

Jan – Mar 2015

2015 Henry Johnson Dinner

An excellent evening had by all



The Chairman, Chris Mills, with “dignitaries” from left to right: Father Charles Lawrence from Northfield (response to Toast to the Church) Richard Jones (Health of the Chairman), Stuart Hutchieson (Toast to Continued Prosperity of the Guild), Simon Linford (Master), Arthur Reeves (Ringing Master and response to the Toast to the Guild).



Andy Hardy and Don Finnemore



Andy Carr (with priceless bowtie)

Clare McArdle with
Sue & John Rogers
and Judy Nestor



Alistair Cherry and Hannah Bristow



Andrew Stubbs and Mike Rigby



Angela Wakefield and Sharon Wall



Katherine, Hannah & Gillian Campbell, with Colin Frew



Cliff and Ann Davies with Gill Fielden



Margaret Edwards, Simon Linford, Alan Ainsworth and Rebekah Horton look at the library display

MURIEL REAY
4th October 1918 – 19th January 2015

The death of Muriel Reay, at the age of 96, marks the end of an era in Birmingham ringing circles. Although born in Birmingham, Muriel was taught to ring in Lancashire in 1946 during her first teaching post. She returned to Birmingham permanently in 1951 and soon became a key member of George Fearn's weekly peal band at St Philip's. She rang a large number of peals in previously unringed Surprise Major, and then Royal and Maximus, methods.

During the early 1950s Muriel was elected the first lady member of the St Martin's Sunday Service band. She was always game to show that she could do anything as well as any man and her presence as the first female member of the Bullring band required thick-skin and determination (these things Muriel did not lack)!



A peal of Northfield Surprise Maximus, rung at St Philip's in February 1977, marked Muriel's 1000th peal: the first lady to reach this milestone. The method was named by Muriel but devised, especially for the occasion, by Rod Pipe. Arthritis in her hands was already causing Muriel some problems and, compared to the early 1950s, she had already moderated her peal totals during the 1960s and 1970s. In these circumstances a final push to be the first lady to reach the 1000 mark must have taken some determination, perhaps driven on by the knowledge that other ringers might also soon be nearing the target.

Muriel was one of the first Birmingham ringers to own a motor car. This became most useful when travelling to long distance peal attempts, usually transporting fellow Birmingham ringers. In later life, when still able to drive, she enjoyed the company of ringers on the monthly daytime ringing outings then organised on 'First Wednesdays' by her friends Brian Downie and Dennis Clive.

Muriel will perhaps be best remembered for her determination, perseverance and longevity. She was rarely intimidated and could be forthright but she demonstrated, throughout her life, a powerful strength of character: few people won an argument against Muriel! She was Secretary of the St Martin's band for almost 30 years and, at the time of her death, a member of both St Philip's and St Martin's bands for well over 60 years. She was the Guild's first lady Master, a Life Vice-President for many years and, in 1990, became the first lady Chairman of the Henry Johnson Dinner. Muriel harboured an intense sense of loyalty towards the Birmingham ringing scene for almost seven decades and there are few other ringers, past or present, who have served Birmingham ringing so loyally over so many years.



By Mark Eccleston

Ringling Master's Report

Arthur Reeves

Well, the first three months in this new role have flown by. As you can see from this newsletter, the Guild continues to run an active and busy



programme. Further to what has been reported elsewhere, the Guild will be represented over the bank holiday at the 10-bell Tewkesbury Shield so best of luck to the team! The youth group have continued to meet monthly, where practices have continued to be well supported. Our next practice will be on Wednesday 29th April at St Paul's – please contact me if you know of any young people who might be interested in meeting like-minded youngsters. Youth practices are fairly relaxed, sociable and good fun. I have put forward a band for the National Youth Striking Competition in July, so finger's crossed we are successful in the ballot!

I am pleased that the Birmingham School of Ringing continues to flourish, demonstrating the Guild's commitment to teaching ringing and developing skills for 6-bell ringing. I am grateful to Phil Ramsbottom for organising a programme of 10-bell quarters. However, I still think that there is a need for developing ringing on higher numbers – on 10 and 12 bells. Therefore, I have set up a series of focused higher number practices. If you are experienced on ringing on 8 and have begun to ring on 10, then please get in touch if you would like some more experience on ringing on higher numbers.

