

Tower Talk

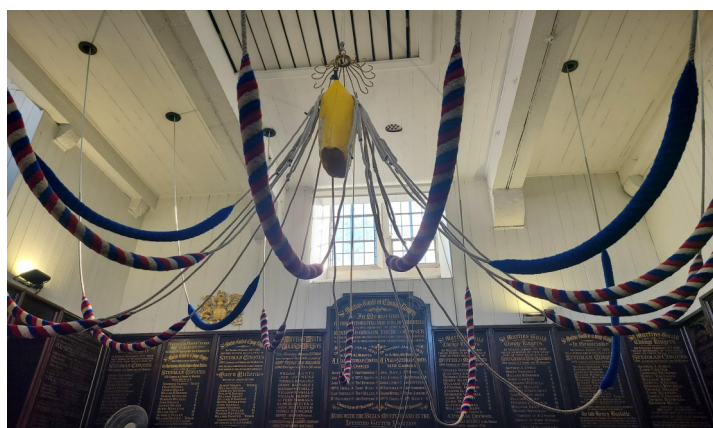
The newsletter for ringers using



Learning
the Ropes

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St. Martin's in the Bull Ring, one of the towers used for the recent LtR Masterclass. See page 3.

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After many years of seriously hard work behind the scenes by a core group of dedicated volunteers, the new SmART Ringer website is up and running. Judith Frye, who worked on the project, introduces the new look SmART Ringer website on page 13. Once logged in you can use this to track your progress through Learning the Ropes and other programmes as well.

This project brought together a diverse set of bellringers who also happened to have two qualities - a transferable skill from their professional life and also a strong motivation to make a contribution which makes our experience of ringing better for everyone. They are probably all glad the project has finally been signed off, but they will keep giving back to their own towers, associations or teaching hubs with their ringing and teaching skills, or in many of the other different ways ringers can contribute - financial skills, practical hands-on skills, organisational skills, social and communication skills - the possibilities are numerous.

Many ringers contribute in this way. Two stand-out contributors were acknowledged in the recent Learning the Ropes Achievement Awards and you can read all about them and what they have done on page 7. They are so inspiring! You don't have to do much to make a difference. Even something as small as befriending a new ringer with a friendly smile or helping them with advice on how you dealt with an obstacle they are facing is the first step in creating a mutually trusting and supportive band.

Let's all be a part of that!

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It's a Family Affair!

Ruth Suggett



Three members of the same family, Angela and Jackie Henderson and Harry Thorne-Henderson all received their LtR Level 5 certificates at the Annual General meeting of the Taunton Branch of the Bath & Wells Association.

The Deputy Master of the Bath & Wells Association, Brenda Arscott presented the certificates.

Brenda Arscott, Jackie Henderson, Harry Thorne-Henderson and Angela Henderson (Image J. Tourville)



A total of 10 LtR Level 5 Awards have been presented in the Taunton Branch and 17 across the Bath and Wells Association.

The Hendersons all started ringing following the installation of the new ring of 12 bells at St Mary's Church in Taunton, now Taunton Minster. They were part of a group of thirteen people who were taught to ring by the Branch Ringing Master, Jill Hansford, and a team of trainers from the Branch. Eleven of them still ring today and make up the vast majority of the band.

In addition to their Level 5 achievements, Jackie, Angela and Harry have all rung their first peals. Jackie and Harry rang together in their first peal (10 Doubles methods) at Holy Trinity Church in Taunton. Jackie rang the treble and Harry the tenor. This was a very special peal as it was rung by a Branch band on the day of the Coronation of King Charles III, and indeed it was one of two peals rung by members of the Branch on this day. (The other one was rung on the new ring of eight bells at North Curry, the first ring of bells to be cast with the King Charles III cypher. Both were conducted by Branch Chairman, Mike Hansford).



Eighteen of the 40 quarters were rung to mark Harry's 18th birthday.

Jackie and Harry rang in Angela's first peal. It was a peal of four doubles methods and Angela rang the treble. Jackie rang her first peal inside and Harry rang the tenor.

Jackie, Angela and Harry have all rung over 40 quarter peals and will look forward to ringing their 50th quarter this year, as well as some more peals. Eighteen of the quarters were rung to mark Harry's 18th birthday. That's not quite the end of the story as Debbie, Jackie and Angela's sister, will complete her LtR Level 5 this year too.

Have you rung a peal?

Once you have completed the LtR scheme you will have rung 6 quarter peals, but there is no requirement to ring a peal. Peal ringing is not for everyone, but it is one of the things you will need to complete the LtR Plus scheme. Did you ring a peal before you gained your LtR level 5? Do you have any tips for ringing your first peal? Let us know what they are by emailing towertalk@bellringing.org and we will pass them on in the next edition.

Did you know that when you reach LtR Level 5 you are invited to a LtR Masterclass? Page 3 tells what happened at the one in April.

A Big Day in Birmingham

Laura Parker, Sussex

Back in 2022 after my first bellringing lesson, I was given a little blue book called "Learning the Ropes". Obviously I hadn't the foggiest what this was or anything that was written in it. My teacher explained that it was to help track my progress as learnt. To be completely honest, I was looking at it and thinking I'd be lucky to get to Level 1. I didn't realise I'd get completely addicted! Things got tricky after Level 2, but I loved ringing so much that I started to attend more practices and with lots of very patient helpers I eventually gained Level 5, which is the last and highest level and those who achieve it are invited to a Masterclass. Sure enough I got my invitation to come to Birmingham on April 18.

It's a full day with an early start, and I soon realised I was surrounded by some of the best ringers in the country, including members of the very successful 12 Bell team. My excitement turned to nerves.

Before the day the organisers ask you what you would like to work on, so that you have the best possible opportunity to focus on something beyond what's set out in Learning the Ropes. For me, this was to stretch myself to 8 bell ringing.

We were in groups of 4 or 5 other students and each of us was allocated a mentor for the day, as well as other helpers. We rang at two towers with ringing focused on our choice. The mentors and helpers were superb. By the end of our ringing tuition we had all got to know each other well; students, helpers and mentors together, and we shared our various bellringing stories and adventures. And the nerves started to settle and were now being overtaken with joy.

In the centre of Birmingham is the church of St. Martin's in the Bull Ring, one of only three (?) towers to have an astonishing sixteen bells. We all met up there after a morning of intensive coaching. What a great experience. I was put on the 9th and we rang some call changes. Now it's not call changes as you would do them in your home tower. The sallies are colour coded. So,



Laura with dedicated Masterclass helper and mentor Eleanor Linford

every 4th rope has a plain coloured sally and the rest are more traditional stripes. This neatly divides the ropes up into groups of four, so we were really only ringing call changes on four but within the amazing soundscape of sixteen bells.

