



Editor's Foreword – *Andy Clark*

An autumnal welcome to the Q3 newsletter. I'll keep my intro very brief as there is plenty to read in this edition, with Q3 always proving to be one of the busier ones.

I've just got the one future date to flag for now, which is the Branch AGM on Saturday 21st November at Dumbleton. This will include some ringing, a short service, ringers' tea and then the AGM, so please pop this in your diaries.

A reminder also to keep checking the branch website please for details of any other events.

That's it from me – see you for the next one, due for publication early in 2027. Yes – you read that right – 2027 – how time marches on!

Branch Chairman's Welcome – *Mike Hartley*

Greetings everyone,

I'm sure that many of you will share my relief at the cooler weather we're having now; and it's great to see more ringers at Sunday service ringing and practice nights now the summer holiday season is over. Notwithstanding people being away, there has been much going on in Cheltenham Branch over the past three months.

G&B's Scouts Initiative

In June the G&B Youth Team manned the mobile Charmborough Ring at a Scouts event in Cirencester Park and promoted ringing to a large number of enthusiastic Scout groups. This resulted in expressions of interest in tower tours, twenty one of which were from groups within the boundaries of the G&B and four within Cheltenham Branch.

We're very fortunate to have in Cheltenham Branch at least two ringers who are involved with the Scouts. I'm grateful to Clara Jackson and Peter Aylott for their willingness to take this initiative forward locally. So far one tower tour has been arranged, to take place at Leckhampton in October. The aims of the tour will be to provide an interesting and entertaining evening for young people and raise their awareness of bell ringing; to recruit young ringers; and to promote ringing to the wider community. It is hoped that more tours will be arranged, learning from the experience of the first. I'm looking forward to hearing about the first tour.

Whether or not this will result in a number of recruits remains to be seen, but plans are in hand to help manage this if it does, which leads me on to my next topic...

Training the Trainers

While we have some very good teachers in Cheltenham Branch, with (hopefully) the prospect of more recruits, we need to increase the number of ringers who have sufficient understanding and confidence to teach someone the rudiments of bell ringing and how to handle a bell independently. A big thank-you to Simon Ridley and Stuart Tomlinson for leading two excellent 'training the trainer' sessions in September,



and of course to Cara for organising. I'm sure there's an appetite and a need for more such sessions. Notes from the sessions are available if you're interested.

Membermojo

Many of you will know that Membermojo is the G&B's online membership database. It gives each member their own record, allowing them to check and update their contact details, while making it easier for the G&B and its branches to keep membership information accurate and up to date. Membermojo will also be used to collect subscriptions and, in due course, send notices and other information directly to members.

If you haven't already done so, please register using this link: <https://membermojo.co.uk/gbda>. There's a Member Registration Guide and a list of FAQs. It is hoped that all branch members will register on Membermojo by 1st November, when the new membership year starts.

If you are uncertain about any of this, please talk to your tower captain, who already has the relevant guidance, or a member of the Cheltenham Branch committee.

Tower Practice Visits

Another thank-you from me, this time to the nine volunteers who visit six of our branch towers regularly in pairs to support their practice nights. This year, this amounts to a total of twenty two visits; i.e. three or four visits per tower during the year.

It would be great if the number of these visits could be increased, and extended to other towers where there's a need, preferably with additional volunteers rather than expecting current volunteers to take on more. If you'd like to join the team, please let me know.

I'd be very interested and happy to receive feedback from tower captains and volunteer visitors on the value of these visits and what improvements can be made.

Cheltenham Branch AGM

Lastly, but very much not least, our branch AGM will be at Dumbleton on 21st November at 3pm. I look forward to seeing you there.

Best wishes,

Mike

2026 Ringing World National Youth Contest – Anya Tillman (aged 11)

Young ringers from Gloucester and Bristol proudly represented the area at the 2026 Ringing World National Youth Contest in Nottingham on 4th July. Competing against multiple teams from across the country, we had great success. The six bell call change team came second and the eight bell method team came fourth. But we wouldn't have done so well if we didn't have the help from our mentors, including Ian Bucknell and Roger Haynes. Although there is more competition it also means that there is more opportunity to make more friends. There is always next year!



Arthur Scruton (15/9/1928 – 17/6/2026) – Jenni Scruton

Arthur Scruton, who died on 17th June 2026, was a Tower Member at Prestbury.

Arthur was born in Middlesbrough, moved to Kew as a boy and eventually moved to Cheltenham to work at GCHQ in 1955.

Arthur began his ringing career reasonably late in life, aged 67.

