

NEWS FROM THE GUILD

[visit the website at hdgb.org](http://hdgb.org)

January 2026

Peals of Celebration – ideas and inspiration for anniversary festivities in 2026

2026 marks a remarkable milestone — the 140th anniversary of the Hereford Diocesan Guild of Bellringers. This is a wonderful opportunity to honour our heritage, and to come together to ring our bells. Here are some planned events and ideas to help us celebrate this special year in style.

1. Anniversary Ringing <https://bb.ringingworld.co.uk/event.php?id=22351>

The actual anniversary of the Guild falls on **Monday 2nd March 2026**. It would be amazing to have general ringing, touches (perhaps even 140 changes in length!), quarter peals or peals recorded in as many of our towers as possible over the week.

Please add details of all your commemorative ringing throughout the year to Bellboard at
<https://bb.ringingworld.co.uk/event.php?id=22351>

If you'd like to ring a simple 140 changes of Plain Bob or Grandsire Doubles you can call a standard 120 and follow it by two bob leads.

There are a number of methods already named after people and places from within our Guild, you can visit <https://complib.org/> to find what you need, or, if you would like some help to identify a suitable method please contact Andrew, pealrecorder@hdgb.org

2. 140 Firsts <https://bb.ringingworld.co.uk/event.php?id=22372>

Throughout the year we want to keep a record of all the firsts achieved by our ringers and achieve at least 140 firsts. Everyone at any stage of their ringing journey can join in this challenge, please make sure the event is recorded on BellBoard and linked to the event we have created.

A “first” can be anything, first time ringing call changes, first time ringing for Sunday service, first time ringing on 10, first QP, first in a new method, first peal and any other first you can think of. Pictured is the first entry – congratulations Burghill!

Hereford Diocesan Guild — 140 'Firsts' - celebrating 140 years of the Hereford Diocesan Guild of Bellringers

1st January – 31st December 2026

Celebrate the 140th Anniversary of the HDGB by recording your 'firsts' on Bellboard.

This can be a 'first' ring for Sunday service or other significant occasion, or any 'firsts' in quarters, date touches or peals

Associated performances

Found 1 associated performances. [[Filter](#)]

3 Jan 2026	Burghill (St Mary the Virgin)	1260 Doubles (1m/1v)
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Performances associated with this event will not be printed together in *The Ringing World*. If you wish your performance to be printed, you should select "Send to RW" on each performance in the normal way.

3. 140 New Recruits

This target is clearly ambitious, but we need something to aim for, and the new recruits will hopefully convert to becoming guild members in time. All of us can encourage people to come along and give bellringing a go, we all know the benefits are enormous, as a hobby it ticks so many boxes, and it is within the capabilities of most. Encouraging towers to open their doors to the public, offering guided tours, bell handling demonstrations, and opportunities to try ringing is a fantastic way to engage communities and attract new recruits to the art.

4. Forthcoming Events

- **Saturday 9th May 2026 Guild Festival & Annual General Meeting – Hereford District**
- **Friday 12th June 2026 Guild Dinner**
- **Saturday 18th July 2026 Guild Competition Day, Bromyard District**
- **Saturday 3rd October 2026 – Tower Open Day**

Thank you

Many thanks to Ashley Smith who has designed the new logo we will be using throughout 2026, we hope you like it –



If you would like a copy of the logo to use on your documents/publicity for the coming year please contact your district secretary or contact@hdgb.org.

- Please share all our activities and photos with the Guild newsletter and website. Contact Fran Watkins, Guild Secretary guild_secretary@hdgb.org, Nicky Aubrey, Public Engagement Officer peo@hdgb.org or Nick Chapman, webmaster@hdgb.org

History at AGM

Some of you will have seen the history display at last year's AGM at Ross. We're hoping to do something similar again at this year's AGM in Hereford. If you would like to get involved, have any ideas for exhibits or have materials that could be used please get in touch with Fran – guild_secretary@hdgb.org.

District AGMs

Leominster, Ross, and Clifford & Kington Districts have already held their AGMs. The remaining Districts will be holding their AGMs shortly, and would love to see you there –

Saturday 17 th January	Church Stretton District	Condover	From 2.30pm
Saturday 24 th January	Hereford District	Burghill	From 2.00pm
Saturday 7 th February	Bridgnorth District	Much Wenlock	From 2.00pm
Saturday 7 th February	Ledbury District	Colwall	From 2.00pm
Saturday 21 st February	Bromyard District	To be confirmed	

JOIN US IN CELEBRATING

1350 YEARS OF HEREFORD DIOCESE: 676AD TO 2026

A Call to Ring Out 1350 Years of Faith

As the Diocese of Hereford prepares to celebrate an extraordinary milestone in 2026 – its 1350th anniversary – The Bishop of Hereford is asking bellringers across the diocese to play a special part in marking this remarkable occasion.

