

Excitement for Castle Bromwich!

The restoration and augmentation project at Castle Bromwich has taken a giant leap forward with the completion of the fundraising (after three years' effort), placing of the order with Taylor's, and the casting of the two new trebles.

A coach load of church members and ringers went from Castle Bromwich to the Foundry to see the casting. The group was joined by one of the project's patrons, Viscount Hereford, the 16th Baronet of Castle Bromwich, who came up from London to be part of this historic event.



The current six will be rehung and supplemented with two new bells which have been cast with a Gillett & Johnston profile to match the existing bells.

The work in the church tower is expected to begin towards the end of February 2017.



Tower captain Dan Harris will shortly be arranging for interested ringers to have a last ring of the present peal and of the new ring in due course.



Brian Downie

15 July 1939 – 9 September 2016

Brian was born at 34 Holt Road, Aston in the shadow of Villa Park and within a stone throw of the parish church. He served in the choir until his voice broke and he found his way into the ringing chamber.

We both attended Handsworth Technical School and it was towards the end of our time there in 1955 that Brian introduced me to ringing. On a bad day I wish I had said no and avoided spending half my life in bell towers on the end of a rope, but then I think about all the lifelong friends I have made, the wonderful places I have visited and the great pleasure that ringing itself has given me, and I thank Brian for that introduction.

Brian joined the army as a cadet, but a few weeks later surprised us when he arrived at ringing on Sunday morning. It seemed that the army was not for him and he had resigned. Unfortunately, after a while he was called up to do his two years national service – in the army. I know he was certainly not looking forward to it, but speaking to him recently he said that he had enjoyed his time in the Pay Corps, most of which was spent in Aden.

When he was demobilised he decided that he would like to go to university and, after obtaining the necessary entry qualifications, he gained a place at Essex University. After graduating he thought he would like to teach, took a masters degree at Leeds University and a teaching certificate at Stevenage.

His first job was at Harlow College of Further Education and he was there for several years. He joined the local band of ringers and did quite a bit of ringing in the area. It was during this period that Brian became involved in the trades union movement. He joined the National Association for Teachers in Further and Higher Education rising to become its President, a position he held until his retirement in 1993.

From the time Brian went into the army to the time he left Harlow for a job at West Bromwich Technical College we didn't see much of each other, but on his return to the midlands our paths crossed frequently, particularly when Brian joined the bands at the Cathedral and St Martin's. He was not a prolific peal ringer, he rang only 17 peals, but was involved in Guild affairs and was Secretary from 1993 to 1996 and Master from 2000 to 2003.



Brian at the 2013 Henry Johnson Dinner

Brian loved travelling and although I don't have details of all his visits abroad I am aware that he went on ringing tours of both the United States and Australia. I remember we were coincidentally in Australia together, Perth I think, listening to a speech that went on and on and on. Meanwhile the wine flowed freely, and I vaguely remember Janice having to help us both into a taxi.

Brian held quite strong views on many topics, but he was not dogmatic and enjoyed a good debate. He fought a long battle against his illness and remained a gentleman to the end.

John Anderson

Birmingham, West Midlands
Cathedral Church of St Philip
Monday, 12 September 2016 in 3.25
5016 Spliced Maximus (6m)
1056 each Ariel, Phobos, Zanussi S, 880
Maypole A, 792 Deimos A, 176 Slinky DLTP,
109 com, atw
Composed by D J Pipe
1 David J Dearnley
2 Mark R Eccleston
3 Simon C Melen
4 Jack P Gunning
5 Simon J L Linford (C)
6 Alistair J Cherry
7 James P Ramsbottom
8 Paul McNutt
9 Stephen M Jones
10 Paul N Mounsey
11 Paul E Bibilo
12 Colin M Lee
Rung in memory of Brian Downie, long
serving member of the Cathedral Sunday
service band, and Past Master of the St
Martin's Guild.
First Cyclic Maximus: 3 & 6

Ringling Master's Report

Arthur Reeves

As the new autumn season begins, the Standing Committee have met to review what we currently offer Guild members. Based on comments from members, we have felt for some time that a regular Guild focus practice would be beneficial. We are also keen to broaden the opportunities offered to reflect where there is greatest need. From 2017, the Guild will begin a monthly Surprise Major practice on each third Saturday; the first four at Edgbaston. The practices are designed for those about to learn



Surprise Major up to those competent at these methods and keen to develop their skills on spliced. Further to this, Phil Ramsbottom's quarter peals on higher numbers alongside a soon to be introduced Surprise Minor practice should broaden the opportunities offered.

