

### Editor's Foreword – Andy Clark

Brexit, Brexit and more Brexit. I hope you are glad to be reading something that steers well clear of politics! In this Q3 newsletter, as well as the usual updates for all things bell-ringing related, we finish with a couple of non-ringing articles, following members of the Guild on their sporting and transport (can I call it that?!) endeavours. We also remember Janice Anderson of Knowle, who passed away in September, and I hope to include an obituary for Sue Marshall, who passed away in July, in our next newsletter. As ever, thank you for all the contributions and please keep them coming.

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### Ringing Master's Report – Arthur Reeves

Sometimes it takes comments from people outside of the Guild, or new to the area, to remind you of what you sometimes take for granted, and I've been heartened by the praise I've heard recently of what Birmingham – and the Guild – offers. When I became Ringing Master nearly five years ago, I said my aim was that Birmingham could offer an escalator of opportunity: from learning to ring right up to ringing on 12. We're not there yet, but the monthly activities regularly offer a fantastic range of opportunity. For example, even though summer tends to be quieter, we've continued to offer:



- The weekly volunteering by a whole range of people at the Birmingham School of Ringing, co-ordinated by Clare
- A bell-handling workshop led by Phil and Tony
- Monthly Moseley mid-week practices
- Weekly youth practices – “Brumdingers” – led by Simon and supported by several others
- X Practices at Selly Oak (focusing on ART Level 2/3) and at the Cathedral (focusing on Bristol Maximus) led by Clare and myself
- Stedman Cinques practice at Solihull, led by Phil
- 6-bell workshops focusing on theory and method development, led by Phil
- 10-bell practice, focusing on listening on higher numbers, organised by Jonathan

... and I know this is in addition to practices others are beginning to organise themselves. You'll notice my name doesn't appear often in the above list and – I know I've said this before – I am very grateful to those who volunteer regularly to co-ordinate and run practices for others. Without that support, we would all be much poorer. These are all in addition to the “big” events – such as the June Walking Tour organised superbly by Mike Dodson – offered annually.

And whilst on that note of “big” Guild events, please make sure you have the below in your diaries:

- Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> December (afternoon): Guild Challenge Day
- 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



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I've kept my usual summing up of Guild activities intentionally brief this time, because I want to discuss something else...

### Why do we forget things so quickly?

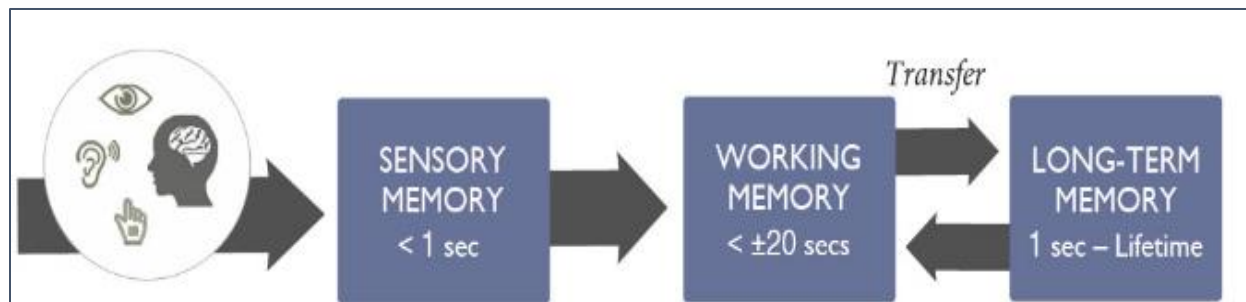
Picture the scene. You've been told you're ringing after the next touch and you have the eight minutes before your turn to re-cap and revise the method you're about to ring – whether it's Plain Bob Doubles, Stedman Triples or Bristol Maximus. You look up your leads one last time and recite the method a couple of times in your head. Then it comes to your go. You're a little nervous, as things went a bit wrong last time. But you've just looked up what you're to do. What can go wrong?

You start to ring rounds. Nerves increase as you begin to recite the method in your head, anxiously waiting for the conductor to say "Go...", but you suddenly realise you've forgotten a piece of the method. You've forgotten what you have correctly recited to yourself two minutes earlier; the very blue line you were physically holding! Once you begin ringing, impending doom awaits as you head towards that part of the method you've just forgotten.

This is – I bet – a familiar scene across many practice nights and a source of frustration for both learners and teachers alike. I know I am guilty of refreshing my memory at the last minute, only for that effort to fall flat. And I've seen teachers react to learners who have forgotten key details in ways that are perhaps not at all helpful.

In my proper job, I've been looking further into how memory works in an attempt to improve how my students can best learn information. Perhaps if we all have a greater knowledge of how our brains learn and retain information, it'll help us – both ringing student and tutor – support one another more effectively.

People often have a misleading idea of how our memory works. Our memory is not simply a repository of information. In fact, it is better to think of our brains as being filters – our brains are constantly "taking in" sensory information, its main function is to decide what information we need to keep and what we can "get rid of". And I think we often underestimate how much our brain actually does retain. For example, most of us have acquired vocabularies of over 42,000 unique words, plus the complexities of syntax to place these words into sentences which others can understand. Furthermore, we recognise what these words mean and stand for. We can instantly recall that chocolate is tasty and safe to eat, using our senses of taste, sight, smell and touch to recognise what chocolate is. We know that a sharp knife can be dangerous, using our senses to recognise the danger and act cautiously.



We receive dozens of pieces of information every millisecond into our sensory memory. Our brains filter this. It retrieves information from our long-term memory to check the information we have received and help us to recognise and make sense of the information we are receiving.

Our sensory memory is exceptionally weak; information is instantly processed. So the angry looking bull in front of us represents danger – we flee. Our working memory is also weak. Studies suggest we can hold three or four things in our working memory for less than 20 seconds. Again, our brains are filters; sorting out the information we need to function effectively and “getting rid of”, or forgetting, anything which is superfluous or risks overloading us. This actually is a positive thing: we don’t want indecision to strike just at the moment we are threatened!

However, the good news is that our long-term memory is exceptionally strong. Once you have learnt something properly, some studies have suggested you can remember it forever. Why do I often forget where I put my car keys two minutes ago, yet can still recite most of Queen’s Greatest Hits? Well, I’ve listened to Queen thousands of times over the last 15 years. Finding my car keys would be more useful, but my brain doesn’t quite work like that.

And so whilst our brains have an incredible memory, it doesn’t know what to learn and what not to learn. After all, how would learning the cycle of work for Plain Bob Doubles be helpful for survival?