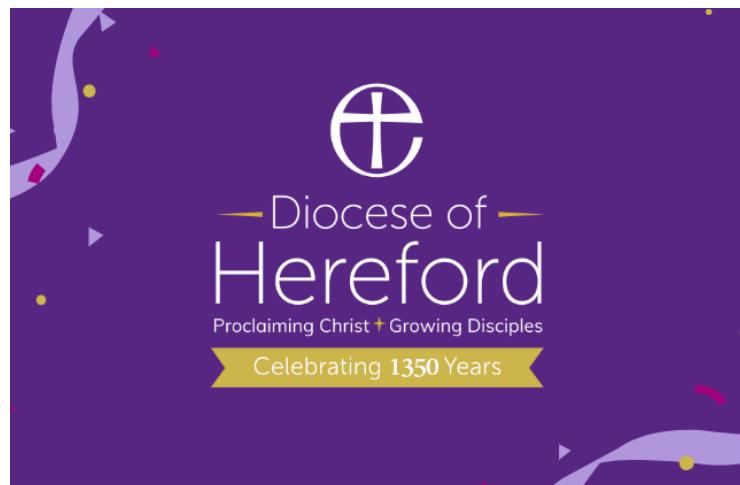
Founded in 676AD, the Diocese of Hereford stands as one of the oldest in England, covering the ancient kingdom of Mercia. For thirteen and a half centuries, the faithful people of this diocese have worshipped in churches whose foundations stretch back to Norman times and beyond, bells have played a significant role in calling the many communities to prayer and marking the rhythm of life across our landscape.

2026 is an opportunity to honour this rich heritage by creating a special commemorative peal that bell towers throughout the diocese can learn and ring during the anniversary year. A wonderful way to proclaim this jubilee with bells echoing across our villages, towns and hills proclaiming the faith for multiple generations.

The Rt Revd Richard Jackson, Bishop of Hereford, said: "As we celebrate our journey of faith, we look back, thankful for the firm foundations we have, and forward with confidence for those who will come after us, continuing to look for God at work in our communities and confidently proclaiming Christ, transforming lives."

The anniversary year will feature an inspiring programme of events, including celebration services at Hereford Cathedral and St Laurence's Church, Ludlow; special pilgrimages following in the footsteps of saints such as Milburga, Dyfrig, and Eadfrith; and Hereford Cathedral's Year of Storytelling, featuring a landmark exhibition of The Hereford Gospels.

Bellringers are encouraged to consider what form a commemorative peal might take – whether a new composition or an adaptation of traditional methods – that would be accessible to towers of varying abilities across the diocese, ensuring that bells ring out from our ancient churches in celebration.



Renewing your membership

An amazing 80% of members have already renewed their membership for 2026 online via membermojo - this is fantastic, thank you. But, for those members who still prefer the traditional method of paying their District Treasurer this is still very much possible and you are all most welcome to continue paying in this way.

Several members have had minor issues when going through the online renewal process but the problems were very easily solved by a phone call or email to Fran, 07702 799082 guild_secretary@hdgb.org. If you do have any questions at all, or are unsure just what to do please get in touch.

Safeguarding

The Guild is committed to ensuring it meets its safeguarding responsibilities. Who is responsible for what, can be a little confusing.

For District/Guild officers, the Guild is responsible for ensuring DBS checks are in place and training has been done for certain roles - those who are leading/running practices and/or ringing on behalf of the District/Guild. This includes but is not limited to District: practices; training/educational sessions; meetings, and Guild: practices; training/educational sessions; meetings; and recruitment events.

We, of course, are dedicated to encouraging everyone to complete all relevant training the Diocese wants for its volunteers, **but when it comes to individual towers, this is the responsibility of the PCC and PSO (Parish Safeguarding Officer).**

The Church of England would like the following positions to have the following training:

- **Bellringers** – Basic Awareness (online OR face to face)
- **Tower Captains/Ringing Masters** – Basic Awareness, Foundation (online OR face to face) and Domestic Abuse (online only)
- **Tower Captains/Ringing Masters of Market Towns/Teaching hubs** – Leadership Training (face to face only – see diocese safeguarding webpage for dates - <https://www.hereford.anglican.org/parish-support/safeguarding/safeguarding-training/>)

The Diocese has given me permission to lead Basic Awareness and Foundation Courses to our members, so if a band of ringers would like this training face to face, then please get in touch and we can discuss a date.

The Diocese safeguarding team also has appointed a Safeguarding Trainer. I have been told by the administrator that they will be looking at providing a Saturday Leadership Course for our District/Guild Officers that require it, so I will keep you posted as I know more.

Jason, safeguarding@hdgb.org

Please consider printing out a copy of this newsletter to put in your tower, or to share with ringers who don't receive emails

Bromyard and District Annual Bell Ringing Outing 22 November 2025

It was at the end of our last tower outing in 2024, when as a novice I suggested ringing in Wiltshire and Gloucestershire having recently moved from the area and suddenly I was coaxed into arranging this year's tower outing!

So, with help from Anthony Ellis who contacted and arranged access to all the churches we rang at, and from Adam Crocker who organised our ringing on the day, I arranged an outing to the following churches:

Kemble – All Saints Church with ground floor ringing on 6 bells. 9 cwt in G.

Malmesbury – St Peters and St Pauls Abbey in a detached tower with 8 bells. 11-0-8 in F#.

Oaksey – All Saints Church with ground floor ringing on 6 bells. 9-3-12 in G#.

Cirencester Watermoor Holy Trinity Church with ground floor ringing on 8 bells. 19-2-22 in F.

Cirencester St John Baptist Abbey with 12 bells. 27-1-16 in C# Inc flat 6th.



Waiting to enter Cirencester St John Baptist Abbey.

We set off on Saturday 22nd November 2025 on a very wet and rainy day which did not let up all day, but it most certainly did not dampen our spirits. It was a good selection of towers, all new to most of us and not too much travelling.

