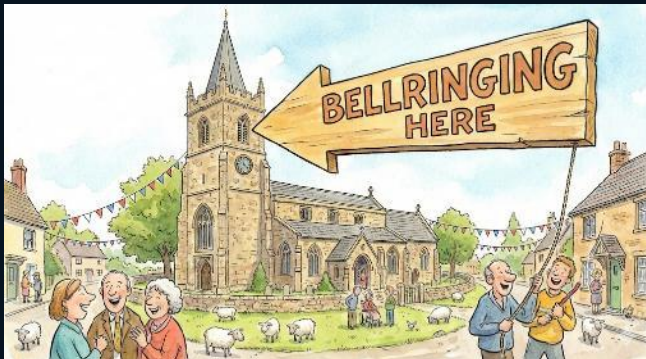




Recruitment & Development Workgroup
– Recruit, Regain, Retain



Recruitment & Development Ringing 2030

Recruit, Regain, Retain team

Steph Pendlebury (Co-lead),
Bob Blanden (Co-lead)
rrr@cccbr.org.uk

Ringing Recruitment Network "Hunting for more...!"

30 September 2026

Guest speaker: Caroline Noonan

"Sound Start: a strategic rethink in new
ringer development"

Hello! Quick intro



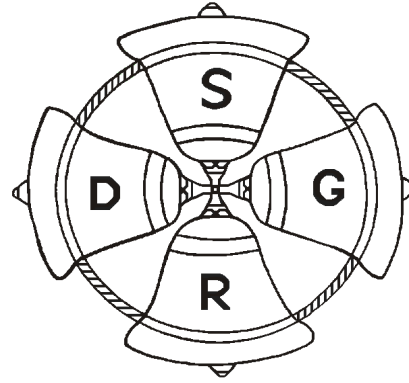
Gemma Groom (tonight's Chair!) –
CCCBR Marketing & Admin Officer

Lucy Chandhial (Middlesex) –
Recruitment & Development Workgroup Lead



Steph Pendlebury (Sussex) &
Bob Blanden (Gloucester & Bristol)
– 3Rs Team co-leads

3Rs group members:
Mary Jones (Norwich & Ladies Guild), Jason Carter
(Gloucester & Bristol), Laura Goodin (ANZAB),
Fran Watkins (Hereford), Dave Cropp
(Worcestershire & Districts), Allison Devine
(Ladies Guild & Lancs), Sarah Stancombe
(ANZAB), Laura Ward & Tom Farthing (NAGCR)



Devizes Branch

SOUND START

A strategic rethink in new ringer development

Caroline Noonan – cjoram21@hotmail.co.uk

How it all began...

- Guild rule change – new learners
- Novice striking competition feedback
- How do we connect with new learners?
- How can we create more social, supportive, inclusive events?
- How do we build a strong foundation for lifelong ringing at our home tower and beyond?
- What is working? What isn't?

The team



Sarah Dow
Keevil



Chris Stirland
Trowbridge



David Hacker
Melksham
VP



Louisa Davison
All Cannings



Jeremy Davies
Great Cheverell



David Norman
Trowbridge



Caroline Noonan
Edington

Our name – Sound Start

- Our mission

The Sound Start Mission:

EVERYBODY COUNTS

As a Branch, we want to improve how we communicate, engage, and include new learners and novices wherever they are, and to be a beacon of excellence in supporting their development as bell ringers.

The discussions

More discussions

- Special mention and thanks to the **Mere branch** for letting us attend their learner event

Workshop day

- Pub and post-it notes
- Breakout groups
- Included members of the branch committee and ringing masters

April
2025

Conversations

May -
Aug
2025

Sound Start
meetings

The report



DEVIZES BRANCH

SOUND START FINAL REPORT and proposals

A refocus of our approach to engaging and developing new and novice ringers

Prepared for the Devizes Branch Committee meeting on Monday 17th November 2025

BACKGROUND

Earlier in 2025, a change in Guild rules meant new ringers are no longer registered with the Guild until they reach the level required for Full Membership. Because the Devizes Branch does not currently manage a separate database of Learners, the Committee supports the view that we risk losing sight of and connection with our new ringers, and we want to consider how we can do more to support them (and indeed their Tower Captains).

