

# THE GLOUCESTER & BRISTOL DIOCESAN ASSOCIATION OF CHURCH BELL RINGERS: WOTTON BRANCH CLANGOUR NEWSLETTER: OCTOBER 2023

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*Deadline for articles for the next edition of Clangour (February) is 26<sup>th</sup>  
January 2024 to [mattandsarah.lorkin@gmail.com](mailto:mattandsarah.lorkin@gmail.com)*

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## DATES FOR THE DIARY

21<sup>st</sup> October – Branch ringing at Coaley 4pm-6pm followed by Quiz and supper in Coaley Village Hall

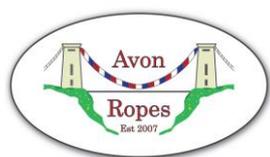
11<sup>th</sup> November - Branch AGM at Berkeley

24<sup>th</sup> March 2024 – Horton Lunch

## NEWS FROM...

### **Dursley**

We held our annual outing on Saturday 17 June. Having decided a few years ago that the cost of a coach outing was too prohibitive, 17 of us set out by car up the M5 to Tewkesbury and our first tower, Ashchurch (8 bells, 12 cwt.). These bells go very well, often being used for peals, but Stedman did not go well. On then to Ashton-under-Hill (6, 7 cwt.), a lovely little ring, accessed by a very short staircase from the outside, to a tiny ringing room only 8' square – cosy. It was Jonathan's birthday and Lizzie had brought birthday cake for us all, very welcome. The group photo was taken – camera perched on a gravestone on automatic timer. Next was lunch at the Star Inn at Ashton-under-Hill, all at a long table, excellent food which we had pre-ordered. A two-hour lunch is essential on these occasions. First tower in the afternoon was Hampton (8, 12 cwt.), again a tower often used for peals, so very easy going. Climbing the long spiral staircase, as we had earlier at Ashchurch, made us realise how spoilt we have become with our short staircase to the ringing room – we are not getting any younger. Here we met up with Rev. Patrick Wooster, formerly Vicar at Stone, who now lives and rings in Hampton. Our last tower was Woolstone (6, 5 cwt.), a small village north of Cheltenham. This is a ground floor ring in a church with a leaning tower, making it appear that the ropes do not hang vertically when viewed from the nave. The tower was stabilised by Italian engineers in the 1970s, but the church is still slowly moving down the hill. Final rounds were in The Shutters pub in Gotherington, in the next village, a very good finale to the day.



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*Standing L-R: Tim, Ashley, Andy B, Anne, Philip, Ros, John T, Helen, Lizzie, Jonathan, Simon, Andrew  
W Sitting L-R: Frank, Liz, Hilarie, John C, Mike*

We have entered into a Vacancy, no vicar, and a full peal was rung at St James's in thanksgiving for Rev. Canon Michael Cozens' Ministry upon his retirement to York. Details are given below. Ringers were gathered from different places to take part and, in completing this peal, a former ringer at St James's, Janet Morris (née Fox), has now rung peals on all 8 bells in the tower:

On Sunday, 23 July 2023, In 3 hours and 2 minutes

5056 Rutland Surprise Major Composition: D. F. Morrison

- 1 Philip F. Pope (Dursley)
- 2 Hilda C. Ridley (Cheltenham)
- 3 Sarah B. Ewbank (Fairford)
- 4 John P. Cole (Dursley)
- 5 Anthony M. Bulteel (Bristol)
- 6 Janet L. Morris (Southampton)
- 7 Andrew A. Ward (Wotton)
- 8 Jonathan C. Adkins (Conductor) (Tetbury)

A retirement compliment to Rev Canon Michael Cozens, and in thanksgiving for his ministry. First surprise major - 4 Completes circle – 6



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*The band Front: Canon Michael L-R Jonathan (partially hidden); Philip; Hilda; Sarah; John; Andrew; Janet; Anthony*

The annual Wotton Branch 6 bell competition was held on Saturday 2 September at Avening. Three teams entered, Chipping Sodbury, Coaley and Dursley, plus a “scratch” team made up of extras and anyone who wanted to ring for fun. These are not the easiest bells to ring well, and very loud in the ringing room. The Judges were Peter Harris and his grandson Toby Hicks from Fairford, who enjoyed an afternoon in the sun marking their score sheets. Dursley band rang slowest, taking 5 minutes to ring 120 Bob Doubles. They were:

- 1 John Taylor
- 2 Anne Pope
- 3 Lizzie Adkins
- 4 Elizabeth Byrne (conductor)
- 5 Frank Byrne
- 6 Philip Pope.



