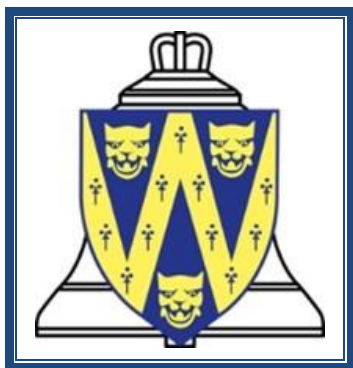




Shropshire Association of Church Bell Ringers

Newsletter – November 2025

Hello,

Nothing to do with ringing, but I couldn't resist putting in a picture of the late autumn colour in our garden!

October was a busy month for the Association: we have reports on two well-supported events.

November offers training, practices and one of Vicki's super quizzes – not to mention a fashion show at Newport.

Happy ringing,

Gill Glover, Editor



Quarterly Ringing Practice and Meeting – Saturday, 11th October

The practice and meeting at **High Ercall** on the **11th October**, attracted about thirty members. Tony Freemont led the ringing, which included lots of rounds and call changes, Plain Hunt on 7, Grandsire Triples, Plain Bob Major and Cambridge Surprise Major. It was good to ring such a variety, and to be joined by several newish ringers, including one of our juniors.

Our practice was in competition with generous refreshments provided by Chris and Judy Yates, and the High Ercall band.

Our Master, Tony, also chaired a short business meeting. We welcomed five new members: Coralie Thornton from Oswestry, and from Whitchurch Tony Kowalewski, Helene Loam, Anne-Maria Taylor and Paul Welburn.

The Committee are proposing a small but significant change to the Bell Restoration Fund Rules. At present any request for grant aid for a project of over £2,000 requires specifications and estimates from two companies. Andrew Gordon has pointed out that it is now very difficult to get inspections

from bell engineers for small projects, and they generally charge for visits. In view of this, and inflation, it is now proposed that projects costing at over £4,000 should require a second specification and estimate. A clarification to the status of ring-fenced funds within the account has been submitted by David Beckwith. These changes will be circulated to the membership and voted on at the January AGM.

Nik Galton ran the raffle, which raised £52 for the bell fund. Winners were: Phil Murphy, Josephine Wrin, Madeline Harris, Chris Yates, Nik Galton and Vicki Sivess.

Gill Glover

Tower Leaders' Get Together

Saturday, 18th October at Hodnet

John and Karen Powell very kindly hosted our tower leaders get together at Hodnet, when we had to move from Edgmond church because of a failure of the heating there. Representatives from Oswestry, St Martins, Baschurch, Meole Brace, Shrewsbury, High Ercall, Market Drayton, Hodnet, Newport, Edgmond, Lilleshall and Dawley met to discuss a variety of issues that affect us all.

Matt Lawrence opened the first session with some ideas about recruitment. It's important to have a clear focus: a campaign to recruit a whole new band will be different from building on an existing band. If you already have some ringers you need to have their support and involvement. Teaching and integrating new ringers into the band will take a long time and will impact on any existing practice. He discussed various forms of communication and advertisement.

Simon Rice then described building a new band at Dawley, over several years and, initially, with help from Darren Swancott. They taught beginners in separate sessions, which we all agreed was more effective than a couple of short goes during normal practice.

On the subject of retaining ringers Michael Carding observed that it is important to develop a friendly culture among tower members. Outings, parties, swap shops and above all time to chat and get to know one another are all valuable.

Several tower representatives observed that they didn't feel experienced enough to teach bell handling. We agreed that it was unreasonable to expect all tower captains to teach - they are doing a good job in keeping practices and service ringing going. There is a shortage of teachers, both locally and nationally. The ART offers a course, together with ongoing mentoring, to develop new teachers and give them confidence. Some who had done the course observed that it also makes you focus on your own ringing, particularly any weaknesses.

We moved on to ideas for running a practice, covering planning, content and record keeping. Then we broke for refreshments and more chat in small groups, before moving upstairs to try out some exercises that add variety to call change ringing, followed by some simple aids to improve bell control and move towards method ringing. Paul Lewis produced a hilarious game which had us pacing out our 'places' on the floor.

Our last talk session began with Michael Carding, running through the celebratory programme for the first half of the Centenary year, especially some of the planned activities that rely on towers taking the initiative. There will be plenty going on to help develop both culture and ringing among bands in the Association.

Finally, Tony Freemont explained the current Church of England safeguarding strategy, and its requirements for church volunteers, including bell ringers. He had organised a meeting with Sarah Fullard, who is responsible for delivering safeguarding training in the Lichfield diocese. He asked for

questions and concerns that he would raise with her. It was clear that a wide range of views, and understanding, pertains across our Association towers.

We ran over time, and broke up, still exchanging ideas and opinions. Although there are no easy solutions, we hope that getting together at least helps tower leaders to feel less isolated. Very many thanks to John and Karen for making the bells and church available, and for their generous refreshments.

Gill Glover, training@sacbr.org.uk

In November

Young Ringers' Practice

Our last meet for this year will be at **Meole Brace, on Saturday 8th November**, from 2.30 till 4.30 pm. All our young members, as well parents and tower leaders, are invited to join us. Why not make a day of it, and stay in town for the Quiz Night that follows!

Let's Get Quizzical!

Quiz Night this year will be held at **Meole Brace Memorial Hall from 7pm on Saturday, November 8th**. Teams of six (approx) will be asked questions on a range of subjects such as history, science and general knowledge.

Hopeless at quizzes? It doesn't matter! Come along and have fun with friends, learning new facts. And, since I'll have the answer sheet, I shall expect you all to make me feel as knowledgeable as Amol Rajan and Clive Myrie combined.

Come as part of a team, or team up with others on the night. The cost is £10 a head, payable on the door or in advance to me. The price includes sandwiches and cakes. Please bring cash for the bar.

Let me know if you're planning to come (socsec@sacbr.org.uk) so we know how many to cater for. I hope to see lots of you there.

Meole Brace Memorial Hall, Upper Road, Shrewsbury SY3 9JP. Doors open at 6:30. Car park on Church Road.

Vicki Sivess

Association of Ringing Teachers

Module 1 Course, for ringers wishing to explore the teaching of bell handling

The ART course will be **on Sat 29th November**, at **Edgmond**. This will be the Module 1 course, which is on teaching bell handling.

This course is now full. Paul Lewis will be in touch with those who have booked, to confirm the arrangements.

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

Fashion Show and Shopping Event

The Newport ringers are currently fundraising for work needed on our bells.

We are hosting a ladies' fashion show and shopping event on Friday 28th November. You will recognise some of the Newport ringers modelling at the event! Clothing from major retailers, including Marks and Spencer, is up to 75% off RRP. The show is being held at the Parish Room, New Street, Newport. Doors open at 7pm, with the show starting at 7.30pm.

Tickets are £10 which includes a complimentary glass of prosecco or juice. They are available from Kathryn 07749935445 or email newportbellringers@gmail.com

Ringling Memorabilia

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.

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.

Many thanks,

Vicki Sivess