At the same time, feedback from our Novice Striking Competition triggered a rethink in our approach. We believe both these things are two sides of the same coin and, taken together, represent an overarching desire to improve how we connect with our new learners, and create more social, supportive and inclusive events that build a stronger foundation for lifelong ringing careers no matter when they start.

The Committee formed the SOUND START working group to consider these aims more thoroughly. Following a summer of meetups, briefing papers and a short survey of branch members, a meeting between Sound Start and Committee members took place in October. These proposals are the outcome.

SOUND START Working Group members:

Caroline Noonan (Edington)	Jeremy Davies (Great Cheverell)
Chris Stirland (Trowbridge)	Louisa Davison (All Cannings)
David Hacker (Melksham, VP)	Sarah Dow (Keevil)
David Norman (Trowbridge)	

The Sound Start Mission:

EVERYBODY COUNTS

As a Branch, we want to improve how we communicate, engage, and include new learners and novices wherever they are, and to be a beacon of excellence in supporting their development as bell ringers.

This report covers recommendations for:

LEARNER ENGAGEMENT (page 2)

1. New Learner Registration & Database
2. New Learner Starter Packs
3. Common Learning Platform
4. Closer Relationships with Local Towers
5. More Opportunities to hear really good Ringing
6. Learner Ringer Engagement Officer

ANNUAL LEARNERS DAY with ROUNDS COMPETITION (page 5)

COMPETITION JUDGING AND FEEDBACK, and HAWKEAR (page 7)

Page | 1
SOUND START Final Report & Proposals_draft v1.0.docx

April
2025

Conversations

May -
Aug
2025

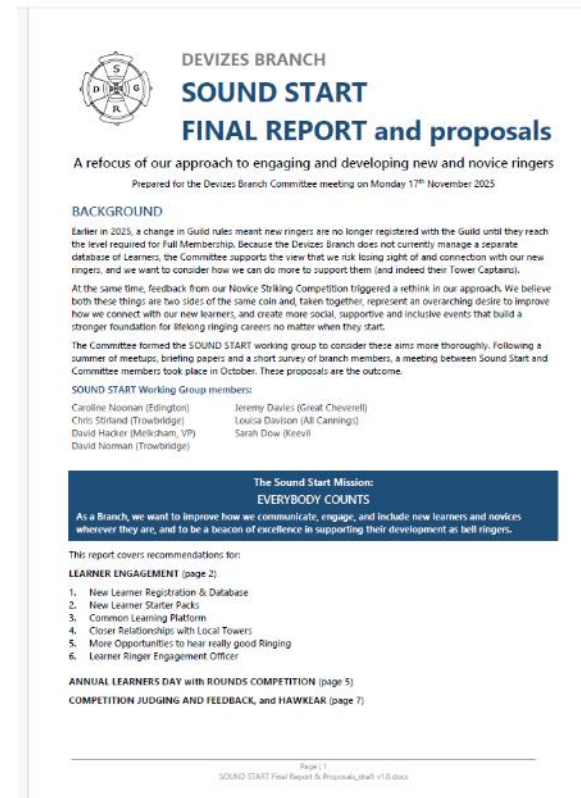
Sound Start
meetings

Sept/Oct
2025

Report ready and
shared. Survey of
members

The report

- 10 pages of brilliance! (Thank you again Sarah)
- Devizes Branch Committee in Sept 2025
- Branch Business meeting in Oct 2025
- Member survey – paper and electronic



April
2025

Conversations

May -
Aug
2025

Sound Start
meetings

Sept/Oct
2025

Report ready and
shared. Survey of
members

Sound Start proposals

- Create a new role on the committee – Learner Engagement Officer (LEO)
- Re-establish registration for new learners
 - Registration form
 - Learner database for the branch
- Charge a £5 fee for all new learners which covers training and a Starter Pack
 - Update Branch welcome card
 - Create pack of information for learners
- Encourage consistent learning – ART
- Identify 'learning towers' where ringers can access high-quality teaching
- Re-establish Tower Captain meetings
- Re-establish practice night visits by committee members
- Re-introduce service touches at branch events and other ways to hear **really good ringing**
- Host a Learner Day

Our survey said...