Arthur met Jenni, then Vellender, in 1994 and decided that he would like to learn to ring to be able to go along to ringing with Jenni and her son Adam. He learned at Prestbury and in the early days also attended Wednesday practices at Woolstone. Arthur kept a diary of everywhere that he rung, what he rung and how well he got on! He was often nervous ringing bells with which he was not familiar and was glad of someone to stand behind him on those occasions. A highlight was ringing at St David's Cathedral on a family holiday.

Although he never really mastered method ringing inside, he was proud to have rung at least 60 Quarter Peals, mostly at Prestbury, though he also lists ones at Childswickham, Winchcombe and Woolstone among his achievements. Most of the quarters were rung on the tenor, but a few were also on the treble.

Arthur and Jenni were married in October 1995 and they were pleased to sponsor the recasting of the treble at Prestbury which bears the inscription that they jointly chose "Love one another for love is of God".





Arthur had a heart attack in May 2003 which brought his Quarter Peal ringing to an end, but he soon recovered enough to continue attending practices and ringing for weddings. He enjoyed Sunday service ringing at Llanbadarn Fawr, near Aberystwyth, when away for weekends and of course, at Prestbury. He rang right up until the Covid pandemic and was Prestbury's first 90 year old ringer.

Lack of practice and worsening symptoms of rheumatoid arthritis meant that when restrictions were lifted he was unable to climb the steps to the ringing room at Prestbury and he had lost the confidence to ring anywhere else. Whilst his ringing career was effectively at an end he still enjoyed visits to the Plough to celebrate other ringers' birthdays. He was always very moved at being invited to be there, collected from home (by then in Woodmancote) by Jenni who had left practice early to pick him up.

Arthur always said that in earlier years he never dreamed he would become a bell ringer, he had met lots at his work at GCHQ. It was a whole new world to him and as a linguist he found a lot of the terminology at first baffling and then interesting! He met lots of people while ringing and made good friends with several of them.

Arthur died peacefully at home with Jenni at his side. He had become frail and his health had deteriorated to the point that he needed 24-hour care. Jenni coped single-handedly with his needs and was able to fulfil his wish to die at home, a place they both loved.

There were lots of ringers at Arthur's funeral and at the wake afterwards.

On the evening of the day that Arthur died, Charles Beardsell rang Taylors for Arthur on Prestbury's tenor. A loving tribute to a man who more than one ringer called "one of our own".



Warden Hill 25 Years and Counting – *Reg Hitchings*

On 14th July 2001, the new ring of six bells at St Christopher's, Warden Hill, were rung for the first time, the installation having completed during the day. It was a bit of an unnerving situation as no other ring of bells with a tenor of only 63lbs had ever been rung anywhere in the ringing world. The bells were dedicated on the following Sunday. Their story has been interesting, in that initially 'Doves Guide' refused to include them as they had an arbitrary rule excluding anything under 1cwt, never expecting a Church to install something smaller, and then more recently the same Guide changed its format and Warden Hill once again was omitted from the general listing, being deemed a 'lightweight' ring. Fortunately, all of these issues have been resolved.

The initial bands at Warden Hill were all members of the congregation and so it took some time to achieve the first notable event, a Quarter Peal of mixed doubles on 21st April 2002. 351 Quarter Peals (to 14th July 2026) have now been rung. The first Peal on the bells was by a local band on 16th April 2011 (<https://bb.ringingworld.co.uk/view.php?id=121406>) and there have now been 11 Peals on the bells. On Tuesday 14th July 2026, to celebrate the 25th Anniversary, a band rang a Peal 5040 changes in 25 methods (<https://bb.ringingworld.co.uk/view.php?id=1988714>). Three of the original (2001) band are still regulars at the tower.

Cheltenham, Gloucestershire

Warden Hill, St Christopher

Saturday, 16 April 2011 in 2h 32 (63lbs)
5040 Plain Bob Doubles

- 1 Gillian Lloyd Williams
- 2 Isabel Hitchings (C)
- 3 Owen Barraclough
- 4 Joan Barraclough
- 5 Nathaniel Hitchings
- 6 Maureen McBane

For the retirement of The Revd Canon Owen Barraclough from St Christopher's, part of The Church in Warden Hill.

1st peal: 1, 2, 3 (aged 79), 5, 6.
1st peal as conductor.
1st peal inside: 4 (= 2nd peal).
1st peal on the bells.

