



Editor's Foreword – Andy Clark

Welcome to this festive Q4 newsletter! Thanks again to the contributors to this edition – without you this wouldn't be possible! On that same topic, I'm still on the lookout for material for future newsletters, so don't be shy and do get in touch if there's anything you'd like to contribute.

Ringin Master's Report – Arthur Reeves

The last few months have seen the usual busy fixtures on the Guild calendar; six bell focus workshops, Surprise Major practices and 10-bell quarters. Myself and the other officers, along with Phil (who has organised many of these events) have been thinking ahead to what we should be offering in 2018. We want to ensure that every member has an opportunity catering for them, should they wish to pursue it, and that our communication is clear. I will therefore send out a "What's On" email once a month. The first introductory one has gone, so if you didn't get it then make sure you are on the guild e-list and the emails are not going to your junk mail!



The regular monthly fixtures will include:

- Surprise Major practices, and sometimes Surprise Royal (each 3rd Saturday, normally Edgbaston)
- 6-bell workshops (2nd Wednesday, St Paul's)
- 10-bell focus practices / quarter peals (alternate 4th Tuesdays and Wednesdays, St Paul's)
- Brumdingers for young ringers (each Thursday, Moseley St Mary's 18.15)
- Moseley mid-morning practice (3rd Thursdays, Moseley St Mary's from 10.15)
- Surprise Major peal programme (Sunday afternoons, once a month)

The Guild also hosted the "all-comers challenge" in October, where 45 members competed in a range of challenges. This must be the highest Guild participation ratio for a long time! Feedback was incredibly positive and I think those involved had a highly enjoyable time doing something a bit different.

Furthermore, many members also enjoyed a trip to Bristol in December where we rang at the Cathedral, St Stephen's and (the fairly challenging!) Christ Church. Despite travel problems with snow and train strikes, people enjoyed a good day in a wonderful city. See write-up later in the newsletter.

It just leaves me to wish you all a very happy new year; look out for my January "What's On" and I look forward to ringing with you all soon.

10 / 12-Bell Programme – Phil Ramsbottom & Jonathan Townsend



The "official" October event was Cambridge Royal at St Philip's, though after several false starts we decided to settle for ringing a few courses of Little Bob Royal for the benefit of some of the band. A perfectly respectable quarter of Stedman Caters was squeezed in at St Martin's the following week and although there were no "firsts", was rung more as a refresher for some of the band. It was good to have Alex Frye ringing with us for the first time.



Unfortunately Tuesday 28th November clashed with the St Martin's band AGM so some of the usual key ringers were not available. Not wanting to miss an opportunity to have some progressive ringing, a practice was held at St Paul's where we concentrated on Yorkshire Major / Royal and Stedman Triples / Caters. "First blows in the method" for some and "first time in a long time" for others. Grateful to all who turned out for this event and to St Paul's for hosting.

The December date clashed with Boxing day so we weren't intending to push our luck fixing anything that evening!

As always, our thanks go to everyone who has supported the programme during the year, none of which would have been possible without your help.

The 2018 programme is kicking off with a Grandsire Caters practice at St Paul's on 24th January (19:30 start), so if you, or someone you know, would be interested in trying out an "upgrade" to caters, this will be the ideal opportunity, so please do get in touch.

Birmingham, West Midlands St Martin

Tuesday, 31 October 2017 in 53
mins (39–1–19 in C)

1275 Stedman Cinques

- 1 D Rose W Horton
- 2 David Ingram
- 3 Richard Andrew
- 4 Alex Frye
- 5 David Bassett
- 6 Daniel Calvert
- 7 Phil Ramsbottom
- 8 Jack Page (C)
- 9 Simon Linford
- 10 Jonathan B Townsend

Peal Report – Mark Eccleston

Nine successful peals were rung for the St Martin's Guild between 1st October and 31st December 2017.

The first peal of Triples on the bells at Castle Bromwich. This was Dan Calvert's first peal of Stedman:
<http://bb.ringingworld.co.uk/view.php?id=1192238>

New bobs-only peals of Stedman Triples have recently been composed by Andrew Johnson. These peals are particularly attractive as they are composed on an exact three part plan. In October the St Chad's handbell band rang a rotated version of one of these peals with Queens, Tittums and Rounds as the three part ends. Jack Page also called this same variation in December at St Paul's:
<http://bb.ringingworld.co.uk/view.php?id=1191785>
<http://bb.ringingworld.co.uk/view.php?id=1201445>

Two peals of Spliced Surprise Maximus – both conducted by Jack Page – were rung at St Philip's by the Monday night band:
<http://bb.ringingworld.co.uk/view.php?id=1193524>
<http://bb.ringingworld.co.uk/view.php?id=1200093>