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Ashley has rung his first Q.P. on 8. Details:

On Monday, 11 September 2023

1260 Grandsire Triples

1 Ashley Pearson

2 Carole Bucknell

3 Anne Pope

4 Jonathan Adkins

5 John Cole

6 Philip Pope

7 John Gibson (Cond.)

8 Ian Bucknell

First on 8 - 1

### **Wotton Branch Striking Competition at Avening on 2nd September 2023**

Chris Cooper

The branch striking competition for 2023 was held at Avening on 2nd September with all the necessary arrangements with the tower chosen by our Ringing Master being made well in advance by Sarah. For those not familiar with this competition, it is held annually with the winner being awarded the Beaney Trophy and the Stinchcombe Cup being awarded by the Branch Ringing Master to the team that came second or that had made the greatest improvement over the past twelve months. The winning team will then go forward ring in the G & B Association Croome Trophy 6 bell competition held on the G & B AGM Day in April in the following year.

When the Branch Committee met about 2 weeks before, our Ringing Master let us know that unfortunately he had got the dates wrong and had arranged a holiday in Portugal over that weekend. With a certain reluctance, I agreed to run the competition on the day and our Ringing Master confirmed that Peter Harris, Ringing Master of the Cirencester Branch, had agreed to judge the competition for us ably assisted by his teenage son Toby. A few days later, I was informed during a flight by my gliding instructor, who is a ringer, that the bells at Avening were renowned for being very challenging to ring. I was left wondering what I had let myself in for, but in spite of this alarming news I did manage to land the glider safely! The day of the competition was fortunately sunny so the two judges were able to set up a couple of chairs in the churchyard and I was met by Steve Uzzell, a ringer at Avening, and shown the access to the tower and also the kitchen where we could prepare refreshments. Only 3 teams had entered the competition and after having a draw, the ringing order was Dursley, Coaley, Chipping Sodbury.

After an initial piece of ringing that included the two judges, Dursley rang a very pleasant 120 of Plain Bob Doubles. My impression of this was that they were having to deal with



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some odd struck bells, but the band, as usual, had certainly set the other bands a high standard to beat.

Coaley were next to ring, They completed their test piece of 120 St Remigius Doubles successfully, although they seemed to struggle with striking the bells accurately and possibly also with ringing St Remigius.

When the Chipping Sodbury band ascended the tower to ring, David Lee hit his head hard on the roof of the staircase but after a short period of recovery fortunately declared that he felt fit enough to ring 120 Grandsire Doubles. Since I was in this band, I could now see the relevance of my gliding instructor's comments as the bells were not easy to strike accurately. Although there were some odd struck bells, the main issue was the noise of the bells and especially the noise of the sliders since the ringing chamber had a low ceiling with the bell chamber immediately overhead. As one member of the band put it, "the noise was louder in the ringing chamber than immediately outside the tower". Nevertheless, the touch was completed with no method mistakes.

A short time after, I was told that a scratch band were ascending to the tower to ring. I therefore had to dash into the churchyard to let the judges know as they were busy preparing to present the results. The scratch band which seemed to consist of some of the Dursley band with some recently arrived visitors from other towers. They rang a nice 120 of Plain Bob Doubles and had clearly now got to grips with the bells.

Whilst Peter Harris and Toby were deliberating on the ringing, everyone enjoyed some refreshments in the sunshine kindly prepared by Edna Cooper and Gill Carey and after a short time, we all gathered in the nave to hear about the results which were presented by Peter. He started by making some comments for each band which I'm sure they found very helpful and then he declared the results as follows:

1st Dursley – 12 Faults

2nd Scratch – 36 Faults

3rd Chipping Sodbury – 37 Faults

4th Coaley – Faults not given but more than Chipping Sodbury!

I therefore presented the Beaney Trophy to Liz Byrne from Dursley. As the Ringing Master was not present, I had to make the decision on the band to receive the Stinchcombe Cup. I decided not to award it to the Scratch Band for coming 2nd and since Chipping Sodbury had come 2nd in 2022, this was not an improvement for the latter over the year. The band did however include Fred Willington, a relatively newcomer to ringing, who rang an inside bell extremely well with no method mistakes, but the cup is a team award not a personal one. Since the Coaley band probably had less experience than the other bands and rang St Remigius and not Plain Bob or Grandsire like the more experienced bands, I decided it had made a really good effort on some very challenging bells and therefore presented the Stinchcombe Cup to Gary Miles from the Coaley band. After thanking Peter and Toby for judging the competition, the Evening ringers for letting us ring their bells and Edna and Gill for providing the refreshments, we all went home to enjoy a warm September evening.