We had a mixture of ringing expertise, and Adam ensured everyone had the opportunity to ring at each of the towers either in a peal with or without call changes or to ring a method. We ended with the prestigious 12 bell parish church in the middle of Cirencester and of course this had the most steps to the tower ringing chamber. We were joined by Canon Graham Morris, who came to see our ringing in action and John Hodges's daughter Kay Hodges, who is Team Captain at Cirencester, joined in ringing with us.



The end of the day at Cirencester St John Baptist. From left to right – Bill Bellis, Nick Cronin, John Hodges, Ian and Gill Tait standing behind Canon Graham Morris, Andrea Chapman, Anthony Ellis, Sue Robinson our Guild Master with Linda Taylor in front, then me Julia Dyche at the back and Adam Crocker our Team Captain in pink, Scott Orr and David and Karen Parker on the right. Although not in the picture Clare Bellis and Tula (their beautiful dog and our tower mascot) and Kay Hodges, Tower Captain for Cirencester also joined us on the day.

We saw some beautiful towns and villages and enjoyed a great lunch at The Thames Head near Cirencester. A good day was had by all.

Thanks, Julia Dyche.

Get Involved

We love to be able to tell you about what is happening in the Guild, but some of you may be starting to think – it is always the same people and places that we hear about. So, please get in touch and tell us your news, thoughts and ideas.

If you feel in the doldrums with your ringing, or don't even know where to start to make change or progress happen, try going to another practice, or ringing with new people. Helping someone else to an achievement can be just as rewarding as your own personal goals.

Ringers always need help from one another, we each need to find a band where we feel happy and comfortable, and can ring to the best of our ability, making sure that when we ring together we always try to achieve the best possible ringing according to our ability and the occasion.

Notices

Since our last newsletter we have sadly lost several members and retired ringers through death.

We remember the following who have rung with us in the past:

- ❖ Shirley Rowlands (Eardisland)
- ❖ John Bartley (Honorary Life Member, Welshpool)
- ❖ Rev. David Eve (past member Cleobury Mortimer)

May they Rest In Peace

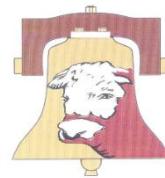


Hereford Ringing Course

The 2026 Hereford Ringing Course will run from Thursday, 9th April to Sunday, 12th April. It will be held at the Royal National College for the Blind in Hereford.

Application forms and the course programme are now available to download from
<https://www.herefordringingcourse.org.uk/>

Applications will remain open until 31st January, so don't delay if you'd like to apply



Ringing for weddings - no interest????

In the last issue we asked you to let us know how much your tower charges for weddings. **We only received three responses.** Thank you to Herbie, Val and Dave for getting in touch.

Sadly, we can't make much progress with a tower response of less than 2%.

The Guild will work best if we work together and support one another, so if you are able to email contact@hdgb.org to let us know your rates, we will try to work out an average, which you might find useful when discussing fees with your church or PCC.

Ringers in the Community - Bromyard and District Belltower – Christmas Tree

Bellringing is such an asset to a community, as part of the church, heralding events and celebrating weddings – so it seems absolutely right to join in the annual Christmas Tree Festival in our town along with other local groups and activities.

We started planning in October with an aim to represent the 7 towers in our district. If you look closely you can see the bunting around the tree spells out Bromyard, Pencombe, Stoke Lacy, Whitbourne, Bredenbury, Much Cowarne and Brockhampton. Luckily our team includes a talented calligrapher, a crocheter and lots of enthusiasm.



We have a tower 'mascot' Tula the cockapoo – who is our 'star' on the top. She has been coming to the tower since she was a puppy so has grown to tolerate the rather unusual human behaviour and is much loved.



The festival included 70 trees which have now been taken down but the bell tree was moved to our ringing chamber to bring even more joy to our practice nights and seasonal ringing.

Living Heritage in the UK

Living Heritage application (UNESCO)

The UK recently joined the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH).

The Central Council has set up a Task Group to co-ordinate a submission to create inventories of living heritage in the UK. A pre-requisite is that the application must be made with the prior consent of the community of practice, i.e. the ringing fraternity. Therefore, they are asking for your help – please sign the petition at <https://cccrb.org.uk/heritage/> to show your support