Finally, after a very busy day, we headed to the traditional ringer's establishment, the pub. What a wonderful thing to be a part of. The whole pub was full of ringers eating, drinking and catching up on what we had all been doing in our groups.

Next day, there was optional Sunday service ringing, with four towers on offer. I went to two, including St Martin's again. In between I got to try handbells before heading home.

Let me tell you this, to be rewarded with a weekend like this after three years of bell handling to method ringing was the best. I won't lie, it wasn't easy. I had my ups and downs and at times didn't think I would get to finish that little blue book with all the necessary ticks. But I worked hard and enjoyed the challenges and goals the book gives you.

If anyone reading this has been given a little blue Learning the Ropes book, keep going, because the reward of the LtR Masterclass weekend is very worthwhile.

Meet Neil Jones, ART's New Chair

Neil Jones, who is Tower Captain at Rochester Cathedral in Kent, has recently taken over as Chair of the Association of Ringing Teachers. In parallel with Learning the Ropes, ART also runs courses to train ringers to become competent teachers of ringing and develops a whole range of support and resources to promote good practice in teaching and learning.

So, we asked Neil what he is most excited about for the future of ART?

I am excited about what ART can bring to the Ringing 2030 project, which is a major strategy, initiated by the Central Council of Church Bellringers to create a sustainable future for change ringing. In order to successfully train the influx of new recruits, we need to be able to offer quality teaching. We also need to look at how quality teaching can be effectively provided. Many areas are now starting to run hubs enabling ringers from more than one tower to join together to receive quality training on aspects of ringing from ART accredited teachers. This serves two great purposes. Firstly, it allows these ringers to benefit from the advice and input of more than one teacher. This is helpful because it may well be that a different way of explaining a concept can really help the concept to drop into place. Secondly, it allows those who are working towards accreditation as an ART Teacher the opportunity to work with others and such collaborative work can really benefit that person. Coming from a career as a teacher, I have seen this work well in so many different guises within the classroom.

Neil has been involved with teaching ringing for a very long time before joining ART. When his daughter was invited to join the Kent Young Ringers, he lent a hand behind the scenes with the team and travelled to various venues across the country, including Liverpool, Worcester, Birmingham and Exeter to support them. He says,



At Exeter I will never forget the vibrant atmosphere in the cathedral nave, with the sound of the majestic bells merging with the different notes of mini rings and handbells, all adding their voices to that air of enthusiasm.'

It makes me reflect on when I was learning to ring. In 1996. I was lucky to have a teacher who really invested in me by giving me dedicated teaching time so I was ringing independently by the time I left for university a short time later. The rest is history... but the things that made a difference were supportive bands who were actively encouraging and regular practice (most weekday evenings!) And if I were to start again today, I don't think that I would do much differently.

My early encouragement led me to several personal achievements but I think that the thing that I am most proud of is to hold the position of Tower Captain at Rochester Cathedral. This is a building that I have had links with as a ringing for nearly all of my ringing career. It is a beautiful building, founded in 604 AD, and the history within its walls is amazing. What is even more amazing is that I have formed part of the history of Rochester Cathedral whilst I have been ringing there and training and leading the band.



Narrow-boating - another interest



Neil and Oscar, the Kent Young Ringers Mascot



Ringing the 6th at Rochester Cathedral

Saying Goodbye to Monica

Annie Hall, Stuart Newton & Lesley Belcher

When Monica Hollows signed up as a Ringing Remembers recruit, she was only thinking about how becoming a ringer would strengthen her connection to her great uncles, both ringers, who died in in WWI. Seven years later, not only had she become a bellringer, but she had made a significant contribution to her local band, her local association and to ART. Learning to ring had sparked a passion which took her beyond her own personal goals.

2018

Monica starts ringing...

One of the many remarkable things about Monica is that she only started ringing in 2018, answering a call for new ringers arising from the Ringing Remembers Campaign. She joined the St Anne's on the Sea band and gained her LtR Level 1 on 8 March 2018, an achievement that was followed later that year by Levels 2 and 3.

Back to Ringing Remembers. Stuart Newton says: In one of the most poignant pieces of ringing I have ever been involved in, we travelled to Cuckney in October 2018, where we rang in Monica's great-uncles' memory. In 2024, in Ypres, the family laid a wreath as part of a daily act of remembrance and also travelled to see the sites of the battlegrounds where her great uncles died and their memorials.

Cuckney, Nottinghamshire

St Mary

Wednesday, 24 October 2018 (10-1-18 in G)

100 Plain Bob Doubles

- 1 Suzanne Newton
- 2 Ellis Hollows
- 3 John P Ottaway
- 4 Monica Hollows
- 5 Stuart Newton (C)
- 6 Tom Stanforth

Ringing at St Mary's Cuckney to mark the centenary of the Armistice in honour of John Joseph and William Henry Hakes, both bell ringers at St Mary's. The ringer on 4 is the great niece of John and William, with the ringer on 2 the great, great nephew. Ringer on 3 rang in both peals to mark the centenary of their deaths in 1917.

2019

... And completes her LtR Level 5 in under 2 years

Monica was obviously a very talented and dedicated new ringer, and by 9 November 2019, she had rung 15 quarter peals and completed the LtR programme.

2020

Covid is but a minor inconvenience

Covid hits... but this doesn't deter Monica. She's a big fan of Ringing Room, and after installing a dumbbell at home, she was involved in the world's first distributed quarter peal on dumbbells.

The Dumbbell Society

Ringing Room, World

Saturday, 15 August 2020 in 51m

1260 Plain Bob Doubles

- 1 Monica Hollows (St Annes, Lancashire; DIY bell based on John Norris' design)
- 2 Sue Marsden (Peterborough, UK; Saxilby Simulator, The Bathroom dumbbell)
- 3 Tom Farthing (Naperville, Illinois, USA; Farthing dumbbell, wheel diam 42 inches)
- 4 Alexander P Johnson (Hemsworth, UK; based on John Norris dumbbell)
- 5 Richard H Johnston (Plymtree, Cullompton, Devon; Johnston's Tyes mini-dumbbell, wheel diam 14 5 in)
- 6 Milica Reardon (Caterham, UK; Milica's Maypole Dumbbell, Caterham)

The first quarter peal rung using distributed dumbbells.

Used an interface developed by Richard Johnston, performed in Ringing Room with simulated sound.

Commemorating the 75th Anniversary of VJ Day 1945

This performance was rung using simulated sound.

Monica's dumbbell



2020

A minor excursion into handbells

During lockdown Monica also learnt how to ring handbells, tutored remotely by Jennie Town. After a number of attempts she scored her first quarter peal in hand – the first handbell QP by an all LACR Fylde Branch band in living memory, and the first for all the band.



2022

Appointed ART Office Manager

In the non-ringing world, Monica quit her job as a school bursar, and 2 weeks later sees the new role of ART Office Manager advertised. She couldn't believe it – it was her dream job. And that was it, interviews completed, Monica became ART's first Office Manager.