A peal specially arranged, and composed, to mark John Fielden's 75th birthday was rung at St Martin's in October. The band that rang 5075 changes of Stedman Cinques comprised friends, family members and fellow band members from St Martin's (see panel):
<http://bb.ringingworld.co.uk/view.php?id=1194379>

Richard Pullin conducted a peal of Stedman Caters 'off the cuff' after meeting short for a peal of Cinques at St Philip's:
<http://bb.ringingworld.co.uk/view.php?id=1194606>

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A peal of Orion Surprise Maximus (always a tricky proposition!) was successfully scored at St Philip's by the Monday night band:

<http://bb.ringingworld.co.uk/view.php?id=1197178>

At Edgbaston, in December, Jack Page called a peal of Bristol Major composed by Michael Woolley and rung to celebrate Michael's recent graduation. The composition claims to include 'the highest number of runs of four consecutive bells contained within a normal length peal of Bristol Major with the tenors strictly together throughout':

<http://bb.ringingworld.co.uk/view.php?id=1201960>

Finally, although not a St Martin's Guild peal, the longest peal yet rung on 12 bells was achieved on the light 12 at Alderney on 25th October 2017. This peal included three members of the St Philip's Monday night peal band (Michael Wilby, Tom Griffiths and Alistair Cherry). 25,056 changes of Bristol Surprise Maximus were rung in just over 16 hours – a very impressive achievement! (see panel)

<http://bb.ringingworld.co.uk/view.php?id=1193752>

<p>St Martin's Guild for the Diocese of Birmingham Birmingham, West Midlands St Martin Sunday, 29 October 2017 in 3h34 (39–1–19 in C)</p> <p>5075 Stedman Cinques Composed by M R Eccleston 1 Victoria J M Wilby 2 Mark R Eccleston (C) 3 Henry J W Pipe 4 David J Pipe 5 Arthur J Reeves 6 Stephanie J Warboys 7 John H Fielden 8 Geoffrey W Randall 9 Eleanor J Linford 10 Simon J L Linford 11 John S Warboys 12 Michael P A Wilby</p> <p><i>Specially arranged as a 75th birthday compliment to John Fielden.</i> <i>150th peal of Stedman Cinques: 8.</i></p>	<p>Ancient Society of College Youths Alderney, Channel Islands St Anne Wednesday, 25 October 2017 in 16h07 (13–1–0 in F#)</p> <p>25056 Bristol Surprise Maximus Composed by D G Hull 1 Matthew J Hilling (C) 2 John N Hughes-D'Aeth 3 Andrew B Mills 4 Paul N Mounsey 5 Alan G Reading 6 Alistair J Cherry 7 Graham M Bradshaw 8 Roy LeMarechal 9 John M Thurman 10 Paul J Tiebout 11 Thomas W Griffiths 12 Michael P A Wilby</p> <p><i>The longest peal yet rung on 12 bells.</i> <i>Umpires: David Dearnley, David Hilling, Daniel Page, Steve Rossiter, Lucy Warren, John Wells, June Wells, Andrew Wilby, Joanne Wilby, Vicky Wilby.</i></p>
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Brumdingers – Simon Linford

Brumdingers goes from strength to strength in the Thursday evening slot at Moseley. They number eight in total, with Robbie and James being the latest arrivals. They are mostly ringing rounds now and beginning to venture into call changes, and Charlie, Sara and Esther have all started to learn the trebles to plain hunt on handbells. One or two of the adult helpers are taking the opportunity to learn to ring handbells as well! On that score, the regular help now of Malcolm Paulson (with Sara), Trish Everett and Tracy Stevens, to supplement Clare and me, has been invaluable as the Brumdingers need to start ringing with steady people around them ("constants not variables").

The final practice before Christmas was a highly entertaining Brumdingers Christmas Challenge. We had seven rounds of activities, ranging from working out call changes on eight, ringing with eyes shut, and even ringing with a chocolate bar balanced on one's head. In a fiercely and noisily fought contest, it went down to the wire, with the final two helpers needing to pass the chocolate bar balancing challenge, thwarted by fine hair and too much conditioner!

With the first anniversary of Brumdingers approaching, we are pleased with the start that has been made. All the kids who have joined are still with us, and I know that for at least three of them it is their favourite time of the week. We wonder how much further they would have got with easier bells, and hopefully next year we will venture out beyond Moseley to give them more experience.

