



Shropshire Association of Church Bell Ringers

Newsletter – February 2025

Hello,

Over fifty members attended the AGM at Ellesmere, despite the Arctic weather. All the Officer posts were filled this year, and the happy, friendly atmosphere left the new Committee feeling upbeat about the year to come. A detailed report follows. Next month we have our New Members' meet, which we hope will be as much fun as last year.

Gill Glover, Editor

New Members' Morning **Lilleshall, Saturday 8th February, 10 – 12.30**

41 new members have been elected to the Association in the last year: Catherine and Doug Slater (Calverhall); Danielle Ashfield (Ellesmere); Kevin Ottaway (Forton); Beatrice Cains, Louise Hughes, Roger Higgins and Mark Howlett (High Ercall); Lisa West (Lilleshall); Julie Platzer (Market Drayton); Diane and Duncan Davis, Eva and Martin Roberts and Fae Stokes (Newport); Victoria Dombrov, Ken King, Tracy and Will Swinnerton (Norton-in-Hales); Andrew and Sam Davies, Stella Doyle, Jenny Gray, Matt Leak, Ann Peacock, Jeanne Spinks and Pippa Tucker (Oswestry); Chris and Julie Basson (Shawbury); Lisa Grimmatt and Jackie Morris (Shrewsbury Meole Brace); Alfie and Kai Boulton, Bev Jones, Penny McDowell, Amanda and David Phillipson and Max Symons (Telford Dawley); Judy Bailey (Tibberton); Pauline Goring and Ian Wiltshire (Overton).

You are all warmly invited to come to our event at Lilleshall, and have a go on this easy-going ring of 6. We hope you will enjoy getting to know some more ringers, including committee members, and find out what the Association has to offer you. We will have your membership certificate and welcome pack, books to browse, and Association badges for sale.

You are very welcome to come with a friend or your ringing teacher, and of course parents are welcome to accompany junior members.

Quarterly and Annual General Meetings Ellesmere, Saturday 11th January

Open ringing before the AGM ensured Ellesmere's generously sized ringing room was filled to capacity. It was great to see several completely new faces, and gratifying that many improvers returned to take advantage of different bells. We must be getting something right - that, or they're gluttons for punishment!

The popularity of the meeting meant that a *lot* of 'Rounds on Eight' was rung, allowing up to four less experienced people to catch hold, most with a minder, bolstered by older hands in-between.

Incidentally, my thanks especially to those who stand by and support the 'newbies'. This makes my running the practice much easier and ensures that everyone gets the best chance at success in an unfamiliar tower.

There was also a plain course and touch to cater for the Grandsire ringers; two courses of Stedman, the first of which included two ringers who are very new to it; and a creditable course of Yorkshire.

Finally, I must add my thanks to everyone for being patient. Sorry if you didn't get to ring your favourite method. It really was that busy, but *do* remember to join us at the next suitable Association practice. And if you can't see one planned - do ask - it *can* be organised.

Nik Galton

The service was taken by the Revd Preb Pat Hawkins, herself a lapsed ringer, who began by suggesting we may have been foolhardy to come to Ellesmere the day after the coldest night of the year, to a church notoriously hard to heat. Some lively singing helped to keep us warm, including *We Three Kings*, it being the season of Epiphany. The short address focused on the gifts of the kings, linking gold to ringing in joyful celebration, myrrh to the marking of more sombre occasions and frankincense to the way the bells may remind people of the church's, and therefore God's, presence in their community.

Lunch followed and our Ellesmere hosts did us proud. An inexhaustible supply of hot drinks accompanied a variety of sandwiches and other savoury items, and many home-made sweet treats.

Biff Patterson

The business of the combined quarterly and annual meetings followed, chaired briskly and humorously by Sue Dancey. A good number of new members were elected, and certificates to mark 25 years' membership were awarded to several others. The Committee had the great pleasure of awarding the St Alkmund's Cannons to Ann Williams. The Cannons are given to an individual who has made an outstanding contribution to the Association: in Ann's case she has served as CC representative for some years and is a much-valued committee member, but the award was made especially for her work master-minding the planning and organisation for our centenary celebrations next year.