- 25/25 agreement with new learner registration
- 15/25 supported ART
- 15/25 supported TC meetings
- 21/25 said yes to practice night visits
- 23/25 said yes to starter packs
- 25/25 supported the Learner Day idea

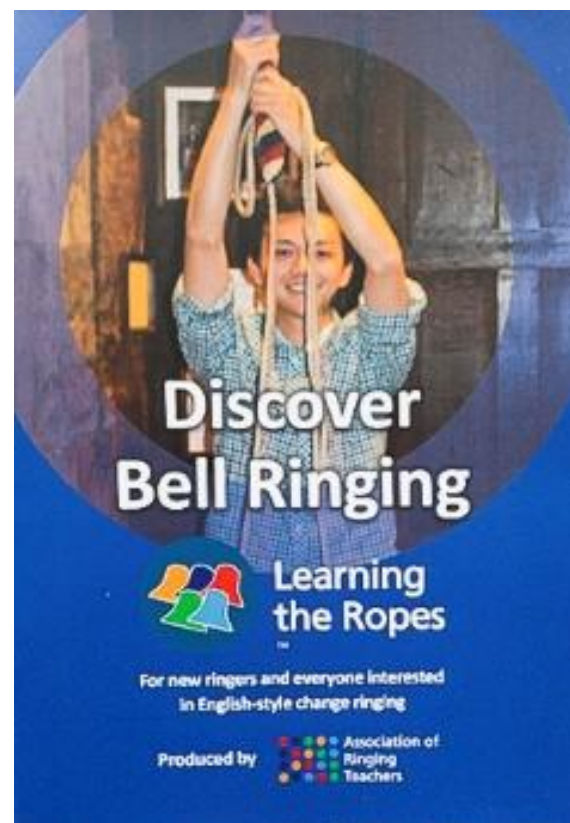
Learner Engagement Officer

- New committee role, working alongside the Training Officer;
 - Focused on building foundation skills throughout the year;
 - Creating additional opportunities to support more cohesive and confident ringers/teams:
- ✓ Manage branch database of new and novice ringers;
 - ✓ Communicate with Tower Captains when new ringers are registered as learners;
 - ✓ Contact and welcome all new ringers and introduce the branch and committee;
 - ✓ Communicate relevant branch events, training opportunities, and education resources, directly to learners and their TC;
 - ✓ Visit learners in their home towers;
 - ✓ With the Training Officer, liaise with local towers to identify learner training needs;
 - ✓ Follow-up after learner training courses;
 - ✓ Play a leading role in bringing the new Annual Learners Day to life and develop it as a beacon of our learners' development;
 - ✓ Work with Ringing Masters, Training Officer, and Tower Captains to build teams for the Guild Novice Striking Competition;
 - ✓ Help learners from less engaged towers to find opportunities, train with other novices, and join a team;
 - ✓ Support new ringer recruitment initiatives.



