



S A C B R 1926 – 2026 Newsletter - September

It was a joy to hear about the success of our August event. Michael Carding organised an excellent day out, which combined walking with ringing on a variety of bells, including the Lichfield Diocesan Mobile Belfry, pictured right. More than fifty people joined in what was evidently a very happy occasion. Michael has provided a vivid summary of the day, which has some interesting statistics.

Our next event is an Open Towers day. If you enjoy visiting local towers, a whole lot of them will be available on the 12th – and no walking required this time! Details below.

Happy Ringing.

Ed.



Edwina Smart

We are very sad to report the death of Edwina Smart, for many years a stalwart of the Baschurch band, and wife of Paul. Edwina died on 22nd August after a short illness. Paul has sent the following:

‘Following the completion of the augmentation to 6 bells in 1998, I suggested to Edwina that she would be most welcome to join our team. After some consideration she agreed and I started to teach her in early 1999. She quickly progressed from call changes to method ringing, including Stedman Doubles, and joined the SACBR in 2000.

She rang her first quarter peal in 2000 and then regularly rang in quarters during the following years. She has also been a regular ringer at All Saints, Great Ness, and Ruyton X1 Towns, and rang for weddings at Leaton and Myddle.

Sadly on 7th August she was taken ill and passed away on Saturday 22nd. May she rest in peace.’

Paul Smart

SATURDAY 15TH AUGUST 2026

SACBR CENTENARY 1926 STYLE OUTING

The gathering was at St Milburga, Beckbury, where tower captain Andrew Gordon was there to greet us and make sure everyone got a ring. This included several early learners who, ringing solo, grabbed all four towers and the mobile belfry during the day. There was a buzz of anticipation in the air as we all prepared for this unique experience.



Right on schedule, at 10.30am, twenty nine of us left the church, through the graveyard, over a stile and onto a footpath that led to the Cross Britain Way. This was our route westwards along a narrow lane with the main group protected by front markers and back markers wearing hi-viz jackets. After over an hour we heard the faint welcome sound of St Mary's bells at Sutton Maddock. There were some ringers who were not walking but travelling in cars. They stayed behind to ring us out and down and got there ahead at the next tower to ring up and us in. This was a delightful bonus for the intrepid walkers.

Sutton Maddock at noon provided rest, ringing and refreshments in abundance thanks to the Sutton Maddock team and the Shrewsbury Food Hub. After a group photo we were on our way again with three extra walkers, across wide harvested fields heading north to Kemberton. Around the middle of this section we saw hares and buzzards, climbed several challenging stiles and waded through maize with a long draft. Once again the bells summoned us to Kemberton with the twin delights of St Andrew's bells and the Masons Arms.

At 2.45pm, with the sun high and the temperature rising, we faced another four mile trek to Shifnal. Our two youngest ringers, Ryan and Josh, hit the front, finding the route along The Monarch's Way beside Evelith Mill. The last mile was easy walking on tarmac surfaces and we were called home by the advance party and the bells of another St Andrew. Along with others I was exhausted and content merely to grab both rings and collapse with tea and cake.



Up the tower they had been busy earlier, ringing for a wedding. Down in the spacious church yard the mobile team, led by our Ringing Master Tony Freemont, had been busy all afternoon. First they had assembled the bells, then engaged with a string of people who wanted to know more about our hobby and “have a go”. When the pilgrims arrived



the emphasis changed and between us we managed some respectable changes, even methods. During the tour itself the ringing had been simple and inclusive, with lots of middle-ranking ringers and early learners. Not much method to our madness!

34 people walked at least one stage with 22 completing the eleven miles. Add in Duncan on his bike and two dogs plus all those ringing but not walking, walking but not ringing and many offering support. The total number involved on the day was over fifty, several in period costume. The age of trekking ringers ranged from 9 to 77 while at Shifnal there was a four-year-old in the tower and John MacLean ringing at over ninety. We climbed 7 stiles, visited 4 church towers (no lockouts!) and 1 pub, sold 2 zines, rang 1 mobile belfry and broke 1 stay. There were lots of smiles, chat, new friends, refreshments, enthusiasm for ringing and tired bodies. We left Beccbury in 18°C and arrived at Shifnal five minutes early at 4.25pm in 23°C sunshine. The contributions raised £256 of which £140 has gone to the host towers, £16 to the Food Hub and £100 to the mobile belfry.

