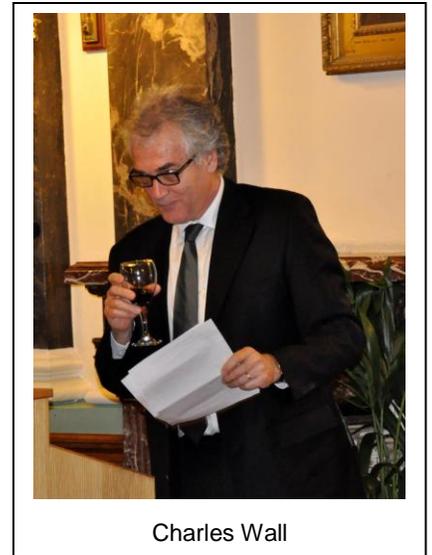


Jan – Mar 2016

Henry Johnson Dinner



Don with Aston entourage



Charles Wall

All pictures taken by
Andy Hardy



Paul McEvilly



David Ingram and Chris Duckett



Certificate marking 50 years as
Tower Captain



Tim Sunter and Janet Horton



Richard Lewis and Tracy Stevens



Richard and Gill Postill



Sarah Vernon



Daniel Calvert and Chloe Harris



Tony Daw, Kay Fuller and Angela Wakefield



Sue and John Rogers



James Ramsbottom, Casey McLellan, Graham Kelly
Liz Bowsher and Adam Constance



Simon Linford, Alistair Cherry, Jonathan Thorne

Ringling Master's Report Arthur Reeves

I write this report with a slightly guilty feeling. Some of you may be aware that I am running the London Marathon at the end of April.



Preparations for this challenge have been far more time consuming than I first conceived, which have impacted on the commitment I have been able to give to my duties as Ringing Master. After April 24th, my life returns to my own and so I will concentrate more of my efforts back on the Guild!

By the time you read this, we will have held two higher number practices, where we have focused on more advanced 8-bell ringing as well as on 10. I'm very grateful to all who have supported these practices, and re-iterate my invitation to get in touch at rm@grimmitt.org if you feel this might be something beneficial for you.

The St Martin's Youths are continuing to develop well; their progress will be reported elsewhere in this newsletter, but I am pleased to report that we will be entering a youth band again for the National Youth Striking Competition in London. Talking of striking contests, just a reminder of the 6-bell Guild contest on May 14th – put the date in your diary; it'd be great to have as many Guild towers participating as possible. Will Bosworth

is coming across from Cambridge specially to judge our efforts, so it would be good to demonstrate to him what Birmingham has to offer (and make his job as challenging as possible!)

Mid-week practices have continued to be well attended. The first one in January at Moseley at 25 people ringing from rounds up to Stedman Caters. Then a similar number came to the 2nd one also at Moseley. Then something happened! Perhaps it was complacency that so many people were going that some attendees thought they might not be missed, or early Easter holidays, but the practice in March had just nine people there. Andy Hardy benefitted greatly from having a learners practice virtually to himself, but the preference would be for the practices to be a little bit more wide-ranging! Increased publicity again for the next one which will be in May – note that there will NOT be one in April.

The St Martin's Youths

Gillian Eastwood

This year we're taking a slightly different approach to the practices. Previously we've focussed on ringing what the band is already capable of based on what they ring at their own towers, but we had a lot of young ringers pretty much all at the same stage of ringing, all able to plain hunt, but not moving forward.



At the moment our focus is on Plain Bob. Doubles first, but the plan is to move on to Minor, Triples etc as everyone improves. By doing this we're still able to include anyone learning to plain hunt or wanting to improve their plain hunt as well. Rounds and Call changes will always be rung on a practice night so no one gets left out. We also always have plenty of help to give assistance where it is needed. We're also encouraging the more able ringers to start conducting.

We'd like to congratulate Ian Wharton on ringing his first quarter on the treble over Easter – a great achievement!

We've recently welcomed Emma from St Michael's Lichfield, Kunal from Perry Barr and are pleased to have Adam back in the band from Handsworth after a long break.

We are pleased to say that we are able to enter a band into the Ringing World National Youth Striking Competition in London again this year and will be holding a few extra practices during May and June.

If you have any young ringers (Under 21ish) at your towers who would be interested in joining us then please don't hesitate to bring them along. We don't mind parents or other ringers staying to the practice and we even have a biscuit break!