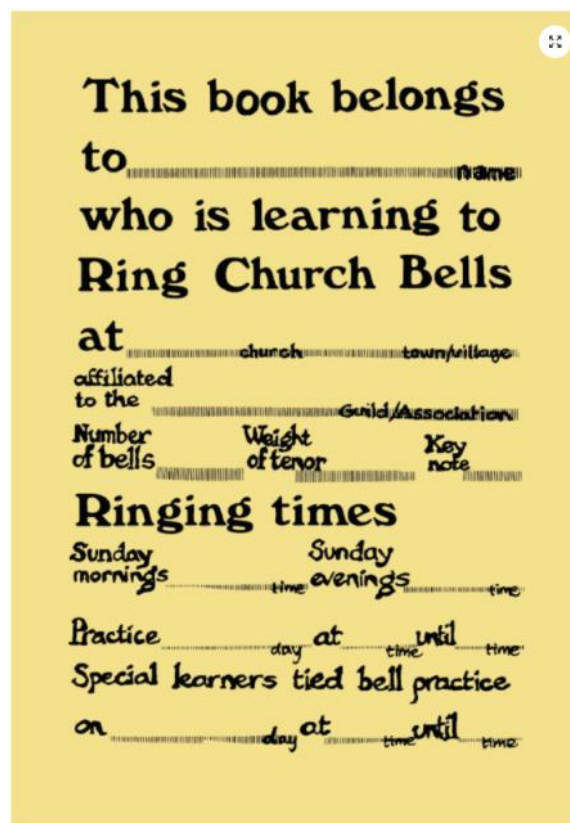
New Learners pack

PLUS Welcome Card and – if available – a Guild Handbook



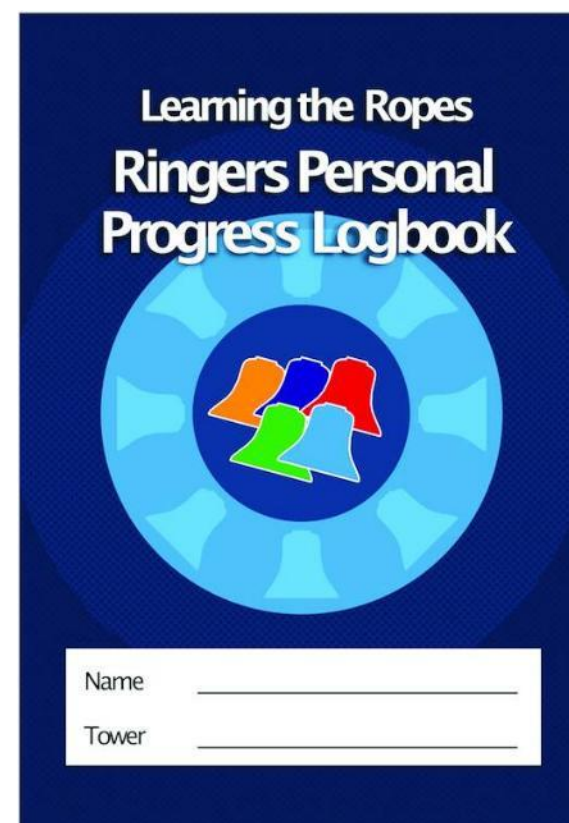
DISCOVER BELL RINGING

A fascinating fact-filled 28 pages for new ringers and everyone interested in ringing - by ART- for general use regardless of whether a tower uses ART LTR or not.



THE YELLOW BOOK

This timeless Sherborne classic learning companion remains as relevant as ever to new ringers of all ages...



Student Logbook

- only if the Tower teaches ART LTR programme

OUR SURVEY SAID....

23/25 said YES to Starter Packs

- ✓ aid understanding
- ✓ provide framework for discussion
- ✓ ground teaching in common foundations
- ✓ highlight wider ringing 'world'.

Provided on completion of Learner Registration form and payment of fee.

Welcome Cards



- Tailored to Devizes branch
- Visually authentic and welcoming
- Information specific to potential and new ringers
- Opportunities beyond the Home Tower
- Relevant sources of information and links

Included in **New Learner Packs** and for use in Towers to give to visitors who might be interested in learning to ring...

Inside Left

Front



Welcome to the wonderful world of bell ringing!

Bell ringers are a friendly, highly sociable group of dedicated volunteers of all ages and walks of life, who, like the generations that have gone before, ring the largest and loudest acoustic instruments in the world – church bells!

Could I become a ringer?

Bell ringing is open to everyone – it's fun and rewarding, it helps keep you fit and your brain active – so you're doing something great for your own wellbeing as well as helping to keep a precious centuries-old tradition alive.

Although for some ringers this may be part of their church life, for many it is simply the pure pleasure and joy it brings to oneself and one's community.

As well as being part of your home tower, you'll find a warm welcome and many opportunities to grow your skills – and make more new friends – at Branch and Guild events.

So whether you're nine or ninety, trying out a new skill, or returning to ringing after a break – **welcome!**

Inside Right

Practice nights

Always check with the Tower Captain if you're planning to visit.

Mondays
Bradford-on-Avon
Seend
Devizes Southbroom
West Lavington

Wednesdays
All Cannings
Corsley
Keevil/Steeple Ashton
Trowbridge
Upavon

For details of towers and tower contacts in the Devizes branch, visit sdgr.org.uk/devizes-branch/ and scroll down to open the Find a Tower section.

