

NEWSLETTER

July – Sept 2014

July started with the **Ringing World National Youth Contest** which this year was held in Worcester. The St Martin's Youths entered once again and were placed equal 5th in the call change category with a C+ grade. There were sixteen teams entered overall and the standard is going up and up, although as bands get older the most experienced ringers have to drop out!



The RWNYC day is packed with activities for all the participants. There was an opportunity to ring handbells with some superstar handbell ringers (pictured above), to see how to ring really heavy bells up at the Cathedral, and there was a "12 Bell Masterclass" at All Saints led by Birmingham.

The Chief Judge was former Brummie David Pipe, and one of his helpers was Alistair Cherry (Ringing Master of BUSCR).



Ian Wharton
 (Perry Barr) catching
 hold at the Cathedral



The Team outside Old St Martins



Results

Celebration and Remembrance at St Nicolas, Kings Norton by David Flint

On 6th July this year Jim Dunn joined the ranks of nonagenarians. Whilst quite a lot of people reach the nineties nowadays, not so many are active ringers. This was celebrated with a peal of 5090 Stedman Caters rung in his honour.

Jim learnt to ring in Stafford but national service, career, together with marriage and family commitments led to his early ringing activities being curtailed.

However, a fortuitous meeting between Chris and Molly Baron outside a children's club at Kings Norton was the spur to revive Jim's return to ringing. Jim became a regular member of the Sunday band and acted as deputy ringing master under Ray Aldington and eventually succeeded him when Ray moved to Winchester. Jim could (and can) be relied upon to call touches of Grandsire and Stedman Triples and Caters. In the heyday of the Kings Norton Sunday service band in the late sixties through to the early nineties, Jim became a competent ringer in advanced Surprise Major and Royal methods. He still climbs the 53 steps up to the ringing chamber most Sundays for service ringing and on Tuesdays for our regular ringing practice.

Jim is a man of many talents ranging from ball room dancing, baking and cooking to woodwork. He has always been a devoted family man and we particularly remember his loving care to his wife, Chris, when she became poorly towards the end of her life.

The 25th September was the second anniversary of Ray Aldington's death. Ray was the Ringing Master at Kings Norton for some 41 years and was

instrumental in teaching many youngsters to ring. The many ringers' outings arranged by Ray were always very enjoyable events. Apart from change ringing, Ray also played the carillon and ran the hand bell tune ringing band at St Nicolas.

A peal was rung to celebrate Ray's contribution to ringing and a peal board, made and lettered by Catherine Taylor, was dedicated at the Sunday morning service on 21st September. The board will be installed in the ringing chamber and will be a permanent reminder of Ray's contribution to ringing at Kings Norton.

Jim and Ray were both very competent ringing masters who organised Sunday Service ringing and weekly practices as well as undertaking the 'not always easy' task of obtaining enough ringers for weddings and other special occasions. Both have led by example and have loyally turned out to lead and support the band through good times and bad.

We remember Ray with fondness and wish Jim continuing good health and many more years of ringing. Thankfully, Jim doesn't need a stair lift to reach the ringing chamber!



The **Boldmere and Erdington outing** in July was enjoyed by 12 ringers. John Davis organised the outing and Debbie Jenkins drove the minibus. The tour managed to take in Hampton in Arden, Rowington, Snitterfield and Claverdon, plus of course the obligatory pub lunch and afternoon tea. Unfortunately navigational problems commuted the ringing at Lapworth to a walk round the churchyard! However a good day was had by all.



Boldmere outing at Rowington

Mark Eccleston is as modest as he is good at calling Stedman, and so without wanting to heap too much embarrassment upon him, he became only the third person to call the most difficult composition of Stedman Triples, about which Alan Burbidge waxed lyrical in the Ringing World. He then called it again in hand.



Like teachers who have an 'Inset Day' before the start of a school year, the tutors of the Birmingham School of Bell Ringing met one evening before the School restarted in September to review and share teaching experiences and techniques. Arthur Reeves organized the evening which he called "**Restocking the Toolbox**", with a dozen attendees, who learned things such as how to cure common handling faults, and practices ringing Bales as a way of teaching people how to dodge in Bob Doubles.



James Ramsbottom explaining the mystery of Bales to the teachers

Birmingham, West Midlands
 St Paul, Jewellery Quarter
 Wednesday, 30 July 2014 in 2h48m
5040 Stedman Triples
 'The Impossible One Part'
 1 Christine Mills
 2 Mark R Eccleston (C)
 3 Alan S Burbidge
 4 Jonathan P Healy
 5 Arthur J Reeves
 6 Michael P A Wilby
 7 James A Forster
 8 Philip A Ramsbottom

**ITTS Module 1 course, August 2014
by James Ramsbottom**

A total of 14 prospective teachers attended the course, mostly from the St. Martin's Guild and connected with the BSoBR. The day course combined teaching theory with practical sessions and was led by Graham Nabb, one of the key figures in ITTS and ART.

