



## Editor's Foreword – Andy Clark

As ever, plenty of good contributions for this quarter's newsletter, so without further ado, I'll wish you a happy new year (is it really 2020 already?!) and we'll launch straight into Arthur's report.

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## Ringling Master's Report – Arthur Reeves

Normally, activities tend to quiet down as the Autumnal months begin. Not for the St Martin's Guild! On top of a full monthly programme, as detailed in my monthly digest emails, the Guild co-ordinated two very popular events. In October, over 50 members travelled up to my old stomping ground to ring at various York towers, including the Minster. See details of this trip later in this newsletter. December saw the return of Challenge Day, with three teams competing for the accolade (and tin of Celebrations) of victory. Challenges included Grandsire Triples, Switcheroo and a rendition of Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star. Over 40 members participated and the youngest was nine years old and ringing in her first competition. Well done to Eleanor Linford who led her team to victory. But more importantly, both of these events were well attended and I'm delighted that so many people took part.

At the risk of becoming boring, because I say it in every newsletter and report, I'd like to thank all those involved in organising and co-ordinating Guild events. However, the message is so vital I need to constantly remind people of the voluntary effort put in by others, as without them, the St Martin's Guild would be nowhere near as strong or as active as it is. The last few months in particular have seen leadership from Phil Ramsbottom, Jonathan Townsend, David Hull, Alison Edmonds and Mark Eccleston. Thank you all. And to my fellow officers, who can always be relied on to lead ringing activities and practices, thank you.

Looking back over 2019, I've been pleased with the range of activities on offer and the engagement from members right across the Guild. That doesn't mean I am about to rest on my laurels! For example, this year has seen the successful introduction of the X Practices – an initiative where local towers host a practice specifically useful to them, and then are supported by the Guild. All practices have been well received and well attended. However, a monthly practice on its own, however successful, will not lead to much improvement for those attending. So I'd like to consider how we can work more closely on a programme of practices hosted at a tower – like the X Practice programme, but over a longer term.

As we reach the New Year, and if I am elected Ringing Master again in January\*, here are my resolutions for 2020:

- Focus on how we can develop the Guild 6-bell contest, so it can be as successful as other events
- Consider how we can develop the X Practice programme to support members over a longer period of time (more on this at the AGM)
- Expand the group of regular volunteers who co-ordinate ringing activities to ensure we offer the fullest range of opportunities to members we can

*\*Please do not consider this a political manifesto! I'd support any new Ringing Master in these ventures too if they were interested in pursuing these areas!*



And please ensure you have the following dates in your diary!

- Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> January 2020 (afternoon): Guild AGM
- Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> February 2020: HJ Dinner Day
- Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2020: BSoBR Away Day
- Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> May 2020: 6-bell Striking Contest
- Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> July 2020: Walking Tour



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### Workshops and Practices – *Phil Ramsbottom*

The October 6-bell event was something a bit different and was an introduction to ringing new methods by joining together two halves of already known methods. In this case, Cambridge Surprise Minor below the treble and Treble Bob hunting over the treble, and rung without the need to learn a whole new line. This was a very well attended evening with several attendees taking their first steps in developing this new skill.

The October 10-bell event was a Stedman Caters workshop which not only provided an opportunity for some to brush up on their skills at this level, but others had a crack at conducting at this level for the first time. A very satisfactory evening all round.

The November 6-bell event was a bit 'off-piste', as moving up to Grandsire Triples from doubles was the theme for the evening. This was another very well attended event and as is usually the case, quite a bit of theory was covered, as well as much ringing of Bastow and Cloisters Triples as building blocks.

Later the same month was a Stedman Cinqes workshop at Solihull and this proved to be very popular and beneficial for quite a number of those who came along. The evening began with us taking four attempts to bring round a very simple touch but ended with us ringing that same touch silent and non-conducted. Now that's what I call progress! Many other one and two course touches were rung during the evening from which goodly number of those present benefitted.