My long term aim is that someone should be able to learn to ring from scratch in Birmingham (through the BSoR) and be given a clear pathway, should they want it, to ringing confidently on 12. Of course, the Standing Committee will continue to review what we offer and any comments are gratefully received.

A second key aim of mine over the next few months is to properly review the recruitment and retention of young ringers. This is certainly not an easy task, so I'm grateful to the working group who have offered their time to invest in this crucial area. If you feel you have any ideas or interest in this, please do get in touch. We will meet in the near future.

Finally, I have sent details of a challenge I'd like to see Guild members step up to. £35,000 has been pledged to Blood Cancer if 200 quarters of Julie McDonnell Doubles/Triples can be rung by December 31st. Nearly 100 have been rung as we go to press; 2 from our Guild. But I think we can do better! I'd like to challenge the Guild to ring 10 by Christmas. Get in touch if you'd like some support with this.

My venture around the Guild has admittedly been quiet over the summer months, though I was honoured to join the St Paul's ringers at their recent AGM. I look forward to ringing with many of you soon!

Arthur

Ringling World National Youth Contest

The St Martins' Youths had a fantastic day in London competing in the National Youth Contest. They rang at various towers in the City and visited St Paul's Cathedral.



Outside St James Garlickhythe



The balcony at St Mary le Bow



Ringling chamber at St Paul's Cathedral

10 Bell Quarter Peal Programme

Not as many quarters attempted this quarter due to the summer holidays but a 100% success rate nonetheless and of course the usual firsts.



Cambridge Royal at Moseley was a first of treble bob for Angie who also went on to score her first of Stedman Cinques at St Philips and rang extremely well both times. Well done Angie. This latter quarter was also significant, it being the first of Stedman Cinques for the programme so really very pleased about that.

And for something a bit, (but not completely), different, a few of us supplemented the Solihull band in a successful date touch of Plain Bob Caters so well done to all involved with that. Date touches are a tradition at Solihull – next year's composition will be more challenging!

Solihull, St Alphege

Wednesday, 28 Sept 2016 in 1h 20m

2016 Plain Bob Caters

Arranged by Jonathan Evans

- 1 Sand J Cooper
- 2 Linda M Whitehead
- 3 Justin Baker
- 4 William G R Davies
- 5 Keith D Whitehead
- 6 David R Ingram
- 7 Jonathan Evans (C)
- 8 John Fielden
- 9 Philip A Ramsbottom
- 10 Malcolm J Paulson

Rung to celebrate the 125th anniversary of the St Alphege Guild

First of PB Caters inside: 5

Probably worth mentioning here that next year I'm only intending to arrange one of these each month as demand has dried up a little. However, the usual rules apply and if

you, or someone you know, would like to take their first steps in 10 bell ringing or broaden their repertoire a little, then please do get in touch.

Phil Ramsbottom

BUSCR News

It has been a long time since I last wrote about happenings in BUSCR. Most importantly, we went on our summer tour on 11th-12th June which this year took us to Loughborough and the surrounding area. We rang at 4 towers on the Saturday, and rather than just grabbing the towers, as there were only 6 of us, we rang a quarter peal at each church. After overnighing in Loughborough, we were treated to a tour of Taylor's bell foundry, which was genuinely more interesting than we were expecting. The 'weekend away' format worked very well and we intend to do similar next year.



Other BUSCR events included another undergraduate peal, at St. Anne Moseley, of Cambridge Minor, which highlighted the significant progress made by certain members of the band over the last year. We were quite worried that such a strong year for BUSCR would not be replicated again this academic year. However, through a strong recruitment drive that included hiring the Lichfield mobile belfry for the University of Birmingham

Freshers' fair for the second year running, we have gained a sizeable number of new recruits, many of whom have never touched a rope before, and we hope these new members grow to enjoy ringing as much as the rest of us!

The next event will be the BUSCR dinner, which will be on Saturday, 28th January 2017, at the Highfield in Edgbaston, the same venue as last year. Tickets should be on sale by the middle of November.