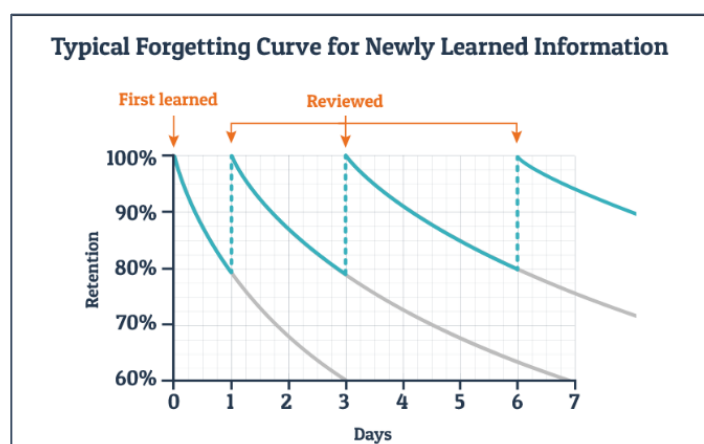
Thus our brains are designed to filter out over-loading. So when we’re in the bell tower frantically reciting our blue line at the last minute, our brain is likely to feel overloaded. Seconds later, our short-term memory is likely to chuck out that much needed information. (Try the following: read a short paragraph from a book. Close the text and count to 10 seconds. How much of the text can you recite?).

This is even more present, I think, for new ringers who have to contend with other things their brains will find overwhelming – like catching the sally and carrying out the mechanism of what a 3-4 dodge actually is.

## What can we do about this?

The key is to transfer information effectively to our long-term memory. Over 100 years ago, Ebbinghaus carried out an extensive study on how the memory works. His conclusions are still relevant to us today.

Ebbinghaus’ study suggested that less than one day after learning new information, over 20% of that knowledge was forgotten (some more recent studies have suggested that this is much higher). For those of us who are school teachers, this is scary! However, if you review that knowledge regularly and often (“topping up that information”) you will retain more of it. In other words, you need to transfer that knowledge to your very powerful long-term memory. The other piece of good news is that the more you have stocked up in your long-term memory, the easier it is to learn new



things. So those experienced ringers who seem like they are learning something from scratch in the tower are actually relying on a wealth of “stocked-up” memories which relate to the new information in front of them – they are simply making lots of connections to stuff they already know. And remember, those experienced ringers have greater headspace because they don’t have to think about how to catch their sally or they know without thinking what a 3-4 dodge is like.

## What is effective learning?

Studies have consistently shown that to remember something, you have to think about it. So just looking at something isn’t an effective way of learning:

- Write methods out (copy-cover-write-check is a useful technique)
- Recite the cycle of work out loud and do so without the blue line in front of you
- Teach someone else
- Use online practice tools (apps such as Blueline offer practice)
- Do so early and regularly (short but often is the advice)
- Homework matters!

## The 100 Club – Clare McArdle

Please see the table for the July, August and September results. Well done to the winners and thanks to all for participating!

July	1st	45	Sarah Vernon	£46.00
	2nd	24	Mike Rigby	£13.80
	3rd	61	Mike Dodson	£4.60
August	1st	68	Steve Pugh	£46.00
	2nd	67	Malcolm Paulson	£13.80
	3rd	30	Mary Pipe	£4.60
September	1st	32	Ann Smart	£46.00
	2nd	7	David Hull	£13.80
	3rd	47	Graham Kelly	£4.60



## Workshops and Practices – *Phil Ramsbottom & Jonathan Townsend*

### *Workshops (Phil)*

The July workshop was an elementary theory session. Very well attended it was too and no ringing whatsoever for a change. All the basic terminology needed to get through the first few years of method ringing was covered, such as leading, lying, hunting up, hunting down, lead ends, rows, place notation to name a few, interspersed with lots of Q & A's. I'm happy to run this again in the future if anyone's interested?

August was billed as a bell-handling improvers workshop and was also very well attended by some brave souls admitting to having developed some bad habits which needed sorting. A very worthwhile evening indeed and I'm grateful that we had three ART instructors on hand. As above, I'd be happy to run this again if asked.

Back to the more usual fare for September which focused on two routes moving on from Plain Bob Doubles, namely Union Bob Doubles and St Simon's Doubles. Both methods were safely negotiated by those attending and done so with the aid of a few things to look out for as opposed to the more usual "line learning".

### *Practices (Jonathan)*

Practices on the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of the month have continued over the summer; we have varied the location around the Guild to make them as accessible as possible. A gloriously hot day in July at Aston saw members and friends meet for Stedman Cinques, less amazing weather in August at St Paul's in the Jewellery Quarter for Grandsire Caters and autumn coolness at Solihull in September for Stedman Cinques. I am very grateful to helpers for their support and trust others have found the practices useful.

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## St Giles Special Practices – *Margaret Burling*

At St Giles, Sheldon, we have continued with our monthly practices. The main aim of these is to improve our Sunday Service ringing. In August we concentrated on St Simon's Doubles and are now able to ring a reasonably well-struck plain course. Our recent September practice helped one of our ringers practice the work at bobs for Plain Bob Doubles to help her achieve ringing a touch. At the same practice more experienced ringers rang touches of Reverse Canterbury Doubles.

The difference between a special practice and an ordinary practice is that everyone commits to coming in the same way that they would to wedding ringing. This then enables us to invite helpers from nearby towers to provide the necessary support and enable ringers to benefit from having a stander-behind.

As it requires intense concentration, we have a short break for refreshments and a chat. To make it worthwhile it is necessary to plan these practices carefully in advance, but the hard work involved is well rewarded by the sense of achievement that we



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feel as a tower as a result. I was encouraged by Phil Ramsbottom to begin organising these practices and I am very grateful to Phil for his continuing advice and support.

I hope our experience will encourage other towers to organise some special practices of their own!

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### **Why Practice – Mike Keeble**

A group of bell ringers who had learnt to ring with Birmingham School of Bell Ringing (BSoBR) felt it would be useful to practice some of the methods we had already learnt. Initially the purpose of the group was to practice and try and ring a quarter peal of Plain Bob Doubles to celebrate five years of BSoBR.

At the end of 2018, sound control was built in the belfry at St Peter's Church, Harborne, so a start was made to organise the extra practices. As Birmingham already had an X practice, thinking of a name was just a matter of working through the alphabet – hence "Y" practice (which soon became "WHY" practice!) was born.