ITTS Module 1 is about the very basics of bell ringing, namely ringing a bell at both strokes, unaided, with control over the bell. This includes learning the two strokes individually, bringing the two strokes together, ringing a bell up and down, and correcting common handling errors.



Brenda Thomson
(Wishaw) and
Roy Followell
(Coleshill)

But the course was about much more than teaching how to teach bell handling. It was just as much about teaching how to teach. Many ideas about teaching, often quite revolutionary ones, were discussed throughout the day. For example, it was suggested that giving a new ringer a solo session during a practice night is a waste of time, and that initial handing should be taught to a level where a learner can begin to ring with a band before they start at practice night. This should be done in a few intensive sessions so that any new learner can get

somewhere in ringing quickly and then feel part of a band.

"But what if we want to put them in rounds when they can only ring backstroke?" was a question raised. And no definite answer was given - it's whatever the teacher thinks is best.

There has been a lot of discussion amongst ringers about the rigidity of the ITTS scheme and what it does and doesn't allow, and the truth is that it can be quite flexible. There is no one 'right' way to teach people - the fact that it tells about three main styles of learning shows this - but there are better ways of doing it than the currently accepted norm.

If the theory sessions pushed boundaries then this was reflected in the practical sessions. New teachers were taught several ways of getting potential students to ring backstroke, handstroke, up and down, and given ideas of how to correct handling faults. Methods to get new ringers to pull all the way down at backstroke, to catch the sally without pouncing on it, to put on the first coil of rope when ringing down and many other things were discussed and put into practice.

It was a splendid yet intense day, making the most of the ideal facilities at St. Paul's.

Andy Ellis
(Sutton Coldfield)
and Ruth Wilson
(Moseley)



Summer Youth Outing:

To extend the monthly Wednesday Youth practices, the Guild ran a couple of outings this summer to the Bromsgrove and Worcester areas. As well as ringing at a variety of towers, we also managed a picnic and walk around the Clent Hills, Frisbee at Worcester and a “sweet-inspired” quiz. “Mother’s local” anyone?



Thomas Horton (Smethwick) takes centre rock

Phil Ramsbottom is organising **10 bell quarters** on a regular basis. These will be at least monthly and should provide good opportunities for members to get 10 bell experience. The quarters will be a mixture of Sunday evensongs and Tuesdays or Wednesdays to broaden the opportunity. The first four dates are:

Sunday Nov 16th

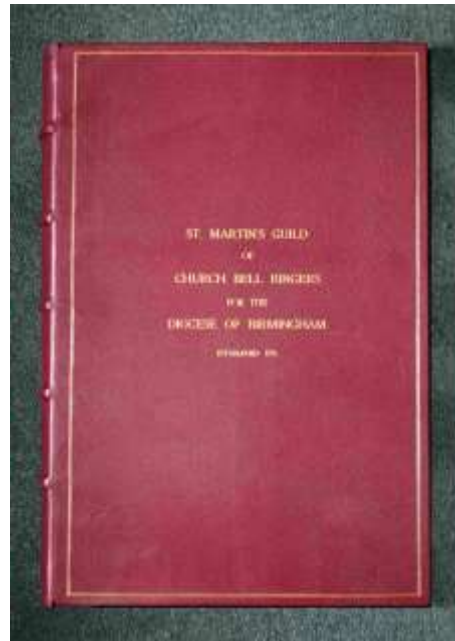
Wednesday Dec 10th

Tuesday Jan 13th

Sunday Jan 25th

If you are interested in taking part in these, make yourself known to Phil who can be contacted via phil.ramsbottom@live.co.uk

Jeremy Dussek has left the incumbency of St Mary’s and St Anne’s Moseley to become Canon Precentor of Chester Cathedral.



The new **peal book** has been received back from the binders and was proudly displayed at the October meeting before taking its place in the Guild’s library at St Martin’s. The last peal handwritten in the old peal book was in 1993, when the decision to look at alternative methods of peal writing was taken. The nettle was finally seized in earnest two years ago and the end result is worth the effort that has gone into it, proving that digital production at a high enough quality can be achieved. Credit goes to Steve Jones, Michael Wilby and Simon Linford.



Honouring the soldiers of The Great War by Clare McArdle

The ringers at Harborne have embarked on an ambitious project, that is set to last for the next four years. We are planning to ring quarter peals commemorating all of the soldiers listed in the church's book of remembrance, who gave their lives in WW1, on the nearest Sunday to the 100th anniversary of their death.