It is probably worth mentioning here that Stedman Caters and Cinqes is to be the focus of all the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday workshops right through the coming year, alternating between St Paul's for Caters in January, March (etc) and Solihull for Cinqes in February, April and so on. This is a golden opportunity for anyone who might like to either break into ringing Stedman on higher numbers, is looking for some regular practice at Stedman on higher numbers or maybe who would like to develop their conducting skills at this level. I will be circulating the usual notices and reminders during the year for these events. However, the towers are all booked so you can make the entries in your collective diaries now. As always for these events, the fun starts at 19:30.

Finally, I feel it's a good time to thank others who have helped towards making all these workshops possible throughout last year. Particular mention goes to Tony Daw, who, as well as religiously turning up for all these, is also my 'go-to' for help and advice behind the scenes and has also led some of the events. Angie Wakefield and Jon Townsend also deserve a mention for being regular members of the support crew, sometimes at very short notice, and thank you to everyone else who has turned up to help and make a difference. Your support is very much appreciated.

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



## Workshop? Or 'Doesn't work'shop? Keith Whitehead

The Ringing World and bellringing social media are awash with articles and comments on how ringing training might be improved. I'm thinking specifically of progress beyond Plain Bob and Grandsire Doubles, rather than handling and up to those basic methods. 'Clusters' seems to be the current buzz word. So this quarter, as well as an update on what we've been doing at St Alphege, Solihull, I thought I'd give a longer perspective and try to draw some personal conclusions, based not just on these, but on attending a variety of Guild workshops over several years.

Since 2012, I've organised monthly workshops for our band. These have been in three phases:

- Until 2017 they were 30-45 minutes before our normal evening practice to enable one individual to practice one thing for much longer than they could in a normal practice
- In 2018 we held several Cambridge Minor workshops (see Newsletter 26). All were 1.5 hours long and held in the evening
- This year, inspired partly by the BSoBR, we've held two-hour daytime workshops (with refreshment breaks!) using our simulator. More detail later, but the purpose is to expand what the local band can ring with a clear intent to bring what we've learned back into normal weekly practice and into service ringing and quarter peals

Looking back, the **first conclusion** I draw is the need to keep changing things to fit the requirements of the current band. What worked for several years became somewhat repetitive and vaguely dissatisfying. It was clear that the concept needed refreshing, so I took advantage of a personal injury (!) to call a halt to them.

The next batch in 2018 addressed a very specific need and required the support of several good Cambridge Minor ringers so their availability was paramount.





Another personal injury caused a further hiatus (!), since when we've entered the third phase. Weekday daytime workshops work for us because the majority of our band is retired. They've been well received and are enjoyable social affairs as well as progressing our ringing.

The first three were on spliced touches of Plain and Little Bob Minor. The band doesn't currently ring any spliced methods and this is the obvious place to start. In the most recent, we rang Solihull Bob Doubles for the first time (a non-palindromic double hunt method, since you ask!). I've thought for a while that we really ought to be able to ring our own method!

I have a long list of topics for future workshops and ask those attending to vote for what we should do next time.

My **second conclusion** is to be clear exactly what the workshop is designed to achieve. They can be for one person or for the band or they can be open to ringers from other towers. So far, we haven't had open workshops. This might appear insular and I don't rule out co-operation with other towers, but I feel strongly that we need to be able to translate the workshop progress into our other band ringing. The Guild provides plenty of workshop opportunities for those who wish to progress personally rather than as a tower band.

My **third conclusion** is that workshop learning must be imported into normal practices and service ringing. Otherwise:

- (a) it won't be remembered
- (b) attendees will think it was a waste of time; and
- (c) it doesn't fulfil its purpose of progressing what the band is capable of.

More on the difficulties this may cause later.