The group has been meeting approximately every two weeks at Harborne since March 2019. Occasionally we have had to cancel due to holidays or work commitments, but usually manage to get together six willing volunteers.

As ringers we all regularly ring at our home towers and help with the BSoBR on Saturdays, and since graduating from the school we have all progressed with our ringing, taking part in many quarter peals and even a few peals. Many of us attend Guild and local ringing outings and all have nothing but praise for the patience and skill for the tutors and helpers we have rung with over the years.

It became obvious quite quickly that we all have our strengths and weaknesses, but as a group of peers we have been able to nurture and encourage each other with only one rule – no apologies necessary! If we mess up, so what?

As a dedicated practice, we can decide what to do and each member has the opportunity to practice whatever piece of ringing they feel would benefit them the most, over and over again if required, whether circling the tower, conducting, trying an old but half-forgotten method (unlike ringers that learnt as children or young adults, most of us need a lot of repetition to embed stuff like "pass the treble where after the bob, or doing 4-5 up instead of 3-4 depending on the method!").

The practices have also taught us to try and see what the rest of the band are doing – who is my course bell, after bell – so that hopefully we can help rescue a touch while still ringing. We have even had a practice focusing on listening, using an array of musical toys to help with rhythm and counting.

As part of the evening, we have a tea break and this time gives us the opportunity to discuss any issues we have and any helpful hints to try and alleviate any problems if possible. In an ordinary home tower practice this isn't possible due to the volume of ringing that takes place.

The Y practice helps us as a group of older learners to consolidate in a separate practice, a method or methods ad nauseum if required for the benefit of one, more or all the band, with no pressure to move on.

The initial reason for the Y practice was to get together and ring a quarter peal, but as time has gone on, we have found that it has been a highly rewarding venture, and each of us has gained a tremendous amount of confidence and hopefully we will achieve the planned quarter very soon. We also hope to be able to continue with WHY practice for graduates of the BSoBR.

### An Editor's Update!

And by way of an update... and a quick scan through Bellboard before this issue of the newsletter was finalised, I was pleased to see that the band has now rung a Quarter Peal of Plain Bob Doubles at Brierley Hill. As you can see from the panel, three excellent footnotes accompany this, but the main one being the fact it's a band solely made up of graduates from the School. I like the selfie too and suspect this trend will catch on!

#### Brierley Hill, West Midlands

St Michael

Monday, 7 October 2019 in 42m

#### 1260 Plain Bob Doubles

- 1 Jenny Sunter
- 2 Eileen Keeble
- 3 Stella Tew
- 4 Christine Barnell
- 5 Tim Sunter
- 6 Mike Keeble (C)

1st Quarter Peal by a band comprising solely of six graduates of the Birmingham School of Bell Ringing with thanks to all the tutors and helpers at the school.

1st quarter conducted no. 6

50th quarter peal no. 6



## Feedback – Mind your Language! *Lesley Belcher*

Have you found that feedback is sometimes treated as though it is a dirty word? Whilst it is true that false praise, such as “that was good” when it obviously wasn’t, is worthless, feedback actually has nothing to do with praise; it is information given to someone about their performance so that they can improve next time.



In the context of teaching bell handling, if you start by recognising that a new ringer doesn’t know the difference between good and bad movements, then your feedback allows them to understand when they are doing something right or wrong and tells them how they can improve. Without such feedback the learner might well judge their performance by how in control they feel or the look on your face, and then have to guess how to improve.

Verbal feedback can be positive, negative or neutral – informational with no positive or negative connotations – such as, “remember to keep your handstroke lead open”. Positive feedback provides encouragement; ringers like to receive praise when it is sincere and honest. Negative feedback does not encourage, may be demotivating and contribute to ringers giving up easily.

The way in which you use feedback will affect the way the learner feels. You should aim to use feedback in a manner which leaves the ringer feeling positive. “DON’T” is one of the most negative words you can use. Used frequently it will demotivate, but unfortunately, it is commonly used. Teachers are notorious for recognising and correcting errors more often than noticing correct aspects of movements. Remember to recognise positive aspects of a ringer’s performance and use them in the feedback you give to them.

If you find it difficult to avoid the “don’t” word, then try using the following technique:

- **Good** – start with what was good about the ringer’s performance or attitude.
- **Better** – then give feedback about what needs to be worked on.
- **How** – provide advice on how to improve performance.

Your feedback will be most useful if it is given immediately after the performance. If the feedback is delayed it is more likely that the ringer will have forgotten exactly how they performed. And to give the ringer the best chance of improving, try to give them the opportunity to practice what needs to be improved straight away.

So, feedback isn’t a dirty word, it is a powerful and necessary teaching tool. When used carefully and thoughtfully it can lead to significant performance improvement and leave the learner feeling both positive and ready for more.



## Milestones and Memories – *Phil Sealey*

My two favourite words in the ringing lexicon are "Go Stedman". It's even better when they are followed, about three hours later, with "That's all!" This does not always happen of course, and experienced Birmingham ringers' memories contain many stories of lost attempts, particularly Stedman Triples, over the years.

After 45 years as a ringer, I recently reached two modest milestones simultaneously: 250th peal (93 with the Guild) and 25<sup>th</sup> peal of Stedman Triples (conducted zero sadly), and was asked to write something about it. Initially I thought that such tiddly numbers would be of no interest to the readership, but then decided that the relatively high proportion of peals of Stedman (73) reveals an enduring love of the principle, which might be worth the effort to read about, especially as 21 of the triples peals were with the Guild.

I learned to ring in 1973, after graduating from Aston University, on the old, lumpy eight at Sedgley, where Simon Linford's father was Rector, and Simon was but an angelic choirboy. I remember at the beginning that alternate practices were taken over by some clever folk from other places (by invitation), and people like me went home a tad resentful. However, after a few months of making progress, I was invited to stay with the experts. They'd let me ring the treble to Plain Bob Major, perhaps, or even to the much scarier Double Norwich (just how do you get back to the front again?).

One Tuesday the chap running the practice said "fix up for Stedman Triples". I'd never heard this word 'Stedman' before and wondered what was coming. Anyway, I sat on the bench (I knew my place), watching and listening (no smartphone distractions then). "Go Stedman ... bob .... bob ...". What was going on? They'd only just started and there was a bob already, two in fact. And the music was lovely, with Queens and other notable rows I'd come across in call changes. Then to cap it all, the bells ran round at hand. Phew!