2023

Monica starts to teach

What next for Monica in ringing? Well, teaching, of course. During 2023, Monica was accredited at Module 1, which was followed a year later by her accreditation at Module 2C. And then there was the formation of the St Anne's Ringing School, where she is part of a team of teachers offering lessons and courses to ringers in the surrounding area.

When not working she seemed to spend all of her time either teaching ringing or just ringing!



2026

Retirement calls

Thankfully, this isn't a complete goodbye. Monica will continue as a volunteer on the ART Management Committee, so we won't have to face the world entirely without her.

We even managed a retirement celebration last week, albeit online. A little different from the old days of gathering in person for a proper drink, but still a chance to raise a virtual glass.

The overwhelming message from all who have worked closely with Monica is simple: thank you. We will miss you an awful lot, and we can't wait to meet up and ring with you and Stuart again soon. In the meantime, Stuart has whisked Monica off to Iceland for a well-earned holiday.



With thanks from everyone at ART

The 2026 LtR Award Winners

Lesley Belcher

Jeremy Bowman won the LtR Contribution Award

What's this award for?

The ringers' contribution award is not based on ringing ability or attainment but contribution to the wider ringing community. It's open to anyone who has been enrolled on the Learning the Ropes programme at any level.

A bit about Jez's ringing

Jez is another recent ringing recruit. He learnt to handle a bell in November 2023, motivated by the fact that the tower captain and his family were moving away and the band was likely to disappear. Jez's connection? Well, he was the Church Warden at Barrow-upon-Soar in Leicestershire and felt a responsibility to keep the bells ringing.

Jez quickly got the ringing bug. He did lots of homework, including inventing the "sock sally" (now a Barrow favourite!), reading educational articles and working with Abel. He quickly got a good grasp of many aspects of ringing: had a good understanding of theory, practice and did lots of work outside of the tower on listening skills. He designed and installed electronics on the Barrow bells so that the tower now has an 8 bell simulator and he (and others) regularly use this to hone their skills.

Just like Clare, Jez thrives on setting himself challenges and loves achieving goals – he isn't afraid to aim high. He has now rung four peals and 38 quarter peals, including being invited by the Garlickhyde ringers to ring the 27cwt tenor at St Magnus the Martyr. He is a very capable ringer on all weights of bell, an excellent striker and keen to develop.

Jez's contribution to the ringing community

Jez is a great asset on the end of a bell rope, but his contribution to ringing is also impressive.

According to Sally Brown, Jez is the glue that binds lots of ringers together across many towers. He organises bands for ringing at a large number of church services (several churches) and events and he is the reason that several towers are thriving instead of silent. Through targeted campaigns and infectious enthusiasm, he has recruited many new learners to ensure that the otherwise silent towers at Hathern and Walton, and the struggling tower at Barrow, now have strong and vibrant communities of ringers.

The "ART Certificate" wall in Barrow tower is plastered with lots of LtR Level 1 to 5 certificates, which is very motivating. There is now a teaching hub at Barrow, the brainchild of Jez, with sessions after practice night and two hours on a Saturday morning (to coincide with the community café). These are very popular and use a team teaching approach.



ART Awards

The ART Awards recognise people and groups who are doing great things in ringing. They include two awards specifically for ringers registered on one of the Learning the Ropes programmes.

Both of these awards are generously sponsored by the Ancient Society of College Youths, who donate £500 each year into the prize pot.





Sally Brown nominated Jez and says:

Everything Jez does is wholehearted – it's astonishing how much he manages to achieve inside and outside of the tower, especially considering that he has his own thriving business and a family.



Clare in 5 words

These words jump out of her nomination:

- Brave
- Ambitious
- Talented
- Passionate
- A team-player

She's someone who we'd all want to ring with!

To find out more about the ART Awards and this year's winners:

<https://bellringing.org/art-awards/>

He's learnt how to teach ringing, accrediting at Module 1 during 2025 and is soon to accredit at Module 2. Jez never misses an opportunity to promote ringing and to seek new recruits. He has encouraged many people to visit the tower, and a high proportion of them have subsequently learned to ring.

He is now a teaching "grandad" as some of his pupils have caught the ringing bug and are now teachers themselves with Jez acting as their mentor. He is cascading his teaching in a way that enables other towers to become self-sufficient.

Jez contributes to the ringing community at local, Diocese and national level. As well as being a key influence in his local towers, he is a proactive Guild officer. He regularly writes ringing related articles for the LDG quarterly newsletter, the Ringing World, Tower Talk and contributes to social media.

In March, he presented at the ART Conference about developing and training a band from scratch. He was elected as Chair of the Guild's Education Committee and has quickly changed its format so that it's now a group with purpose and clear objectives. These are modelled around the ART teaching programmes. Jez pays close attention to what's happening in the wider ringing community and is always keen to learn and to introduce good practice.

Clare Tilling won the LtR Achievement Award

What's this award for?

It's for any ringer who's passed their Learning the Ropes Level 5 during 2025 – which is obviously a fantastic achievement in itself! It's about someone's ringing development, the timescale over which progress has been made, taking into account the support available.

Clare's ringing

Clare learnt to handle a bell as a teenager but gave up when people started showing her numbers for plain hunt. In March 2024, she took up ringing again when a brand-new band was started up at Huntley and Longhope in the Forest of Dean.

She has progressed quickly since then, probably helped by her love of a challenge. For example: Whilst still learning Bob Doubles, Clare asked what the line of Cambridge looked like. When showed, she was advised that she wouldn't need to worry about that for a few years. Challenge accepted! Clare went away, learnt it, and rang a plain course at the Branch AGM only one month later.

She's definitely not scared of learning. With a round number birthday approaching, Clare saw a perfect opportunity for another quarter peal! With just two practices and lots of homework, she rang a quarter peal of 60 doubles methods (yes, 60) which

provided lots of fun for the other ringers who joined her in learning them all. <https://bb.ringingworld.co.uk/view.php?id=1899401>

And it's not been all about Clare

Far from it. Clare has greatly supported the ringers who started at the same time as her, providing friendly advice, practical support, stood behind people. She has helped 5 people achieve their LtR Level 3 and 4, ringing 21 quarter peals in the process.

In June 2024, she entered the band into the local striking competition and supported the others to ring well-struck rounds. Fast forward to 2025, Clare conducted the band in the competition with four other recruits who started in March 2024 and one experienced ringer. The band came first and Clare is now campaigning for a method section to be added to the competition for next year.

Learner, Teacher, Tutor

We are all ringing volunteers, constantly learning and constantly contributing. Some are called to teaching, due to a desire to pass on to other ringers where they are so passionate about, or more pragmatically, because someone must do it. Some very experienced teachers become tutors and help to build the next generation of teachers. Here two ringing volunteers talk about their journeys from learner, to teacher to tutor.