Cheltenham, Gloucestershire

Warden Hill, St Christopher

Tuesday, 14 July 2026 in 2h 10 (0–2–7 in C)
5040 Doubles (25m)

240 ea Plain Bob, New Bob, Huntspill, St Vedast, Westminster II, Blackburn, St Hilary, Callendar, Twineham, Bampton, Fifield, St Nicholas, Winchendon Place, St Remigius, St Simon's, St Martin's, St Osmund and 120 ea Huntley, Eynesbury, St Ouen, Dragon, Blaisdon, Maltby, Chevasse, Montgomeryshire

- 1 Simon J Ridley
- 2 Alison M Lee
- 3 Henry J Stephenson (C)
- 4 Reg C Hitchings
- 5 Stuart E Tomlinson
- 6 Grace L Dooley

For the 25th Anniversary, today, of the first ring on the bells following installation.
200th Peal (5).



Leckhampton and Friends Annual Tour (15th – 18th July) – *Chris Hickey and Stuart Tomlinson*

This year we visited Shropshire. The weather was lovely, the countryside idyllic and we were warmly welcomed by the local ringers.

On the way up we rang at Leominster and at Kingsland – both very nice rings and we rang a variety of methods, up to Surprise Major. This was followed by dinner at the Ragleth Inn in Little Stretton. Church Stretton was central to most of the ringing, so several people stayed there and enjoyed the beautiful views around the Long Mynd.

The next day, we based ourselves in the Ludlow area, starting at Stoke St Milborough. These bells were recently cast in Italy at the Allanconi foundry. They ring well and sound great. It was good to hear that they usually have three practices a week (regular, learners and surprise), with some ringers travelling 30-40 miles for the surprise practice. Next, we rang at Stanton Lacy and then on to Ludlow. After climbing the 136 steps to the ringing room, we had general ringing, followed by a quarter of Stedman Caters (conducted by Harry Stephenson). It was a hot day and this probably contributed to us nearly losing the quarter right at the end – that is Stedman for you!

After lunch we rang at Leintwardine. These bells are on plain bearings, and we did find them quite challenging. We ended our day at Jan Herraty's private ring, and we rang on both the teaching belfry (tractor weights attached to a simulator) and the fire ring (cast by Taylor's and based on old fire engine bells). These rings were built by John Turney, a well-known local ringer. The teaching belfry was used for many years until John became ill and unable to ring. Both rings are in a large barn, which also stores some interesting old tractors and various other unusual items.

Friday morning dawned bright and hot and we spent the day navigating the little sixes around Church Stretton, getting used to grass in the middle of the road, meeting occasional tractors and 4x4s on narrow lanes and using satnavs with very little signal. Despite this we enjoyed the bells at Hope Bowdler, Church Stretton, Cardington, Tugford and Rushbury. Church Stretton was probably the highlight of the day, and we managed a variety of methods including Turramurra, which is our current method of the month. The newly augmented eight at Cardington were an especially nice ring too. Above an old doorway at Rushbury, we saw a 'Sheela na gig' - an interesting stone fertility carving.

We had dinner at the Royal Oak in Cardington – very rural and pretty.

On Saturday we started the day ringing the fine ten at Coalbrookdale – what an amazing location, way up a heavily wooded valley. Next, we rang at Much Wenlock, where parking was at a premium – it is quite a tourist hotspot! Lovely bells again. Some of us had lunch in Shrewsbury at the aptly named Loopy Shrew and then rang at Shrewsbury St Mary (10, 19cwt) and St Chad's (12, 49cwt). We struggled a bit to do these fine rings justice, due to the heat and a shortage of back-end ringers but we still managed decent rounds / call changes and some Grandsire and Stedman.

One of our ringers joined the Sunday service ringing at Condover and Meole Brace and two others rang at Hodnet.



Thanks to Stuart for booking the towers, Gilly for the lunch and dinner arrangements and Keith for the route and parking suggestions. Those on motorbikes were the lucky ones on this trip, and a visit to rural Shropshire is not for the fainthearted with a new EV car. We look forward to next year.

Photo:

On the steps leading to the ringing room at Stanton Lacy – taken by Cathy Heathcote

Ringers from top to bottom:

Richard While, Pat Hickey, Chris Hickey, Isabel Hitchings, Reg Hitchings, Jacob Coates, Geoff Soul, Barbara Pettit, Graham Lee, Alison Lee, Howard Nichols, Gilly Whittingham, Steve Newlands, Stuart Tomlinson.



Other ringers on the trip:

Anna Bayley & Philip Pratt, Brad Coates, Cathy Heathcote, Harry Stephenson, John Liptrot, Jon Hill, Janet Jones, John Proudfoot & Sue, Keith Reading, Malcolm & Paula Ware, Mike Seagrave, Tony Foster.