Well, I was hooked. I wanted some of this action and, after a few more weeks learning and ringing Stedman Doubles with our own band, I was asked to take a bell to triples with the visitors. That was it: this Stedman stuff was, for me, a quantum leap up from most even-bell ringing in terms of enjoyment.

By now (the late 70s) I was visiting other practices and I noticed that Stedman didn't feature much in Black Country towers, with something called 'Surprise' being favoured. Back in the pub at Sedgley (yes, I was ringing with the good ones and going to the pub with them now), I asked Eric Speake where I could go to ring some more Stedman. "Ah, you'll need to go into Birmingham for that", he opined, "How about if we go to a fourth Tuesday practice at St Martin's and I introduce you to John McDonald?" I knew nothing about the Birmingham ringing scene then, but I sensed that I was going to be impressed and I was not wrong.

In the meantime, I'd discovered that Eric had never conducted a peal of Stedman Triples. He had arranged one for me to ring my first, but we lost it. I decided to make it my goal to arrange another. In the end, I arranged several more and success was achieved for Eric as conductor in July 1977 at Kingsbury. He never called another one.

A few weeks later a fourth Tuesday arrived and so did we at St Martin's, climbing up to the grand ringing room, with its splendid and historic peal boards, books and central table. The first thing I noticed was that Eric was welcomed enthusiastically, with much hand-shaking: he was clearly well known in Birmingham circles at the time. I was made to feel very welcome too, but cannot remember what I rang at that time. Anyway, I

returned home after a great pub session, well pleased and vowing to go again, which I did on numerous occasions over several years.

In 1978, Richard Grimmett asked me in a peal at Handsworth. "What is it?", I asked. "Stedman Triples", he boomed. A good peal ensued and, looking back, this was the start of, for me, a "golden era" of ringing, lasting several years, with quarters and peals in and around Birmingham, and further afield to notable towers, plus holidays in Wales and Dorset arranged by John McDonald. The vast majority of these peals were of Stedman.

Time moved on and in 1983 I moved to Warwick for promotion. Ringing in Birmingham became more difficult to fit in, but I maintained full membership of the Guild and kept in contact, largely through the Last Wednesday Group (still going), which met "to exercise already-acquired skills", to quote John. There were also occasional peals.

Fast-forward to 2017 and ringing had to cease for quite a while owing to a trio of illnesses, one of which required emergency surgery, followed a few weeks later by a cardiac pacemaker insertion, followed by a frozen shoulder. It was then that I noticed my peal total was 247. As is often the case when you can't do something, you want to do it more than ever, and I was keen to resume ringing and reach 250. I was worried about the pacemaker though, given its position just under the skin beneath the clavicle, with wires going into the heart: all that arm movement over three hours. What might work loose?

Eventually, confidence was rebuilt and I rang a couple of peals in Warwick on the treble, and got to 249 in April this year. One to go! It was only then I spotted that the Stedman Triples peal total was 24. So that was it: the twin goals of 250 peals and 25 of Stedman Triples at the same time were beckoning.

For a few weeks, I contemplated contacting Stedman conductors I knew in Birmingham to see if they had 'vacancies' in peal attempts, but held back as I felt it was perhaps a bit of a cheek. Fortuitously, however, Richard Grimmett sent a Guild notification of the Stedman Celebration weekend he was planning for June, and I replied forthwith.

I was allocated a rope in a peal attempt at Selly Oak. It was all falling into place – what was not to like? This was it! Stedman had other ideas though and revealed its aforementioned fickle nature robustly in the loss of that peal after about an hour. Afterwards, I mentioned quietly to Simon Linford what the milestones would have been. "I'll fix another one", he said immediately. Given how many things Simon is involved with, I assumed it would be a few months away, but no, an email arrived within days and an attempt was set up at St Paul's for 12 July.

#### **Birmingham, West Midlands**

St Paul

Friday, 12 July 2019 in 2h 40

#### **5040 Stedman Triples**

Composed by P A B Saddleton (20 part, adapted from Thomas Thurstans false 1839 peal)

- 1 Philip J Sealey
- 2 Simon J L Linford
- 3 Lucy J T Gwynne
- 4 D Rose W Horton
- 5 Stephen W Horton
- 6 Mark R Eccleston (C)
- 7 James P Ramsbottom
- 8 John W G Gwynne

250<sup>th</sup> peal and 25<sup>th</sup> peal of Stedman Triples: 1.  
Rung in affectionate memory of Sue Marshall

Mark Eccleston was to call the peal and I assumed that it would be a relatively simple composition. I should have known better: not only did it have a 'funny' start, it contained over 450 calls! As ever, he was on it throughout and an incident-free peal was scored. A convivial pub session ensued and I returned home on the train feeling pleased, but mindful that I must keep awake so I don't miss my stop (I've done it twice before!).

In conclusion, I should like to thank Richard Grimmett, Simon Linford and Mark Eccleston for their parts in the achievement of these milestones at St Paul's, and to the rest of the band for agreeing to take part. More generally, I'd also like to make special mention of the extraordinary friendliness and welcoming nature of the Birmingham ringers which I have experienced consistently over 40-odd years, despite never having lived in Birmingham. I feel truly privileged to have been involved to the extent I have and look forward to continuing my association.

Now, 93 peals with the Guild. Will I reach 100? Watch this space!

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### **Central Council Meeting Weekend – *Richard Andrew and James Ramsbottom***

Following on from the momentous changes to the Central Council's constitution at the 2018 annual meeting, it was decided to move this year's annual meeting from the late May bank holiday weekend to the first weekend in September, reshape the format to include new events such as a Mini Road Show and generally make the whole programme open to all ringers, not just Council members. The weekend was held from Friday 6<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> September on the campus of Goldsmiths College in New Cross, South East London.

Events for the weekend started on the Friday afternoon with open ringing at a number of City churches including Cripplegate, Garlickhythe and St Magnus, and other London towers including Southwark Cathedral, Limehouse and Greenwich. There were also guided tours of the ringing room and belfry at St Paul's Cathedral for those who had pre-booked. Events continued into the evening, with a hot buffet supper at Goldsmiths College followed by an informal quiz evening hosted by Phil Barnes, chair of the Kent County Association.

