MONMOUTH BRANCH NEWS

Llandaff and Monmouth Diocesan Association of Church Bell Ringers

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In this Issue

1 From the Branch Master
2 Association Chair's Thoughts
3 News from the Tower
6 200 Club Draw
7 Branch Training News
8 Bell Maintenance Group Update
8 Young Ringers
8 Ringing for Mary Sumner day
9 Meet your new Safeguarding Coordinator
9 Ringing 2030 - Survey
10 RWNYC Nottingham 2026

Dates for the Diary

8th Oct, 7:30pm (Usk)
Branch 8-bell Practice

9th Oct, 7:30pm (Sully)
Association Quiz

17th Oct, 9:30am (TBC)
Branch Training

19th Oct, 7:30pm (Llandaff)
Association S.Major Practice

30th Oct, 10:30am (Caerphilly)
Association Daytime Practice

12th Nov, 7:30pm (Usk)
Branch 8-bell Practice

16th Nov, 7:30pm (Radyr)
Association S.Major Practice

21st Nov, 2pm (Abergavenny)
Branch Practice

27th Nov, 10:30am (Bassaleg)
Association Daytime Practice

10th Dec, 7:30pm (Usk)
Branch 8-bell Practice

12th Dec, 10am (Rumney)
Branch Practice

21st Dec, 7:30pm (Whitchurch?)
Association S.Major Practice

16th Jan, 3pm (Blaenavon)
Branch AGM

FROM THE BRANCH MASTER

Branch practices and training practices have been carrying on as usual.

In June, we visited Nash. A lovely evening and we had 12 ringers there with 5 towers represented. We rang quite a variety of methods with Grandsire Doubles, Stedman Doubles, St Simons Doubles, some spliced plain Minor, Norwich Surprise Minor, Cambridge Surprise Minor and London Surprise Minor. Quite a varied list. And as it was such a nice evening, we were able to sit outside for a beer afterwards in the local pub. We were also joined at the tower by Chris Aldridge - lovely to see him and he had plenty of chats outside with all the people he knew

Also in June was the Pitman trophy, this year held at Llanedeyrn. This is an Association event and involves the top two scorers from the Branches individual striking competitions. Results were

1st Newport with 27 faults
2nd Penarth with 50 faults
3rd Cowbridge with 52 faults
4th Mathern with 74 faults

In July, Simon Lockhart organised an outing to the Bristol area. It was a sweltering day with 5 towers. I believe there were 22 ringers on the day which was a very good turnout. I hadn't been able to attend as we had a wedding at St Woolos that day with few people available, but I think the heat would have been too much for me. Grateful thanks to Simon for organising and all who ran towers.

There was also a Plain Hunt on 7 bells course in July. with 5 students and this was held at Usk. Thanks to Andrew for sorting that morning out - it was a very useful session.

In August, the Branch practice was held at Mynyddislwyn. We had 15 ringers with 7 towers represented. It was another warm evening with stunning views from the churchyard. A little smoky up there and we could see a couple of smoke plumes in the distance. Some of the ringers met a fire engine on their way up the mountain, which delayed them slightly. The ropes were a bit stretchy due to the warm weather, so we kept the ringing sessions quite short. Refreshments provided by Elizabeth the churchwarden were very welcome. As was the beer afterwards in the "cash" only pub next door.

I also organised a couple of Surprise Major practices in August. We had a dedicated Superlative practice at Usk and an advanced practice at Bassaleg.

The Branch 8-bell practices at Usk on the 2nd Thursday continue to be well supported and are run by Helen Phillips, with occasional guest "in charge" ringers.

Upcoming events include:

- QP fortnight - Sat 26th Sep to Sun 11th Oct
- Training day - Oct 17th
- Branch Practice - Abergavenny - Nov 21st - 2pm
- Branch Practice - Rumney - Dec 12th - 10am
- AGM - Blaenavon - Jan 16th - 3pm

Further details will be circulated nearer the time

Anne Hayman
Branch Ringing Master

ASSOCIATION CHAIR'S THOUGHTS

I'm coming to the end of my 6-year tenure as Chair of the Association.