Tuesdays
Edington
Great Cheverell
Hilperton
Westbury

Thursdays
Devizes St John
South Wraxall
Urchfont
Warminster
Westwood

Fridays
Melksham
Rowde
Holt

Come and explore the joy of church bell ringing with us
Your Home Tower or Training Hub contacts...

We look forward to seeing you at a practice soon!

LEARNER EVENTS

As well as practice at your Home Tower or Teaching Hub there are additional learner opportunities – speak to the Learner Engagement Officer for more information:

- Weekly Branch Learners practice & bell handling at...
- Edington on most Wednesday evenings
- West Lavington on most Monday evenings

ANNUAL NEW LEARNERS DAY & ROUNDS COMPETITION

OTHER BRANCH EVENTS

Your Tower Captain or Ringing Teacher will know when you are ready to join in with general branch events, such as:

- Monthly Branch Practice & Tea (Saturdays)
- Monthly Branch 10/12 Bell Practice (Saturdays)
- Annual Branch AGM
- Annual Branch Coach Outing

USEFUL LINKS...

Learn to Ring sdgr.org.uk/learn-to-ring/
Learning to Ring: cccbr.org.uk/bellringing/learn
Discover bellringing: bellringing.org/discover-bellringing
Devizes Branch News sdgr.org.uk/devizes-branch/ - scroll down for Find a Tower and details of Committee Members/Officers...

YouTube Recommended videos...

Search ART on YouTube: @ringingteachers for...
- Should I Try Ringing?
- Bellringing – the inside story

Join our conversations...

SDGR Devizes Branch Ringers: @devizesringing
Salisbury Diocesan Guild of Ringers: @sdgr.group
Bellringing Learners: @bellringinglearners
ART Learning The Ropes: @artlearningtheropes

Inside Right

Back

Baldrc was born!

- Goal: Support learner ringers to gain confidence and skill leading to better striking, in a relaxed, social setting
- Relaunch Branch Novice Striking Competition as a training event where EVERYONE COUNTS
- Open to all (aimed at learners but all members welcome)
- Cost - £10 per person
- Rounds competition – teams put together on the day. Judged by humans and **Hawkear**





Devizes Branch

ANNUAL LEARNERS DAY

with Rounds Competition

March 28th 2026

Sound Start mission: EVERYBODY COUNTS

FEEDBACK – how did we do?

19 Student feedback forms – overwhelmingly positive – lots of learnings – bigger better plans for 2027!

	LISTENING: Robert Livsey			RHYTHM: Chris Jenkins			ROPE HANDLING: Dusty Millier & helpers				ROUNDS COMPETITION TRAINING				
	Good tuition	Helpful information	More training like this	Good tuition	Helpful information	More training like this	Good tuition	Helpful information	More training like this		Good experience	Helpful judges feedback	HawkEar analysis	More training like this?	Join Guild Novice team?
Yes	18	17	15	17	16	14	18	17	17	Loved it/Yes	14	14	11	16	6
Sort of	1	1	3	2	2	4	1	1	1	Was OK	3	2	2	2	0
Not for me	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Neutral	0	0	0	0	0
Blank	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	Not for me/No	1	0	0	1	5 + 2
										Blank	1	3	6	0	6 inc ?s

	OTHER ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE DAY										
	Refresh ments	Lunch	Venue	Parking	Toilets	Organisation & stewarding	Book stall	Clothing	ART info	Peals on Wheels	Judges feedback
Yes	14	16	16	11	13	17	11	12	12	15	12
Sort of	1	1	1	7	5	1	1	1	2	1	1
Neutral	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	0	0
Not for me	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	2	2	1	
Blank	4	1	1	1	1	1	3	2	2	2	6