My **fourth conclusion** is that some ringers prefer ringing with their own band at their own tower and won't take up opportunities elsewhere however useful the topic would be to them. This isn't 'wrong' but scarce resources may understandably be concentrated on those who have greater potential for progress. Regrettably we may have to leave some people behind in order to help others forward.

My **fifth conclusion** is that it takes a lot of time, enthusiasm and nagging (!) to organise. So the organiser needs to feel that it's worthwhile – perhaps personally as well as for the band.

My **last conclusion** is that the job of tower captain in incorporating all these extra requirements into a normal practice is almost impossible. There are probably six to eight things that I'd like the band to practice on Tuesday evenings apart from the 'bread and butter' stuff and realistically we might manage three. Perhaps the pressure to do something different from conventional weekly practices will come from a realisation that there's just too much to try and fit in (i.e. bottom up) rather than reorganising (imposing) from the top down.

Have I found the ideal solution? Of course not. But I seem to have found something that works for us at the moment and that may be the best we can achieve. Here's to the next seven years!

*Thanks to Richard Postill, our resident photographer, for supplying the image of St Alphege, Solihull.*





### Handsworth – *Simon Linford*

Handsworth has been a key tower for the BSoBR, with the Level 2 stage usually running there. However it was felt that the overall experience could be improved if the ringing chamber was redecorated. The School offered to do this on behalf of the local ringers, and over the course of about six months, the old polystyrene ceiling tiles were chipped off, the ceiling was boarded by Gary Peynado, and a team including Steve Horton, Olly Bouckley, Simon Linford, Clare McArdle, Tracy Stevens, Stella Tew and Jane Morris transformed the ringing chamber into one of the brightest and most colourful in the Guild!



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### Sara Level 5 – *Simon Linford*

Sara Paulson of Solihull and Brumdingers rang a quarter peal of Cambridge Minor on the treble at Harborne on New Year's Eve which completed her Learning the Ropes Level 5. Sara has actually now rung 17 quarter peals at Solihull, Harborne and Moseley.

Finishing it in 2019 had become a target because the ART Masterclass, organised by Stephanie Warboys and run in Birmingham in the autumn each year, is open to anyone who has passed Level 5 in the previous year, and quite a number of young ringers passed in 2019, including Charlie Linford. The hope is that the 2020 Masterclass will have a youth section.





### Brumdingers – *Simon Linford*

The Brumdingers are progressing very well and still managing to enjoy themselves greatly. They are perfectly capable of ringing rounds and call changes by themselves – a sight to behold because they don't get the concept of only the conductor talking! Seven or them rang for the Christingle Service at St Mary's.

One of the Brumdingers, Susan, has started ringing at other towers and will be starting at the School this month. Luke Daniel's son Elliot is the other way round – he has just started to be taught by Tony at the School and is going to come along to Brumdingers as well.



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### 25,000 Minor – *Andy Clark*



This newsletter doesn't often deal with ringing achievements outside the Guild, but two members, Simon Linford and Stephanie Warboys, took part in a record peal in December that is beyond many ringers' comprehension. The record was for the most Treble Dodging Minor methods rung 'all the work' which means every bell rings the whole of the method rather than just one lead. 210 different methods, 25,200 changes, and a peal of Spliced Minor which took over 12 hours.

The peal was rung at Ston Easton in Somerset, where the absolute longest ever peal of Minor was rung (30,000 changes) for the Ancient Society of College Youths.





## Guild Outing to York – 12<sup>th</sup> October

Whether it was a chance to visit the beauty of York's historic centre, ringing itself, the Minster or breakfast at McDonald's, this year's Guild trip was enjoyed by nearly 50 members. Here, three Guild members recall their highlights.

*Philip Sealey writes:*

I'd never rung at York Minster before, though heard the bells at close quarters when I went up to the 1980 National 12-bell Striking Contest to support the Guild (they came second, sadly). Impressed by their musicality and the unlikely combination of delicacy and majesty, I made a mental note to go and ring there some time, not knowing that almost 40 years would pass before it happened.