For the last 5 years or so, the Association Management Committee (AMC) and I have been focused on making the Association easier to run, requiring less effort on admin, and putting better structures in place to support the growth of ringing in the future. It's not perfect, but I think we're in a better position than we were 6 years ago.

Changes that we've made include:

- Reviewing the composition of the AMC, trying to make sure we've got the right people around the table and ensuring that everyone can contribute in a meaningful way
- Changing the Public Relations role to focus on liaison with the community, supporting recruitment
- Appointing a Safeguarding Coordinator to act as a champion of good practice and signpost people to appropriate resources
- Merging the Association's finances into a single account, reducing the number of volunteers required from 8 to 3, with a significant saving on bank charges and harmonised membership fees across the Association

We also reviewed whether the aims and objects of the Association were still relevant and what we needed to do to support ringing in the future. We were surprised to find that the Objects that have stood us in good stead are just as valid as they were 133 years ago when the Association was first set up, although maybe we might express them differently today.

You'll not be surprised to hear me say that recruitment remains our first priority. Recruitment needs to be targeted at finding the teachers and Tower Captains of the future. This means recruiting more young people, and we need to make sure they feel safe and welcome.

There is a huge opportunity to share ideas between the two branches and for them to support each other, and this is still very much work in progress. We want to retain the unique culture of each branch, but I feel there is still much more we could do to support efforts on training at all levels.

In a perfect world, I'd stay on for another year, to help consolidate the changes we've made and tidy up some loose ends, but the Association Rules say that I must step down after 6 years in post.

The main focus of the role is around ensuring that the AMC meetings are well run and that the Association is well governed. However…

If you have a vision of what ringing in South Wales could be like in the future, here's your opportunity to try to shape that future by working with the other officers and AMC members.

We're reviewing the job description at the moment, and it will be published on the Association website by the end of August, but if you'd like to know more, or you can think of someone who would do a good job, please get in touch.

Helen Phillips

NEWS FROM THE TOWER

Bedwellty

Monday night practice at St Sannan's has continued to grow in popularity, helped by the fact we worked out how to open the back double doors to the ringing room! This not only relieved the heat in summer, but also made the bells much easier to hear! We still have some way to go before our local band can ring without outside support, but we now have two new learners coming along (Eunice and Emma) plus a further potential recruit wanting to visit us next week!

These recruitment efforts have been greatly helped by posts from the area vicar, Rev Matt Davis (who is bonkers, and a whiz on social media) plus local vicar, Rev Ralph Aladese, who came to visit us at a recent practice night, and produced a very good recruitment poster for us too. Ringing always includes rounds and call changes, plain bob doubles, plus a special method, such as Cambridge Minor, but we also frequently manage grandsire or stedman triples, when we have enough helpers.

Many thanks to the local ringers who turned out for some special rounds and call changes in August for the 150th anniversary of the Mothers Union. The local band also rang for a marriage blessing in July - this was much appreciated by the bride and groom, as the vicar (at a church elsewhere) had shown up drunk to their actual wedding day, and they only got an electronic recording of bells!

We now have a proper wedding to ring for on 12th October, and of course the annual carol service on Sunday 20th December, so please keep these dates in your diaries, and be sure to show up sober. As soon as we can build up enough local ringers we hope to start ringing for occasional Sunday morning services, but for now our first priority is still building up skills, and of course to have plenty of fun along the way!

Rob Bruce

Caerleon

Summer Weddings

Caerleon Bellringers have rung for two weddings this summer and were pleased to help celebrate these special occasions. The first wedding took place on Saturday 13th June 2026, and the second on Tuesday 30th June. A further wedding is planned for 18th September 2026. The sound of the bells adds a special touch to the bride and groom's day.

Visiting Bands

In recent months, visiting bands have come to ring our bells, and have both commented on how lovely they sound.

Recruitment

A local resident recently expressed an interest in bellringing and joined us for a taster session. She appeared to enjoy the experience, and we hope she will continue learning.