Jack Page, BUSCR master.

Alison Joiner is welcomed back to ringing after a break of 18 years. Within two weeks she had taken part in a quarter peal at Solihull:

Solihull, St Alphege

Sunday, 3 July 2016 in 0h 42m

1260 Grandsire Doubles

- 1 Allison K Joiner
- 2 Jen D Hickman
- 3 Michael G Dodson
- 4 Keith D Whitehead
- 5 Malcolm J Paulson (C)
- 6 Joseph S Humphries

For Evensong and to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Battle of the Somme.



Boldmere and Erdington Bell Ringers' Outing - 3rd September

In TV crime dramas exhumations take place at dawn. We arrived at St Michael & All Angels in Appleby Magna at 9:30 am and the graveyard immediately adjacent to the church was taped off. Men were hard at work with shovels and wheelbarrows. For a few seconds we thought we'd walked into a grisly police operation - despite it being well past the first light of day. Then we read the notice telling us that building work was going on to improve the drainage at the church - relief all round!

The six bells here were cast between 1619 and 1769 and then restored and rehung in 1982 as a gift to the parish by Harold and Hazel Oakley. There's a real sense of history in many ringing chambers and Appleby Magna was no exception. A very old, worm-eaten but sturdy fixed wooden ladder led from the ringing chamber up to the clock room on the floor above. On the ladder were several heavy black scorch marks. Apparently these were burns from the days when ringing was carried out by candlelight. It must have been quite a fire hazard with flying ropes and naked flames.

In most towers the bell are installed so that their ropes hang in a circle and are numbered from lightest to heaviest in a clockwise direction. But at Appleby, they were arranged in an anti-clockwise direction. This meant we had to pay closer attention than usual to work out which bell we should be following as the changes were called out.

The second tower on our itinerary was St. Peter's at Sweptstone. Here the six ropes hang in a semi-circle rather than the traditional full

circle. The bell frame has room to hold another two bells so maybe in the future, given sufficient funding, the circle could be closed by the addition of two more bells. As at Appleby, the noise of the bells was subdued inside the ringing chamber as there was a clock floor between us and the bells. This made it easier to hear the changes as they were called by the conductor - unlike at Boldmere where commands have to be shouted!

Unfortunately our ringing here was curtailed during a touch of Bob Doubles which ended rather prematurely with a loud thump from above. The clapper had fallen out of the fifth bell striking the wooden floor in the belfry above us. This is a rare event and the sudden noise from above caused much consternation.

Lunch at The Globe in Snarestone gave us a welcome rest. The food and the service were good and with energy levels boosted we moved on to St. Laurence's at Measham. The bells here are on plain bearings as opposed to ball bearings which are becoming the norm these days. This can make them more difficult to handle, but the ring of eight bells had been oiled for us the previous evening and they didn't present us with too many problems.

The Measham tower captain told us about his experience of ringing at Westminster Abbey. His first visit on 7th July 2005 had to be called off when his train to London was allowed no further than Reading because of the terrible London bombings. But later that same year he did make it to the Abbey and his legs shook as he took a rope and rang with some of the top bell ringers in the country at this prestigious location. Westminster Abbey's ringing

chamber was large enough to hold the bell ropes plus an audience of the rest of the Measham band who'd gone to London to watch their captain. The walls were covered in peal boards commemorating peals rung for major royal events. It must have been quite an experience!

Our final tower of the day was St Peter's at Netherseal. The bells are a ground floor ring which gives the advantage of no stairs to climb but the disadvantage of having to control a much longer length of rope going up to the bells. A good ringing action is required with this arrangement and deterred some of the ringers initially but the bells were not too wayward and there were no mishaps.

In Netherseal churchyard lies the grave of the famous railway engineer, Sir Nigel Gresley, the youngest child of Rev'd Nigel Gresley, rector of Netherseal. He became the Chief Engineer of the London & North Eastern Railway and is best known for designing a series of Pacific locomotives, including the recently restored 'Flying Scotsman' which achieved 100 mph, and 'Mallard' which holds the world speed record for steam locomotives of 126 mph. The minibus taking us home travelled at a more sedate pace down the Derbyshire country lanes on our way to the M42.

Many thanks to Debbie Jenkins for procuring and driving the Venture Scouts' minibus for us and to Ed Laughton for his precision planning of another great outing.