My luck was in when Simon Linford's notice went out earlier this year regarding the Guild outing. I'd been on ringing outings to York before, but the Minster never featured. This was a SJLL promotion though: not only were we going to ring at the Minster (the seat of an archbishop, no less), it was to be for Evensong. No pressure then!

Whilst most ringers' faces were inscrutable, I'll admit to private nerves before and on the day. Would I get up the 100 (100!) chunky stairs without needing the paramedics (yes I did) and would I be able to hold up that first backstroke round the front when pulling off on a substantial ring of 12 (yes I did, twice).

Arthur was nervous too, pacing up and down with a frown and a clipboard containing lists, which, much to Tracy Stevens' amusement, had been amended, renumbered and re-grouped during the morning. He need not have worried though and the day went faultlessly as he pulled everything together.

Up in the vast ringing room, flooded with natural light, we pulled off and rang a bob course of Grandsire Cinques to start. The sound was indescribable (in a good way!), so I won't try. Suffice it to say that, for me, spine-tingling and a certain amount of welling-up featured as the various tones and harmonics filled the air, and it was an unforgettable experience.

I've focused on the Minster as it dominated the day. However, there was lots more to do, with other towers to ring at, pubs to go to and tours to be had, all aided by a splendidly informative map produced by David Hull which was the go-to piece of paper for the event. It was truly a grand day for all.

*Sara Paulson (Brumdingers) writes:*

It's 06:00 in the morning, my alarm goes off and it's not a school day! The promise of a McDonald's breakfast was too good to resist, ready to set me up for the busy day ahead. We met up with some of Brumdingers – our young ringers' group – at New Street station along with many others.

Two and a half hours later we arrived in York and we rapidly walked to the first church - All Saints, North Street. The Church was a ground floor ring and having rung Plain Hunt and Call Changes, we headed off to the next tower, St Olave's, which is a 6-bell tower. It was decided that if all three 12 year old girls (Charlie, Eliza



and me) could ring a touch of Plain Bob Minor inside, we would celebrate by going shopping and having another McDonald's! After we successfully completed our task, we headed off into town for a bit of retail therapy.

Our next church was St Wilfrid's and we walked there armed with my new Primark handbag and full of chicken nuggets. After a quick ring here, we were ready and keen to get to the Minster. The first thing I thought when I reached the top of the tower was how clean it was! The bells were very heavy so I only rang the second and third bells. I normally enjoy ringing heavy bells and the Minster had a very nice ring of 12. Some of the many ringers went up to watch the bells in motion in the bell chamber whilst they were being rung. After the ringing we had a short but special guided tour of the minster (see photograph of the Brumdingers in action at the Minster).



Soon after this, we watched the adults have a quick pint in the pub, before catching our train back to Birmingham. I was shattered but I had a fantastic day.

*Finally, John Rogers writes:*

As morning broke to bright sunshine in York, a band of ringers of all ages from Birmingham were on their way for a much anticipated tour of bell towers in the city centre. Most arrived by train for the day, some came for a long weekend – one even came for a week's holiday ending with a day of ringing!



The first church of the day and our meeting point was at All Saints in North Street, a ground floor eight led by Clare McArdle who organised ringers dependent upon abilities into teams to ring Rounds, Plain Hunting and Cambridge Surprise Major to name a few. After an hour's ringing at All Saints, we made our way through the park and across the river bridge to St Olave's Marygate (see photograph), another ground floor ring of six bells. Our leader here was Mark Eccleston and he organised teams to ring Plain

Bob Doubles, Plain Bob Minor, Grandsire Doubles and some Plain Hunting. Before we broke for lunch, our

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large group of 48 ringers was split into two groups in anticipation of the afternoon ringing sessions at our next two towers - St Wilfrid's and York Minster.