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Liz Byrne receiving the Beaney Trophy from Chris Cooper.



Gary Miles receiving the Stinchcombe Cup from Chris Cooper.



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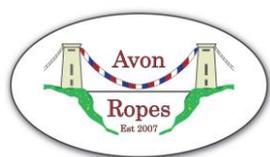
## Have you been involved with the campaign 'Strike Back Against Blood Cancer?'

Frank Byrne

A long article appeared in the 1st September, 2023 edition of The Ringing World (no. 5862) and below is a very brief synopsis of what was written. It is offered here because many ringers have been involved with the appeal discussed and very few either take or read the R.W.

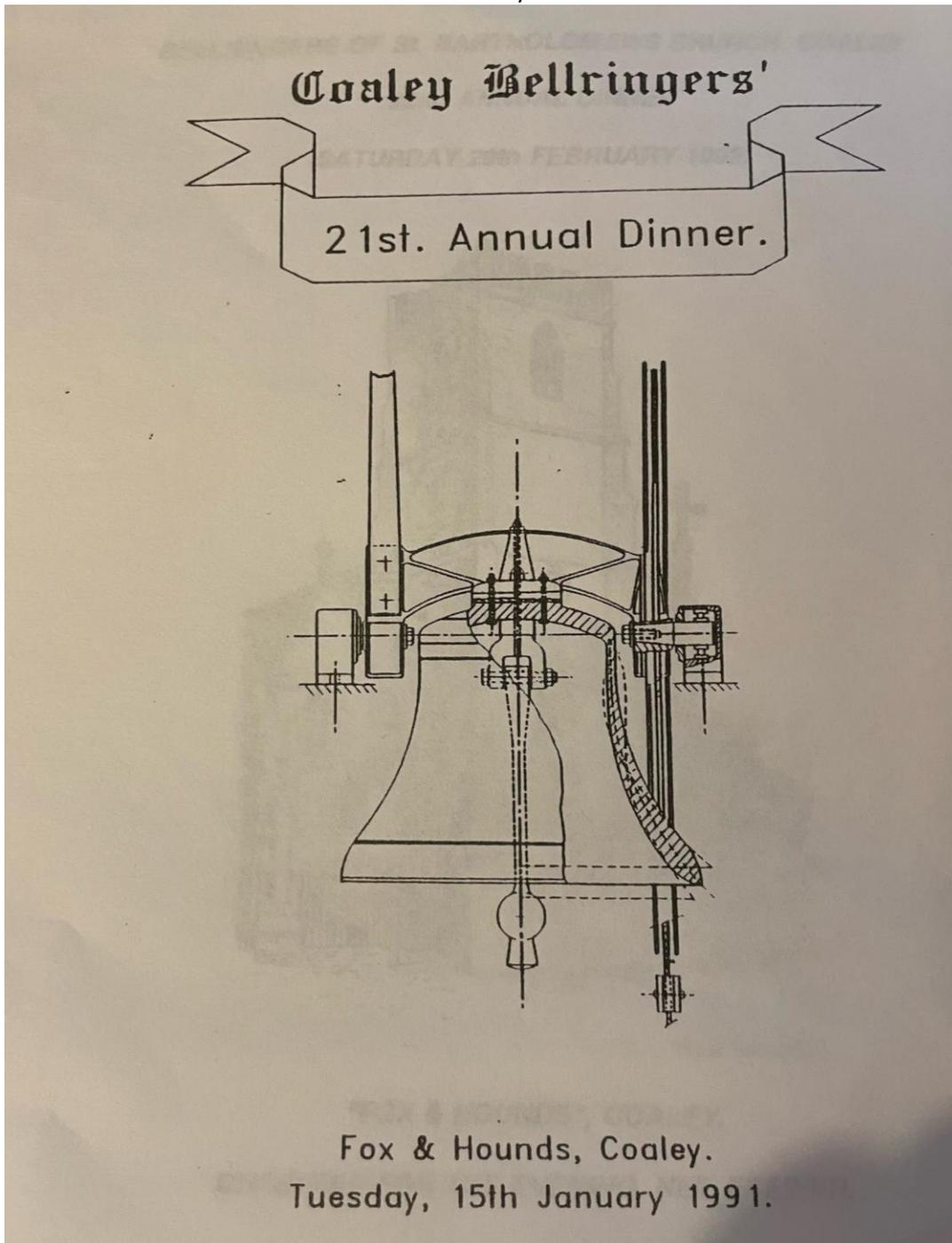
Some years ago, a Sussex bellringer revealed her terminal cancer on Songs of Praise and spoke about the medical treatment she had received. She launched a campaign to help others with the life-threatening condition. A special method was devised 'Julie McDonnell Doubles'. Hundreds of churches became involved in ringing, making donations to raise public awareness about leukaemia. Over 1500 performances have been rung and thousands of pounds have been collected.

