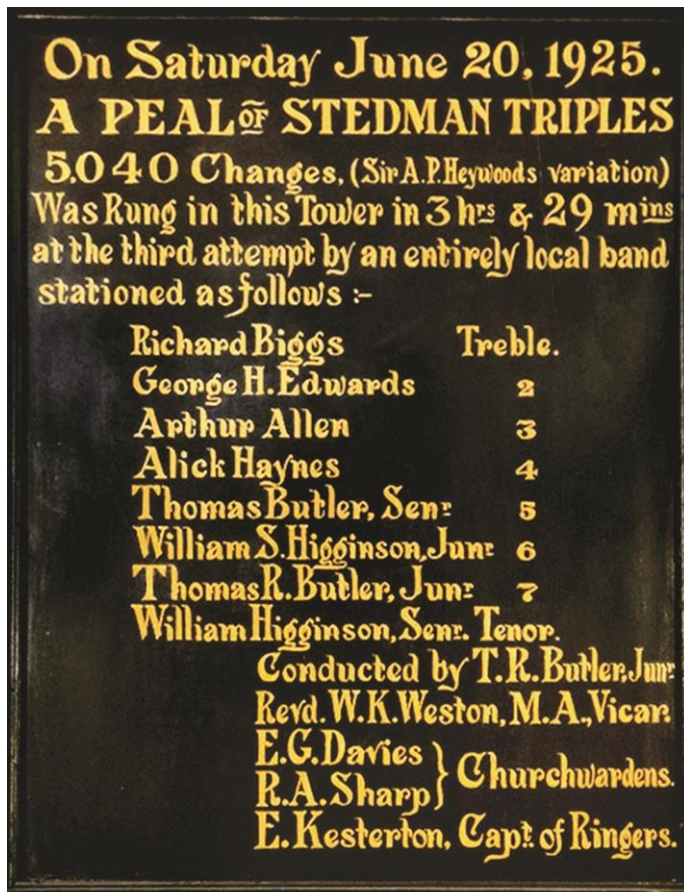
Gill Glover, SACBR Training Officer, training@sacbr.org.uk

ELLESMERE CENTENARY PEAL – A tale of determination...

Thank you to Nik Galton for this fascinating account of a recent achievement at Ellesmere, and congratulations to all concerned. Ed.

On 20 June 1925, a band of ringers, all local men, born and living within one mile of St Mary's Church, Ellesmere rang a peal of Stedman Triples. The peal is recorded on a board displayed in the ringing chamber. It was the first time a local band of ringers had rung a peal here since 1730. With a population of around 2000 in 1925, it is remarkable that a home-grown team should ring a peal of Stedman Triples.

For context, in 1920, a group of Ellesmere ringers, inspired by a Salop Archidiaconal Guild band who rang a peal of Kent Treble Bob Major at St Mary's, decided that they would also like to ring methods. At that time, as commented by one of the method ringers, there was a 'stony Sunday Service band', opposed to method ringing and only ringing call changes. Despite this, the maverick group was determined to go ahead with method ringing, although it was some time before method ringing would be permitted for Sunday Services. Six ringers initially learned method ringing on handbells and practised on silenced tower bells. Their first method ringing on open tower bells was at a Salop Archidiaconal Guild meeting at Oswestry in April 1921. Having proved that they could do it, open bell practices started in Ellesmere. However, ringer numbers dwindled so they had to recruit a further four ringers before they made further progress. The band concentrated on Stedman, both Doubles and Triples, and through the summer of 1922, they were ringing touches in nearby towers, including Whittington and Chirk. By September, they were allowed to ring a plain course of Stedman Triples at Ellesmere.