A Visit to London – Jonathan Townsend

"Of course, I'd love to join your ringing outing to London" I heard myself saying. Simultaneously a voice in my head was replying to the same question, "Are you crazy? You ring methods I've never even heard of!" As one of the newest members of the Guild (joined just two weeks prior to the outing date!) I was a little nervous about what standard of ringing would be expected. But as I'd already come to know quite a few of the Birmingham ringers I figured it would be okay (also figured I probably wouldn't have been asked if I wasn't wanted!).

Ringing started on Saturday morning at St Botolph's Aldgate, just a few minutes' walk from the hotel and the first touch of the weekend was Bristol Major. More ringers joined the group at the second tower, St Botolph's Bishopgate, where the tower sway was commented on. An impressive CCTV set up at Fulham allowed the conductor to keep an eye on how the wedding party in the church was progressing – we rang the bride in then walked over the bridge to Putney. A 23 second Twitter video of Cornwall Surprise Major (one of those methods I'd never heard of) provides evidence of a high standard of ringing and publicised bellringing to over 1,500 people who have viewed it (#stmartins #putney). The last tower of the day (Southwark Cathedral) saw the founding of the "I'll pull the tenor off when I'm ready" club, membership of this exclusive club doubled the following day at Queens Tower (no names = no pack drill). Saturday was rounded off with an excellent curry at a Southwark restaurant.

The Towers

Saturday 21st October:

St Botolph's, Aldgate (8)
St Botolph's, Bishopgate (8)
Fulham (10)
Putney (8)
Southwark Cathedral (12)

Sunday 22nd October:

St Martin in the Fields (12)
Rochester Row (8)
St Margaret's Westminster (10)
Queens Tower, Imperial College (10)
St Mary Abbots, Kensington (10)



Sunday dawned bright and some of us experienced an exciting bus ride to St Martin in the Fields where the bus driver took our request to get us there on time rather literally. Best summary of ringing here is provided by London ringers @StMartin's Bells Twitter comment: "This morning, at our service ringing, we were joined by ringers from Birmingham! A good range of ringing from rounds and call changes to Bristol Surprise Maximus!" More good ringing at Rochester Row and St Margaret's Westminster preceded Queens Tower. I had thought one of the ringers was joking when he commented that the view through the tower windows changed when the bells were ringing because the tower sways so much; on the contrary, he was serious. Nevertheless, we produced some decent ringing and some of us went to the top of the tower to be amazed by the views right over the Royal Albert Hall across London. Train times meant I had to miss the last tower, but I know ringing was good.

Huge thanks to Simon and Eleanor for organising the weekend and to all the ringers who went for all or part of the weekend for making this new member feel very welcome. Would I do the same again? Yes definitely, only next time I'll silence that voice of doubt by making an effort to learn some of those methods I've never heard of.

Remembering Revd John Linford (1931 – 2017)

Revd John Linford, who passed away quietly on 23rd October, presided over churches with active bands for a large part of his Ministry. At Sedgley he supported the project for the recasting of the bells in 1975, walking the Offa's Dyke Path to pay for the 5th – "Offa's Bell".

At Cannock, a flourishing local band under Geoff and Linda Pick was responsible for teaching sons Simon and Peter to ring, with Diana having learned at Sedgley. A service remembering him was held at Mavesyn Ridware on Wednesday 8th November.

The photograph shows the Revd John Linford with sons Simon and Peter hiding away.



Adult Learner Event (ALE) – Tour to Wolverhampton – James Ramsbottom

Spending a Saturday afternoon visiting Wolverhampton might, at first, seem like a curious decision. But when the latest SMG Adult Learner Event (ALE) is held there, the reason becomes obvious. And so about 30 members of the guild headed north from Birmingham on the 11th November on an outing organised by the Guild master, Simon Linford.

As ever, the event took place in the afternoon only, allowing the Birmingham School of Bell Ringing to run as usual in the morning. This also allowed three people at the school chance to have lunch in The Wellington before making a short walk to Birmingham New Street station to catch a train. Unfortunately, delays on the railways meant we missed the start of the first tower. Everybody else made it in time.

Only two towers were planned for the afternoon – Wolverhampton and Blakenhall. The first of these is a grand ring of 12 bells, and methods rung included rounds and call changes, plain hunt and Grandsire Caters. Several people rang their first blows on 12 bells here, and the large ringing room was packed with people.



Once ringing here had finished, the assembled company walked to Wolverhampton bus station to catch a bus a few stops to the next tower. The itinerary noted that the ring of 8 bells at Blakenhall were very rare. More precisely, the church had been closed until shortly before the outing, when it had moved into private ownership. The owner of the building was also the outing organiser, so booking the bells must have been an easy affair. The first ringing on the bells for at least five years had taken place the Sunday before, so we were the first visiting group for some time. In fact, the tower visitors' book showed that the last visiting band was in 2011 – from St Lawrence, Northfield!