Sally Jenkins & Dave Reeves



At Solihull, John Askin rang his first quarter peal at the age of 77

Solihull, St Alphege
Sunday, 5 June 2016
1260 Grandsire Doubles

- 1 Jen D Hickman
- 2 Michael G Dodson
- 3 Sand J Cooper
- 4 Malcolm J Paulson
- 5 Richard J Cann (C)
- 6 John Askin

For Evensong. A 95th birthday compliment to HRH Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh and an 80th birthday compliment to Mary G Bartholomew (mother of the 3). Also a 40th wedding anniversary compliment to Phyllis & Will Davies.

First QP: 6 (aged 77).



ART Masterclass - Birmingham

The Masterclass organised by the Association of Ringing Teachers is a new initiative aimed at giving all those ringers who have reached Learning the Ropes Level 5 the opportunity to ring with and learn from some of the most experienced ringers in the country.

This took place in September, organized by Stephanie Warboys, and comprised an intensive but hugely appreciated day of ringing and learning in Birmingham, supported by St Martin's Guild members.



Aston has a new incumbent. Revd Philip Nott has been installed as Vicar, coming to Birmingham from Bristol. Meanwhile Revd Canon Janet Chapman has been installed as Rector of **Northfield**. Canon Janet is well known to many ringers having formerly been at the Cathedral.

THE ROYAL RING AND RIDE

In the year of Our Lord two thousand and sixteen
T'was the 90th birthday of Elizabeth, our Queen.
To celebrate, Gillian and Sand, with great pride
Planned and organised a Royal Ring and Ride.

With Craig, our coach driver, to Windsor we went
And there round the area, some hours we spent.
At Winkfield's White Hart it was now breakfast time,
Then, straight to St Mary's, the bells for to chime.

We went to St Andrew the Apostle at Clewer
To experience their tower of six bells, no fewer.
Then repaired to the Union Inn for our lunch,
That is - all except for the non-ringing bunch.

Old Windsor provided our next stopping place
At Saints Peter and Andrew the bells rang apace.
St John the Baptist in Windsor's royal town
Saw us ring near the castle, the Queen looking down.

She said to her courtiers, "Oh, what a good band!
I'm delighted I replied to Gillian and Sand."
In Farnham Royal was St Mary the Virgin;
To ring our last bells we needed no urgin'.

Our own Royal Twosome had worked for so long
To give us a great day where nothing went wrong,
Even down to the goody bags put in our hand.
Our most heartfelt thanks to Gillian and Sand.

Mary Wilkes



Peals

Ossett, West Yorkshire
Holy and Undivided Trinity
Saturday, 16 July 2016 in 3h31 (27)

5096 Bristol Surprise Fourteen

Composed by J S Warboys

- 1 Stephanie J Warboys
 - 2 Victoria J M Wilby
 - 3 Mark R Eccleston (C)
 - 4 Jack E Page
 - 5 Paul E Bibilo
 - 6 Paul McNutt
 - 7 Frances Dodds
 - 8 James P Ramsbottom
 - 9 John H Fielden
 - 10 David C Brown
 - 11 Paul J Tiebout
 - 12 John M Thurman
 - 13 John S Warboys
 - 14 Michael P A Wilby
- First peal of Bristol Fourteen on the bells.

Birmingham, West Midlands
Cathedral Church of St Philip
Monday, 18 July 2016 in 3hrs 22mins

5016 Stedman Cinques

Composed by M R Eccleston

- 1 Richard B Grimmett
 - 2 Mark R Eccleston
 - 3 Alban D Forster
 - 4 Paul E Bibilo
 - 5 Jack E Page
 - 6 Alistair J Cherry
 - 7 Jack P Gunning
 - 8 James P Ramsbottom
 - 9 Stephen M Jones
 - 10 William R Haynes
 - 11 Michael P A Wilby
 - 12 Paul Jopp
- Rung silent and non-conducted.