The book of remembrance only lists the soldiers by initial and surname, so a fair amount of research has had to be done. I am grateful to Tamsin Lane and Rose Horton for undertaking this, although I think it proved to be quite an interesting and absorbing project. We also had help from Alan Regin, Steward of the Rolls of Honour for the Central Council, pointing us in the right direction and giving advice on how to use the Commonwealth War Graves Commission website.

We have extended an invitation to members of the congregation at St Peter's, to include family members not from the parish in our project. In return for a donation we will supply a framed memento of the quarter peal and the money raised will be donated to charity.

As this is a bell ringers' project, in addition to the soldiers from our own church, we will be commemorating ringers from Birmingham, of which there are seven – five from St Martin's Guild and two from the WDCRA. We have a list of 258 soldiers to commemorate, so we are going to be kept busy.

We have already rung two of our quarter peals – the first in August for Private Francis F Lediard, who died on 26th August 1914 at the age of 45; and Stoker H Plaskett of the Royal Navy, who died on 20th September 1914.

The six **Surprise Major practices** organised on Wednesday evenings through the summer were a great success. About 20 members attended some or all of the sessions, with significant progress made across the target methods of the Standard 8, Lessness and Glasgow, and a lot of Spliced.



Surprise Major practice at Edgbaston

Surprise Major practices are also held at Shirley every 2nd Tuesday. Contact Colin Baugh to be added to the mailing list for reminders.

Worth remembering that all our churches should be very vigilant about **lead theft**. Following a recent downpour, it was discovered that lead had been stolen from the roof at Old Church Smethwick. Not only that but, when the thieves ripped off the lead, they were careless about the slates on the roof. So a number of those need replacing too.

The final week of the **Birmingham School of Bell Ringing** before the 'summer recess' was rounded off with a party at Simon and Eleanor Linford's house in Moseley. 25 or so students, teachers and helpers ate drank and made merry, and reflected on a great inaugural year.



Simon toasting the year

Come the start of September, the School reopened with the full four towers originally envisaged. Harborne has replaced Yardley as Tower C, and Edgbaston has been added as Tower D where students are learning to ring methods and should end up by ringing quarter peals of Plain Bob Minor inside.

The following ringers have achieved awards under ITTS and **Learning the Ropes**:

Level 1

Adam Lloyd (Kings Norton)

Sophie Keeble (Harborne)

ITTS M1

Matthew King (Perry Barr)

ITTS M2

Arthur Reeves (St Martins)

Chris Mills (Sutton Coldfield)

Simon Linford (St Martins)

BUSCR News

After the summer break the BUSCR practice at Edgbaston started again in October and it was good to see some new faces, recruited from the societies fair, along with the regular university ringers and helpers from the city centre. Joining us this year we have three new learners as well as a few more experienced ringers. However there was also a more unwelcome visitor at our first practice in the form of a large spider, which proved very distracting to some of the ringers during a half course of Bristol Major. It is very promising to be beginning the first term of BUSCR's 60th year with some new and enthusiastic ringers who we are sure will become regulars at Edgbaston and other towers across the city.

And while we have added some new students to our own ranks we have lost two in the other direction. **Rose Horton** (Smethwick) has departed for Swansea University where she is reading English Literature and History, and **Peter Lewis** (Harborne) has gone to Kingston to read History.

91% of the Guild's peals for the quarter have been of Stedman! A peal of Bristol Maximus at the Cathedral was the one exception, with one of Stedman Caters at Northfield, six of Triples in hand at St Chad's, and three of Triples on tower bells at St Paul's.

Amongst those peal ringing achievements were **Arthur Reeves** ringing his first on handbells (Stedman Triples), **James Ramsbottom's** first peal as conductor (Stedman Triples) and **Graham Kelly's** first peal of Triples (Stedman)!

There were plenty of achievements in the quarter peal columns including:

Catherine Vernon, 1st Grandsire Doubles inside
Rose Horton, 1st Surprise 8 inside and 1st on 10
Rob Pinnock, 1st Major

Solihull, West Midlands
St Alphege
Monday, 4 August 2014 in 47 mins
1260 Grandsire Triples
1Triona M Jowett
2Jen D Hickman
3Richard J Cann
4Keith D Whitehead
5William G R Davies
6Philip D Pope
7Michael G Dodson (C)
8Clive Day
Rung half-muffled on the centenary of the declaration of war and prior to a service in remembrance of those from Solihull who gave their lives in the Great War, especially Private Tom Turner, a St Alphege bellringer

(Sorry if I missed anything but this is original research!)

Forthcoming events:

Birmingham School of Bell Ringing
Every Saturday morning until Christmas

Lots of things to be organized by the new Ringing Master!

28th Feb 2015 – Henry Johnson Dinner
Banqueting Suite, Council House

4th Wednesdays – St Martin's Youths at St Paul's

2nd Wednesdays – Surprise Major practice at Shirley