Finally, I said at the AGM that one area the Guild needs to work on is communication. There is no doubt that there is still work to do here. But I urge you to do two things: first, pass this newsletter and Guild notices on to others. Second, get in touch should you want to get involved in anything you read here or have any further ideas. My email is rm@grimmitt.org

10 Bell Quarter Peal Programme

Phil Ramsbottom

writes ...

"I am very keen to hear from any Guild members who would like to progress to ringing on 10 bells. Beginning last December, the Guild has been arranging 10 bell quarter peals (two per month), specifically for this purpose.

The principal aim is to provide ringers with the opportunity to ring for extended periods on 10 bells with a dedicated band. So far every attempt (whether scored or lost) has been to the benefit of more than one member of the band.

The entry level is Plain Bob Caters, (it doesn't get any simpler than that!). Quarters of Grandsire and Stedman Caters, Plain Bob and Cambridge Royal have been rung.

Please do get in touch if you would like to take part - whether you're an experienced 10 bell ringer or a total novice.

phil.ramsbottom@live.co.uk



The Birmingham band in the **12 bell contest** eased their way through the *Eliminator heat at Shrewsbury*. Drawn to ring first, the band were then placed first with a score of 88%, ahead of David Pipe's Cambridge band on 84% and then Exeter on 79%. The final will be contested by 10 teams in Norwich on June 28th.

Birmingham, West Midlands
St Laurence, Northfield
Saturday, 28 February 2015 in 2h55
5096 Stedman Caters
Composed by M R Eccleston
1 Stephanie J Warboys
2 Maurice F Edwards
3 Philip J Sealey
4 Paul Needham
5 Catherine R Taylor
6 Stephen W Horton
7 John H Fielden
8 Frances Dodds
9 Stuart C W Hutchieson
10 Mark R Eccleston (C)
Rung on Henry Johnson Dinner Day in memory of Muriel Reay (1918-2015): first lady to ring 1000 peals and first lady Master of the St Martin's Guild.

Birmingham, West Midlands
St Bartholomew, Edgbaston
Saturday, 28 February 2015 in 41m
1250 Yorkshire Surprise Major
1 Rebecca L Sugden
2 Janet A Horton
3 D Rose W Horton
4 David B Flint
5 David G Hull
6 Arthur J Reeves
7 Philip A Ramsbottom
8 Ewan G A Hull (C)
First Major as conductor.
Rung on Henry Johnson Dinner Day.

Chairman of the **2016 Henry Johnson Dinner** is going to be Don Finnemore. Don will soon be marking 50 years as Ringing Master at Aston, Aston will be hosting the National 12 Bell Striking Contest in 2016, and the AGM will be held there.

During the first three weeks of May, the flower arrangements in **St Philip's Cathedral** will have a bell ringing theme, as part of the tercentenary celebrations depicting the life of the Cathedral. When you are passing through the city centre, do pop in and have a look.



Eleanor Linford and Alistair Cherry were guest speakers at the University of Bristol Society of Change Ringers annual dinner. Alistair Cherry gave the speech which is traditionally given by a Master of another university society while Eleanor proposed the toast to the UBSCR. Eleanor grew up in Bristol and is well known there. Both speeches were extremely well received, and definitely ranked in the top two on the night!



The School's current Tower D students, Diane Meacham, Roy Followell and Andy Hardy all rang a quarter peal together on 31st Jan. This was Andy's first inside, which Diane took the treble for her second quarter, and Roy rang the tenor behind.

We are welcoming back **Jack Gunning** and family. They left Birmingham a year ago to live in Kent, but Jack's work brings them back and we will be very pleased to see him again. Whilst in the south east, Jack took the opportunity to do some ringing in London and was pleased to be elected as a member of the Ancient Society of College Youths.