Proposed changes to the General Rules were voted through with little discussion. Officers' Reports followed, which will be published in full in the next Annual Report. The following people were elected to lead the Association this year.

Ringling Master	Tony Freemont
General Secretary	Sue Dancey
Treasurer	David Beckwith
Bell Adviser	Andrew Gordon
Training Officer	Gill Glover
Report Editor	Madeline Harris
Membership Secretary	Biff Patterson
Social Secretary	Vicki Sivess
Safeguarding Officer	Tony Freemont
Librarian/Archivist	Gill Glover
Webmaster	Madeline Harris
Committee Member	Nik Galton
Central Council Representatives	Paul Lewis, Ann Williams
Lichfield Diocesan Mobile Belfry Trustees	Tony Freemont, Biff Patterson
Independent Examiner (of finances)	Beter Bruty

Tony Freemont explained a change to Lichfield Diocese policy on safeguarding: the diocese is now asking all tower leaders to undertake the Level 3, Leadership, course in the Church of England's scheme.

Ann Williams outlined bookings already made for next year's Centenary, and asked us to reserve the dates. The most important are the Dinner at Hawkstone Park on Friday, 15th May, and the anniversary service and tea at St Chad's on Saturday, 25th July.

The raffle raised £104 for the bell fund. In the last 100 Club draw of the twelve month period, winners were Biff Patterson, Jad Bienek, Dawn Offen and Ann Williams.

Training Morning **Edgmond, Saturday 8th March, 10 – 12.30**

The next Association training morning will be held at Edgmond, on 8th March. At our last meet, we invited students to nominate their choice of what they would like to learn and practise. This proved very successful and popular, so we will do the same again. Places are limited, so please get in touch, with your request, so that we can ensure we have enough experienced ringers to give you a worthwhile morning.

Training is one of the things I think this Association does well. Along with providing generous refreshments, of course. We want to thank all those who have baked and served the goodies, as well as all the willing helpers who make up bands or 'stand behind', making the training effective. As a learning opportunity, training mornings are far more useful than our quarterly meetings, and I would urge anyone who wants to progress their ringing to come along this year.

Training mornings are booked for Meole Brace in May, Moreton Corbet in July, and Edgmond is planned for November. In addition, we hope to run an event for our young ringers to get together. I would like to organise a forum for tower leaders and teachers to exchange ideas for effective training, and perhaps put some of them into practice together. I have been teaching ringing for more years than I care to remember, but I still like to glean new ideas from other tutors. And I especially want to encourage newer ringers who may be faced with running a tower or building up a band.

Do, please, give us feedback on what you have found helpful, and what training you would like to see.

Gill Glover

National 12 Bell Competition Qualifier Shrewsbury, Saturday 22nd March

This is a 'heavy' year for the National 12 Bell Competition, with Qualifiers at Beverley, Liverpool Pierhead, Shrewsbury and Rotherham, and the final in June at St Mary Redcliffe, Bristol. The test piece is a touch of Stedman Cinques, and the seven teams drawn at St Chad's, Shrewsbury are: Birmingham, Chilcompton, Exeter, Hursley, Portsmouth, Towcester and Truro.

We shall be busy serving breakfasts and teas in the church hall. Anyone is very welcome, who would like to come and hear some excellent ringing – and perhaps consume cake or even help with the washing up!

Monthly Surprise Major Practice

Our monthly Surprise Major Practice will be held at Wem on Friday, 21st February at 7.30.

The ringing is great fun and the after ringing social activities are great too. Please come and invite your friends along. We are not restricted to SACBR ringers, the more the merrier.

We will ring Cambridge and Yorkshire as standard learning for beginners and for those wishing to progress – 5 spliced, Bristol, Lessness and Pudsey. London is coming soon.

See you there.

Tony Freemont