This is the latest in SACBR monthly specials to celebrate the Centenary. We have tried to be inclusive and to use these events to reach out to the wider public. For those of us who rang and walked it was an enjoyable experience, a great feel of “togetherness” and an outing that will be remembered for a long time. It is also evidence of a truth which I have held for many years. The secret of recruitment and retention, and therefore the future of our hobby, lies not just in tackling the next method but in creating a culture of bonding and fun. There is more opportunity for both during the remainder of the Centenary Year: Open Towers, Ceilidh, Quarter Peal month and Carol Service. See You There!



Michael Carding

1926-style Outing by Josh

Really lovely tune produced by the bells
In a conversation someone told me
bells cost £20-30,000!!!!
Never a missed beat by the ringers
Great views from the hill tops
Inquisitive people always asking questions
Normally 6-8 ringers ringing at a time
Great fun come and try

*(Joshua, aged 9, rang at every tower and
loved the mobile mini-ring! Ed.)*



Work at St Chad's, Shrewsbury

Work on the bells and frame at St Chad's has been completed in August by White's of Appleton. The two smallest bells have been swapped over and each re-hung in the pit formerly occupied by the other bell. These are the treble of 12, cast in 1914, and the extra treble, cast and installed in 1999 to complete a 16 cwt front 10. The swap has restored the 12 to its original lay-out. The extra bell now has its rope dropped between bells 11 and 12, an arrangement that several towers have adopted to fit in an extra bell. This bell would not, of course, be needed to ring the heavy 12. The work provided an unusual opportunity to compare the profiles of the old and new bells, hoisted side by side.

We have also had some bracing installed to stiffen the frame around bell 10, and two clappers have been re-bushed. We are very grateful for grant aid from the SACBR Bell Restoration Fund.



*The 1914 treble, left, and
the millennium bell, right.*

Hodnet Ladies

Due to holidays, cricket, surgery and other events, and entirely without planning, we found ourselves with a ladies' band for a wedding at St Luke's last Saturday. They rang call changes before and after, with the inevitable refreshments!

As a matter of interest, we have a photograph in the tower of a band of eight ladies in 1967, teenagers to those of mature years, all from Hodnet.



The ringers above are: Heather Vernon, Calverhall; Karen Powell, Hodnet; Helen Charnock, Hodnet; Chris Fraser, Shawbury; Alice Turner, Hodnet; Claire Unsworth, Stanton; Sarah Riley, Hodnet; Sue Perry, Calverhall.

The SACBR Centenary Zine

This is a miniature magazine combining art (Si Rice) and poetry (Michael Carding). There are two versions : full size at 20 guineas (£21) or the smaller one at £10. All profits to SACBR to support the mobile belfry.

This is a limited edition of 100 and each copy is personalised. Sales have already raised about £550 and they will be on display and sale at all centenary events throughout the year.

For more information and to place an order: michaelcarding@btinternet.com

Si Rice, Michael Carding



Notable among the ladies of 1967:- Mrs Gee, wife of our Rector, Rev. Arthur Gee, and daughter Rachel; Mrs Sisley, wife of the Stoke Heath prison Chaplain; and, of course, Mair Mothershaw. The girls were a couple of years younger than me, so would have been 14 or so.

John Powell

In September

Open Towers, Saturday 12th September

Dear SACBR member, we are just 3 weeks away from our first Open Towers Day for many years. I hope you will find it fun and interesting. This is part of our centenary celebrations.