50 Years of Quarter Peal Ringing – *Reg Hitchings*

On Saturday 8th August I completed 50 years of Quarter Peal ringing, making a total of 3,589 (1,799 conducted). My first quarter was at Linton, Herefordshire, when I rang the treble to Plain Bob and April Day (1m/1v), with my first inside on 28th September 1976 (my brother's first attempt) and my first as conductor on 9th December 1977. I have rung 777 quarters at The Bicycle Ring, 334 at Warden Hill, 304 at Leckhampton and 294 in the tower at Cheltenham Minster.

In addition to the Quarter Peal total, I have managed to ring 169 Peals and as of 8th August, have managed to ring at 3,790 different towers around the World.

Bell Frame Painting update – *Stuart Tomlinson*

I wrote an article about the bell frame painting that I do as my bit of volunteering at the end of 2023. I aim to do a frame a year over the spring / summer months involving up to 20 3-hour visits. At that point I had just finished painting the frame at Elmore (there was a lot of rust, and it badly needed painting). Since then, I have painted the frames at Earls Croome (2024) and Winchcombe (2025). This year's project (just finished) was at Upton Upon Severn, Worcestershire.

This came about following a conversation Hilda Ridley had with the tower captain Richard Duckett after a Peal she rang there. I subsequently arranged to meet with Richard to have a look and to offer my advice – not really expecting to do the work myself! However, after talking with Richard and seeing how much time, effort and enthusiasm he was putting in to improve this tired and rather awkward ring, I decided to get involved.

Only about half the frame is metal (the lower part), so a quicker job and less paint used than on other frames I have painted.

However, this is probably the hardest one yet in terms of getting to all the places that needed painting. There are a lot of large timber joists (including some diagonal ones holding clock hammers) which get in the way. As is often the case, the space between the wooden floor and the bottom of the frame is only about 12-18 inches, so I was often sliding under a steel girder to get to my next area for painting. Also, when there was more than a week between visits, I needed to vacuum the floor and frame as fine strands of bird nesting material and the occasional small twig came down from the louvres high up in the spire, plus the usual cobwebs.

This required 10 3-hour visits, during which I used 10 750ml cans of Hammerite 'straight to rust' smooth midnight blue paint, applying two coats. Whilst I worked alone, Richard was around, doing various bell maintenance projects.

Overleaf are some photos of the painted frame. Most of the metal frame is hidden underneath the bells and upper wooden part of the frame and I couldn't get a decent photo from below. So, whilst it doesn't look like I have painted much, believe me there is a lot of painted frame that you can't see!





Cheltenham Minster Annual Outing – *Chris Hickey*

We had originally agreed that we were going to go to Southampton this year, but events conspired against this (not least The Boat Show was on in town) so Richard Knight quickly put together an alternative itinerary and we decided to stay (relatively) local.

So, on 19th September, 19 ringers and friends from the Minster visited the Cotswolds for their annual outing. The day dawned gloomy, with a threat of rain but soon the sun came out for us and we had a great day.

Our first tower was Blockley, a very nice 17cwt 10. After enjoying the excellent coffee shop we adjourned to the tower and rang a variety of methods from rounds and call changes to Stedman Caters as people gradually arrived. The parking was tricky in this pretty village and one or two people took a while to get to the tower.

From Blockley we drove to Chipping Camden, a 22cwt 8, where we rang a variety of methods including our methods of the day, Bristol and Double Norwich, on these majestic bells. It was a good climb up to the tower including an interesting step arrangement at the bottom, so we were all ready for our lunch. We had preordered at The Kings Arms in Mickleton. It was very well organised, with excellent food and we thoroughly recommend them for a future outing or day out.



The tower at Mickleton was, very handily, just a short walk along a foot path through the pub garden. We enjoyed the, generally, easy-going 15cwt 8.

Our final tower of the day was Pebworth, where, unfortunately, we were not met at the expected time. These things happen, as we know, but the weather was very pleasant and we enjoyed our wait in the sun



in the pretty church yard. Many, many thanks to Alison Lee who saved the day. We enjoyed our ringing on this 11 cwt 10 and this completed a happy day in glorious surroundings.

Many thanks to Team Knight, Richard and Andra, for organising everything so well. We look forward to next year!

A Third 1,000 Quarter Pealer at Leckhampton – *Barbara Pettit*

I believe that I am the third person to ring 1,000 Quarter Peals at Leckhampton. The first was Helen Taylor but this was not acknowledged as Helen presumably did not keep a record. She would have rung 20 of these on the old bells. Her 1,000th would have been on Christmas Day 2004 at 7am, or if we discount her quarters on the old bells, Helen's 1,000th would have been on 21st August 2005 (see table below). Helen rang her first quarter at Leckhampton on Sunday 5th June 1966.