Practices are from 7.30 - 9.00 at St Paul's in the Jewellery Quarter on the fourth Wednesday each month so the next one is April 27th. (Parking is free around St Pauls at that time of night and the car park can be used)

If you'd like more information, please give me a call or send me an email. Gillian Eastwood 01543 480017 or gillieastwood@gmail.com

Great Barr, West Midlands

St Margaret

Thursday, 31 March 2016 (9–1–15 in G)

1260 Plain Bob Doubles

1 Ian Wharton

2 Christine Mills

3 Denise Large

4 Arthur J Reeves

5 David Large

6 Clare McArdle (C)

First quarter peal on the treble

And the Award goes to.....

The Association of Ringing Teachers (ART) inaugural awards ceremony took place on Saturday 12th March in the superb setting of Taylor's Bell Foundry.

The awards are a new scheme recognising people and groups who are successful in teaching and training ringers and also the achievements of those on the Learning the Ropes scheme. The hope of the organisers is that by providing meaningful rewards they will stimulate and encourage teaching, training and achievement.



The Birmingham School of Bell Ringing and Clare McArdle won the "Award for Innovation in Recruitment and Retention". Chief Judge Stephanie Pattenden particularly noted *"The huge scale of the operation and an approach that is new and different, which also makes efforts to ensure that participants are able to integrate into a local tower and not just the School."*

However it was Rose Horton who stole the show with an impressive three awards:

- **Winner of Learning the ropes plus young conductor of the year award**
- **Joint winner of learning the ropes level 5 achiever of the year award**
- **Highly commended for Learning the ropes plus outstanding progress award.**

Along with certificates and medals, both the BSoBR and Rose received cash prizes, Rose will also



have a bespoke ringing "treat" to assist her development, which will be specially tailored and arranged with her sponsor.

Stephanie Warboys led this new and exciting project and has plans in place for all those who have achieved Learning the Ropes Level 5 to be invited to 'The Learning the Ropes Masterclass'. The first of such an event will be held here in September.



Stephanies Pattenden and Warboys
Judge and Organiser

Outing to Worcester

by Tim Sunter

An early Easter, preparations for the 12 bell competition, and the availability of helpers meant an early break for the students at the Birmingham School of Bell Ringing.

Rather than waste the day, a fascinating visit to the Teaching Centre at Worcester Cathedral was arranged by The Guild to sample the ringing simulators there. Over 25 members attended. The visit was followed by ringing at Old St Martin's and a sumptuous lunch at the King Charles II public house.

Members congregated at the entrance of the Cathedral before signing in and heading up its tower. The Teaching Centre lies a floor below the ringing room and the climb to get there is not for the faint hearted.

Once there though, there is a spacious area in which to practice with the simulators. Three sides of the room have laptops, each linked to one of eight dumbbells attached to flywheels. Together these simulate bells which each weigh about 5 hundredweight.

After ringing up, the next step was to get to grips with the computer simulator. Hearing the bells requires the use of headphones. This was the first challenge: how to ring without the rope getting entangled with the headphones cable.



The second challenge was to be able to ring without ropesight. The software has pictures of screen bell ropes and sallies. But these only change once the bell has sounded, not when the bells are actually pulled. For novices this was quite difficult - the removal of ropesight was disconcerting. Indeed even those who had been ringing for a very long time found the experience less than easy.

Not that the Teaching Centre makes any apologies about this. Its website comments: "...The dumbbells won't teach you rope sight (an overrated skill); however your listening skills will dramatically improve. Ringing is an aural activity."

Once familiarised with the controls its use was easy. Simply pull the bell a few times and it picks up your ringing speed and goes into rounds. From there, either a colleague can click a button, or you can set the computer to automatically advance to the method selected.

At first it was challenging just to get it into rounds. Some brave members then started trying out methods with varying degrees of success. It is fair to say that all found it challenging. It is also fair to say that most rapidly improved with practice.

The group was then given the opportunity to be taken up to the Cathedral's ringing room. The bells together weigh 16 tonnes and are supported by a wooden structure which directs the forces down onto the supporting corner pillars of the tower. A further climb took visitors to the roof of the tower to admire the views.



Having enjoyed the experience of simulating ringing the party then moved on to the real thing...walking through the City centre to Old St. Martins to ring its ten bells. As ever a range of ringing - from rounds and call changes, through Plain Hunt to more advanced methods - took place, meaning ringers of all abilities had the chance to experience the bells.