It is a real opportunity to ring at 19 of our towers, some of which you may not have rung at previously and others that are not usually available. The route is along the

M54/A5 corridor starting out near Staffordshire and ending up in Shrewsbury. The itinerary for the day is:

Boningale – St Chad	WV7 3BY	09.00-09.45
Tong – St Bartholomew	TF11 8PW	09.30-10.30
Shifnal – St Andrew	TF11 9AB	10.00-11.00
Kemberton	TF11 9LI	10.30-11.30
Ryton	TF11 9NY	11.00-12.00
Beckbury	TF11 9DG	11.00-12.00
Stockton	TF11 9EF	11.30-12.30
Sutton Maddock	TF11 9NQ	11.30-12.30
Dawley – Holy Trinity	TF4 3NH	12.15-13.15
Wellington – All Saints	TF1 1DN	12.45-13.45
Wrockwardine – St Peter	TF6 5DG	13.15-14.00
Uppington – Holy Trinity	TF6 5HJ	13.30-14.15
Wroxeter – St Andrew	SY5 6PH	14.00-14.45
Atcham – St Eata	SY5 6QF	14.15-15.15
Upton Magna – St Lucia	SY4 4TZ	15.00-15.45
Meole Brace – Holy Trinity	SY3 9HF	15.30-16.30
Shrewsbury – St Mary Virgin	SY1 1DX	16.15-17.15
Shrewsbury – St Chad	SY1 1JX	17.00-18.00

Ring in as many or as few as you want.

You can find more about the towers on our website at <http://www.sacbr.org.uk/AssociationTowers.html>

There is no charge for SACBR members but as is usual when you ring at another tower, we ask you to make a donation on the day. The recommended amount is £10 for the whole day, payable to one of our Stewards at any of the towers or £1 per tower if you just want to ring at selected towers.

Could you also sign a visitors' book at each tower. These will be our permanent record for the day and hopefully will be a source of interest to ringers in our bicentenary year!

There are lots of hostelryes as you go around to whet your whistle or fill your tummies.

Please come and enjoy yourselves. Looking forward to a memorable day with friends.

Tony

Tony Freemont: SACBR Ringing Master

Next Training Morning – Saturday 26th September

Our next Training Morning will be held at **Kemberton** on **Saturday 26th September**, from 10.00 to 12.30. **This training morning is fully booked: apply for waiting list only.**

Calling All Tower Leaders, Teachers and Would-be Teachers

On **Saturday 24th October** we plan to hold a **half day meeting for tower leaders**. Last year a group of us met at Hodnet to discuss recruitment and retention, ideas for building a band, and safeguarding. Representatives came from Oswestry, St Martins, Baschurch, Meole Brace, Shrewsbury, High Ercall, Market Drayton, Hodnet, Newport, Edgmond, Lilleshall and Dawley.

Some of these members are regular attenders at SACBR practices or training, some not. It would be very interesting to hear how they have got on this year. This time I would like to focus on training, but, no doubt, some of last year's topics need a more thorough airing!

Please **let me know now** if you can support this event, and what subjects you want to discuss, and I will put together a programme.

On **Saturday, 28th November**, we will hold an **Association of Ringing Teachers Module 1 day course**. This is an introduction to teaching bell handling. It combines theory and advice with plenty of hands-on practice, in which attendees work in pairs or threes. There are 12 places available. Priority will be given to Association towers where there is currently no-one able to teach, or only one teacher. Details of how to book, cost, etc. will follow next month.

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

Autumn Ceilidh, Saturday October 17th

The autumn ceilidh will be held at Mereside Community Centre, Shrewsbury, SY2 6LH (<https://meresidecc.co.uk/>) on Saturday, October 17th. Doors open at 6:30, with dancing from 7pm to the music of The Devil's Chair Ceilidh Band. Hot food will be served.

Tickets are £15, to be paid by BACS or in cash on the night. Let me know on socsec@sacbr.org.uk if you are planning to attend.

A good dance needs a bar and the event has a licence. We are looking for a volunteer or two to be bar manager (s) for the evening. Could this be you and a friend to take on the challenge of buying the stock and serving the drinks and helping the event go with a swing? Please contact me if you are interested.

Vicki Sivess

Young Ringers for Ringing 2030 Launch 4th September 2026

We are launching the Young Ringers Hub at the CCCBR ACM on 4th September. It's a one stop shop for all young ringers, from school age to 30, comprising three sub sites – University Ringing, Under 18s, and the Library. Check it out on the Central Council website or get in touch at yr@cccbbr.org.uk



CCCBR Rugby 2026 Meeting papers now published

The agenda and meeting papers for the upcoming 2026 annual council meeting are now available to download from the Meeting Papers page on the CC website. Access open to all.