Annual General Meeting

Our AGM was held in the church on 5th August and was chaired by the Rev. Sue Pratten. Several bellringers attended, and a range of matters were discussed and agreed. Some work remains to be completed in the bell tower, and we hope this will be finished in due course. The Bell Maintenance Group is also considering changes to the positioning of the bells, with work expected to begin in the Autumn.

Mothers Union 150 Yr Celebration

On 9th August 2026, the Caerleon Bellringers marked the 150th anniversary of the Mothers' Union, founded by Mary Sumner in 1876. Churches across the country also rang their bells to commemorate this significant milestone. In Caerleon, we rang for 15 minutes from 1:50 pm in celebration of the organisation and its enduring legacy.

Annual Service of the Bells

Finally, on 12th August, our church bells were serviced by J. Taylor & Co. as part of their annual maintenance agreement. The installation was thoroughly checked, with nuts and bolts tightened, lubricated and adjusted where necessary. The bells were found to be in good working order.

Karen Jones

Llanfrechfa

During the service at All Saints' Church, Llanfrechfa on Sunday 2nd August 2026 a presentation was made to John Challenger.

John learned to ring there over 80 years ago and several members of his family can also ring and they joined in the ringing of rounds on the back 6 bells before the service.

Since 1984 John has been the Tower Correspondent for Llanfrechfa and has acted as Tower Captain. He helped with the removal of the bells for their reconditioning and retuning in 1999 ready for the Millenium ringing. He also helped with their rehanging on their return.

Over the last few years John has not rung very much but John Hopkins has taught Melanie and Dai Jones (members of the congregation) to ring. John Hopkins will now be the Tower Captain and Melanie Jones will be the Tower Correspondent.

In her sermon, Canon Wendy Tayler mentioned John Challenger's contribution to bell ringing at All Saints' and, at the end of the service, Canon Jenny Mole publicly thanked John for his work there over the years. She then presented him with a framed certificate in appreciation of that work.

Jenny Mole

Llantilio Pertholey / Llantilio Crosenny

This year the ringers of St Telios Llantilio Pertholey and St Telios Llantilio Crosenny teamed up once again to visit a number of towers in our local area. The day was a great success. We kicked off at 10am on a beautiful Saturday morning on the 11th July. First tower of the day was St Andrews Church Tredunnock then St Cybi, Llangybi. Where we paused to lunch at the White Hart village Inn. Once fully refreshed we made our way over the Blorenge to finish our day at St Peter's Blaenavon.

On tour this year were (from left to right) Les Taylor, Sarah Heath, Sue Prangley, Maria Luiza Spencer, Gwyn Sayce, Richard Stubbs, Rachael Beck, Henry Beck and Richard Booth

Henry Beck

Michaelston

Over the summer period the ringing room at Michaelston has been re-decorated with a fresh coat of paint. This has made a big difference, and the ringing room looks very smart. Practices continue to be well-supported and we're particularly grateful to the helpers who come to lend a hand. We've been pleased to welcome two returning ringers, Anita and Sam, who both learnt to ring at Michaelston in previous years. It's great to have them back ringing with us.

The rest of the band continue to make good progress with practices typically featuring a range of rounds, call changes, Mexican Wave and, more recently, Plain Hunt with several Michaelston ringers having a go in recent weeks. The band has also rung for several weddings over the summer period, as well as a christening and a funeral.

Matthew Turner

Rumney

We've had a focus on progressing our surprise minor ringing over the past few months with Norwich being our target method. We've been ringing plain courses and touches on a practice night most weeks and worked up to ringing two quarter peals of it in April and July. This allowed Wendy, Jane, Andy and Catherine to ring their first quarter peals in the method – very well done to all. We've now moved our focus onto London – a slightly bigger challenge! As well as surprise minor, our practices typically include rounds, call changes and a wide variety of Doubles methods.

Elsewhere, two of our younger ringers were part of the Cymru team, with a third being part of the wider squad, for the Ringing World National Youth Competition which took place in Nottingham in July. They had a great day with ringing at Clifton, Beeston and both twelve-bell towers in Nottingham city centre. To cap it all off, at the results ceremony they were delighted to discover that they had won their category. Very well done. One of our slightly older younger ringers (if that makes sense!), Adam, also achieved a significant ringing milestone by ringing a quarter of Bristol Maximus whilst on a ringing holiday on Alderney in July.