Saturday morning began with a slot devoted to Presentations for Council members and ringers by each of the five Council Workgroups covering projects worked on in 2018 / 2019 and also giving details of future projects planned. As several of these presentations ran concurrently, it was not possible to attend them all, so if you want to find out further details on what each Workgroup is doing, it is best to use the link given in the 'Link to Presentation Material...' section towards the end of this article, which will take you to the relevant page on the Central Council website where you can access each Workgroup's presentation slides in turn. Alternatively, the Ringing World is running a series of articles from issue 5656 (September 20, 2019) onwards summarising the presentations and reports of each Workgroup in turn.

### ***The Ringing World AGM***

The rest of the morning was devoted to the AGM of The Ringing World Ltd, chaired by the Ringing World Chairman, Nigel Orchard, who reported that the quality and range of articles in the RW has continued to improve, and that work is continuing on developing an App which can be used to read an on-line version of the paper. He also said that the question of moving to fortnightly issues of the RW was still being looked at, but as the RW's finances have generally improved, it may well be possible to continue with weekly publication of the paper.

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The other major point of interest was the changing of the objectives of the Ringing World. The original charitable objectives had a strong focus on promoting Christian worship, but the board felt that this was at odds with what the RW tended to do, which is promote ringing as a hobby, both to ringers and non-ringers, and focus on communication within the ringing community and to the general public. The new objectives were proposed by the board and, after discussion, were carried by a large majority.

Nigel Orchard had previously advised that he intended to stand down as RW Chairman at the end of the meeting and he offered his successor, Rev. David Grimwood of Kent, every success. He also paid tribute to Robert Lewis who is standing down in November after a period of 19 years as RW editor.

### ***Central Council Meeting***

Saturday afternoon was mostly taken up by the annual meeting of the Council, held after lunch and chaired by the President, Christopher O'Mahony, who would be standing down from office during the course of the weekend.

In general, this was a quieter and less contentious Council meeting than in recent years, as no significant motions had been proposed for discussion. As a result of the wholesale changes made to the Council's format following last year's meeting at Lancaster, the section of the meeting devoted to annual reports took up much less time than in previous years, as there are now only the Executive and five Workgroups to report back to the meeting instead of the 15 or so committees under the previous structure. In addition to their annual reports covering the period up to the end of 2018, the Executive and each Workgroup also gave the meeting updates on the work they had been carrying out in the period from January to August 2019.

The other significant part of the meeting was the election of four Trustees to serve on the Executive of the Council. As Christopher O'Mahony had given notice that he was intending to stand down as President a year earlier than would normally be the case, as he needed to return home to Australia, this meant that a new president would need to be elected, alongside the existing Secretary (Mary Bone) and two Ordinary Trustees (David Smith and Alison Everett) who were up for re-election.

Our own Guild Master, Simon Linford, was the only nomination for the post of President and his proposer Phillip Barnes and seconder Linda Garton both gave supporting statements to the meeting, highlighting the qualities they felt were essential for a President of Council. Simon himself was unable to be present at the meeting owing to prior commitments at the ART Masterclass being held in Birmingham the same day, so he had pre-recorded a video which was then shown to the meeting in which he summarised how he intended to tackle the post of President. Following this, the meeting was then shown a video of the Brumdingers at Moseley, conducted by Simon in a performance of 'Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star' on tower bells. This received a



round of applause from the meeting. Simon was duly elected unopposed, as were the Secretary and two Ordinary Trustees.

Towards the end of the meeting, details were given about next year's Council meeting weekend which will be held on the Jubilee campus of Nottingham University. Mary Bone, the Council Secretary, also gave details of attendance at this year's meeting – apparently a total of 149 Council members were present, which was the lowest figure for a long time and considerably lower than last year's attendance of 163 in Lancaster. Mary said that the Executive will review possible reasons why so many apologies for absence were received this year.

### ***Council Dinner***

The annual Dinner of the Council was held in the main refectory of Goldsmiths on the Saturday evening by which time Simon Linford had been able to travel down from Birmingham to be present, as he was due to give the final speech to the Dinner as President Elect. He was handed his badge of office by the outgoing president Christopher O'Mahony – see accompanying photo of him wearing this.

### ***Mini Road Show***

Sunday was taken up with the Mini Road Show. This included a number of exhibition stands with a good selection of organisations represented, such as Westley Group Bells, the Whiting Society, Central Council Publications, ART, John Taylor and Co., and Avon Ropes.

There were three portable rings available, including the Charmborough Ring – see accompanying picture (overleaf) of it on the green in front of the main college building.

There was also a full programme of about 20 speaker events throughout the day, including talks by each of the five Workgroups, while other talks covered a wide diversity of ringing-related topics, such as "Project Picked Egg – Are you converted yet?" (speaker was Simon Linford of course!), "Insurance and Bellringing – All you Need to Know", "How to succeed with your Bell Restoration Project", "Setting up a youth band", "Building a bell sound – the science and history of bell tuning", "Sound Control – Within and Outside Your tower", "Safeguarding – striking the right balance", and other talks including one on the Churches Conservation Trust and its work, and an entertaining talk by Steve Coleman on "When Ringing Had to Stop" during the Second World War.

And if that wasn't enough, there was Sunday service ringing organised at towers across London for those that fancied it. Many of the towers don't have regular Sunday ringing and so were opened especially for the weekend. This meant that one SMG representative and his girlfriend had a ring on the historic, anti-clockwise five at St. Bartholomew the Great, Smithfield.





***Link to Presentation Material and Handouts for the weekend***

The link below to the relevant page on the Central Council website (headed 'London 2019 – Presentation Material and Handouts') gives access firstly to slides for the Council Workgroup Presentations given on the Saturday morning for Council members and ringers in general on the projects they have been working on over the past year and their plans for the future.

The section that follows lower down the page gives the presentation slides from a number of the talks given during the course of the Mini Road Show held on the Sunday.

<https://cccbr.org.uk/about/annual-meetings/2019-meeting/materials/>

***Next year's meeting at Nottingham***

The Central Council meeting weekend for 2020 will again be held over the first weekend in September (4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup>) and will be based on the Jubilee campus of Nottingham University about a mile from the city centre. Planned events will be similar to this year's weekend and will include a Tower Open Day, a Mini Road Show and seminars and workshops.

It is intended that all these events will be open to all ringers in the same way as this year, so why not put the dates in your diary and go up to Nottingham for at least one of the days? The day for the Mini Road Show in particular should be a good day out. Nottingham is easily reachable in a day's outing from Birmingham and this is as close as the Central Council weekend will be to Birmingham over the next few years.