Due to the lack of regular ringing, the bells were a little tricky, but we coped with them well. Rounds and call changes and methods such as Plain Bob Major and Grandsire Triples were rung, and we even managed a touch of spliced surprise major later on. As the ringing room wasn't large enough for everybody at once, most people spent some time outside, admiring the fascinating Victorian architecture of the church and listening to the characterful sounding bells.

As the sun sank and evening came, most of those present headed home for the night, leaving a few to catch a bus back into Wolverhampton in search of a pub. Thanks are due to Simon for organising this outing and running the ringing on the day.

London Striking Competition – *Simon Linford*

The St Martin's Guild provided all three judges for the London 12-bell Striking Competition in October. Simon Linford was Chief Judge, and invited Jack Page and Alistair Cherry along to get their first taste of judging a 12-bell contest. The London 12-bell is a bit less formal than the National 12-bell contest - the teams don't practice (officially), there is some overlap of ringers allowed, and the strikeometer is not used by the judges. The London bands also appreciate a contest with no chance of Birmingham spoiling the party!

In a rowdy atmosphere in the pub where most participants had been all afternoon (out of earshot of the ringing), the judges delivered their verdict, which was that the Society of Royal Cumberland Youths were the winners. The photograph shows Alistair and Jack enjoying a well-earned liquid refreshment.





Guild Outing to Bristol – Andy Clark

The odds were well and truly stacked against us – waking up to a couple of inches of snow, plus a Cross Country train strike. However, despite these potential setbacks, a group of 15 or so members of the Guild enjoyed an excellent outing to Bristol on Saturday 9th December. The tour was organised by Arthur Reeves, who guided our group around the city, despite claiming not to know his way!

The Towers

Saturday 9th December:

Bristol Cathedral (8)

St Stephen's (12)

Christ Church (10)



Followed by a breakfast at the Lloyd's Bar at Harbourside (no beer was consumed!), the first tower of the day was Bristol Cathedral, with a very nice ring of 8-bells. We rang a range of methods, including Bristol Surprise Major (of course!) but also Variable Treble Grandsire Triples (ably conducted by Tony Daw), traditional Grandsire Triples and call changes.

We then took a visit to the Old Fish Market for lunch, and received a warm welcome. Please see the photo of the group. Arthur had very sensibly allowed two hours for lunch which gave the group plenty of time to sample the beer.

Our next port of call was the nice 12-bell tower at St Stephen's. Our ringing here included rounds and call changes, Grandsire Cinques and Little Bob Maximus.

Our final tower – and easily the most 'tricky' bells of the day – was Christ Church, with 10 bells. Nonetheless, our hardy group of ringers successfully conquered rounds and call changes, Cambridge Royal and Stedman Caters.

A big thank you to Arthur for arranging such an excellent day out! Thank you also to Richard Andrew for supplying the photographs.

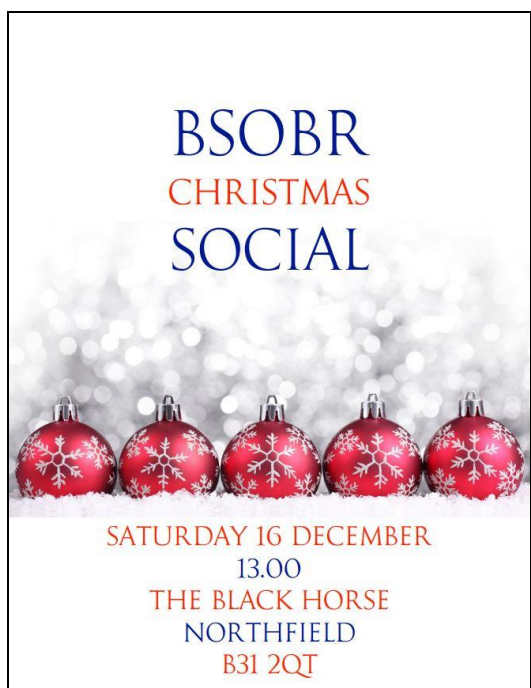


For up to date information and latest calendar use the website <http://www.stmartinsGuild.org/>



Birmingham School of Bell Ringing – Christmas Party

Another successful year at the Birmingham School of Bell Ringing was concluded with a social event on Saturday 16th December at the Black Horse Pub in Northfield. The afternoon proved really popular with between 40 and 50 people attending. The right-most photograph (supplied by Robyn Tighe) shows Stella Tew receiving her certificates, having completed all five levels of the LtR scheme. Well done to Stella on graduating from the school.