At the beginning of September, Jane Dumont-Jones and Wendy Reilly organised a "ring and ride" for the Rumney and Michaelston ringers. An enjoyable day was had by all with cycling from Cardiff Bay to ring at Penarth and Sully and return. Many thanks to them for their organisation.

Matthew Turner

St Woolos

Hot, hot, hot! That was the verdict on summer 2026. Despite the heat, we continued to ring throughout for Sunday morning services and Tuesday practice nights. This included regular weekly touches of seven-core surprise major and grandsire caters, (and occasionally Yorkshire Royal) plus ringing on 12 whenever we had enough. Visitors helped out too, including one particularly memorable touch of stedman triples on a Sunday morning, which of course we failed to record. Doh!

Quarters suffered more with the heat and holiday absences, meaning we were well short of our usual totals. However, we did ring two quarters of Grandsire Caters, including one on 9th August for the 150th anniversary of the Mothers Union. Plus two quarters of Grandsire Cinques where a South Wales band with a number of St Woolos ringers, continued to improve on our striking, with the help of hawk-ear feedback. Ten of this band will travel down to Truro for the SW 12 bell competition on 10th October so fingers crossed for a better result this year!

Despite "silly season" holidays, Anne did an excellent job of wrangling ringers to support several special services, including the Ordination Service, a rare wedding at St Woolos, and a service to celebrate 30 years since the ordination of John Connell. Many thanks to all those who turned out to support these events.

On 17th June a St Woolos band triumphed in the Association Pitman trophy held at Llanedeyrn. Despite the absence of Rumney this year, there was stiff competition for the trophy, so we were delighted to win with only 27 faults. Unusually, Peter Bennett was not in the band, having been given the night off to celebrate his 85th birthday! Many congratulations to Peter, but next year we will want you back!!

Everyone is looking forward to some cooler weather finally this autumn. Please remember these dates for your diary, and note you can bring non-ringing partners to these events:

Friday 9th October - Association quiz night at Sully (always a fun night),

Saturday 28th November - St Woolos Dinner Day

Rob Bruce

Shirenewton

This year's Shirenewton Summer Ringing Tour was held over the weekend of Friday 26th–Sunday 28th June around the beautiful village of Fotheringhay, Northamptonshire. The Summer Tour is traditionally a weekend event headquartered around a campsite as base, allowing more distant towers to be sampled than possible on a single day trip. The Tour was named "King and Queen Tour" as Fotheringhay (previously named Fotheringay) was the site of a castle in which Richard III, last of the Plantagenets, was born in 1452, and where Mary Queen of Scots was beheaded in 1587. Nothing now remains of the castle except the motte, which stands in the grounds of Castle Farm where we set up camp.

The Tour started on Friday with 3 towers to visit beginning with the 5 bells at Thornhaugh followed by the 6 bells at Wansford and then the 5 bells at Yarwell. We then headed back to camp to finish setting up before walking from the farm to The Falcon Inn where we enjoyed a fine evening meal set in our own dining room set for 18 people.

Saturday was the main Tour date with 10 towers organised. We started at Elton(5), then Warmington(6), Cotterstock(6), Glapthorn(3) where the second bell was a pre-reformation bell cast in 1399, and finally the last tower of the morning Stoke Doyle. We then had a short detour to Thorpe Waterville: a village without church bells but a surviving pub – The Fox Inn – for lunch. It is a sad reflection of the times that neither Stoke Doyle nor our first village for the afternoon had surviving pubs, both having closed quite recently. Benefield(6) was the first ring in the afternoon followed by Deene(6), Bulwick(6), Kings Cliffe(6) and finally Fotheringhay(6).

St Mary & All Saints in Fotheringhay is an architectural jewel. It is described by Simon Jenkins in his fine book "England's Thousand Best Churches" as: "floating on its hill above the River Neme, a galleon of perpendicular on a sea of corn".