From learner to teacher - Simon Lovelock, Thanet

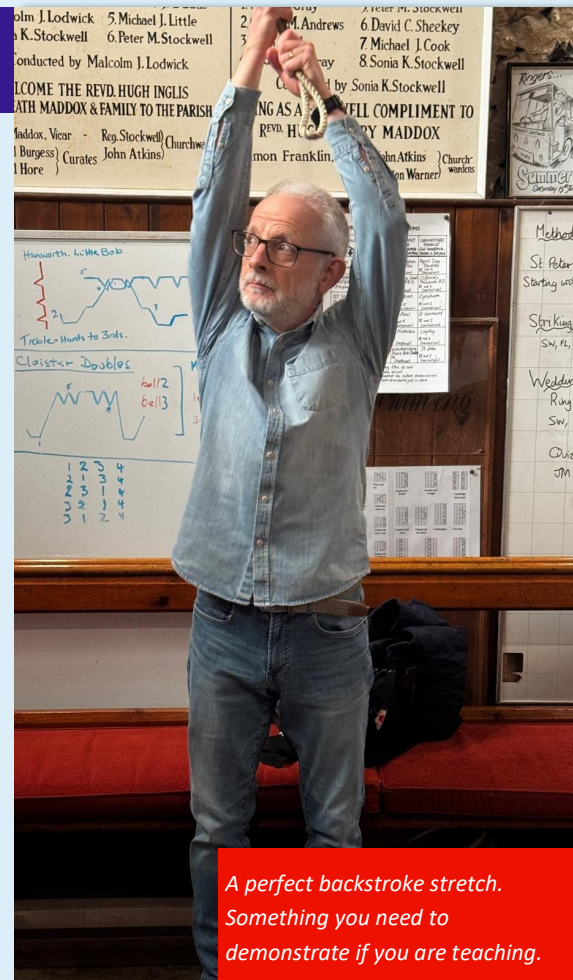
I began learning to ring bells in September 2018 at St Peter's in Thanet as a result of the "Ringing Remembers" recruitment campaign. I was taught in bursts of 5-10 minutes during breaks between group ringing and I remember struggling to control the rope for quite a while and even thought of giving up.

However, when I watched others ringing methods like Plain Bob or Grandsire, I really wanted to learn how to do what they were doing. So I persevered! Gradually I gained more experience and confidence by ringing at other towers, and after my first quarter peal in 2019 I have learned and rung those methods that I watched people ring when I first started.

As I progressed I also observed other beginners being taught by the ART accredited teachers at our tower. Sometimes it was difficult for the teachers to spot problems while teaching and I was encouraged to add my observations and I also gave practical help with wayward ropes - which people seemed to find helpful. I was then encouraged to get involved with teaching as I found helping learners a very rewarding part of bellringing. I attended a M1 Teaching Bell handling day course in August 2025 and was lucky that a new recruit had recently started at my tower, so it was agreed that I could start teaching him under the supervision of the other ART accredited teachers.

The M1 course was a very enjoyable and informative day and consisted of PowerPoint presentations combined with practical demonstrations which we then practised within the group. I left the course with a folder full of information and resources including my Teacher's Logbook.

In the months that followed I continued teaching my beginner, working through, ticking off and completing the various sections of the Logbook. When this was complete my mentor arranged for an assessment of my teaching. Although I was initially very nervous, Sue (the assessor) soon put me at ease and my planned lesson ran more smoothly than I had anticipated. At the end of the assessment I received some very welcome news that I had passed together with some very helpful and constructive



*A perfect backstroke stretch.
Something you need to
demonstrate if you are teaching.*

I would certainly recommend this accreditation route to anyone who enjoys teaching others how to ring and would like to learn how to do so in a safe and tried and tested way.

Reflections of a retiring tutor - Les Boyce, Tiverton

ART Tutors are the people who deliver the day courses introducing ringers to teaching, both bell handling and introducing change ringing.



"Retiring" is not the word I would associate with any of the ART tutors! You need to put on a bit of a show when teaching a group and ART day courses are no exception.

My background was in Further Education as a college librarian. I was not trained as a teacher (for many years at least), but at the start of each academic year I did a lot of teaching, giving every group of new students a library induction. Usually a formal classroom session, this introduced the learning resources available for the subject and explained how to research a topic, followed by a practical tour of the Learning Resources Centre and possibly a research exercise.

I only got one chance to get my messages across with each group. So, I had to be well organised, know the subject area and put it across with passion and make it interesting. It was a good training for delivering an ART day course!



Likewise, the ART tutor only gets one chance with each group of trainee ringing teachers, so each day course must be good.

I was a founder member of ART attending the inaugural meeting in March 2012 in Oxford. In November that year I tutored my first day course at a local tower in Devon. Since then I have delivered 25 Teaching Bell Handling (M1) day courses and 16 Teaching from Rounds (M2C). I have held courses across the South West from Longcot in Oxfordshire and Colerne, near Bath in Wiltshire to Zennor in Cornwall. Throughout I have been ably supported by my partner,

Sheila Scofield who is a qualified teacher and has been a valuable critical friend.

As you can imagine, it's not just a question of turning up at the venue, delivering the course and then clearing off to the pub or curry house at the end of the day. Each course takes several days' preparation getting resources organised and mentoring support for the students arranged or at least possible mentors identified.

On returning home there are several bits of admin to do and mentoring arrangements to finalise. When you have several courses in quick succession, you barely have time to square away the last course before starting to think about the next. And all the while you have to maintain your own teaching and ringing development.

My greatest regret is not having more time to follow up the progress of the trainee teachers after each course.

Sheila and I have enjoyed our travels around the South West in support of ART. We often make a short holiday of trips to some of the farther destinations. I will miss tutoring, but I do detect that I am slowing down in my mid-70s. So it's time to pass on my ART projector!



Ringing Wordsearch

Rose Nightingale

Method Ringing Terms

D L S F P O L B O B A L W P U
M U U S O A T L O H C T O R M
E C B I S E B R L C I T L I S
E O A N O E T U I I E A S N C
N D C G R X O W E P M E S C U
I M K L C T U E U T L C A I E
L A W E L E C L M B K E U P T
E J O B P N H H U N T E S L E
U O R S L T U O L A W S L E F
L R K N A E D O D G E R C R A
B L J O C I R S D B I U E E L
U C X U E N W O S D S O A N S
S O A S S Y M E T R I C L L E
E X T R E M E L S U O C N N C
C J R D A E L N I A L P E E S

| | |
|------------|-----------|
| DOUBLES | BLUELINE |
| DODGE | COURSE |
| EXTENT | MAJOR |
| BACKWORK | EXTREME |
| PLAIN LEAD | BOB |
| ASSYMETRIC | SINGLE |
| HUNT | FALSE |
| GO | PLACES |
| SLOW | TRIPLES |
| TOUCH | PRINCIPLE |

Solution on Page 17

50/50 Club Draw News

Gill Hughes, Belper

The 50/50 Club supports the Association of Ringing Teachers in delivering training for teachers and ringers

It is a simple way of supporting the work of ART as well as having the chance to win a cash prize. All you have to do is join, pay the subscription of £12 per year (can also be £3 per quarter or £1 monthly) and your membership number will be entered into a quarterly draw. Over the year, half the money received goes to ART... and half is shared out in prizes by a draw of member numbers.