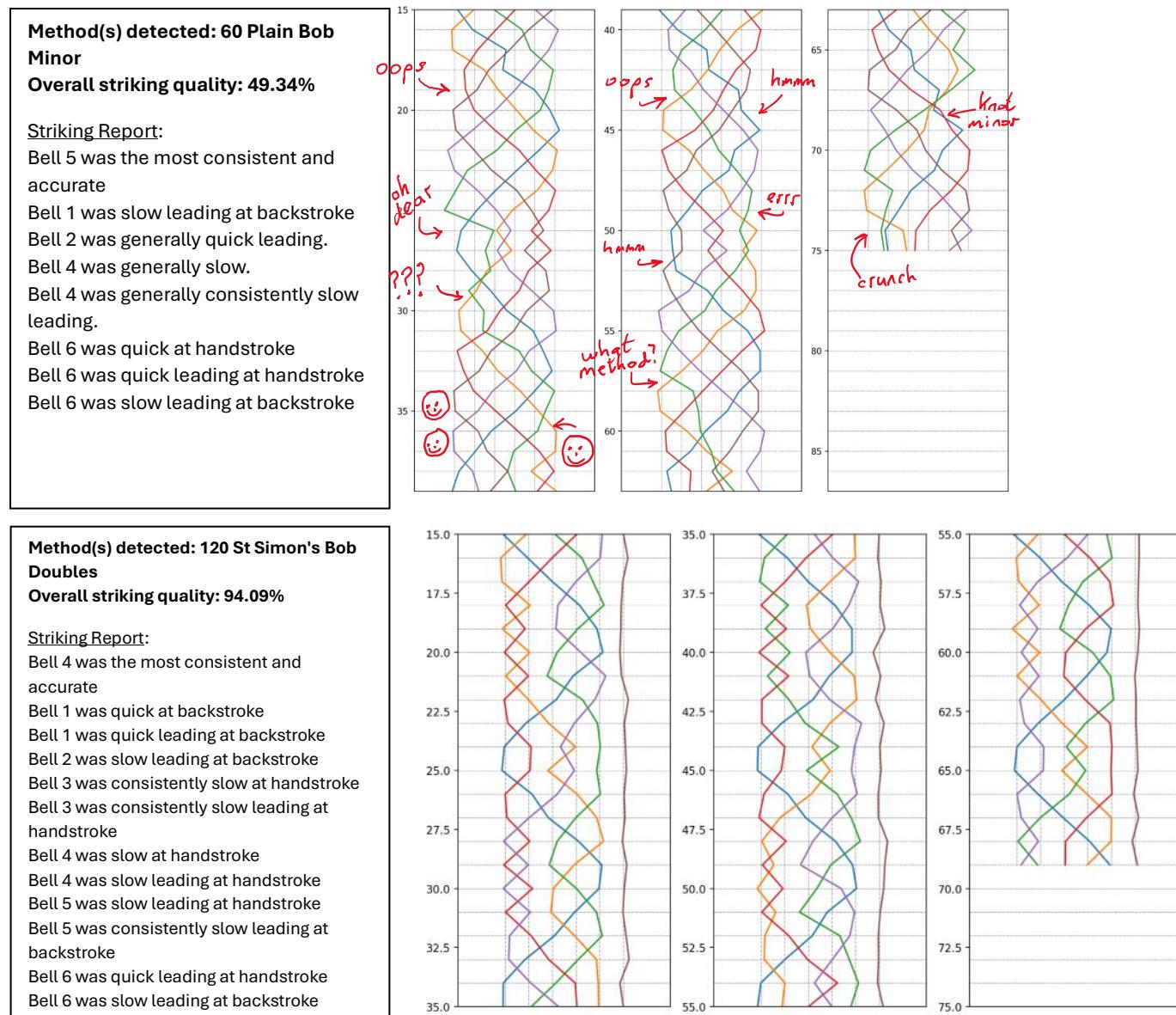
We all know that our fantastic ringing culture and heritage should be celebrated, and it something that we should try to promote and protect as often as we can. Think of other traditional crafts, skills and activities that are now recognised and highly valued, or others that have almost been lost – surely ringing is just as important? To find our more go to - <https://livingheritage.unesco.org.uk/>

But what does BRENDA think?

Recently we surveyed ringers in the Ledbury District interested in developing their triples and major skills. One consistent theme was that people wanted the opportunity to improve their striking and concentrate on fewer methods rung well rather than crash on through a larger, complex portfolio.

As we thought about how to evolve our triples and major practices we reflected on how to get better at striking. Guidance barked from a frustrated conductor “Listen to it” is a good indication that we are creating more noise than music but it doesn’t provide the wayward ringer much of a clue as to how to improve. I feel sure that some of our ringers think every clunk and clash is down to them. There is perhaps an equal number convinced that the calamity is wholly explained by the other ringers. Relatively few of our experienced ringers are able to discern what’s not quite right and craft helpful pointers as to how to perfect the striking, especially if the ringing is uneven. Hence our conundrum. How could we objectively understand good ringing and work out how to improve?

Then we found BRENDA. “Bell REcording with Novel Data Analysis” (BRENDA) can be found <https://brenda.oekrice.com> and credit goes to the author Oliver Rice. This is what BRENDA made of a couple of our ringing efforts on a Ledbury District Outing recently.



To get this analysis we recorded the ringing using a digital recorder placed outside about 20m from the tower. We uploaded the CD quality recording to the web site (the Analyse Striking page). BRENDA's database had information about the bells at Mathon, both the number of bells and the frequency of the note of each. Next is some mathematical magic. From the recording starting with some even rounds, its data about the number of bells and frequency of each BRENDA can work out which bell is striking. BRENDA can also determine method and composition although this does depend on the performance having some resemblance to the method supposedly being rung. We discovered this when we tried to analyse an attempt at what we thought was Stedman Doubles that BRENDA couldn't recognise. The analysis includes a blue line representation of the ringing together with a summary of how each bell performed, an estimate of the overall striking quality and various graphs that show the accuracy of striking and consistency of each ringer.

Subjectively, we agreed with the striking quality assessment. We found this visualisation of the actual blue line incredibly helpful. We can see the late backstroke leads, half-hearted dodges, meandering whilst making rather approximate places, not getting to the back, and the trigger to the calamitous crunch as we collectively lurched off the line.

BRENDA is similar to other software e.g. HawkEar and Strikeometer. Having looked at the instructions and the technical requirements for each we found BRENDA very easy to use though have only really scratched the surface of its capabilities. We are exploring whether how we can use it for those with an interest in understanding and improving their striking and how as a District we might support Oliver Rice's endeavours to help us with that ambition.

Neil Toussaint, Ledbury District.