After a short lunch and enjoyable ring at St Wilfrid's, the main event of the day was having the opportunity to ring at the Minster, a fantastic ring of 12 bells. We did this in two groups and while each group rang, the other group had a guided tour of the Minster. The ringing was led for both groups by Simon Linford and we were accompanied by very experienced ringers from the Minster. Our ringers were also given the opportunity to go up into the belfry to see all 12 bells in motion.

All in all, a very enjoyable day was had by everyone, and for that we have to thank a lot of people.

We are indebted to David Hull for organising the itinerary for the day and for making the arrangements at each church for us to ring there. Alison Edmonds gave up her time to show two groups around the Minster and we all certainly benefitted from her extensive knowledge of the Minster and its history. We must also thank the St Martin's Guild organisers and leaders at each tower for their experience and patience and for giving up their time to benefit us all!

### The 100 Club – Clare McArdle

Please see the table for the Q4 results and of course the Christmas Draw. Well done to the winners and thanks to all for participating!

October	1 <sup>st</sup>	80	Carl Jenkins	£46.00
	2 <sup>nd</sup>	61	Mike Dodson	£13.80
	3 <sup>rd</sup>	67	Malcolm Paulson	£4.60
November	1 <sup>st</sup>	36	David Ingram	£46.00
	2 <sup>nd</sup>	74	Clive Day	£13.80
	3 <sup>rd</sup>	72	Catt Smith	£4.60
December	1 <sup>st</sup>	21	John Anderson	£46.00
	2 <sup>nd</sup>	39	Arthur Reeves	£13.80
	3 <sup>rd</sup>	92	Oliver Bouckley	£4.60
Christmas Draw    	1 <sup>st</sup>	13	Ruth Shepherd	£88.24
	2 <sup>nd</sup>	76	Tom Horton	£44.12
	2 <sup>nd</sup>	32	Ann Smart	£44.12
	3 <sup>rd</sup>	44	Triona Jowett	£11.03
	3 <sup>rd</sup>	14	Ann Smart	£11.03
	3 <sup>rd</sup>	72	Catt Smith	£11.03
	3 <sup>rd</sup>	36	David Ingram	£11.03



### **Coleshill Ringers' Visit to St George's Memorial Church at Ypres – John Rogers**

On Friday 19<sup>th</sup> July, three Colehill ringers - Karen Bowley, Sue and John Rogers - made the journey to Ypres along with a group of ringers from the Leicestershire Guild. The association with Leicestershire is that Karen's cousin Bill is a ringer at Croft and Enderby, and the three of us having all rung at Enderby, asked if we could join their trip to Ypres.

The group arrived quite tired after a coach and ferry trip to Belgium, but all settled down for a lovely evening meal at the New Regina Hotel in the square at Ypres. After the meal the group wandered up to the Menin Gate for the 20:00 playing of the last post which was, as ever, very well attended.

On Saturday morning, the group assembled outside the hotel and made the short walk to St George's church, a church that had its foundation stone laid in 1927 and was opened in March 1929. It is a simple brick building constructed in keeping with the other buildings being reconstructed in their original pre-war style. The church was built as a memorial to the 500,000 British and Commonwealth troops that died in the three battles of the Ypres Salient during World War 1.

The eight bells at Ypres were made at the John Taylor bell foundry at Loughborough in 2017 and were installed the same year. The bells had been commissioned to be rung for the 100<sup>th</sup> commemoration of the end of World War 1 in 2018. The band of ringers has been taught among others by members of the St Martin's Guild.

The group was met by the Tower Captain, Liz Millward, and was shown to the ringing room, just a short flight of stairs above the main entrance to the church. The group rang a variety of methods, including Plain Bob Minor, Triples and Major, and Stedman, along with Plain Hunting and Rounds.

After an hour of ringing by ourselves, we were joined for a further hour by members of the newly recruited Ypres ringing band, one of whom travels almost two hours from Brussels for practice and Sunday service. Unfortunately there are no Sunday services at present as they are awaiting the appointment of a new clergy person.