March prize winners

Ian Turner

Evelyn Loweth

Susan Read

Why not get your whole band to join?

Full details on how to join are at: <https://bellringing.org/donate-to-art/>

Mentors for Novice Ringers

Mary Jones, Norfolk

A mentor is an experienced individual who provides guidance, support and advice to a less experienced person. This relationship involves sharing expertise to help the mentee achieve personal goals, and to reach their full potential. Mentors offer insights, constructive feedback, and encouragement, acting as trusted advisors to help the mentee navigate challenges and develop new skills.

Ringers may have come across mentoring in their professional lives and appreciate how useful the relationship can be. At present, there does not seem to be any formal system of mentoring in ringing other than mentoring of would-be teachers as part of the ART scheme. No doubt some individuals make their own informal arrangements, but in the main, a teacher teaches and, once safe to handle, a learner joins a band and, depending on the local offer, gets on with it. Often, their teacher will be a member of the band, so the relationship of teacher-pupil remains in force, perhaps diluted as more novices come along. Would a designated mentor, either within the band or from a neighbouring band, be a natural next stage and if so, how to find one?

I suspect that there are many ringers who would be happy, indeed flattered to be asked to mentor a less experienced ringer. It provides a supporting role for ringers who perhaps do not have the skills or inclination to teach, but are keen to give back something to the community. Taking on a mentee could be a way of contributing that would not only be personally satisfying, but also increase engagement levels on both sides of the equation, thus boosting retention levels across the board. It also releases teachers to move on to the next cohort of beginners. All too often teachers have sequential learners over a number of years, some of whom are still looking for support which could be provided by someone else.

Some sort of training would be required or at the very least a simple guide on how to mentor – What does mentoring involve? How to best support a less experienced ringer? How to find a good fit between mentor and mentee?

I know that there was a stage when I returned, very hesitantly, to ringing after lockdown, when I greatly appreciated the input of a more experienced ringer, separate from my teacher and tower captain, who undertook to support and encourage me in this way. Without him, I could have been yet another statistic – a ringer, who reached a basic level of rounds and call change competence, but then gave up because attempting anything more felt too demanding and sticking at that early stage felt like a failure.

If so, how best to organise such a scheme to maximise the chance of success?

Are there more of us out there who would welcome a mentor? Are there ringers approaching the end of the LtR programme who would be interested in providing this sort of support to those coming up behind?

Key aspects of a mentor's role

Guidance and Support

Mentors provide direction and support, acting as an advisor to help mentees overcome challenges and move beyond their comfort zone.

Expertise and Knowledge

They share their experience, knowledge, and insights to help the mentee learn and develop as ringers.

Networking

A mentor can open doors by introducing the mentee to other ringers and towers, helping to build a support network

Feedback and Encouragement

They offer constructive feedback and provide encouragement to motivate the mentee to pursue their goals.

Long-Term Relationship

Unlike a short-term coach, a mentor typically offers long-term support, helping the mentee in a more general and comprehensive way.



Networking—an important part of a new ringers' journey

The New SmART Ringer

Judith Frye



Did you know the brand-new SmART Ringer is now up and running? It's a replacement for the old one but works in a much more intuitive way.

What can you see and do as a Ltr ringer?



You can see your progress through Learning the Ropes and you can also enrol yourself on other programmes. Why not try Learning the Ropes Handbells? Or, if you have finished Learning the Ropes, Learning the Ropes Plus might be a good next step.

There are plenty of goals ranging from more complex methods or ringing on higher numbers to conducting or tower management. The choice is yours and you can tackle them in any order. Certificates are available for all levels of Ltr Plus.

Learning the Ropes Plus and Learning the Ropes Handbells Achievement logbooks are available from the ART shop: <https://shop.bellringing.org>

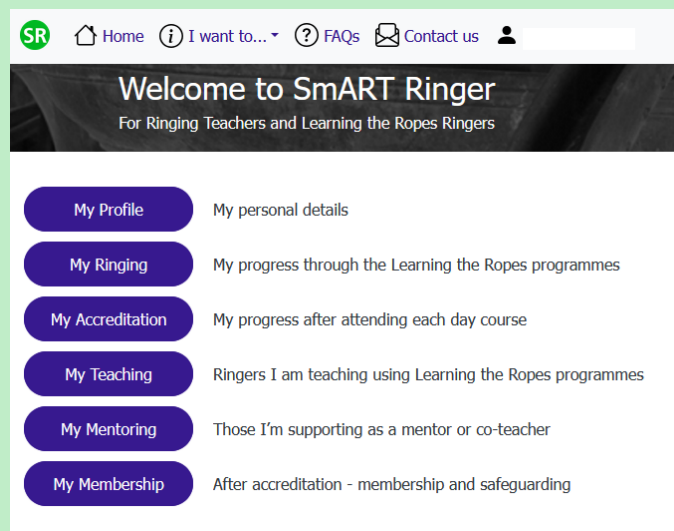
Grab a friend and work through them together!

Accessing your SmART Ringer account

You can access SmART Ringer using the same address as before:
<https://smartringer.org>.

Your account has been transferred from the old website with all your details, but your current password won't work, so the first time you login you'll need to use a one-time code.

You may already have been sent this by email. If not, just go to the site, click *Lost password?* and enter your SmART Ringer username and your email address and we'll send you a one-time code. You'll be asked to set a password once you login with the code. If you have any problems, just contact enquiries@bellringing.org and they will help.



Where are the old SmART Ringer resources?

These and much more are now located on the ART Online website: <https://artonline.bellringing.org/>.

There are resources for both teachers and ringers and there is a lot of information to help everyone at different stages of their ringing career. Do browse through what is available and see what might interest you. If you don't already have an account for the site, you will need to set one up but it's very quick.

One tip is to set your username and password to be the same as your SmART Ringer login details – it avoids having to remember another password!

Review: A Beginner's Guide to Better Striking

Miranda Penhaligon, St Buryan, Cornwall

First off, I laughed when the package came – so slim! However, as I mention below, this has the advantage that it doesn't take long to read.

It started with 'what is good striking', essentially 'clean, rhythmic, evenly spaced sound, with no gaps or clipping', followed by a brief mention of the mechanics of getting the sound relative to the position of the rope and covering odd-struckness.

The four steps in striking

The booklet goes on to consider 'the four steps in striking' as someone progresses.