### 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration – Gill Postill

The Rev. Richard Postill, Canon Emeritus of Birmingham Cathedral and member of the Shirley Band, recently celebrated 50 years as an ordained priest. He was ordained in St Martin's Church on 21<sup>st</sup> September 1969 by Bishop Leonard Wilson and apart from three years, has served all his ministry in the Birmingham Diocese. The Shirley Ringers rose to the occasion and celebrated with a Quarter Peal of Cambridge Minor, Cambridge being the place where Richard trained for the ministry. The photo shows Richard with the QP band. The next day there was a celebratory Eucharist at St James the Great, Shirley, with Richard presiding. Congratulations to Richard from all the Band at Shirley.

*(from left-right: Gill, Bridget, Richard Postill, Gwen, Colin, Adam, Richard Andrew)*

#### Shirley, West Midlands

St James the Great

Saturday, 21 September 2019

#### 1320 Cambridge Surprise Minor

- 1 Adam Knight-Markiegi
- 2 Gwen Albrow
- 3 Gill Postill
- 4 Bridget Osmond
- 5 Colin Baugh
- 6 Richard Andrew (C)

Congratulations to the Revd. Canon Richard Postill, Hon. Assistant Priest and Band member who celebrated 50 years of Priesthood on St. Matthew's Day



### **Simon Linford, an Appreciation – *Arthur Reeves and Clare McArdle***

With the news that Simon Linford has been elected President of the Central Council, a little reflection on his achievements seems appropriate. Simon deserves recognition as one of bell ringing's most innovative and inspiring leaders.

When Simon became Master of the St Martin's Guild in 2009 he saw the potential the Guild had to offer to improve and develop ringing within Birmingham. He sought to reinvigorate the Guild, believing that his role as Master could be instrumental in leading on this. Simon publicly made it known that his aim was to remain Master until the Guild had as many ringers as it had bells.

This renewed focus of the Guild's prime objective – indeed its *raison d'être* – has been the driving force in changing the Guild's activities. Simon was clear. Any activity the Guild hosted was re-examined. Anything held simply because of tradition was abolished and replaced. The Guild was re-structured: the Northern and Southern Area Ringing Master posts were suspended and activities were centralised. Generic Guild practices were replaced with focused sessions to help ringers develop in specific areas.

Simon, himself an outstanding ringer, sought to bridge the wide gap between the less experienced ringers within the Guild and the highly talented members of the St Martin's band. One of Simon's first initiatives was to start a quarterly newsletter. He worked hard to get contributions from as many people as possible. The first edition ran to five pages; the newsletter for the first quarter of 2016 was thirteen pages long and Simon was beginning to complain that he was struggling to fit everything in. The newsletter has put names to faces, keeps members informed and celebrates all that is good in the Guild.

In 2012 Simon brought grass-roots and top-end ringers together on the first Adult Learners' Event (ALE). The idea was simple – a locally based ringing outing, accessible by public transport, giving less experienced ringers the opportunity to listen to and take part in ringing that would be better than the ringing in their own tower. In preparation, Simon targeted some of the best ringers in the Guild and invited them along. The first of these outings identified some serious shortcomings in the teaching that prevailed at local tower level and many of the ringers were struggling to ring competently in rounds, but crucially, it was an immensely enjoyable social occasion for all concerned. Drawing participants from all over the Diocese, friendships began to form and a social network began to develop. The ALEs have continued and are always one of the highlights of the Guild's calendar. They have developed to the extent that Simon no longer needs to ensure that there are enough experienced ringers in support, as they look forward to each outing as much as the members who are benefitting from the support. Over the seven years since their inception there has been a huge improvement in the standard of ringing of the less experienced ringers.

The early experiences of running the ALEs were one of the catalysts that brought about the foundation of the Birmingham School of Bell Ringing, the Guild's flagship training and recruitment programme. Key members of the team that Simon has built around him came together and the idea was mooted, thrashed out and, with Simon as one of the driving influences, the School was formed in September 2013. It is highly unlikely that this would have happened without Simon as one of the key players. The Guild now has a consistent purposeful training programme which has seen the training and development of more than ninety ringers through BSoBR. 170 Learning the Ropes certificates have been awarded and the Guild has fifteen tutors accredited through ART, some of whom came through the School as students, and more in training. Simon plays a core and regular role as a tutor to students and mentor to teachers in training.

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



Another area in which Simon's influence has been felt, is the development of youth ringing in the Guild. In 2017 "Brumdingers" was born – weekly sessions at St Mary's Moseley for young ringers. The group started with Charlie and a couple of keen individuals, recruited from the local primary school, and its popularity grew, through word of mouth, resulting in a thriving and enthusiastic youth group, who have now entered the Ringing World National Youth Contest twice.

In addition to these four core initiatives, Simon has led the way in the provision of numerous other ringing activities, each with an individual focus. In particular, Simon has promoted the need to appreciate the theoretical side of ringing along with the practice. Every one of Simon's initiatives involve pre-set homework. These focus practices are almost too numerous to mention, but have included: Surprise Minor workshops which focused on how such methods are constructed; serial Surprise Major practices with built-in progression; how to conduct Plain Bob Minor; how to conduct Stedman. Simon's initiatives are invariably successful and feedback is, almost without exception, excellent. To ensure this success he uses what has become his trademark formula – prepare by securing the 'buy-in' of experienced ringers and the rest (enhanced, of course, by his expertise as a teacher and communicator) follows.



Simon has never been afraid to stand up to resistance within the Guild, and the wider ringing community, when he has felt change has been necessary. Simon is a conciliatory man, preferring to achieve change through persuasion rather than by force. He will lead discussions at Guild meetings, seeking opinions from a wide range of people. However, Simon is also determined when he feels change is essential and will seek out, prior to a meeting, those he feels may be resistant to hear their views and explain why he feels as he does. The respect and regard people have for Simon mean that when he wishes to see something happen, it invariably does. Simon is the absolute 'go-to' man for other Guild officers when we have a difficult problem which needs solving!

Simon himself defines inspirational leadership as encouraging others to do things they did not think they could do. Simon embodies the spirit of generosity with a selflessness that has inspired others to come together and reinvent the St Martin's Guild as a forward-thinking association with its members at the core.

Simon prides himself on his many outstanding peal records, especially on completing many "all the work spliced" records. What is equally remarkable is the sheer amount of time Simon gives to helping others achieve their peal records, especially for those to achieve things they did not think they could. A commonly articulated complement paid by many of the less experienced ringers, in particular those who engage with BSoBR, is that they really appreciate the help they receive from those ringers whom they regard as 'on a par

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

with international sporting heroes'. Simon certainly fits that description (even if some of the rest of us don't!). He has brought about a culture of 'sending the elevator back down'.