After a very enjoyable morning's ringing, the group disbanded to do other things, some visiting Commonwealth cemeteries as a number of the group wanted to visit graves of fallen relatives.

Sue Rogers revisited the Menin Gate to find the name of her great uncle killed in the first battle of Ypres.

Sunday morning came with an early morning call for breakfast, followed by the coach trip back to the UK, which turned into a long and tiring journey, with some of the group not getting home until almost midnight.

The group had a wonderful time and ringing at Ypres was a new experience for all of us and maybe one that we will do again sometime. Our thanks go to the trip organisers Helen and Phil Staples, both Leicestershire Guild members at Enderby and for the very warm welcome that we received from the Ypres band.





## Exploring England's Belfries - *Richard Jones*

Christopher Dalton (1941–2008) has been described as 'one of the greatest post-war photographers of historic buildings'. He was also a distinguished archaeologist of bells and belfries. The book illustrated below and the subject of this article, with more than one hundred photographs reproduced to a high standard, is a selection from his work portraying churches in their landscape settings, tower exteriors and interiors, historic bell frames, and a chronological sequence of bells and their ornamentation.

It is not widely known that England's belfries contain a rich heritage of bells by a great variety of makers of all periods, including some very fine examples of medieval bell-founding. In these pages one can trace the outline of this craft tradition, from a remarkable 11th-century survival to a product of the Victorian industrialised bell-trade. The book is aimed both at ringers and at a wider readership of people with an interest in historic churches and English bell design.

The photographer was a close friend of mine whom I met through ringing, and over many years I spent a lot of time assisting him in his belfry research and photography. In putting together this commemorative book, I have added an appendix of background material, including short introductory essays on the casting and tuning of bells, and on conservation issues; and there are descriptions of each belfry represented.

The Ringing World is planning to publish a review of the book early in the new year.

**For those wishing to buy a copy, I am able to offer a discounted price of £32.00 if the book is obtained direct from me at the St Martin's Guild AGM on 11<sup>th</sup> January.**

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'EXPLORING ENGLAND'S BELFRIES'  
A Pictorial Essay

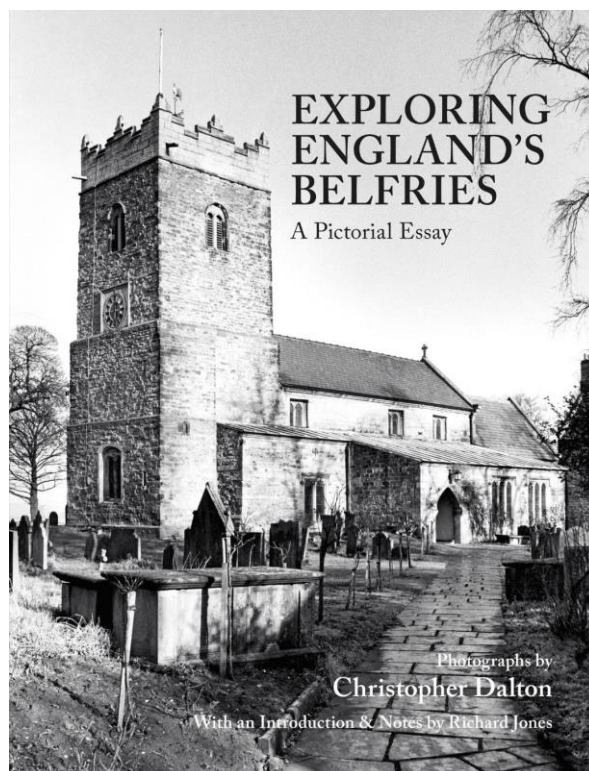
Photographs by Christopher Dalton  
With an Introduction and Notes by Richard Jones

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297 x 230mm    104 black & white photographs







## Remembering Janice Anderson – Stephen Shipley

Please see details below of two pieces of ringing to remember Janice Anderson of Knowle, who died in September. The peal was rung on 20th September, the day of Janice's funeral, with the quarter peal following in December. Please also see Newsletter 30 for Janice's obituary, written by John Fielden.