The final port of call for the day was The King Charles II public house where admirable support was given to the local brewing industry, and, for those who had ordered it, a fine lunch rounded off an excellent morning.

The venue also provided the opportunity for a not entirely scientific survey of opinions on the Teaching Centre and its simulators. Everyone agreed that the visit was well worthwhile. There seemed to be a consensus that the equipment there was valuable in teaching people to ring. The use of

listening only meant that a learner had to get a 'feel' for the changing speeds of ringing depending on which direction you were going in. This had to be a benefit.

Against this was a view that ringing is a team activity. Ringers need to watch the ropes and to be able to cope with the human frailties of each other and to adjust accordingly. On a simulator you are ringing with 'perfect ringers' all the time. Does this really prepare you for ringing with others?

So the conclusion: a very useful tool for teaching and practicing; best used as part of a range of approaches. Thanks to Clare and Simon for organising the visit.

Sophie Keeble from Harborne has just been awarded Level 4 LtR, and is well on the way to Level 5. Sophie is very shy and retiring, so she fits in very well at Harborne! She is multi-talented and juggles many different hobbies whilst studying hard for her GCSEs. Sophie has taken to bell ringing like a duck to water. She is an essential member of our Sunday morning team and has a very bright ringing future ahead of her.



10 Bell Quarter Peal Programme

The programme has kicked off to a very good start this year with four quarters scored out of five attempts, all with the usual spread of beneficiaries throughout which is the main reason for arranging these events.

These have not been without last minute changes of plans though. The spliced Plain and Little at Northfield became just Plain when the conductor lost his voice during the day, and Bob Royal at Solihull became Bob Major after Linda Whitehead was hospitalized that afternoon due to a cycling accident. That quarter was rung as a Diamond Wedding compliment, which doesn't happen often!

The dropping down to eight bells was countered by ringing our first on 12 bells with Grandsire Cinques at Aston, so really very pleased about that. Other 12 bell quarter peals are already in the pipeline. Cambridge Royal at Moseley was the other success, scored without a hitch.

Notable firsts so far are:

- 1st of Royal inside – Rose Horton and no you can't have a certificate
- 1st of Royal – Matthew King
- 1st of Surprise Royal – Graham Kelly
- 1st on 12 – Daniel Calvert and Matthew King

As always, I'm keen to hear from anyone wanting to break into elementary 10 bell ringing, (treble to caters is where it all starts) and also experienced ringers who could come along just

once or twice a year to help out, in particular conductors.

Phil Ramsbottom
phil.ramsbottom@live.co.uk



"50 for 50" Jenny Sunter set herself a target of ringing at 50 new towers before reaching 50. She did it! Happy Birthday Jenny (14 April)

At **Coleshill's AGM** in January Roy Followell was elected as captain. He has rung at Coleshill for about 30 years. Roy has spent much of the last year trying to improve the standard of ringing of the team in a training role, having attended the BSoBR. Other members of the team attend the BSoBR and are trying to go to practice at other towers whenever they are able to. Andrew Else, tower captain at St Editha's Tamworth is coming along to Coleshill practice night most Tuesdays and the team are benefitting from his help and experience.

A **quarter at Solihull** had particular achievements with a first of Bob Minor inside for Jen Hickman and a first as conductor for Malcolm Paulson.

Solihull, West Midlands
St Alphege
Sunday, 7 February 2016 in 45m
1260 Plain Bob Minor
1 Philip D Pope
2 Jen D Hickman
3 Linda M Whitehead
4 Keith D Whitehead
5 Sand J Cooper
6 Malcolm J Paulson (C)
For Evensong. First of Minor inside: 2. First Minor as conductor. 50th together: 1 & 3.

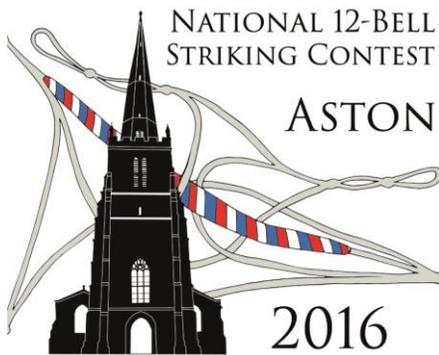


Band in order from left to right

The "**Clean for the Queen**" campaign on March 5th saw many public parks and open spaces tidied up, and also St Alphege Solihull's ringing room, which got a thorough spring clean including beeswaxing the wooden wall panels.