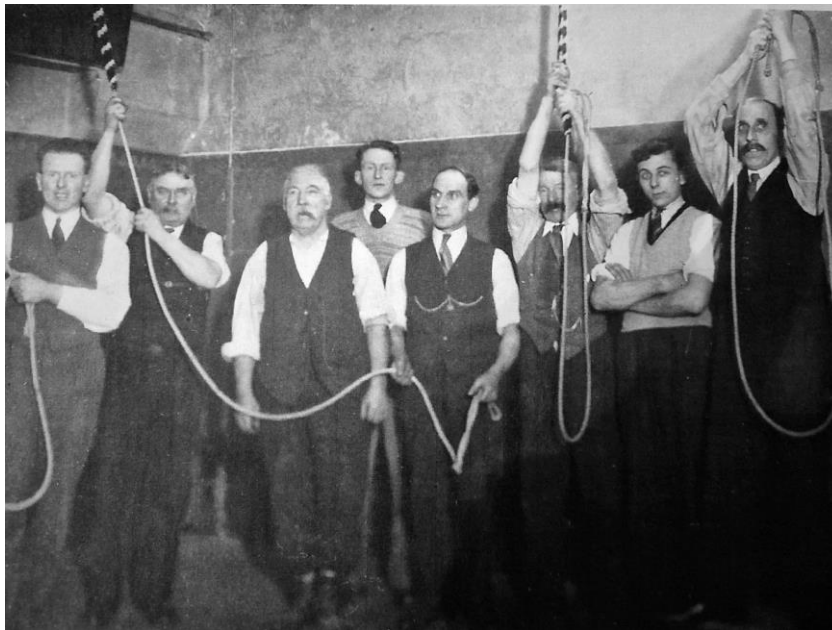


The Ellesmere peal board for the 1925 peal

On two occasions in 1923, they rang quarter peals of Stedman Doubles on the Ellesmere bells, and in October 1923 succeeded in a peal of Stedman Doubles at Whittington. Later, in November, several of them rang with members of the Chester Diocesan Guild, in a peal of Stedman Triples at Pulford. In September, a local band rang a quarter peal of Stedman Triples at Ellesmere and repeated it on several occasions before the end of the year.

During 1925, they continued to ring Stedman Triples, either a full team or a group of them joining with Chester Diocesan Guild ringers to ring peals at Tarporley, Oswestry, Gresford and Pulford. Finally, on 20 June 1925 and after two

failed attempts, the local ringers rang their peal of Stedman Triples at Ellesmere. Thomas R Butler conducted the peal, calling Heywood's transposition of Thurstans's Four-Part. A photograph on the tower wall is believed to be of the peal band.



A photograph, at Ellesmere, believed to be the 1925 peal band

To mark the centenary of the 1925 peal and as a tribute to those local ringers, the present Ellesmere Tower Captain Peter Leigh arranged for a band to repeat the performance. Paul Jopp conducted the peal using the same composition.

The recent band must have had a more pleasant

experience than the 1925 ringers, as the bells were difficult to handle and had idiosyncratic tuning (the notes almost not in the right order). Since then, Peter Leigh has led a project to restore the ring, and mercifully, this Nicholson restoration included tuning at the Whitechapel Foundry.

The peal was well received by the Ellesmere public and it was a privilege to play a small part in this anniversary.

Nik Galton



2025 Centenary peal band (clockwise from front right: Rick Shallcross, Richard Clements, Steve Horton, Mike Wilshaw, Peter Furniss, Chris Pickford, Paul Jopp, Nik Galton)

Maurice Ingram

Many of you will know Maurice (Ingram) as both a friend and valued ringing companion. Some will also be aware that Mo has suffered a significant haemorrhagic stroke (brain haemorrhage) during the past weeks.

He was out and about around Market Drayton walking his beloved dog Molly when the incident occurred. He was rapidly transferred to the Stroke Unit at Stoke hospital for initial assessment and care. Since then he has been transferred to The Princess Royal Hospital, onto Ward 15. This is the stroke rehabilitation unit where he is undergoing physiotherapy to assist in his recovery. He has lost some left side function but his speech and wry humour remain. Still very much the Maurice we all know and love.

Bill Deason has been an absolute rock in supporting Mo from the start of this. He has been involved both in practical help and the logistics of visiting from the start. Thanks Bill.

Further assessment is planned this week to devise a plan for his ongoing rehabilitation and I'm sure we will all wish him well with this. He remains in good spirits and the visits of his ringing friends and wider family have been a real help to him. If you can, and want to please do visit him.

I'd suggest liaising with Bill in case he is moved out of PRH.

John Neal (Noj)

Very best wishes to Maurice from all of us. *Ed.*