Julie McDonnell was eventually arrested and charged with stealing £5840 from the 'Just Giving Platform', money donated via the fundraising site which should have gone to cancer charities. It is alleged that the bell-ringing campaign was based on a lie, Julie McDonnell had never undergone stem cell treatment, as claimed, or suffered from multiple other ailments also as claimed. A straightforward prosecution has dragged on with the defendant unable to attend the 20 or so hearings arranged because of a range of health issues. The case of theft against Julie McDonnell has now been dropped because it was decided, in the circumstances, there was little prospect of the case ever going to court and it was not in the public interest to continue with the prosecution. A formal verdict of 'not guilty' was entered. It is claimed that the significance of this is that a woman who, a number of judges had suspected of malingering and who had allegedly defrauded the public via a fundraising platform, has been let off the hook. There have been other twists and turns concerning this case that support the contention that the whole campaign was based on a lie. These have been reported more fully in the R.W and in the Church Times. There was to be a discussion about changing the method name 'Julie McDonnell' to something else at the Central Council AGM under AOB on 2 September but the room had to be vacated before this item was reached.



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A step back in time  
Terry Chivers



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A BIT OF A DO

'We'll have an annual knees-up'  
Said the Captain to his band.  
Then he deviously plotted  
And studiously planned

He laboured hard and was convinced  
The format was a winner  
He'd make up several 'Daft' awards  
And present them at a dinner.

Accomplices became involved  
With ideas for the scheme.  
The evening was a great success,  
So 'Awards' became the theme.

The Captain thought himself quite safe  
Until the following year,  
When the first, (now famous) trophies  
Were starting to appear.

These crafted masterpieces,  
(As recipients have learned)  
Are not awarded lightly;  
They have to be well-earned.

One year there was a film show.  
They could not believe their eyes:  
Conducting a band of learners  
Was their Captain, (in disguise?).

And whoever was the culprit  
That came up with the idea  
Of printing silly poems  
On the menu card each year?

Of one thing we can all be sure:-  
The hard work has been done.  
Midnight oil has burned  
To make this year a special one.

Tonight the dinner 'comes-of-age',  
We are gathered here once more  
And cannot help but wonder  
What this evening holds in store.



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## WOTTON BRANCH OFFICERS

|                                 |               |
|---------------------------------|---------------|
| <b>Chairman</b>                 | Chris Cooper  |
| <b>Ringing Master</b>           | James Joynson |
| <b>Assistant Ringing Master</b> | Vacant        |
| <b>Secretary</b>                | Sarah Lorkin  |
| <b>Treasurer</b>                | Gill Carey    |
| <b>Clangour Editor</b>          | Sarah Lorkin  |
| <b>Publicity Officer</b>        | Terry Chivers |
| <b>Management Committee Rep</b> | Chris Cooper  |

## REGULAR PRACTICES

### Monday

|   |                |                 |
|---|----------------|-----------------|
| Chipping Sodbury                                | 19:30-21:15    | Antony Gay      |
| Cromhall  | 19:30-21:00    | Sue Wray        |
| Stone   | 19:30-21:00    | Jeremy Sargent  |
| Yate (1 <sup>st</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> only) | By arrangement | Barrie Fletcher |

### Tuesday

|                   |             |              |
|-------------------|-------------|--------------|
| Wotton-under-Edge | 19:30-21:00 | Adrian Davis |
| Upper Cam         | 19:30-21:00 | Alex Reeves  |

### Wednesday

|            |             |               |
|------------|-------------|---------------|
| Berkeley   | 19:30-21:00 | Tim Soanes    |
| Coaley     | 19:30-21:00 | Terry Chivers |
| Horton     | 19:30-21:00 | Rex Isaac     |
| Hawkesbury | 18:30-20:00 | Colin Dixon   |

### Thursday

|             |                |                 |
|-------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Dursley     | 19:30-21:00    | Elizabeth Byrne |
| Tortworth   | By arrangement | Fen Marshall    |
| Stinchcombe | 19:30-21:00    | James Joynson   |
| Wickwar     | 19:15-21:00    | Peter Juniper   |

### Friday

|              |             |                |
|--------------|-------------|----------------|
| North Nibley | 19:30-21:00 | James Joynson  |
| Slimbridge   | 19:30-21:00 | Huvin Thompson |



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