Birmingham, West Midlands
Cathedral Church of St Philip
Monday, 1 August 2016 in 3h22

5076 Stedman Cinques

Composed by M R Eccleston

- 1 Margaret Whiteley
 - 2 Mark R Eccleston (C)
 - 3 Martin J Whiteley
 - 4 Henry J W Pipe
 - 5 David J Pipe
 - 6 Jonathan M P Thorne
 - 7 James P Ramsbottom
 - 8 Stephen M Jones
 - 9 Paul Jopp
 - 10 Eleanor J Linford
 - 11 Michael P A Wilby
 - 12 Gordon R Birks
- Rung in memory of Mike Lowndes; and as a farewell compliment to Revd Janet Chapman, Canon Liturgist, leaving St Philip's to become Rector of Northfield

Spotting the following anniversary was by chance looking at the old Guild peal book.

Lichfield Cathedral

Saturday, 3 September 2016 in 3h 10m

5076 Stedman Caters

Composed by William R Haynes

- 1 Timothy M Davis
 - 2 Alistair J Cherry
 - 3 Martyn G Reed
 - 4 Michael Wilshaw
 - 5 William R Haynes (C)
 - 6 Tim J Peverett
 - 7 Paul McNutt
 - 8 Simon J L Linford
 - 9 Gordon R Birks
 - 10 Paul E Bibilo
- Rung to mark the 200th anniversary of the first peal at Lichfield Cathedral rung by the St Martin's Guild

Birmingham, West Midlands
Cathedral Church of St Philip
Monday, 5 Sept 2016 in 3hrs 22mins

5040 Stedman Cinques

Composed by M R Eccleston

- 1 Arthur J Reeves
 - 2 Mark R Eccleston (C)
 - 3 Dickon R Love
 - 4 Jack P Gunning
 - 5 Alistair J Cherry
 - 6 Andrew D Clark
 - 7 James P Ramsbottom
 - 8 Stephen M Jones
 - 9 David M W Threlfall
 - 10 Robert C Kippin
 - 11 Christopher J Pickford
 - 12 Paul E Bibilo
- First on 12: 6

Erdington, West Midlands
Abbey Church of St Thomas and St
Edmund of Canterbury
Saturday, 1 October 2016 in 2h 47m

5040 Stedman Triples

Composed by Sir A P Heywood's
Transposition of Thurstan's'

- 1 Rebekah G W Horton
 - 2 Alan S Burbidge
 - 3 Stephen W Horton
 - 4 James P Ramsbottom
 - 5 Vernon C Wright
 - 6 Simon E Adams
 - 7 Andrew J Ellis (C)
 - 8 Jonathan M P Thorne
- Rung on the presumed 100th anniversary
of the death of Pte George Parsons,
London Regiment 1st/20th Bn. Service
No. 633432, a ringer at this church since
1902, aged 33.
George was reported as missing in action
on 1 October 1916, and later presumed
to have died that day.
Requiescat In Pace
First peal of Stedman - 1
75th peal as conductor and 25th peal of
Stedman Triples as conductor.

Cyclic Spliced Maximus, a particular form of
spliced maximus without bobs or singles,
using 'designer methods' that maximize the
number of musical 'runs' of bells, and cycling
the composition through rotations of rounds,
has been rung another three times at the
Cathedral this quarter, enabling Arthur Reeves
to ring his first Spliced Maximus.

Birmingham, West Midlands
Cathedral Church of St Philip
Monday, 22 August 2016 in 3hrs 17mins

5016 Spliced Maximus (6m)

1056 each Ariel, Phobos, Zanussi S, 880
Maypole A, 792 Deimos A, 176 Slinky DLTP,
109 com, atw

Composed by D J Pipe

- 1 David J Dearnley
 - 2 Mark R Eccleston
 - 3 Dickon R Love
 - 4 Arthur J Reeves
 - 5 Simon J L Linford (C)
 - 6 Jack P Gunning
 - 7 Eleanor J Linford
 - 8 James P Ramsbottom
 - 9 Stephen M Jones
 - 10 Paul McNutt
 - 11 Paul N Mounsey
 - 12 Colin M Lee
- First Spliced Maximus: 4

Other attempts including Alistair Cherry's first
of Cyclic Maximus as well.

The Monday night band is now venturing into
a much more difficult area – watch this space!

And finally:

Many members have lots of interests and achievements outside ringing! Keith Whitehead from Solihull represented GB at triathlon in the European Middle Distance Championships in Austria recently. This “half ironman” comprises a 1.2 mile swim, 56 mile bike ride and 13 mile run, which Keith completed in 6h 38m.