Step One

Visual only: No compensation for large/small bells; odd-struckness and being able to see the ropes clearly.

Step Two

Visual/aural: Some compensation for bell size etc but encouraging you to hear your own bell.

Stage Three

Aural/visual: Knowing which is your bell and knowing what place you are.

Stage Four

Aural/rhythmic.

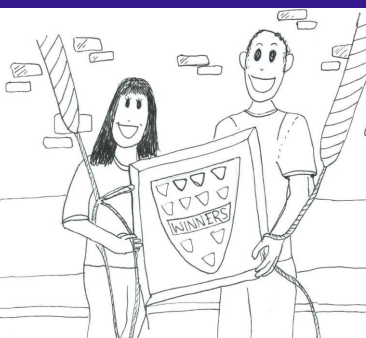
This is followed by two types of exercises to improve striking followed by a section on common faults in striking - what to do if the bell in front is too slow/fast and if leading is poor - and finally, an encouraging conclusion!

So, should you buy this booklet? Initially, I thought I'd been a bit shortchanged, but in fact this brevity is its strength - there is a lot in it, that if worked on, could really help a new band (and probably some more experienced bands!) The book can be lent out to everyone in the band, and it shouldn't take them long to at least skim read and start to apply some pointers.

So, my conclusion. Yes - buy this book in the hope your band attains that Holy Grail of ringing - better striking!



50 Ringing Things



There are two striking challenges in 50 Ringing Things

- *Take part in a striking competition*
- *Help judge a striking competition*

The starting point for both is working on your own striking. Once you are constructively critical of your own striking it is not a big leap to being constructively critical of the striking in any ringing you are listening to.



BELLRINGING

A beginner's guide to better striking



Central Council Publications

Central Council Publications
<https://shop.ccbbr.org>

There are loads of resources out there to help you work on your striking and there is so much you can do when you are not in the tower as well, so take a look at some of these suggestions:

- Fun with Bells podcast - go to <https://funwithbells.com/> and search for 'striking'
- Various articles from the CCCBR 'Learning Curve' series - <https://ccbbr.org.uk/resources/learning-development/>
- CCCBR <https://ccbbr.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/199907.pdf>
- The ART YouTube channel - <https://www.youtube.com/@ringingteachers/featured>

Author's Disclaimer

I'm no way the best striker - but I do try and know I must keep trying!

Clunky to Classy

Rose Nightingale

Learning tips

So there's a handy book you can read about improving your striking (reviewed on page 13). What practical things can you do to work on becoming a good striker? One important thing to remember is that you don't just wake up in the morning being able to strike your bell. It's a skill you have to build with lots of practice and so do not be disheartened or put off if you feel you just don't know what anyone is talking about in the early days. Like everything else in bellringing it develops gradually and cumulatively.

Here are a few things to try which help focus your mind on the sound of the bells rather than who you're following. None of these suggestions are 'do it once' type exercises. They help you build a habit, so that it becomes automatic, just like remembering to say 'Look to' when you start to ring. Do talk about this within your band as everyone needs to buy into doing it and absolutely everyone will benefit.

Things for you to do

Ring your bell solo. The treble is a good one to start with so that you know which 'bong' is yours. The 2 joins in after a few pulls. Then the 3, but only after you are confident that you can hear your sound before the second's. If this goes well, add another bell. Don't just do this once! Do it every week, and gradually build up to being able to do it on every bell.

Ring rounds, deliberately not looking at the bell you are following but looking at something else. If there is something at eye height you can put in the middle of the circle, look at that. If not, pin something to the walls in our tower so you could use something like that. We use printed cartoon pictures of eyes. You want to develop your use of your peripheral vision so that your full attention is not totally on looking. This will allow your other senses to work better.



Internalise the rhythm of ringing so that you can feel it when you are ringing. This means listening when sitting out or listening to recorded ringing, especially touches with the tenor bonging behind. Listen and anticipate that 'bong'. Tap your toe to the rhythm. With good ringing you should be able to do this. With not so good ringing... what is wrong? You are allowed to be constructively critical of other peoples' ringing!

There is a direct connection between smooth and confident handling and good striking, so **continue to work on aspects of your technique** which may be stopping you from progressing.

Things for the band to do

Pick a **named call change row** (e.g. Queens). As soon as someone recognises that you are ringing that row they shout out what it is. This encourages active listening and it's good fun. You can find lists of named call change rows online.

Quietly ask someone to **deliberately ring their bell too slowly or too fast**. Everyone else (and you can include the people sitting out) has to identify the bell making the striking error and give them the right instructions to adjust.

Adjusting your bell

Often you know your bell isn't in the right place and someone tries to help by saying 'pull!' or 'quicker!' - given with the best of intentions but these instructions might not mean anything to you and can undermine your confidence. There are often much more effective words one might use but in the real world these instructions are what you are very likely to hear. So you need to really work on understanding what they mean.

Pull means you need to put more energy into your bell to make it swing higher up towards the balance or you might have lost the tension in your rope and are in danger of losing control. This can apply equally to handstroke and backstroke or just one of them, so be prepared to ask your helper to be precise about that.

Quicker (or closer) can mean don't let the bell swing too high or don't wait too long on the balance. You need to make the gap between you and the bell ringing in front of you smaller.

Slower (or wider) often means that you need to stretch up more to allow the bell to go nearer to the balance. You need to make the gap between you and the bell ringing in front of you bigger.

200 Quarter Peals

Edward Gormley

On Tuesday 30th December 2025 I rang three quarter peals to mark the end of the year of celebrations to mark 200 Years of Train Travel. Here are some of the significant quarter peals I have rung during my bellringing career.

On Saturday 6th May 2017

A quarter peal of 1260 Plain Bob Doubles at St Mary's Church Lewisham, on the tenor.

Rung for the Docklands Ringing Centre Quarter Peal Day. This was the first quarter peal I rang in my bellringing career. It was a memorable experience!

On Saturday 11th September 2021

A quarter peal of 1260 Plain Bob Triples at the St George the Martyr Church Borough High Street, on the tenor.

Rung in memory of Jim Ramsay (1949 - 2019) on the 22nd anniversary of his marriage to Lorna. I knew Jim from 1984 to 2019.

On Friday 24th February 2023

A quarter peal of 1260 Flying Scotsman Doubles (St Simon's Bob Doubles with Ready Money Singles) at St Mary's Church Rotherhithe, on the treble.

This was my 100th quarter peal, on the 100th anniversary of Flying Scotsman - the most famous steam engine in the world - rolling off the production line at the London North Eastern Railway Doncaster Works.

On Sunday 13th May 2018

A quarter peal of 1260 Grandsire Triples at St Mary's Church Lewisham, on the tenor.