Save the Date! 4-6 September 2026

The 2026 Central Council AGM weekend takes place in Rugby, hosted by the Coventry Guild from Friday 4th to Sunday 6th September 2026 and is open to anyone wishing to attend, not just CCCBR Reps. The weekend's activities are open to all ringers, and the full programme will be published in due course. Keep an eye on the CCCBR website and social media for updates.

Friday 4th Sept	Saturday 5th Sept	Sunday 6th Sept
General ringing will be available at towers en route to Rugby. Routes will follow the main roads into Rugby. Evening ringing will be at St Andrew's, Rugby with a social event at the Benn Hall.	Welcome desk and registration Ringing World AGM. CCCBR AGM. Social event at the nearby Arnold House.	Service ringing at local churches, including a special bell themed service at Coventry Cathedral. Opportunities to support locals with ringing workshops in the early afternoon.

Booking for all elements of the weekend will be essential and more details will be published as they are confirmed. The booking and registration process will be accessible nearer the time.

Vicki Chapman, Deputy President, Central Council of Church Bell Ringers

Ross District

Several of the Guild Officers had a lovely afternoon visiting the Ross District AGM at Llangarron on 29th November. We had an opportunity to ring with Helen Shipton, the long-standing tower captain of Llangarron and were very interested to see the ringing chair that was specifically designed for her by the charity REMAP to enable Helen to continue ringing following a diagnosis of multiple sclerosis. Helen wrote an article about the ringing chair back in 2018 that was published in the Ringing World and can still be found at <https://remap.org.uk/stories/helen-keeps-bell-ringing/>

REMAP are an incredible charity, their mission is to improve the quality of life for people who experience short or long-term disability through infirmity, illness, or ageing. They do this by making and adapting equipment to meet the unique needs of individuals at no cost to them.

The equipment, produced by a team of dedicated volunteers, can help with day-to-day tasks such as mobility, personal care or eating. Or it can enable the client to pursue a hobby or ambition, such as participating in a sport or art activity.

We highly recommend that you visit their website <https://remap.org.uk/> - there may be someone you know that they could help, or you might consider supporting their work with a donation or with their £1 weekly lottery.

Helen has recently relinquished the role of tower captain as she is moving away from the area. A practice was held on 5th January as an opportunity to say farewell to Helen and to welcome Caroline Meller who has assumed the responsibilities of tower captain. We wish them both all the best for the future.

At the AGM we also welcomed Greg White who has taken on the role of District Secretary, with Mike Williams remaining as Ringing Master, Martin Thorne continuing as Treasurer and Sally Townsend becoming the new Management Committee Rep. Thanks to each of them for their work in the roles.

Clifford & Kington District

The AGM was held at Eardisland on 6th December. There were no changes to district officers other than Ian Price stood down as Management Committee Rep. having been in the role since 2016. Thank you, Ian. Tim Hollinghurst now takes over the role.

A provisional programme of District events has been agreed:

7th Feb **Almeley** 2.30-4pm

1st Aug **Whitney on Wye** 6.15-7.15

7th Mar **Kingsland** 2.30-4pm

and Eardisley 7.30-9pm

11th Apr **Staunton on Arrow** 7.30-9

5th Sept **Eardisland** 7.30-9pm

6th Jun **Clifford** 7.30-9pm

7th Nov **Dorstone** 2.30-4pm

4th July **Kings Pyon** 6.15-7.15 **and**

5th Dec **Presteigne** AGM 2.30pm

Dilwyn 7.30-9pm

Recruitment & Teaching Bell Handling

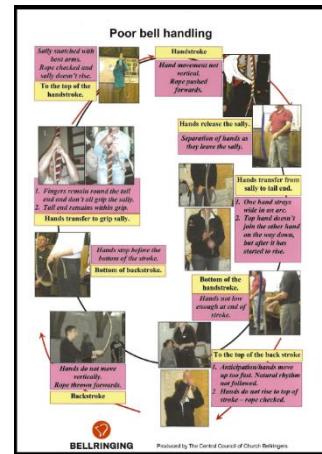
1) Online meeting

Following discussions at the October Management Committee Meeting, a 'mini-MCM' will be held online on Sat 31st January, 9.30am to discuss ideas and needs for recruitment in the districts. If you are not a member of the management committee but would like to take part please contact Fran contact@hdgb.org, 07702 799082 asap.

2) Handling posters



The Central Council has kindly provided the Guild with copies for the Good Handling/Bad Handling posters – a copy for each tower with ringers in the Guild. we are distributing these to the District Secretaries at the AGMs, so you should receive one in your tower soon. Contact your District Secretary or email contact@hdgb.org for more details.



A model bell (with standard or hastings stay options) is now also available for loan if you are having a tower open day or recruitment event, contact Fran for details

3) A reflection on Learning to Ring

My bellringing journey started with my daughter saying “Do you fancy bellringing?”. My initial reaction was that I would never keep to time, but I would give it a go.

Learning to ring when you are older brings its own challenges, not least a fear of what may go wrong. I stepped up to the bell for weeks not sure what that first pull would bring. It was a wonderful feeling the day I felt confident enough to just pull the bell and enjoy the ringing.

Caroline the bellringing Captain, and my fellow ringers have supported and encouraged me. Ringers from other towers too have generously given their time to help me.

It has been a full-on first year, but I have made new friends, seen a number of church towers and learned a lot about bells. I am looking forward to learning more in 2026.