Christmas Ringing at St Philip's Cathedral – Gill Postill

As usual, December was a busy month at Philip's Cathedral, which hosts many different Carol Services and special events. Once again, we were asked to ring for several of these and in all we rang for seven Christmas specials, in addition to all of our Sunday ringing. A total of 30 different ringers, comprising 16 band members and 14 visitors, climbed the 53 steps to the belfry. Chris Mills rang on every occasion and Angie Wakefield only missed one, due to work commitments. A huge thank you to all who helped; the response was beyond all expectations.

Date	Service	Ringers
Monday 11th December	Santa Lucia Service (18:00)	19
Wednesday 13th December	Chaplaincy Plus, carol service for the business community (13:00)	16
Wednesday 20th December	Christingle Service (18:00)	15
Friday 22nd December	BBC WM Carol Service (13:00)	12
Saturday 23rd December	Nine Lessons and Carols (17:00)	13
Sunday 24th December	Fourth Sunday Eucharist (11:00)	9
Sunday 24th December	Nine Lessons and Carols (17:00)	6
Monday 25th December	Christmas Day Service (11:00)	8

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New Year's Eve Quarter Peal at St Philip's Cathedral – Jonathan Townsend

Always up for trying something new, five of us rang a quarter peal on New Year's Eve, Sunday 31st December, at St Philip's Cathedral - 1260 changes of Grandsire Doubles in 53 minutes. To "ring out the old" year we used the heavy minor five and gave the event some publicity to the Cathedral congregation who we rang out of the morning service. The band is pictured in the photograph below.



7	8-0-20	967.0	B	34.50"	1937	Gillett & Johnston	Stef Warboys
8	10-1-10	870.0	A	37.75"	1937	Gillett & Johnston	James Ramsbottom (c)
9	13-2-26	773.0	G	41.50"	1937	Gillett & Johnston	Tony Daw
10	15-3-24	725.0	F#	43.50"	1937	Gillett & Johnston	Jonathan Townsend
11	21-3-20	652.0	E	48.50"	1937	Gillett & Johnston	Phil Ramsbottom



Knowle Quarter Peals – *Stephen Shipley*

The 'quarter peal machine' at Knowle has been rolling on during 2017 – with another year of (almost) a quarter peal each week. The vast majority were rung for Sunday evening service, with a few 'extras' to compensate for the losses on the way! The methods ranged from Plain Bob Doubles to 5-spliced Surprise Major.

In a similar way to Harborne, Knowle dedicates its Sunday ringing to those connected with the local area who became WW1 casualties in the equivalent month 100 years ago. In the period from August 2014 to December 2017, there have been 58 WW1 quarter peals (23 of these during 2017) and 113 casualties have been named in the footnotes!

Knowle, West Midlands

SS John the Baptist, Lawrence and Anna
Saturday, 30 December 2017 in 41 mins (9–3–7)

1260 Grandsire Triples

- 1 Rosemary Watts
- 2 Steven Tibbetts
- 3 Stephen Shipley (C)
- 4 Ruth E Shepherd
- 5 Ann Smart
- 6 A J Barnfield
- 7 Julie Tarling
- 8 Judith Taylor

50th QP on the bells this year.

Remembering Bob Wooldridge, inaugural Chairman of the Knowle and Dorridge branch of the RNLI (a position he fulfilled with dedication for approximately 40 years), who died this morning, aged 89.

BUSCR Report – *Susannah Moore*

I am extremely pleased to be able to update you all on the success that BUSCR has had this term. We've been teaching six new learners how to handle over the past few months and many of them are now starting to ring rounds. I am so proud of this because that is more new starters than BUSCR has had over the past three years combined. As well as these ringers, we have also welcomed two ringers who can already ring. They have joined our eight ringers from last year meaning BUSCR has doubled in size over the past few months. But don't be fooled into thinking BUSCR practices only consist of handling and rounds. We have been able to introduce a new surprise minor method to our repertoire each week, and have big plans for a peal of 7 surprise minor with a student band by the end of the academic year.

Other than our influx in numbers the other exciting news I must share is that in December BUSCR rang the only undergraduate peal rung by any university society in 2017. It really was a fantastic peal and something the entire band are extremely proud of. Please see the link below.

<https://bb.ringingworld.co.uk/view.php?id=1201741>

Finally, the annual BUSCR dinner is planned for Saturday 27th January and tickets are selling fast so we expect this to be a wonderful celebration of all we have done this year with good food and brilliant company.