Simon has been instrumental in supporting the Association of Ringing Teachers, believing that the overall objectives and direction of the scheme was exactly what ringing needed. It was Simon who promoted the notion that the Guild should adopt the Learning the Ropes teaching programme, and Simon publicly supported ART through what were at times often challenging obstacles formed by other ringers.

Simon truly has inspired change, not just within the St Martin's Guild, but for ringers all around the country. As he steps down as Master of the Guild, we must be thankful for the huge contribution he has made. The Guild has flourished – Membership has increased by over 25% (circa 220 in 2009 to 289 in 2019). St Martin's Guild is frequently singled out as an example of a forward-thinking association in these times of change and uncertainty. The Central Council is extremely fortunate in the election of its new president.

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### **Mike Keeble – “Highly Commended” – Clare McArdle**

At the Central Council weekend in London on 8<sup>th</sup> September (see Richard and James' article earlier in the newsletter), the results of the Westley Award for Church Bell Maintenance 2019 were announced.

The criteria for entry was “anyone who has become involved in the maintenance of tower bell installations for the first time in the last five years and shown the most commitment to developing and using their own skills and those of others”.

The judging criteria included: benefits of the work undertaken by the nominee in maintenance and installation projects; the nominees approach to learning about tower bell maintenance; the nominees support for others not previously involved in maintenance work and a summary of the scale and scope of projects undertaken in the last five years.

At Harborne, we felt that Mike Keeble deserved a nomination for the way in which he has whole-heartedly taken on the role of steeplekeeper. With no previous experience, he set about teaching himself what to do. He made sure to go on a Tower Maintenance workshop and came back with many good ideas such as regular checks and a maintenance schedule. He has taught himself to splice ropes and even passed on this skill to our youngest members, helping them to get “50 Ringing Things” achievements. At the end of last year, Mike project managed the installation of our sound management system.

A cheque for £100 and a certificate was awarded to the winner of the award. Although not the winner, Mike was awarded a well-deserved “highly commended” certificate.



### Remembering Janice Anderson (1942-2019) – John Fielden

The sudden and unexpected death of Janice Anderson at the age of 76 on Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> September was a great shock to everyone. She had suffered a cerebral haemorrhage the previous day.

Janice was an extremely enterprising lady with very wide interests both during her working life and in retirement. In recent years she had not been an active ringer but her support for John during his long and successful ringing career meant that she had many ringing friends from all over the country and the words 'John-and-Janice' seemed almost inextricably linked. Along with John, she was a loyal supporter of the HJ Dinner and remained a full member of the Guild for over 40 years.



*Janice and John at a recent birthday celebration*

Janice was born and grew up in Yardley, and after school her first job was as a research assistant with ICI, leaving to study for a Cert Ed and degree in sociology. She then taught in various schools until 1992 when she was sponsored to undertake a Masters Degree at Warwick to explore the links between Education and Industry. Afterwards, she continued this work with the CBI, finally setting up her own business as a consultant. After retirement in 2003, she joined the Dorridge Branch of the U3A taking senior roles in its management and development and was an enthusiastic leader and participant until her untimely death.

It was through John's sister Rita that Janice first met John. That was in 1960 and subsequently Janice was taught to ring by John at St Philip's Cathedral along with John McDonald's wife, Margaret. John and Janice were married at the Cathedral in September 1963 and their homes for most of their lives were in the Knowle / Dorridge area except for a brief spell in Scotland.



Janice's active ringing was suspended whilst their two children, Liz and Mark, were young but when they became teenagers there was an opportunity at St John's Knowle to develop a shared hobby so under John's tuition, Liz and then Mark were taught, a band was assembled and Janice resumed active ringing, joining the Guild in 1977. She rang only four peals, all for the Guild, but her first, on 8<sup>th</sup> December 1979, was memorable as it was the first on the renovated bells at Knowle and was also Liz's first peal. It was Grandsire Triples, conducted by Steve Shipley, and is recorded on a peal board in the tower.

Liz went on to become an extremely proficient ringer and was a member of the band ringing the first ever peal of Orion in February 1982 at St Philip's Cathedral, it being only just over two years since her first peal, a remarkable achievement. Janice's other three peals were rung in 1981, Grandsire Triples (Mark's first peal) at Knowle conducted by John, Cambridge Major (inside), again at Knowle and conducted by John and finally a peal of Minor at West Buckland in Devon on a ringer's holiday, conducted by Steve Shipley, who was the only person to ring in all her four peals.

Janice's funeral was held at Robin Hood Crematorium on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> September, attended by a large number of people including many ringers, some travelling long distances. There were heartfelt tributes from Liz and Mark and from their four grandchildren and the service was led by David Reddish, a minister and long-standing friend in the Dorridge U3A. Afterwards a memorial peal of Grandsire Triples was rung at Knowle, conducted by Richard Grimmett (see panel).

**Knowle, West Midlands**

SS John the Baptist, Lawrence and Anne  
Friday, 20 September 2019 in 2h 42

**5040 Grandsire Triples**

Composed by J J Parker 12 part

- 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

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

After the peal, John, Liz and Mark were waiting outside the tower having listened to the latter part of the peal and Liz and Mark were persuaded to join us in the tower and take part in the lower in peal. The sight of the peal board recording their Mum's first peal coming as it will be, exactly 40 years ago, encouraged Liz to consider an anniversary quarter peal in December this year. This would be a very fitting tribute indeed to their Mum.

We all then retired across the road to the Red lion where we spent a very happy hour in reminiscence and celebration of Janice's much admired and much-loved character.



## Notable Quarters and Peals

The table outlines a selection of notable pieces of ringing over the last three months. Well done to all involved.