		COMMENTS					
Home tower	Most helpful thing overall?	Want more of?	Future learner training?	More social events (without competition)?	Learner comp separate or combined?	Other comments	
1 Warminster	Bell sounds as my hands pass it - game changer!		More practice		Yes - not bothered about comp	Not sure	Was great for a first effort
2 Warminster	Ringling on different bells, learning about the pause in rounds, videoing handling	Idea of rhythm and applying it to ringing. Know it is essential but great difficulty	Practice and trouble shooting on individual basis	Skills broken down for call changes and plain hunt	Yes - no comp	Separate event - long afternoon of waiting	Many thanks to all who worked hard to deliver the training day. Much appreciated and to feel valued as a learner
3 Erlestoke	Closing eyes and listening!	All good	Listening, rhythm with more ex		Yes	Together - good to get all involved otherwise they wouldn't come	Such great fun and so appreciated the effort. Lovely people, stewards, thank you
4 Trowbridge	Listening with Rob and Jenny - how to listen, clues from hand vs back	Transposing rhythm with physical movement	Listening and learning how to spot errors, and how to correct them, plus assessment, bell handling + listening		Shorter, no comp, half day with ringing and element of learning to appeal to more people, especially those not retired.	Separate	Temperature of the church in the afternoon - remind people to bring layers.
5 All Cannings							It would have been helpful to have the teams more evenly balanced
6 South Wraxall	Listening and rhythm - learning a lot				Not sure yet		Great way to intro learners, thank you
7 Westbury	Combining theory with practical	Listening to		More 1:1 practical	Yes		Fabulous day - so good to have theory with bell handling. Just a great day with lovely people
8 South Wraxall	Having expert support and advice - very valuable	None - well	und at the end		Yes - ok to do with a comp	Combined	Volume of session leaders, more interaction in some sessions. Excellent organised, well run, good to meet other learners
9 Edington		Everything explained very clearly	More peals on wheels ringing	No	Yes	Held as a separate session	It was great, I loved every part
10 Edington	Listening and bell competition	Rhythm	Bell handling and ringing	Hand bells	Don't mind	Combined - great combination of all the sessions	Thanks to everyone - great experience that I will benefit from
11 Warminster	Theoretical aspects	Peals on wheels!	More exhibition ringing from experts	No	Yes please	Separate	A great day - thanks to all concerned
12 Trowbridge	I have learned a lot of info and tips. The day was very well organised and interesting.	Nothing, it was all really good.	Nothing - it was a really good combination of topics and very enjoyable and informative	Whatsapp group for learners to share ideas, hints and tips and maybe social	Yes - the competition element is good fun too.	Don't mind - it has all been very enjoyable	The day has been very well organised and it is a good opportunity to meet all the other learners
13 West Lavington	3 sessions all excellent	Counting bells / listening	N/a	N/a	?	Yes	More practical in the rhythm section
14 Melksham	Peals on Wheels	The langu	ringing rounds			Combined	
15	Being part of a team - listening	Listening					More days like this would be nice
16	Clapping hands to visualise timing		handling - not enough to go slightly better planning on				
17 BoA	Just spending time on the ropes. A number of tips from more experienced ringers.	n/a	time on the ropes		Yes please		It is clear that much time and effort has been put into organising this day and I would like to thank everyone who made a contribution
18 Urchfont	Listening, rhythm and finally understanding it	Nothing, all good	I just love learning the art	Learning opportunities	initely - and with the competition	Yes, dreaded it but it is all part of it	I cannot say how great this was, I learned so much, had a great day and met so many nice people. I was just a brilliant day.
19	Listening session was fantastic. Great to put skills to the test.	New terminology and rounds explained well throughout.	More variety in the pm. Perhaps rotation of sessions could continue to avoid sitting around.	Perhaps having rhythm session on the ropes	Yes	Both - option to sign up/group levels of novice	Big huge well done and thank you for a very well organised event - fantastic