The ringing room is accessed from inside the church but requires a short walk across part of the roof before entering. The room is housed within the first stage of the tower and is constructed of massive oak beams supporting the upper

200 CLUB DRAW

June 2026

Prize	Number	Winner
£30	15	David Moore (Llandaff)
£15	174	Sam Emmott (Llanedeyrn)
£10	83	Llandaff Tower
£10	101	Richard Rowe (Llanishen)
£10	105	David Weston (Llanedeyrn)

July 2026

Prize	Number	Winner
£30	186	Ali Robinson (Llandaff)
£15	180	Llanedeyrn Tower
£10	16	Owen Francis (Rumney)
£10	17	Mike Kemp (Cowbridge)
£10	95	Newport Tower

August 2026

Prize	Number	Winner
£30	37	Andrew Gainsbury (Radyr)
£15	52	Redwick Tower
£10	20	Sheila Denison
£10	162	Sam Bolingbroke
£10	7	Wendy Reilly (Rumney)

tower stages above. After ringing we were given a tour of the church which contains a mausoleum to leading members of the Yorkist dynasty of the Wars of the Roses. After the visit we returned to our camp for our traditional BBQ and drinks.

For Sunday we visited the beautiful church at Oudle. We had been given permission to ring the eight bells even though no service was being held. A local ringer met us and we raised the heavy bells. The lightest bell in the ring at 7½ cwt is a couple of cwt heavier than the largest bell in Shirenewton. The heaviest bell of the 8 was over 25cwt requiring 2 ringers to raise it. Having worked up an appetite after ringing we returned to camp for breakfast before departing back to Wales. In the evening held a post-Tour celebration courtesy of Leigh and Alison Ayland.

Mike Penney

Tredunnoc

Birthday Celebrations at Tredunnoc

On 3rd July, Tredunnoc Church was host to a party to celebrate the 85th birthday of Peter Bennett. After a slightly shorter than usual practice, 20 ringers and some non ringing and injured invited guests were pleased to share in a delicious buffet provided by Lyndsey, Karen and Cathy. A delicious, personalised cake was cut by Peter and Marion and enjoyed by everyone. Peter was allowed to make a thankfully short speech and we all had a lovely evening. Here's to the next 85 years Peter.

Everyone is welcome at practices at Tredunnoc. We meet most Fridays from 7.00pm (recently changed from 7.30) ringing ranges from rounds to Stedman, from Plain hunt to anything you ask for. If you would like more information please call Philippa on 07846 916 224.

Philippa Shaw

BRANCH TRAINING NEWS

The last branch training session was held on 25th July at Usk. The session covered Plain Hunt on 7, mainly for the new Abergavenny learners, although there were also students from Trellech and St Woolos involved.

Thank you to the helpers that came out to help for the training session.

The next Branch Training session will be held on **Saturday 17th October**.

The session will be an **Introduction to Ringing Up and Down in Peal** course.

The session is primarily aimed at those who can ring a bell up and down on their own competently, but who have not tried ringing up and down in peal.

There will be a maximum of 6 student places available on a first come, first served basis. Please email if you are interested in being a student on this course.

As ever, these courses cannot run unless there are enough helpers to provide support for the learners. Potential helpers please note that they will primarily be standing by learners rather than ringing up and down themselves all the time.

Please let me know if you are able to help out on the morning of 17th October.

I will aim use a suitably light and easy going set of bells within the branch for the session.

Further details will be available closer to the date via Association email system.

If you want to receive emails regarding Monmouth Branch training, then please sign up to the Association's email list list at https://llanmon.org.uk/mailing-lists

Andrew Phillips
MonmouthTraining@llanmon.org.uk

BELL MAINTENANCE GROUP UPDATE

10th July was a most productive day. The group met at Baglan for an inspection in the morning followed by repairs at Newton Nottage and Bridgend in the afternoon. For more details please see the Llandaff Branch newsletter.

We do not meet in August as it is holiday time!

If any member of the L. and M. has a bell maintenance query or would like their peal of bells inspected (free of charge) then please do get in touch with me and the BMG will do its best to help.