Rung in memory of Lance Corporal Merrick Raymond Warnett of the 20th Battalion, London Regiment, who was killed in action on 14th May 1918 aged 25 and buried in Contay British Cemetery in France. He and members of his family rang at St Mary's Church Lewisham.



On Sunday 14th April 2024

A quarter peal of 1280 Plain Bob Major at St Paul's Church in Birmingham, on the fifth.

Rung after the Birmingham LtR Masterclass. It was my first quarter of Plain Bob Major.

On Sunday 14th July 2019

A quarter peal of 1320 Reverse Canterbury Pleasure Place Doubles at St Mary's Church Rotherhithe, on the tenor.

Rung to recognise my ten years as an Event Steward at Southwark Cathedral. I wrote an article about the quarter peal, which was published in the September 2019 issue of *The Bridge - Newspaper of the Anglican Diocese of Southwark*.

On Sunday 27th February 2022

A quarter peal of 1260 Plain Bob Minor at St Mary's Church Rotherhithe, on the second.

I completed Level 5 of the Learning the Ropes Learning programme (via the Doubles route). The quarter peal was rung in solidarity with the people of Ukraine.

On Tuesday 30th December 2025

A quarter peal of 1260 Grandsire Triples at St Mary Magdalene Church in Richmond, on the tenor.

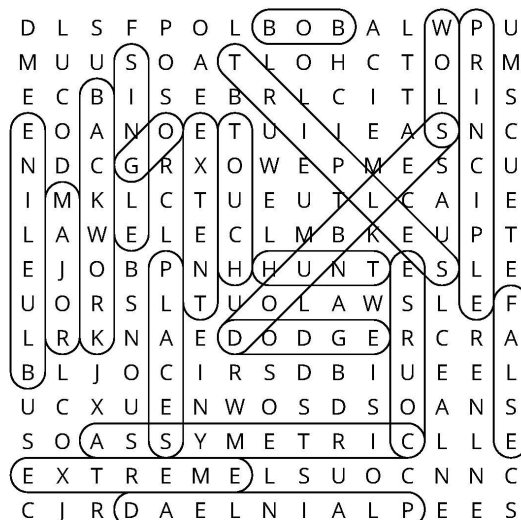
Rung to mark the end of the year of celebrations to mark 200 Years of Train Travel. This was my 200th quarter peal.

Reasons to ring bingo!

Edward has rung quarter peals for an interesting and wide range of reasons. There are lots of 'good excuses' for a quarter peal, here are some that we've seen recently

| Quarter Peal Bingo | | | |
|--|--|------------------------------------|------------------------|
| MBE awarded to local ringer | Church celebration of volunteers | Local festival | Completing a LtR level |
| National event | Patronal Festival | Bell Sunday | Special service |
| In memoriam for a friend, family member or church goer | Anniversary of VE Day, VJ Day or local ringer killed in action | A special birthday | Career highlight |
| Important date for an alternative hobby or interest | Important date for an admired writer, composer or artist | Anniversary of a peal in the tower | First as conductor |

Ringling Wordsearch Solution



Learning the Ropes Achievers



Level 1 – Bell Handling: Safe and competent bell handling including raising and lowering a bell.

February 2026

Julie Goddard - Bishops Waltham
Shannon Dagnell - Bishops Waltham
Amy Large - Bishops Waltham
Eli Chard - Bishops Waltham
Kaz Downing - Upham
Dora Denton - Northampton
Louise Butterworth - Northampton
Harry Rhead - Kinver
Ellie-Mae Price - Kineton
Sheila Fisher - Broseley
Evelyn Adamson - Barrow upon Humber
Holly Peachey - Barrow upon Humber
River Ashton Paul
Taliah Lee - Crowcombe
Susan Ambler - Katoomba
Susan Glew - Thorverton
Sue Morgan - Stretton on Dunsmore
Caroline Wright
Liz Bradbury - St Dennis
Benjamin Keen - Hemingford Grey
Elizabeth Holloway - Bampton
Christine Burns - Cotherstone
John Griffiths - Hurworth
Natalie Crossman - Loughton
Tim Blythe - Edinburgh
Ruby Walsh - Bolton
Olivia Bird - Pontefract
Sophia Van Rooyen - Wellington
Katie Ben - Wellington
Emily Stewart - Dorchester
James Parkinson - Dorchester
Simon Goodger - Shenley
Elizabeth Sugden - Exeter
Louise Cross - Cosby
Jess Glover - Pewsey
John Rattigan - Clitheroe
Gus Cable - Great Bardfield
Richard Cassell - Mansfield
Sally Crook - Mansfield
David Edwards - Mansfield
Dave Shaw - Mansfield
Mark Potter - Fownhope
Hannah Rudd - Stokesley
Freia McCall - Lutterworth
Freia McCall - Lutterworth
Wendy Brown - Aylestone
Favour Onwuchekwa - Workington

March 2026

Chi Kin Kwong - Bishop's Stortford
Phillip Burke
Harry Wake - Edgbaston
Elliot Walker - Kinver
David Boden - Alrewas
Emma Thompson - Alrewas
Stephen Rees - Glasgow
Jo Shaw - Glasgow
Joanna Jelley - Hillfarrance
Rupert Kirby - Taunton
Zarino Zappia - Burghill
Cationa Lambeth - Eaton Bishop
En Christopher - Eaton Bishop
Rowan Stevenson - Cambridge
Emilie Sampson
Teo Tomas - Cambridge
Timothy Lomax - Sunningwell
Cathy Chow - Cheltenham
Lucy Fowler - Blackburn
Barry Freestone - Belfast
James Morley - Bexhill
Nicky Upritchard - Belfast
Richard Hillis - Belfast
James Orchin - Belfast
Judy Morgan - Broadwell
Julia Aitken - Spetisbury
Debbie Streeter - Pimperne
Nicola Christopher - Pimperne
Spencer Barrington - Aldershot
Trevor Taylor - Roker
James Collins - Rochester
Stephen Johnstone - Kirkham
Sharon O'Dwyer - East Witton
Melanie Mansell - Edith Weston
David Ives - Marchington
Helen Locking - Great Carlton
Jilly Prince - East Witton
Chris Fleming - Alton

April 2026

Morris Chase - Billingshurst
Helen Rodier - Burton Bradstock
Kelly Farrell - Perranarworthal
Alex Hicks - Meysey Hampton
Gail Jones - West Lavington
Olivia Law - Corby
Phil Burgess - Willingham
Sam Saloway Cooke - Walsham le Willows