Sheila Devlin, Eownphone

4) Central Council survey

The Central Council 'Recruit, Regain, Retain' group has recently launched a survey –

Are you involved in recruiting new ringers (and attracting back lapsed/"resting" ringers)? Or perhaps you'd like to do some recruiting but you don't know where to start, or would like some advice...? Would you find it useful to join a 'Community of Practice' of other people involved in recruiting ringers (at tower, cluster, branch, or guild/association level)? Please share your thoughts via the following short survey (which will only take a couple of minutes to complete)...

They would really appreciate as many ringers as possible completing the survey, please go to

<https://forms.gle/rFWMe2c18cp1TmDK9>

From The Ringing World – An Inspiring Image

This image by Jane Lynch featured as a Ringing World 'Image of the Week' in September.

The Yorkshire Tykes are the Yorkshire Association's youth ringing group and are a force to be reckoned with! They went on an outing to Liverpool and rang at both heavy rings of twelve in the city centre: the 41cwt Pier Head, and Liverpool Cathedral, the heaviest ring of bells in the world at a whopping 82cwt! Even more impressive, Jane reports that several of the young Tykes had a go at ringing the Cathedral tenor - it's big enough to scare off plenty of fully-grown-up ringers! The Ringing World is looking forward to seeing all the youth teams from around the country square up to the Tykes at the 2026 Ringing World National Youth Contest, which will be held in Nottingham in July. It's the best day in the ringing calendar!

If you've taken a fun, inspiring, interesting or beautiful photo connected with ringing, do share it with the Ringing World and you might see it in print soon!

(with grateful thanks to the Ringing World for the text and photo in this section)

The Yorkshire Association is one of the largest ringing associations in the country and, like our own Guild, much of the area is extremely rural. It is amazing to see how they have been able to build a young band of ringers – what can we do to encourage more young ringers?



Please send any feedback on this newsletter to news@hdgb.org. We'd also appreciate submission of any news, information or articles to news@hdgb.org

Please consider printing out a copy of this newsletter to put in your tower, or to share with ringers who don't receive emails

New Calendar & Ringing Book

Those of you who loved last year's Ringing Carpets calendar will be pleased to hear there is a new calendar for 2026 and an illustrated book too!

To order, you can visit the [Stoke St Milborough website](#) where Ashley Smith writes - we proudly present the **Ringing Carpets 2026 Calendar**, and the **100-ish Ringing Carpets** photo book. Professionally printed by VistaPrint with high-quality materials, they provide a photographic record of the wonders discovered by members of the [Ringing Carpets Facebook group](#) since its creation in 2023.

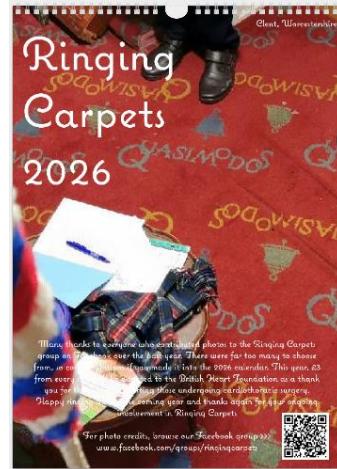


You can place your order(s) using this form <https://forms.gle/SYNkWXApfRF3ydw7>

£3 from each item you buy (plus any additional profits) will go to the [British Heart Foundation](#) as a thank you for the life-saving work they do to support those undergoing cardiothoracic surgery.

Putting together the calendar and the book has kept me focused and creatively engaged during the run up to my own mitral valve repair surgery which took place at Wolverhampton New Cross hospital at the end of November 2025. Many thanks to all of you who have made contributions to the group as it goes from strength to strength.

Ashley x



News from Bellboard & Facebook

We regularly check Bellboard and Facebook to see what has been happening around and about. Here is a round-up of some of the news and events over the past three months:

- Huge congratulations to **Caroline Priestley** who rang her first peal, half-muffled for Remembrance.
- Ringers at **Mathon** rang a half-muffled quarter of Grandsire Doubles for Remembrance Service that was described as a 'joy to ring'.
- There is a new mini-ring in the area, the **Llanllieni Mini Ring** has been at Leominster Priory with locals having lots of fun getting to know the new bells.
- Well done to **Broseley Bellringers** for their continuing fundraising efforts, they have now raised £72,531 towards their target of £132,362 – if you'd like to donate please visit <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/broseley-bells>
- As well as fundraising Broseley has a fabulous recruitment campaign underway on Facebook – brilliant!
- Congratulations to **Jason Walker** who is now an accredited ART teacher for Module 2
- A special peal was rung at Bromyard in memory of **Revd Dr Peter Newing**
- Congratulations to **Andrew Burdett, Steffi Ellis and Billie Banham-Jones** on achieving their Learning the Ropes Level 2 awards.
- Commemorative ringing took place for Harvest Festivals, Remembrance, Christmas and New Year

Letter to the Ringing World – cause for thought

In the Nov 14th edition of The Ringing World there was a letter to the Editor which described the problems experienced by a visitor from Ireland who had made arrangements to visit 8 towers on their practice nights:

'Unfortunately, four of the practices were no-shows, despite my having checked again just before I left Ireland. In two cases, the practice had been moved to a nearby tower; the other two simply didn't turn up. Checking on arrival wasn't possible, because three of the correspondents had given me an email address, and the other, an infrequently manned landline.... Yes, practices are often moved or cancelled. But when a visitor is expected, would it be possible for someone to be at the tower door to tell the visitor what's happened and, when appropriate, where to find the band? Or leave a note pinned to the door?'