<p><b>Moseley, West Midlands</b> St Mary Sunday, 1 September 2019 in 40m</p> <p><b>1260 Plain Bob Doubles</b></p> <p>1 Kunal Pal 2 Charlie Linford 3 Simon Linford (C) 4 Trish Everett 5 Arthur Reeves 6 Orson Gee</p> <p>First quarter peal: 1,6</p>	<p><b>Edgbaston, West Midlands</b> St Bartholomew Thursday, 18 July 2019 in 40m</p> <p><b>1260 Stedman Triples</b> Composed by A S Burbidge ('The Impossible Quarter Part')</p> <p>1 Christine Mills 2 Paul E Bibilo 3 Alan S Burbidge 4 Jack E Page (C) 5 John H Fielden 6 Mark R Eccleston 7 Richard B Grimmett 8 Jenny M Page</p> <p>Arranged and rung to celebrate the conductor's graduation earlier today</p>														
<p><b>Birmingham, West Midlands</b> St Martin Tuesday, 30 July 2019 in 3h 35</p> <p><b>5001 Stedman Sextuples</b> Composed by John S Warboys</p> <table> <tr> <td>1 Stephanie J Warboys</td><td>8 Graham M Bradshaw</td></tr> <tr> <td>2 Simon C Melen</td><td>9 Paul J Tiebout</td></tr> <tr> <td>3 David J Baverstock</td><td>10 Christopher J Pickford</td></tr> <tr> <td>4 Dickon R Love</td><td>11 John S Warboys (C)</td></tr> <tr> <td>5 Paul McNutt</td><td>12 Simon J L Linford</td></tr> <tr> <td>6 Luke G Groom</td><td>13 Colin G Newman</td></tr> <tr> <td>7 Arthur J Reeves</td><td>14 Mark R Eccleston</td></tr> </table> <p>First on 14: 6,7</p>		1 Stephanie J Warboys	8 Graham M Bradshaw	2 Simon C Melen	9 Paul J Tiebout	3 David J Baverstock	10 Christopher J Pickford	4 Dickon R Love	11 John S Warboys (C)	5 Paul McNutt	12 Simon J L Linford	6 Luke G Groom	13 Colin G Newman	7 Arthur J Reeves	14 Mark R Eccleston
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5 Paul McNutt	12 Simon J L Linford														
6 Luke G Groom	13 Colin G Newman														
7 Arthur J Reeves	14 Mark R Eccleston														

### **Keith and Linda's Duathlon – *Keith Whitehead***

In May this year, Linda (my wife) and I lined up at the start of a duathlon in Viborg, Denmark, racing for GB in our age group (65-69). How on earth did that happen to two competent fitness enthusiasts who never regarded themselves as high-level racers? Especially when seven months earlier I'd fallen from my bike, fracturing my femur and spending nine days in hospital for an operation to insert six pieces of metal in my leg, with 49 stitches and two units of blood.

Some of you may recall my article in The Ringing World in December 2016, in the series "Alternative Hobbyist", which documented my triathlon journey up to that point (and tried to compare triathlon with ringing!). The highlight was qualifying to represent GB in middle-distance triathlon (1.2 mile swim, 56 mile ride, 13.1 mile run) in the European Championships in Austria that year, where I finished pretty near the back, but still thrilled to have taken part. Would Viborg be similar?

A few years ago, we switched from triathlon to duathlon (run-bike-run) because of a medical condition that prevents Linda from swimming in open water, which we only discovered when she nearly drowned and was diagnosed (incorrectly) with multiple heart attacks. That's another story that there isn't space for here!

We discovered that we're better at endurance events than short ones, gradually making our way from running half-marathons to marathons and recently to ultras (anything longer than a marathon). Similarly in duathlon we prefer the six to seven hour events (called middle distance) to sprint or standard distance.

Last October we entered the middle-distance Holdenby Duathlon and Linda raced, finishing first in her age category and qualifying for GB. However, I was on crutches following my accident and spent the day marshalling at a water station on the run. So we made plans for her to race in Viborg in the European Championships with me as supporter while I began my recovery with short walks, eventually starting to run in December and ride in January. I set my sights on the Naseby Duathlon in April, which happened to be another GB qualifier! We both raced, we both won our age category and now we would both be racing in Viborg.

It is, of course, easier to qualify and to do well at our age as there are relatively few people who will undertake multi-hour multi-disciplinary events in retirement. Some would say that there are few mad enough...

The Viborg event comprised a 10k run, 60k ride and 10k run, which is a bit short for middle distance and that we expected to complete in about 4 ½ hours. Each run was four laps in and around the beautiful medieval city (partly on cobbles!) and the ride was two laps out into the surrounding countryside. Halfway round the first run Linda took a nasty tumble, losing skin from two elbows and a knee and twisting an ankle. But she doesn't give up easily and carried on, refusing medical attention. I finished just inside 4 ¼ hours and Linda just outside 4 ½ so we were both pretty happy. We got Linda patched up and waited for the medal ceremony, expecting Linda to feature as there were not many female competitors in her age category. But the moment when she was announced as gold medallist and European Champion was still very special!

With more entrants in my category, I had no expectation of a medal and had lent my GB jacket to someone else for their podium photo. My jaw dropped as I was announced as bronze medallist and I had to quickly recover my jacket for the photos. The organisers broke with protocol at that point, kept Linda back and called

me up for my medal so that photos could be taken of the two of us together. Then my medal was taken away so that it could be presented again properly with the other male medallists in my category!

What next? Well, as medallists this year, we've automatically qualified for next year's European Championships in Alsdorf, Germany. And maybe there's a World Championships we could try too...



## A Tour of London! *Casey McLellan*

The day before the Central Council weekend started in London last month, James Ramsbottom and I undertook the mad "Tube Challenge" by visiting all 270 stations on the London Underground in one day. Here is some of the story.

A ringer I met while on vacation in Italy in 2017 first told me about the Tube Challenge (I guess this is the sort of thing that ringers are into). I half-seriously suggested to James that we should have our own attempt. He ended up being MUCH keener than I ever imagined he would be! What a monster I had created...

Two years later and we finally did it. James made the route and spent several weekends in London testing out various sections. I made the t-shirts and decided which snacks we should take with us. And many of you, our ringing friends, supported us with encouraging Facebook comments on the day, thank you!

And with all the delays and mishaps, we really needed your encouragement. What started as just a few minutes behind schedule early in the morning, ended up being a few hours behind. But we pushed on, despite James actually considering calling it quits on the platform of North Harrow when we realised we would somehow have to get back to our Airbnb near Heathrow after all of this. I said no way were we quitting, as at that point I would rather have slept under a hedge in Amersham than quit, especially since quitting would mean that we would have to try again sometime, a thought I didn't want to contemplate (after much recuperation, however, we are already making plans for our next attempt!).

At least for me, an American who doesn't know the difference between West Ham and West Hampstead, the whole day was a blur. All concepts of space and time were lost as one station blurred into the next. All I know is that we started at 5:04 at Heathrow Terminal 4 and finished 18 hours 22 minutes 43 seconds later at Amersham after visiting all 270 tube stations. You'll have to ask James if you want the grizzly details!