The **Guild website** is changing, with new webmaster Tracy Stevens keeping it up to date, and relevant. With the discussions on keeping more of the Guild's material and information online, increasing use of the website is important, hence the increased focus on keeping it up to date, particularly the calendar.

Please forward any good news stories, alterations to ringing and any other information of interest to members and the wider community to Tracy Stevens - stevens.tl41@gmail.com



The next Newsletter may well feature the Final of the National 12 Bell Striking Contest, which hopefully everyone now knows is being held at Aston. The date is Saturday 25th June.

The 12 Bell Contest is now a major event needing a high degree of organisation. The Contest is being hosted jointly by the church and the Guild, so the organisation is being shared.

One of the Guild's responsibilities is dealing with the bar, and this is no mean feat. The 12 Bell Contest now attracts upwards of 500 people – it has come a long way from the early years where it might just have been the team members and a few friends and family. Beer sales in recent years have average 1700 pints! Which is along the lines of a small beer festival.

The general programme for the day is that the church will be open to welcome teams and provide breakfast from 9, with a welcome and then the draw given by the new Bishop of Aston at 10.30. The first team will start ringing at 11, and then the eight other teams will follow on at 30 minute intervals, concluding at 3.30. The results are scheduled for 5, although ultimately

the results will be when the judges are ready to deliver them.

The Strikeometer is a key feature of the Contest now, assisting the judges by providing detailed striking data, and also providing information to bands in advance, who get data from their practice touches that they can then analyse and interpret. The recording equipment has already been put in the tower at Aston so that when band come for their practices in May and June they will get recordings and strikeometer information. Keith Whitehead and Clive Day from Solihull are members of the strikeometer technical team. They helped out at the Eliminator at High Wycombe and will be in action again at Aston.

Simon Linford is co-ordinating the Guild's organizational activities. 30 people have so far signed up to help in whatever capacity, but there is definitely room for more, as 1700 pints of beer do not serve themselves!

The Birmingham band won its eliminator heat at Amersham and therefore will be ringing in the Final. The other teams are Cambridge, Exeter, College Youths, Cumberland Youths, Guildford, Bristol, Melbourne and Worcester.

Although the Guild is focusing on the 2016 Final, 2017 will also see us providing a venue for one of the Eliminators, which will be held at Birmingham Cathedral in March.

BUSCR News

BUSCR has had a rather busy start to the New Year. Firstly, at the Society's AGM in February, I was elected master, with Jenny Robertson becoming secretary, Alex Deam remaining as treasurer, and Hannah Bristow filling the other official committee role of steeple keeper. In addition to this, Alistair Cherry has become both webmaster and Life Members' secretary, and Toby Dando now holds the position of deputy master. Other significant discussions included a plan for BUSCR's gradual departure from the CCCBR, as well as a provisional decision to go on a society outing to Nottingham and Loughborough over the weekend of 11th and 12th June. More details in due course.

A total of two peals have been rung for the society since the start of the year. Firstly, a peal of Stedman Triples rung at Edgbaston, on 29th February, containing 5 undergraduates. Also, on 9th March, an undergraduate handbell peal of Plain Bob Minor was rung in Selly Oak.

Wednesday night practices continue to be well attended, partly due to the large number of active ringing students at the university this year, but also because of the fantastic and loyal help provided by non-students. Without whom, many practice nights would be significantly under-staffed, and would struggle to be beneficial or worthwhile. Looking forward, it has become clear that only two of the band that rang in the undergraduate peal last November will still be at their respective universities for the next academic year, which may leave us very low on numbers. We now need to go on a large

recruitment drive in order to ensure that the successes of the society seen this year can be replicated with the help of new undergraduates in October.

5th March saw the 61st Annual Dinner at the High Field in Edgbaston. Attendance was lower than in previous years but the food and company more than made up for it. Guest speaker Arthur Reeves gave an enthralling speech detailing his plans for a new game known as 'ringing spotting', and outgoing master Daniel Calvert regaled us with numerous 'Yorkshire jokes' during his speech, some of which were actually quite funny.



The zenith of the evening's events proved to be a selection of tunes rung on handbells by current undergraduates, and conducted by Chris Mills. Much like an inexperienced band at a striking competition, it's safe to say we were pleased to get through the piece without firing out! Furthermore, only two of the six ringers signed up for Sunday ringing managed to make it to Edgbaston for 9:45 the morning after, further proof that the dinner, and the post-dinner drinking was a big success.