Diana Boyles - Nantwich
Roger Boyles - Nantwich
Claire Jordan - Nantwich
Natalie Alexandroff - Findon
Breda Allen - Findon
Christopher Blacker - Findon
Alex Harris - Heathfield
Roger Middlebrook - Wantage
Adrian Riches - Findon
Ben Roake
Arthur Morrison - Stratford sub Castle
Karen Pile - Ickford
Lee Rumsey - Sandon
Ellen Brown - Gainford
John Truswell - Thorverton
Peter Eves - Oswestry
Philip Foster - Bewdley
Hannah Probert - Swaffham Bulbeck
Nicola Haines - Pimperne
Jackie Linford - Pimperne
Brian Watson Bell - Staindrop
Jeremy Watson Bell - Staindrop
Lorraine Butterfield - Wellington
Abigail Thurtle - Writtle
Alfie Jones Ward - Kinver
N Bartlette
Susan Barton - Swaffham
Rachel Cox - Leire
Neil McGann - Saxthorpe
Dawn Moore - Wroxham
Ray Moore - Wroxham
Chloe Richards - Leire
Tom Shanaghy - Drayton
Abi Skinner
Harry Talbot - Burwell
Amelia Douglas - Chichester
Victoria Littlejohn - Chichester
Michael Armitage - Much Wenlock
Thomas Beldom - Wokingham
Charlie Elliott - Retford
Judith Feeney - Dorchester
Glen Leckie - Wokingham
Heidi Manley - Stretham
Laura Antonieta Velilla Alarcon - Longstanton
Paul Way - Wentworth
Abigail Woodward - Retford
Louise Boulton - Ruskington

Congratulations to our LtR Achievers!

Don't forget that when you achieve LtR Level 5 you will be able to attend the **Learning the Ropes Masterclass** and can be nominated for a **Learning the Ropes Achievement Award**.



Level 2 – Foundation Skills: Ringing with others: able to dodge, make places and ring simple changes.

February 2026

Laura Taylor - Dunblane
Abdul Khan
Dan Bulley - Boughton
Jo Strange - Kirtlington
Jo Taylor - Marsworth
Darren Ford - Dawley Magna
Mina Bixley - Wellington
Katie Ben - Wellington
Calum Hocking - St Buryan
Cadan Bone - St Buryan
Ella Fairburn - Henley
Elizabeth Goodchild - Offton
Chloe Poppleton - Beccles
Janet Richards - Brampton
David Bradbury - Whalley
Liz Evans - Clitheroe
Diane Monroe - Hughsden

Luke Hollingsworth - Burghill
Noah Powell Tuck - Wellington
Caroline Wright
Linda Johnson - Thorpe on the Hill
Oscar Darton - Litlington
Melanie Dughan - Packington
Cathy Chow - Cheltenham
Matthew Dowall - Winterbourne Earls
Nichie Sawtell - Winterbourne Earls
Sarah Bennett - Winterbourne Earls
Pauline Gordon - Wool
Julie Dunk - Stourpaine
Madeleine Davenport Smith - Much Hadham
Hannah Webb - Nettleham
Luke O'Connor - Rochester
Noah Corlett - Studley
Raif Smith - Great Carlton

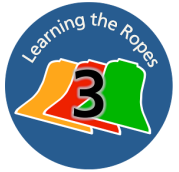
David Johnson - Longstanton
Barbara D'Silva - Alconbury
Chris D'Silva - Alconbury
Caroline Alderson - Canford Magna
Cathy Garwood - Canford Magna
Sherryn Ravenscroft - Legbourne
Carol Worthington—Fladbury
Stephen Savage - Lincoln
Andrew Bloor - Ackworth
Heather Roberts - Ackworth
Andrew Davies - Oswestry
Stella Doyle - Oswestry
Matt Leak - Oswestry
Ann Peacock - Oswestry
Jeanne Spinks - Oswestry
Roché Walker Petersen - Brierley Hill
Sue Green - Ackworth
Pearl Woolley - Barming
Susan Barton - Swaffham
Phil Burgess - Willingham
Abi Skinner
Susanne Skov-Goddard - Swaffham
Ben Mustafa - Shenley

March 2026

Emma Thompson - Alrewas
Anna Fenton Smith - Ranmoor
William Wilson - Ranmoor

April 2026

David Fielding - Badsey
Anne Freestone - Barrow upon Soar
Leigh Robinson - Wentworth
Mick Robinson - Wentworth



Level 3 – Introduction to Change Ringing: Competent at Plain Hunt and covering (demonstrated by ringing two quarter peals at least one of which is on the treble).

February 2026

Lynne Dumbrell - Droxford
Rachel Tordoff - Belper
David Savory - Kineton
Jane Millward - Tysoe
Katie Waterworth - Stretton on Dunsmore
Sahib Singh Bhamra - Stretton on Dunsmore
David Blake - Maldon
Jamie Slack - Shenfield
Katie Ben - Wellington

March 2026

Sally Sturt - Droxford
Joyce Gent - Alrewas
Emma Thompson - Alrewas
Elliot Taylor - Ranmoor
Sylvia Chen - Ranmoor
Catriona James - Glasgow
Annie Ashton - Sidmouth
Walter Sinclair - South Petherton
Thomas McDowell - Carrickfergus
Dean Hallam - Great Totham
Elizabeth Ferguson - Shipton Gorge
Catherine Choi - Kingston upon Thames

April 2026

Kaz Donald - Hendon
David Martyn - Greenwich
Ivan Probert - Marple
Matilda Sampson - Cambridge
Matthew Cooper - Mitcham
Alison Peel - Roker
Reuben Lomax - Abingdon
Eliza Steadman - Brough
Gillian Herbert - Saffron Walden
Kate Clouston - Hexham



Level 4 – Novice Change Ringer: Ringing and calling touches of a Double or Minor method (demonstrated by ring a quarter peal inside). Raising and lowering a bell in peal).

February 2026

Helen Sayers - Tysoe
Jane Millward - Tysoe
Katie Waterworth - Stretton on Dunsmore
Jamie Ben - Wellington
Hannah Cole - Thorley
Reuben Zebidiah Willoughby - Mitcham

March 2026

Kirsten Cousens - Droxford
Eddie Prayle - Bramcote
Joyce Gent - Alrewas
George Davis - Thurcaston
Annie Ashton - Sidmouth
Aneurin Kennerley - Bradfield

April 2026

Tilly Dyer - Great Chishill
Paul Chapman - Corfe Mullen
Reuben Lomax - Abingdon
Graham Smith - Melsonby
Paula Heaney - Cambridge
Ali Poulter - Thorley
Hannah Turk
Katie Ben - Wellington



Level 5 – Change Ringer: Ringing and calling a second method and ringing touches of Plain Bob (demonstrated by ringing three quarter peals including inside to Plain Bob Minor).

February 2026

Charlie Macke - Tackley
Michael Hodgkinson - St Annes on the Sea

March 2026

Joyce Gent - Alrewas
Kiyoshi Thompson - Sheffield
Susan Payne - Piddlehinton
Ben Wigley - Edgbaston
Ben Williams - Harwell

April 2026

Parin Herbert Seymour - Heathfield
Ben Williams - Edgbaston
Jamie Ben - Wellington