Joy Kipling
bmg@llanmon.org.uk

YOUNG RINGERS

The Young Ringers of the Llandaff and Monmouth association are a group of ringers all under the age of 30 who meet every term for a practice at towers across the two branches. We aim our practices at young ringers in our association as well as local students from across South Wales. These events are currently organised and run by Debbie and Matthew Turner who do an excellent job of supporting young ringers.

We recently met at Coity in May and had a good practice ranging from rounds and call changes to Grandsire Doubles with all the young ringers having a good go at what they're learning. Then in July, a group of us competed in the Ringing World National Youth Contest in Nottingham and ended up winning our category of 6-bell basic call changes. This was a great moment for all young ringers in our association because it shows the progress that we have made from when we first started these youth practices.

A few weeks ago, a large amount of us met up for pizza at Franco Manca's which is a restaurant in Cardiff city centre. After the meal, we joined in at the St John's local practice and lots of us had their first experience of ringing on 10. We rang a range of doubles methods, Grandsire Triples, Plain Hunt on 7 and more. We all very much enjoyed not just the ringing but also the social aspect of going for pizza beforehand.

The next event is to be on Saturday 3rd October. If you are aged under 30 and would like to come along, please email Debbie at youngringers@llanmon.org.uk for further information or arrange for your parent/carer to email if you are under the age of 18. Even though our young ringers group has expanded throughout years, we can always do with more ringers! If you are a ringer under the age of 30 or if you know someone who is and would like to be involved, please email Debbie about joining us.

Catherine Turner

RINGING FOR MARY SUMNER DAY

Sunday the 9th August was Mary Sumner day and the 150 years milestone of the Mothers Union. Nine performances from the Llandaff & Monmouth Association were put onto bellboard and I know of a least one other where chiming took place to acknowledge this event but has not been recorded.

Two quarter peals were rung with the remaining ringing being attributed to General Ringing or Chiming.

The footnote from Llandaff Cathedral is of particular interest, as noted below,

"The treble of the twelve was the gift of the Llandaff Diocesan Mothers Union when the bells were rehung and augmented in 1992"

Thank you to everyone who took part. Throughout the country there were only 29 performances linked to this event so as an association we made a big effort.

MEET YOUR NEW SAFEGUARDING COORDINATOR

I have been elected as Safeguarding Coordinator for the Llandaff and Monmouth Diocesan of Church Bellringers and would like to introduce myself to those who do not know me. I learnt to ring in Chepstow as a child and have been a member of Llandaff Cathedral for nearly twenty years.

I have been in school teaching all my working life and have taught primary and secondary school children as well as working in Adult Education for a few years as a Welsh teacher. Throughout this time I have undergone many hours of safeguarding training.

In my new role, I will be acting as a safeguarding champion within the Association, encouraging people to follow the guidelines set out by the Church in Wales. I will be a point of contact for any issues that arise and communicate with the Church In Wales as necessary.

I will write regularly in these newsletters to give you suggestions on your roles and responsibilities as bellringers, in particular Tower Captains, and those who run extra practices. Tower Captains and Deputy Tower Captains need to have a valid DBS certificate and have completed Module A and B of the Church In Wales Safeguarding Awareness course. I am currently arranging a Module B course specific to bellringing which will take place in person in the autumn. More details to follow. I will also be providing other suggestions for bellringers on how to keep children and vulnerable adults safe as bellringers.

You can contact me via the Association website or on safeguarding@llanmon.org.uk

Meriel Gainsbury

RINGING 2030 - SURVEY

For those of you that are not aware, the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers (CCCBR) has been generating a major strategy over the last 3 years or so, to increase the number of Bell Ringers.

Full CCCBR information is available at Ringing 2030 – CCCBR (https://cccbr.org.uk/ringing-2030/)

For those who have not been following the Ringing 2030 progress in the Ringing World magazine over the last 3 years or so, here is a summary of the objectives:

- 10000 more active ringers by 2030 (new and returning)
- Half of them under the age of 30
- 30000 people under the age of 20 have heard about or had a go at ringing
- Retention rate of at least 50% of new recruits
- Double the number of teachers and trainers of ringing

The objects above have been split into projects which fall under one of the following three pillars:

Pillar 1: Publicity and Marketing: Raise awareness of the art of bellringing and promote it as a social and voluntary activity. Drive new recruits to us with better targeted marketing initiatives (using an external professional marketing company).

