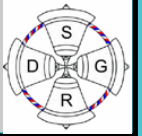


Summer
2022
special

Mere Branch News

Bringing you up to date with happenings around our branch over the last six months, in addition to any news already published in the latest edition of Face-to-Face

**SALISBURY
DIOCESAN GUILD
OF RINGERS**



With so much going on to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, we're pleased to say that your branch of the Salisbury Diocesan Guild of Ringers was making itself heard with ringing and events right across our area. We've included images and short reports from the towers that have sent their details in and are delighted to include reminiscences from John Parker who rang a Coronation Peal in 1953!

And that's not all that's been going on so far this year. Mere Branch is proud to have organised its first ever Association of Ringing Teachers course, promoted bell ringing through BBC's Radio Solent as well as three local events, and enjoyed its first group outing to ring across the borders of three counties.

Our bells rang out to mark the Queen's Jubilee

So many of our ringers turned out to mark the unprecedented occasion of the Platinum Jubilee, some timing their ringing to coincide with the bells of St Paul's Cathedral in London before the Service of Thanksgiving. Other towers rang for local church services and events at different times over the extended Bank Holiday weekend.

Thanks to everyone who contributed their skills and time, bringing pleasure to so many local communities.



Above: At Hindon, Wiltshire, rounds and call changes were rung to coincide with St Paul's



Above: The bells rang out at Compton Abbas to mark the unveiling of the latest plaque on the Jubilee Obelisk during the village party on the first day of the extended bank holiday



Above: Members of towers in the Benefice of Upper Stour, spanning the Dorset-Wiltshire border, met for breakfast before ringing on 3rd June. They performed 30 minutes of call changes on the six-bell towers at Stourton, Zeals and Bourton through the morning.

Below: Some of the band went on to ring the five bells at Kington Magna in the afternoon



**A very
"Happy
Birthday
Ma'am..."**

Celebrations began early for Mere Branch when the bells at Margaret Marsh were rung on 21st April, to mark the 96th birthday of Her Majesty the Queen. It was the first time for several years that all five bells had been rung.

The band was made up of Judith Williamson (Guild President), Len Roberts (Branch Chairman), Fred Shotter (Kington Magna), Caroline Owen (Compton Abbas) and Jay Dallison (Sturminster Newton), with changes being called by Sturminster Newton's Tower Captain Nick Dallison.

And despite having no tower members, the bells were rung again on 5th June for the Platinum Jubilee. Judith Williamson, Len Roberts and Caroline Owen were joined by John and Jenny Parker (Shaftesbury).

Right: St Margaret's Church, Margaret Marsh, Dorset in its rural setting



JOHN PARKER ON RINGING FOR THE CORONATION...

"I was almost 17 back in 1953 and a group of us youngsters were learning to ring at St Martins, Chelsfield on the outskirts of London. We'd managed the fundamentals of change ringing but our instructor persuaded us to try a full peal for the Coronation – 5,000 changes that would take about 3 hours.

"We weren't sure we'd keep going but we did it – the first time for all of us that we'd rung a full peal.

"Sixty years later, I was back at Chelsfield for the Diamond Jubilee. By now there were two more bells, so we rang 5,040 changes of Grandsire Triples.

"And this year? Well, I was pleased to ring a quarter of Grandsire Doubles at Mere to celebrate the Platinum Jubilee!"



Above: John and wife Jenny in the Chelsfield belfry for their wedding in 1985

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First course for ringing teachers in Mere Branch

Zeals was the venue for the first ever Association of Ringing Teachers (ART) course organised by the Mere Branch SDGR, on 30th April this year. And with recruitment of new learners proceeding at pace (see right), new ringing teachers will be in demand over the coming months.

A total of nine guild members attended Module 1 of the ART course, on Teaching Bell Handling, led by tutor Paul Lewis and assisted by local ART assessor David Hacker. Zeals provided an ideal venue for training, both for the practical and theory sessions.

Patricia Kennedy from Maiden Bradley was one of those on the course. "My concern was whether I could maintain focus for the whole day, but Paul took us engagingly and skillfully through both the theory and practical involved, so I needn't have worried!"

"Of particular benefit was learning how to take control of a flailing rope," she added. "I can thoroughly recommend this course to any ringer, whether or not they wish to continue on and teach!"

Mere Chairman, Len Roberts said, "I hope this will be the start of a long and mutually beneficial relationship, between Mere Branch of SDGR and ART. Several of the Zeals attendees have already registered for Module 2 Course at Edington in October."

"Our sincere thanks go to Paul and to David for an excellent and enjoyable course," he added.



Above: Lunch provided an opportunity to swap stories and discuss learning from the morning session

ENCOURAGING NEW MEMBERS TO LEARN THE ROPES



2nd May - LEBRF* Stourton Event



31st May - Radio Solent interviews



3rd June - Chime a Bell Event at Sturminster Newton



4th June - Mere Jubilee Event

The church bells of St Peter's attracted plenty of visitors to our fundraising and open day. There was plenty of interest in the displays of how bells work, while tea and cakes provided by branch members were popular as people waited to try chiming a bell. Thanks to all those who helped promote ringing we raised £215.00 and signed up some potential new ringers.

*Llewellyn Edwards Bell Restoration Fund

We were thrilled to be featured on BBC local radio coverage for the Platinum Jubilee. BBC Radio Solent's, Jo Palmer, came along to St Mary's, Sturminster Newton to interview ringers Jo Gray, Jay Dallison and Michael Williams for a piece about bellringing that went out on the Breakfast programme. And presenter Alun Newman interviewed our Press Officer, David Hurrion, live on the day as well!

The Committee and Members of Mere Branch turned out again at Sturminster Newton to show the mechanics of bell ringing and demonstrate how to chime a bell. A steady stream of happy visitors enjoyed tea and cakes before ascending to the ringing chamber at St Mary's to pull the ropes. This enjoyable day proved to be a great success.

Prior to the town's festival, a Jubilee Quarter Peal of 1270 Grandsire Doubles (note the 70 included rather than 1260!) was rung. During the afternoon branch members chatted to visitors and explained displays of ringing information, while queues waited to have a go at chiming a bell, including a large number of youngsters – hopefully our ringers of the future!

New Guild Master meets up with Mere Branch on summer outing



Above: New SDGR Guild Master, Vicki Rowse (seated on left), chats to Mere Branch Chairman Len Roberts, during the recent group outing

Branch members were excited to see the return of our full-day summer outing on Saturday 16th July, made all the more special by Vicki Rowse, our new SDGR Guild Master, who joined our ringers in the afternoon.

Taking in towers on the borders of Dorset, Hampshire and Wiltshire the tour visited: St Mary, Breamore (4 bells); St Laurence, Downton (8); St George, Damerham (6); St Mary & St Bartholomew, Cranborne (8); and St Giles, Wimborne St Giles (8).

David Hurrion put the day together, while Nick Dallison conducted the ringing, along with Christopher Sykes. Ringers included Judith Williamson, Len Roberts, Mike Williams, Jo Gray, Jay Dallison, Pat and James Kennedy and Lucie Payne. Huge thanks go to the host towers on what proved to be a great day learning to ring some wonderful bells!



Above: First ring of the day at the historic and beautiful St Mary's, Breamore. Below: Tackling the 8 glorious bells at St Laurence's, Downton