Knowing that the visitor had intended to visit two towers in Herefordshire we contacted her and she wrote back to say that whilst at one Herefordshire tower she had been made very welcome and enjoyed an excellent practice, the other

'was the one with the intermittent landline. On the only time I managed to get through to him, which was about a week in advance, he said his practice was definitely going ahead... So that Friday I turned up with a friend, and we waited till 8pm just in case. We could very faintly hear bells somewhere, but in the dark and the rain we'd never have found where they were....'

'I'm glad the RW published my letter, because it needs to be stressed that visitors are a good thing and need to be looked after (don't most towers love having them? we do) and that every tower correspondent should provide a mobile number; if they can't, they shouldn't be the correspondent.'

It can be difficult to find a volunteer for roles such as tower correspondent, tower captain or District/Guild officer, but a reluctant, worn out or disinterested volunteer should be permitted to step-down from a role – a tired '*I'll carry on because no-one else will do it*' is not always the positive stop-gap it is intended to be. Where there is already a person in a role, other ringers seem increasingly reluctant to offer to stand as an alternative candidate.

At each tower, district and Guild level there should be annual **elections** for these roles, and to have an election we do need more than one candidate! Maybe people would be more willing to volunteer if they didn't feel that they were entering into a commitment with no foreseeable end.

So if, you feel that you would like to try a role, please let your fellow-ringers know, and put your name forward – it need not be a life-sentence!

Time for a Spring Clean?

With tower AGMs coming up, along with thoughts of recruitment and celebrations is it time to give your tower a spring clean?

When did you last look at it with fresh eyes? You might be accustomed to that slightly damp pile of paper and old ringing worlds in the corner; the notices on the noticeboard may have become old friends; that old metal plant stand and the boxes of jars and vases might be useful for the flower arrangers one day...but is it welcoming or even safe? What would a new recruit think?



Central Council

WDYLDI when did you last do it?

Check the tower lighting

- Is there one light in the tower or on the stairs?
- If that went out, would you be plunged into complete darkness?

More advice about lighting in and around a tower is available here:

<https://runningatower.cccbr.org.uk/docs/ringingroom/lighting/>

As well as the ringing room, think about the stairs, any intermediate rooms and the external approach (the tower entrance may be different from the main church entrance).

Any space should not be totally dependent on a single bulb. General power failure should trigger emergency lighting powered by an emergency power supply (which may need to last the rest of a peal!). If not integrated with the building system, then a separate system may be purchased and installed relatively economically and safely. Any system should be tested periodically.

Meanwhile a good quality, rechargeable torch is an asset in any tower, kept fully charged and retrievable (ideally even by visitors) in total darkness.

Remember that electrical installation work (and this includes lighting) must be done by appropriate electrical contractors, and that you must have permission from the church authorities, quite possibly including faculty permission.

From the Ringing 2030 Environments Workgroup of the Central Council

(article reproduced from The Ringing World issue 24/10/2025)

Bell Restoration Fund meeting minutes

Our sister charity, **Hereford Diocesan Guild of Bellringers Bell Restoration Fund (registered charity No.508531)** has requested that we distribute the minutes of their most recent Annual General Meeting, and these are reproduced below:

HEREFORD DIOCESAN GUILD OF BELLRINGERS BELL RESTORATION FUND

Registered Charity No. 508531

c/o Mrs Ginette Pardoe, Hon. Secretary, Katoomba, The Knowle, Jackfield, Shropshire, TF8 7LF
Tel: 01952 883432 gstapp@gmail.com

Minutes of meeting of the Trustees of the Hereford Diocesan Guild Bell Restoration Fund (the BRF) held online on Wednesday 15th October 2025.

Present: Frederick Shallcross (Chairman), Ginette Pardoe (Hon. Secretary), Richard Clements (Treasurer), Mark Pugh, Jane Mason, Neil Bennett, Sue Hack, Ann Bennett, Phil Buggins, Nick Cooper-Tomkins, Stuart Edinburgh (8.10pm), Barbara Fox, John Hill, Roger Moss, Anne Newman, Andrew Watkins, Fran Watkins.

Apologies: Penny Salisbury, Neil Bragg, Ashley Fortley, Kris Peruzza, Valerie Roberts, Sue Robinson, Jason Walker.

1. Welcome by FS and one minute silence for Cherry Hughes

Rick welcomed everyone to the meeting. A one-minute silence was held for our Previous Hon. Secretary who had sadly passed away since the last meeting.

2. Minutes of the last AGM

Copies of the minutes were distributed. It was commented that these had not been distributed prior to the meeting. It was thought that they had been distributed by the Guild Secretary in the past - Action GP

The minutes were approved by Richard Clements and seconded by Sue Hack.

3. Matters arising

None

4. Treasurer's report

Richard Clements distributed the accounts.

The BRF's previous Independent Examiner is retiring, and it is thought it unlikely he will conduct this role again. A thank you note is to be sent to Keith – Action RC

A new Independent Examiner is to be sought – Action RC

5. Approval of investments

The accounts were distributed. There have not been any substantial changes in investments since 2022. Richard has internet access to two HSBC accounts. There has been no movement apart from accumulation of interest on CofE and Virgin money accounts. The bank charge a fee of 50p per cheque, so the BRF ask for bank transfers rather than cheques where possible.

6. 600+ lottery

Mark Pugh has taken on the organisation of the 600+ lottery. He gave a big thank you to the District Representatives for all the work they do to support it.