Jack Page, BUSCR master.

Bill Haynes is organizing handbell peals on higher numbers at his house in Rugby. In addition to a peal of Kent Royal this quarter, the following peal of Stedman Cinques saw good first for Jack Page and Alistair Cherry.

Rugby, Warwickshire
63 Clifton Road
Tuesday, 22 March 2016 in 3h 12m (14 in D)
5016 Stedman Cinques
arr. W.R.Haynes
1–2 S Clarke Walters
3–4 Alistair J Cherry
5–6 Jack E Page
7–8 William R Haynes (C)
9–10 Stephen M Jones
11–12 Paul E Bibilo
First on 12 in hand - 3-4
First Cinques in hand 5-6 .

Jonathan Thorne has joined the ranks of surprise major peal ringers:

Birmingham
St Paul, Jewellery Quarter
Tuesday, 12 January 2016 in 3h 1m (12-2-13)
5056 Cambridge Surprise Major
Composed by Johnson's Variation of Middletons
1 Chris Mills
2 Mark R Eccleston
3 Michael P R H Woolley
4 Jonathan Thorne
5 Graham R Kelly
6 John H Fielden
7 James P Ramsbottom
8 Richard B Grimmett (C)
First of surprise : 4

Quarter peal achievements:

Chloe Harris – first quarter
Malcolm Paulson – first treble bob
Rose Horton – first Superlative

Birmingham, West Midlands
RC Cathedral of St.Chad (The Ullathorne Room)
Thursday, 3 March 2016 in 2h 17m (11 in G)
5040 Stedman Triples
Composed by Johnson/Saddleton (unreduced bobs only one part)
1–2 Alan S Burbidge
3–4 Charles A S Webb
5–6 Mark R Eccleston
7–8 Paul E Bibilo
Rung silent and non conducted.
Derived from bobs-only one part by Andrew Johnson and Philip Saddleton by restoring 43 Q sets of plains to their bobbed equivalents. Contains 708 bobs, 132 plains (579 bobs, 261 plains in original composition)

Clare McArdle and Sarah Vernon celebrated 40 years of ringing with a quarter.

Harborne, West Midlands
St Peter
Friday, 12 February 2016 (12–3–24 in F#)
1280 Yorkshire Surprise Major
1 Clare McArdle
2 Sarah L Vernon
3 Janet A Horton
4 Richard A Lewis
5 Tracy Stevens
6 Tamsin Lane
7 Michael Rigby
8 Stephen W Horton (C)
Marking 40 years this week since Sarah and Clare had their first bell ringing lessons. Birthday compliment to Mary McArdle

Birmingham School of Bell Ringing's first graduate

Christine Barnell has become the School's first graduate. Christine has been with us from day 1, starting at St Paul's in September 2013. She had previously learned to handle a bell, but had become disillusioned and given up ringing. A friend suggested that she might like to give it one more go and pointed her in our direction.

It obviously made all the difference as Christine's ringing went from strength to strength. On Sunday 10 January a fine quarter peal of Cambridge Minor was scored by a band comprised of 5 of the tutors who have taught her, with Christine ringing the treble.

Lucky for the School, this isn't the end of the line for Christine because she has become one of our regular helpers - not only that she's learned a couple more methods, so she is more than pulling her weight! As far as her own progress is concerned, she is now advancing on to higher numbers, ringing Grandsire Triples and is a Harborne Sunday service band member and Evensong quarter peal regular.

On January 23 a social event for School students, tutors and helpers was held, after School, at The Woodman. The gathering of around 30 people enjoyed an excellent "Woodman special" buffet lunch and it gave us an ideal opportunity to congratulate Christine and make her a small presentation.



In January, we welcomed 4 new students to the School. All were from Castle Bromwich and have been making great progress from a variety of different starting points. Sue and Emma have already been signed off Level 1 and are making great strides towards Level 2. It is gratifying that we are making a difference in Guild towers, giving extra training to their ringers, who in turn take their experience back to their home towers, strengthening their own bands.

It doesn't end there. In the run up to Christmas and since the new year, there has been a positive flurry of achievements by many of the students. First quarter peal congratulations go to Paul Mobey, Chloë Harris, Adam Knight-Markiegi and Jonas Munos; Level 3 Learning the Ropes honours go to Paul Mobey and Eileen Keeble and Level 2 certificates have been presented to Chloë Harris and Kara Larson.