Pillar 2: Recruitment and Development: Encourage the development of local and regional structures to recruit potential new ringers and attract lapsed ringers back to ringing, then ensure their expectations are met as they progress.

Pillar 3: Quality Environment: Teachers, teaching structures, leadership, bell installations, ringing environments, safeguarding, etc. We have to create a quality environment that makes people enjoy ringing and want to stay doing it.

The question many people have asked is, how do you know if you have achieved these aims/objectives?

That is very difficult, if not impossible, to workout with the current lack of data which is available nationally and internationally, so the CCCBR is going to be carrying out a week long individual Ringer Survey during November 2026. The hope is that as many ringers as possible will fill in the online survey sometime during the **week of 16th - 22nd November 2026**.

This will also be followed up with a based Tower survey.

Incidently, the last time the CCCBR carried out a national ringing survey was in 1988 … so we are well over due one anyway.

A link to the survey web site will be available much closer to the survey week, but please please make every effort to spend the 10-15 minutes it will take to carry out the survey.

Expect to see a link to the survey either via the L&M mailing system and/or copied to you by local ringers much closer to the date.

Andrew Phillips

RWNYC NOTTINGHAM 2026

In July, Team Cymru competed at the Ringing World National Youth Contest (RWNYC) 2026 which was hosted by Nottingham. The RWNYC is an annual competition organised by Jo Cresshull and involves over 300 young ringers from all around the UK. This year was the fifteenth competition and involved 43 teams and over 800 people in total! Team Cymru is comprised of young ringers from South Wales and this year we competed in the 6-bell Beginners Call Change Section.

So, Team Cymru headed up to Nottingham. Most of us went up the night before and stayed overnight whilst others went up and back in one day. We met at the Holy Trinity Tram Stop to get a minibus to our first tower which was St Mary's Clifton and was our competition tower. In our competition piece, we had to ring to Queens (and back) and ring a minimum of 80 rows. Thanks to Vini Olah for counting these rows for us. We were all a bit nervous about this competition, especially me as it was my first year as conductor of the team, but in the end, we were all really pleased with our ringing.

Then we got the minibus to the tram stop and headed to Beeston, which is a 10-bell tower on the outskirts of Nottingham. Whilst we were there, we had the opportunity to do a handbell workshop with Colin Newman whilst others in our team had a go on the famous Matthew Higby creation of 'Peals on Wheels'. Both these opportunities were very fun, especially since half of the band had never rung handbells before. We then travelled by tram into the town centre and rang at the two 12-bell towers of St Mary's and St Peter's. Whilst at St Mary's we also looked around the wide variety of stalls advertising the Young Ringers Hub, the Ringing World and ringing at university.

Finally, after a long day the results were revealed in St Mary's. As the results were coming through and our name still hadn't been called, we were on tenterhooks. It came down to us and Gloucester and Bristol for who won the category. When they called their name for second, we were in complete and utter shock. That meant that we had won! It all became real when Jo Cresshull said Cymru had won. We all went up, received our golden medals and our prize was a Cadbury's chocolate hamper which we shared out between the band. We also had a photo in front of all the young ringers with Jo Cresshull and another one with Anna Sherwood who was one of our judges.

We were all so happy because this was the first time that Team Cymru has ever won. We should all be so proud of what we achieved and how much progress we have made. Unfortunately, this year we had to say "goodbye" to Rhys Fairchild and Jack Disley as they are both too old to compete. They were both in the very first band that we entered and winning on their very last year is something very special. Rhys and Jack will be very much missed in next year's competition. Overall, this year's RWNYC has made our team stronger and more confident in our abilities.

We would like to say a big "thank you" to our team leaders Debbie and Matthew Turner for organising this trip and for helping in the preparation for the competition. Team Cymru will return next year for RWNYC 2027 which will be hosted in Guildford.

Catherine Turner