Leckhampton, Gloucestershire St Peter Saturday, 25 December 2004 (9–1–14 in Ab) 1320 Cambridge Surprise Minor 1 Helen Taylor 2 Max Drinkwater 3 Barbara Pettit 4 Sue Drinkwater 5 Huw Davies 6 Stuart Tomlinson (C) Rung prior to 8am Service	Leckhampton, Gloucestershire St Peter Sunday, 21 August 2005 (9–1–14 in Ab) 1250 Yorkshire Surprise Major 1 Bob Bennett 2 Chris Hickey 3 Helen Taylor 4 Pat Hickey 5 Barbara Pettit 6 Cathy Heathcote 7 Huw Davies 8 Stuart Tomlinson (C)
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The second person to ring 1,000 at Leckhampton was Stuart Tomlinson on Sunday, 6th November 2016, outlined in the table below.

Leckhampton, Gloucestershire St Peter Sunday, 6 November 2016 (9–1–14) 1260 Stedman Triples 1 Chris Hickey 2 Pat Hickey 3 Sue Drinkwater 4 Harry Tomlinson 5 Malcolm Taylor 6 Hilda Ridley 7 Stuart Tomlinson (C) 8 Barbara Pettit 1,000th quarter on these bells - 7. The vast majority being rung for the Sunday evening service. Malcolm and Hilda rang in my first on 18th May 1975 (my 15th birthday) along with Eric and Helen Taylor and Ann Herbert.



I rang my first Quarter Peal on Sunday 6th December 1992 and my 1,000th at Leckhampton on Sunday 24th May 2026. See panel below.

Leckhampton, Gloucestershire St Peter Sunday, 6 December 1992 (9–1–14 in Ab) 1260 Plain Bob Doubles 1 Louisa Pettit 2 Helen Taylor 3 Jacqui Hyde 4 Cathy Heathcote 5 Eric Taylor (C) 6 Barbara Pettit 1st Qtr - 1 & 6 (daughter and mother). 1,300th Qtr – 5	Leckhampton, Gloucestershire St Peter Sunday, 24 May 2026 (9–1–14 in Ab) 1296 Cambridge Surprise Minor 1 Isabel Hitchings 2 Reg Hitchings (C) 3 Barbara Pettit 4 Andrew Haynes 5 Mike Seagrave 6 Michael Hartley Barbara's 1,000 Quarter Peal on the bells 600th together: 1, 2 and 6
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Stuart wrote an article in 2022 when we rang the 2,000th Quarter Peal on the new bells, on Sunday 30th January of 1260 Stedman Triples, for the Church Magazine, listing the top scorers at the time – unfortunately there's no-one currently ringing at Leckhampton on his list, so it could be a long wait until the next 1,000 Quarter Pealer!

Notable Performances

Congratulations to Paul and Sylvia Smith on their Ruby Wedding anniversary, with Paul marking the occasion in a Quarter Peal at Croome D'Abitot on Sunday 23rd August. Also well done to Alma Tillman on ringing her first Quarter Peal on an inside bell – ringing the second to Plain Bob Minor on Wednesday 16th September.

Croome D'Abitot, Worcestershire St Mary Magdalene Sunday, 23 August 2026 (9–1–12 in A) 1392 Plain Bob Minor Arranged by rp 1 Sarah Haynes 2 Paul Smith 3 John Slater 4 Nigel Davis 5 Ellie Haynes 6 Richard Pullin (C) To entertain the visitors to Croome Park, and with our best wishes to Paul & Sylvia Smith on celebrating their Ruby wedding anniversary.	Meysey Hampton, Gloucestershire St Mary Wednesday, 16 September 2026 in 47m (9–2–17 in G) 1260 Plain Bob Minor 1 Anthony M Bulteel 2 Alma Tillman 3 Ian D Bucknell 4 Peter J Harris 5 Michael J Woodward 6 Toby J Hicks (C) First in method: 2
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Branch Notices

A Reminder of the Belfry Repair Fund – *Andrew Haynes*

At the Management Committee meeting in March, it was noted that there were very few applications for grants. This means that there is a reasonable amount of money available in the Belfry Repair Fund for grants for repairs and renovations. This fund exists to provide grants towards repairs, renovations (excluding ropes) or augmentations of existing rings of bells, installation of new rings and similar purposes, and also to make payments and grants towards marketing, recruitment, training and development.

Please get in contact with the branch committee or check the Bell Restoration Fund's [webpage](#) if you believe your tower has a project that could benefit from a grant.