A couple of firsts at Knowle. Congratulations to Lesley Griffin on ringing her first quarter:

Knowle, West Midlands
 SS John the Baptist, Lawrence and Anne
 Sunday, 29 March 2015 in 41 mins
1260 Plain Bob Doubles
 1 Lesley Griffin (1st Q)
 2 Halisi Drysdale
 3 Ann Smart
 4 Bridget Osmond
 5 Stephen Shipley (C)
 6 A J Barnfield
 For Palm Sunday evening service

And Judith Taylor:

Knowle, West Midlands
 SS John the Baptist, Lawrence and Anne
 Sunday, 1 February 2015 in 42mins
1296 Cambridge Surprise Minor
 1 Judith Taylor
 2 Rowena Shipley
 3 Ann Smart
 4 A J Barnfield
 5 Richard Andrew
 6 Stephen Shipley (C)
 First of treble bob - 1.

Peal ringing achievements were:

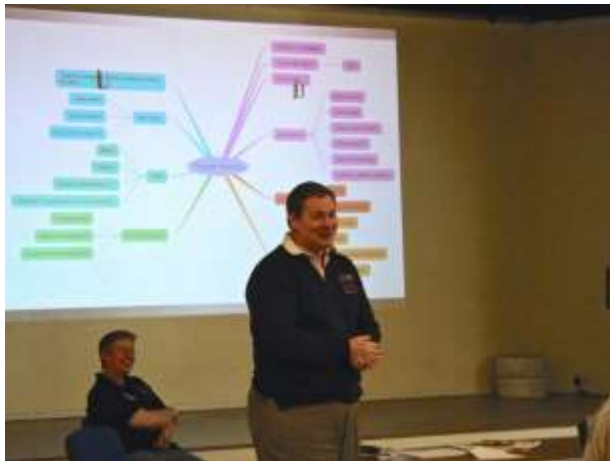
Birmingham, West Midlands
 RC Cathedral of St Chad
 (The Ullathorne Room)
 Thursday, 22 January 2015 in 2h 14m
5040 Stedman Triples
Composed by J O Lancashire
 1-2 Alan S Burbidge
 3-4 Charles A S Webb
 5-6 Mark R Eccleston
 7-8 Paul E Bibilo
 Rung silent and non conducted.
 An arrangement of the 1898 peal as an exact 5 part. There is one set of three consecutive calls in each part, sacrificing an important feature of the original peal of never having more than two calls together.

Both **Handsworth** and **Perry Barr** have new incumbents. Firstly Fr Barrie Scott became Vicar of St John's Perry Barr on 14th January, while Dr Robert Stephen was inducted as Rector of St Mary's Handsworth on 25th March.

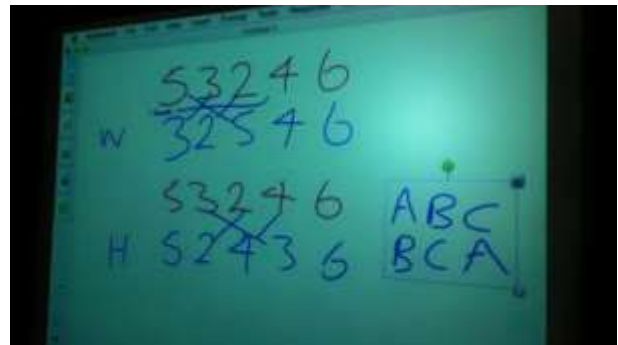
Association of Ringing Teachers 2015 AGM at Northfield

The Guild hosted the AGM of the Association of Ringing Teachers, largely because of ART's interest in and support for the BSoBR, and also because we volunteered.

The excellent facilities of Northfield were the centre of activities, with practical sessions at nearby towers. The main focus was the conference and a number of speakers throughout the day on different aspects of ringing training. The highlight was the talk on the Birmingham School of Bell Ringing, excellently delivered by Clare McArdle, and supported by Tim Sunter who gave a highly entertaining 'students view' on learning to ring.



In the afternoon, and continued on Sunday, Simon Linford delivered the inaugural running of a new course on learning to call and conduct. This is a course he has been developing on behalf of ART along with Neil Donovan and Andrew Wilby, with the intention of it being able to be delivered by other tutors.