<p><b>Knowle, West Midlands</b> SS John the Baptist, Lawrence and Anne Friday, 20 September 2019 in 2h 42</p> <p>5040 Grandsire Triples Composed by J J Parker 12 part</p> <p>1 Christine Mills 2 Frances Dodds 3 John H Fielden 4 Barrie Hendry 5 Philip J Sealey 6 Richard B Grimmett (C) 7 Stephen R Shipley 8 Richard L Jones</p> <p>Rung to celebrate the inspiring and wonderful life of Janice Anderson, wife of John Anderson, immediately following her funeral. Janice was a member of the band at St John's for several years. Rest in peace dear friend. The band wish to associate David Purnell, who was unable to ring, with this peal.</p>	<p><b>Knowle, West Midlands</b> SS John the Baptist, Lawrence and Anne Sunday, 8 December 2019 in 41m</p> <p>1260 Grandsire Triples</p> <p>1 Jill Erskine 2 Stephen Shipley (C) 3 Elizabeth Kenrick 4 Ruth E Shepherd 5 Ann Smart 6 John Fielden 7 Rowena Shipley 8 Mark Anderson</p> <p>Rung prior to the evening Contemporary Carol Service on the 40th anniversary of the first peal on the restored bells. The peal of Grandsire Triples on the 8th December 1979 also was the first peal for Janice Anderson and her daughter, Elizabeth.</p> <p>The local ringers were honoured to have Elizabeth and her brother, Mark, ring with them on this special occasion in memory of their mother, who sadly passed away on the 8th September 2019, and to share refreshments later with their father, John, whose enthusiasm brought about the restoration of the bells.</p>
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### Notable Performances – Andy Clark

Well done to Andy Hardy for calling his first quarter peal. Andy conducted 1320 changes of Grandsire Doubles at Drayton Bassett, Staffordshire. Andy has also recently managed to gain LtR Level 5, followed by Module 1 (teaching bell handling), so it's certainly been a busy and productive time for Andy.

Secondly, a big well done to Rose Horton on ringing her first peal of Stedman Caters – with a performance lasting nearly 3 hours and 30 minutes on the heavy ring of 10 at Warwick. Stephen Horton, father of Rose, also rang in this peal.

<p>Lichfield &amp; Walsall Archdeaconries Society <b>Drayton Bassett, Staffordshire</b> St Peter Friday, 13 December 2019 in 47m</p> <p>1320 Grandsire Doubles</p> <p>1 Chris Mills 2 John F Mulvey 3 David Blick 4 David Hall 5 Andy Hardy (C) 6 Richard Chantler</p> <p>First quarter conducted No 5. Thanks to all who made this possible. In Memory of Mom &amp; Dad to C, Margaret Elsie Hardy 06.02.1930-14.09.2002 and George Brian Hardy 04.03.1928-04.07.2019.</p>	<p>Coventry Diocesan Guild <b>Warwick, Warwickshire</b> Collegiate Church of St Mary Saturday, 21 December 2019 in 3h 27</p> <p>5008 Stedman Caters Composed by Robert M Kilby (No.3)</p> <p>1 Jane M Rogers 2 D Rose W Horton 3 Hilda C Ridley 4 Paul McNutt 5 Andrew F Alldrick 6 Stephen W Horton 7 John R Ridley 8 Michael Chester 9 Simon P Rogers (C) 10 Roman E Sadowski</p> <p>The annual Robert Kilby memorial peal. First Stedman Caters - 2.</p>
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### Simon's New Role – Andy Clark

In Newsletter 29, we ran an article on Simon Linford's September election to the role of President of the Central Council. Unfortunately Simon was unable to be there in person, due to a prior ringing commitment in Birmingham, but his video message was extremely well received and Simon is now a few months into his tenure. Simon's role will be a minimum of three years and a maximum of six. It is also interesting to note that the last member of the St Martin's Guild to be President was John Anderson (1999-2002).