GAMECHANGER

HOW TO LISTEN

THEORY AND PRACTICAL

FEELING VALUED

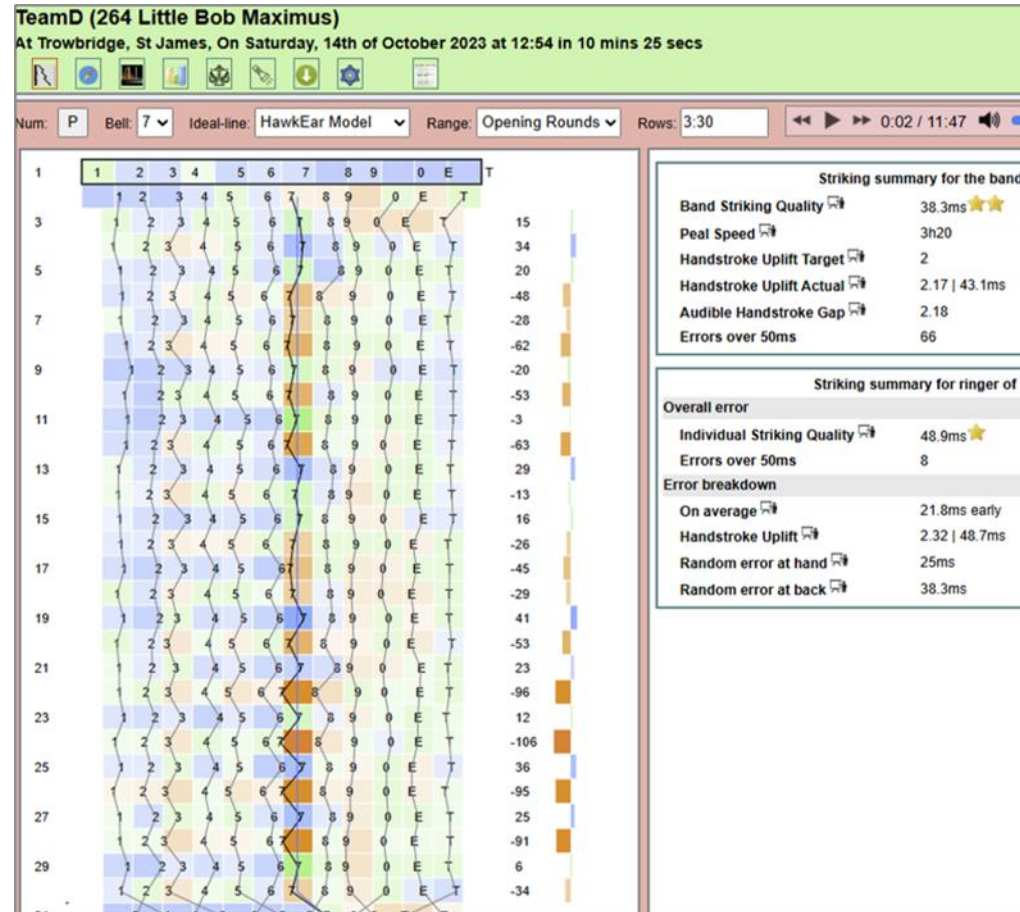
VISUALISE

MORE SOCIALS with RINGING

JUST BRILLIANT

Hawkear

Judging branch competitions?



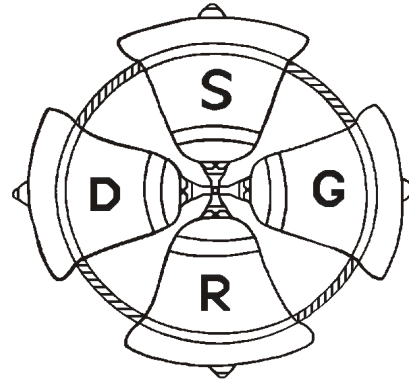
More towers?

Practice nights?

What next?

- Baldrc 2027 planning
- More Hawkear installations?
- Devizes branch birthday party – 17th Oct
- Social media presence – Instagram
 - @devizesbellringer
- Striking competitions
- Ringing (on) Up and Look To (the future)





Devizes Branch

SOUND START

A strategic rethink in new ringer development

The Sound Start Mission:

EVERYBODY COUNTS

As a Branch, we want to improve how we communicate, engage, and include new learners and novices wherever they are, and to be a beacon of excellence in supporting their development as bell ringers.

"Sound Start: a strategic rethink in new ringer development"

Q&A and discussions

- WhatsApp group is live (see email for link to join)
- Facebook group live (see email for link to join)
- Next RRN meeting: November – using AI (date TBC)



That's all, folks!



Any other questions or things you'd like to raise?

Interested in joining the Team?

Suggestions for speakers and/or topics, or a particular challenge to discuss?

Contact us: rrr@cccbr.org.uk