There are four draws per year, and the next one will take place in early December. Mark will get the 600+ application forms sent out before District AGMs. Anyone over the age of 18 can buy a ticket and they don't need to be a member of the Guild. Prizes must be paid by cheque as it's not feasible to get everyone's bank account details and there are also issues with data protection.

Barbara queried if it would be possible to publicise the 600 club more and advertise the winners. It isn't possible to publicise names or ticket numbers of winners due to GDPR, but we could advertise when the draws are taking place, and which District the winners are from – Action RC / MP

Richard thanked Barbara for her suggestions.

Conflicts of Interest

Rick asked the room if anyone has any declarations of interest to share. Ginette declared that she is now Hon. Secretary of the BRF and has an ongoing project at Broseley. Rick asked if anyone else had any conflicts of interest to share but no one else came forward.

7. Election of Officers

Sue explained the significant responsibilities and obligations of the BRF Trustees. The Trustees must be constantly aware of conflicts of interest and ensure they treat everyone in the same fashion. The Trustees must make reasonable decisions that any body of Trustees would make, whilst being answerable to both the Charity Commission and Guild members.

Rick then spoke about his fellow Trustees. The BRF have gone to some effort not to concentrate all officers in one particular place and are spread quite evenly across the area covered by the Guild. Richard has financial expertise and has taken over the role of Treasurer from Neil last year, who did an exemplary job over the years. Sue has knowledge of the law. Mark is our bell expert and is also now looking after the 600+ club. Jane has expertise of working with charities. Penny has moved away but is a good asset to have in the North Shropshire area.

All Trustees were willing to stand again.

Nick Cooper-Tomkins proposed that all Trustees were elected, and this was seconded by Anne Newman. Nick thanked the committee for their efforts during the year.

8. Projects completed and ongoing projects

Much Wenlock

Much Wenlock have received a grant and are happy with the work they have had carried out.

Broseley

Broseley have raised just over half of the funds required for their project. There is an issue with the church pipe organ, which is on the first floor of the tower. It was planned that three groups would work towards relocating and restoring the organ, leaving space for a Heritage Centre on the first floor of the tower. Two of these groups have lost interest

in the project, leaving the bell ringers to either raise £190,000 for the organ or find an alternative means of completing their project.

Andrew Nicholson from Nicholson Engineering was due to visit Broseley on the day of the BRF AGM to look at the feasibility of removing the bells through the louvres but had to cancel due to Covid. Fundraising is continuing while the issue is resolved.

Fran asked if the grant for Broseley was still valid as, according to the BRF rules, grants are valid for two years. Ginette advised that she was not aware of the status of the grant, though she believed the offer must be around two years old, and felt that a new application could be made if necessary.

Fran enquired if Ginette had had any discussions with the BRF regarding the Broseley grant since taking office. Ginette replied that due to the issue with the organ she had not seen any point in raising the subject of the grant since taking on the role. She stated she had kept the BRF up to date on the status of the project, but the grant application had not been discussed. Rick confirmed this was the case.

Rick said that most projects took more than two years to come to fruition, and the BRF ought to look at either extending the validity period of a grant, or reviewing grant offers every two years – Action BRF Trustees.

Nick suggested that churches could put in a grant application later in the project process.

Ginette mentioned that she had received some useful advice from the BRF in the early stages of the project. Rick pointed out that earlier applications help the BRF to plan their finances.

9. New grant applications

There have been no formal applications since the last meeting, but there has been an informal application from Mordiford.

Mordiford

Rick said that this project had been a difficult one for the BRF to consider. Mordiford has been told repeatedly that they need to be affiliated to the BRF to receive a grant before Barbara took over the clerical work for the project. Another church joined the BRF, obtained a grant and then cancelled their payments, which is why the BRF like to see a payment history before awarding a grant.

The BRF had concerns that only one quote has been received and that quote was from Taylors, who Nick undertakes some work for. Nick clarified that he works for someone who sometimes contracts for Taylors. Sue stressed that conflict of interest is specifically mentioned by the Charity Commission and obtaining at least two quotes is normal practice.

A completed form has still not been received from Mordiford, despite hearing that the project was completed, and the BRF do not have a breakdown of eligible costs.

Nick stated the Matthew Higby wanted to rip the bells out, Nicholson wasn't interested in the project and Blyth & Co said they were too busy. Nick said that Taylors came back with a very good quote and that around £12,000 was saved with local labour.

The bells are now rung regularly including once per month for Sunday service.

Despite their concerns, the BRF are supportive of this project. Rick will work with Barbara to work out which parts of the project are eligible for a grant and all being well the BRF will be able to offer a grant.

10. George Cousins Cup

There have been no nominations for the cup this year. Rick said that we probably ought to advertise the cup on the Guild website and will consider doing this for next year. –

Action GP

George gave the cup so that it could be awarded to people who had put a lot of effort into doing up their ringing room. The cup is currently at Dorstone.

The BRF welcome nominations at any time.

Closing comments

Rick commented that he is not keen on AOB and it is at the Chairman's discretion, and he is not going to include it on this occasion.

Rick thanked Nicky and the Guild fundraising team for the very successful open day. The BRF are very grateful to any money the Guild donates to the BRF as it goes back into the bells.

The BRF representatives do a fantastic job and the BRF do not want to put undue pressure on them by expecting them to undertake fundraising activities.

Rick thanked everyone for attending the meeting.