I am certainly eager to see what Simon can bring to the role, and of course it will undoubtedly be helpful for the St Martin's Guild to have our ear to the ground in terms of the national ringing circuit.

Of course, the downside to all this is that at the AGM, Simon will be standing down as Master of the Guild, and we'll be seeking a replacement with big shoes to fill. We owe a great deal of thanks to Simon for his work for the Guild, much of which goes on behind the scenes, but is nonetheless crucial in keeping the wheels turning in such a busy and varied Guild.

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



### **Birmingham University of Bell Ringing – Simon Linford**

For some time we have been thinking about a purpose built ringing training facility – something Clare dubbed the 'Birmingham University of Bell Ringing' (BUoB). It has always been one of those projects with lots of talk and no action! Well the action has started now as Clare and I have met and briefed an architect to produce a concept design that will help with identifying a good place to build it, and help get backing for the project. The building would have a normal ring of eight, a ring of six dumbbells, a set of booths for individual practice, a handbell room, and central shared space that could also be used for other community groups.

Although the BUoB could easily just be in an empty industrial unit or shed, the intention is for it to be a piece of architecture in its own right which will sit in a public place such as one of Birmingham's parks. This will attract people to it and put ringing into the public eye. Plans to put such a centre into a building in one of the Cemetery chapels (Brandwood End or Witton) have been thwarted by the Council being completely unwilling to allow access to them in the evening when they are shut.

So the new line of attack is to have a great looking building and persuade the Council to allow us to put it in one of the Parks (for example, Sutton or Cannon Hill).

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### **Mystery Parcel – Clare McArdle**

As many towers do, Harborne had a Christmas party. This year we eschewed the usual pub Christmas meal and opted for a "do it yourself" curry night. Everyone chipped in to produce an amazing meal with more than enough to go round.

Harborne ringers past and present gathered at the Parish hall for a night of fun and games. Dexterity was tested – how many of you have tried carrying an empty coke can with a partner only using spaghetti? Serious "present envy" was witnessed in the stealing Santa game and we had great fun gift-wrapping a member of each team. Can you guess who this is? For the answer, turn over the page!

We must thank our regular Fun-Meister Tamsin Lane for devising so many entertaining challenges. We all went home full of good cheer and curry.



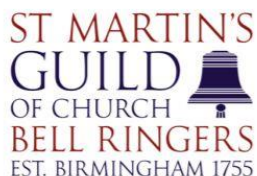
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### **The 132<sup>nd</sup> Annual Henry Johnson Commemoration Dinner**

And to finish, please do buy your tickets for the Guild's Annual Dinner in February. We return to the Banqueting Suite at Birmingham Council House for what promises to be another excellent evening, with Gill Postill taking the chair. Tickets will be available from Jenny or Clare (details overleaf), so please bring your money to the AGM.

Please see the back page of the newsletter for the full flyer.





**132<sup>ND</sup> ANNUAL  
HENRY JOHNSON COMMEMORATION DINNER**

Chair: Gill Postill

SATURDAY 29<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2020

at

The Banqueting Suite  
Birmingham Council House  
Victoria Square

6pm for 6.45pm

Carriages at 11:30pm

Tickets £45

Available directly from:

Jenny Sunter – [bells@brierleyhill.org](mailto:bells@brierleyhill.org)

Clair McArdle – [claremcardle151@gmail.com](mailto:claremcardle151@gmail.com)

Or please ask at your tower

NB This year there will be a cashless bar

Q: Who was wrapped up?  
A: Chris Mills!