The course went very well, lots of 'lightbulbs' came on for attendees as the mysteries of coursing orders were explained, and plenty of feedback has enabled the course to be tweaked and improved.

Tracy Stevens co-ordinated the catering with great efficiency, laying on a sumptuous buffet lunch, and constant refreshments, to much appreciation from attendees.



ART was very appreciative of the facilities the Guild had provided, with particular thanks to Andy Carr at Northfield. When we were having dinner at the pub on Saturday evening, one of the delegates said to me "well Birmingham has come out of this smelling of roses."

The **Conducting Course** piloted at the ART AGM will be run by Simon Linford twice in June and July. It is in two parts, and you do not have to come to both. Part 1 explains how to call touches of Bob Doubles and suits people who have never called a touch before, or who lack confidence in doing so.

Part 2 uses Plain Bob Minor as a base for explaining how calling positions and coursing orders are used to understand touches and how to keep them right more deeply. This will suit ringers who are already able to put in calls and maybe even have called quarter peals and peals, but who have never got to grips with the concept of coursing order, or cannot see how it is used to correct ringing.

Bill Haynes (St Martins) is organizing handbell peals of Stedman on more than 8 bells, with a view to establishing regular handbell peals of Stedman Cinques. The programme has started with increasing the experience of Stedman Caters, with James Ramsbottom, Alistair Cherry and Laura Davies having rung their first Stedman Caters in hand. The Guild Master hopes to follow soon!

Clare McArdle has completed an OU Honours Degree in English Language and Literature (First Class) – congratulations to her.

Kings Norton ringers needed

The Bishop is visiting Kings Norton on the 10th May, and the local band would love some extra people to help out during Sunday Service, so they can ring all 10 bells for his visit.

Sunday Service times 9:45 - 10:30

Please contact Julie Winterbourne if you can make it julie18881@gmail.com

BUSCR News

Alistair Cherry writes ...

In January the 60th anniversary BUSCR dinner was held at Edgbaston Palace hotel and was enjoyed by almost seventy people. David Pipe was the guest speaker and a handbell touch of Kent Royal was rung.

There have been a number of achievements by BUSCR members over the past few months. Hannah Bristow rang her first quarter peal on a working bell, trebling to Grandsire Doubles. This was followed up with her first quarter of minor, trebling to Plain Bob. Michael Woolley conducted his first quarter peal of minor, calling Cambridge and St Clements. Daniel Calvert has rung his first quarter peal of Stedman. This was caters at St Philip's for St George's day.



Association of Ringing Teachers

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

Level 1

Thomas Willetts (Erdington Parish)

Level 2

Sophie Keeble (Harborne)

Sallie Morgan (Erdington Parish)

Jenny Sunter (Smethwick)

Tim Sunter (Smethwick)

Level 3

Christine Barnell (St Annes Moseley/Harborne)

John Rogers (Coleshill)

Level 4

Andy Hardy (Perry Barr)



The Guild is supporting the Central Council initiative to find 300 people to ring their first peal in 2015, but we have expanded it to include first of any kind. A section of the Guild website is set up to log of targets/requests.

<http://www.stmartinsguild.org/events-3/2015-peal-firsts-challenge/>

Simon Linford is now organizing the first batch of peal attempts.

Forthcoming events:

Birmingham School of Bell Ringing
Every Saturday morning

4th Weds – St Martin’s Youths at St Paul’s
2nd Thurs – Surprise Major practice at Shirley

- 2nd May Tewkesbury Shield
- 9th May VE Day ringing 11am
- 9th May 6 bell contest and May meeting
 Coleshill
- 16th May 10 bell practice Northfield*
- 30th May Adult Learners Event
- 2nd June 12 bell practice St Martin’s*
- 5th June Enhanced practice Northfield
- 20th June Walking tour (no School)
- 25th July Simon Griffiths walk
- 27th June 12 bell contest final
- 11th July RW Nat Youth Contest, Oxford

* Contact Arthur Reeves for details
rm@grimmett.org

Conducting course

- Part 1 – calling Bob Doubles
Thursday 4th June and Sunday 7th June
- Part 2 – first steps in conducting
Thursday 18th June and Sunday 5th July