

Rod Pipe Commemoration Weekend

Many of you will have participated to a lesser or greater extent in October's Rod Pipe Commemoration Weekend. The attendance of over 150 people was a fitting tribute to one of the Guild's greatest members.

The challenge for the organisers was to put together an attractive range of events that Rod himself would have enjoyed, spanning the range of Rod's ringing and non-ringing interests and providing something of interest to all.

A central feature of the weekend was the dedication of the re-ordered and refurbished ringing chamber at St Martin's, including the blessing of the new and restored peal boards. This was a project initiated by Rod when he was conductor of the St Martin's band. The room now looks splendid and befits the tower's stature, with a memorial plaque to Rod taking pride of place.

This dedication and service was attended by past and present members of the band, and the family. A highlight was a course of Bob Major in hand rung by David, Cecilia, Henry and Alfie.

Saturday morning saw peals and quarter peals rung, using Rod's methods and compositions where possible. In the afternoon, while some took the opportunity to ring at St Martin's,

others attended the "Judging Experience", which gave participants the opportunity to immerse themselves in the world of judging striking competitions with the aid of Hawkear.

Saturday evening then saw a reception in the Banqueting Suite of the Council House, with a semi-formal dinner, a spectacular touch on 24 handbells, tributes from Simon Linford and David Hull, reflections from George Pipe, results of ringing activities and competitions.



As John Warboys concluded in his Ringing World article (Christmas issue) "A great weekend had been had by all, and it seemed a very fitting way to remember a man who had influenced so many of our ringing careers in such a positive way. Conductor, composer, Innovator, visionary – these are the accolades attributed to Rod on the new plaque at St Martin's, to a man who led us to new frontiers and who will be remembered and missed by all for so many years to come."

Quarter peal week was extended to a month with quarters dedicated to Rod. The theme was 'firsts' and a large number were achieved.

Dan Harris rang his first quarter of Plain Bob Doubles at Castle Bromwich as part of the Rod Pipe QP month. Rose Horton rang her first of Major at Edgbaston, In all, 35 quarter peals were rung for the Rod Pipe quarter peal month, at 26 different towers, which was a superb effort. Thanks go to Tony Daw and Chris Mills for coordinating this.

One of the attempts was a rare quarter peal rung at Wishaw

Wishaw, Warwickshire
St Chad
Sunday, 6 October 2013 in 46 mins
1260 Stedman Singles
1 Emily Tamhne
2 Luke Daniel (C)
3 Simon Linford
First on three for all.

Members of the local band listened to the whole performance and then provided tea and cakes under the Yew tree.



The weekend of October 20th was a Red Letter Day at **Perry Barr** because it was the first time in about 15 years that all the bells have been

rung for Sunday Service by a home band of ringers. Such is the turnaround at Perry Barr, which they hope to build on under the leadership of Matthew King.

For a number of years, **Knowle** has been working slowly but surely through quarter peals of the family of 11 symmetrical, regular, twin-hunt, pure triples methods. In the first wave, back in December 2011, six of us completed the family and on 27th October three more joined this 'rare breed' when Bridget Osmond, Richard Andrew and Luke Daniel joined us in a QP of London Bob Triples! Steve Shipley has called all the quarters.

As background, the eleven Triples methods are:

- Grandsire
- College Bob
- Double Court Bob
- Double Grandsire
- Double Oxford Bob
- Hereward Bob
- London Bob
- Reverse Grandsire
- St Clement's College Bob
- Single Court Bob
- Single Oxford Bob

VAT News! Don't often have indirect taxation advice in the newsletter but a change to the VAT regime introduced on 1st October is actually quite significant. There was a change to the Listed Places of Worship scheme which means that VAT on bell restoration projects is now going to be recoverable, potentially reducing the cost of BRF projects by nearly 17%.

On the subject of bell restoration projects, Dan Harris sent the following report from **Castle Bromwich**:

“Last year was a very eventful year for the CB ringers. We've had numerous new ringers starting and they are progressing wonderfully now. The current ringers are progressing steadily too. However the main event has been the initialization of the Bell restoration project. Since this was actioned, we've had a lot of positivity by everyone, and a lot of help.

We're well on our way to reaching our target (Which will be formally announced in February) and we've had donations from as far away as Dorset and Canada!

It has also been confirmed that we have been granted charity status (thanks to Bill for his hard work on this) which again, is brilliant news and should be a boost to further fund raising.

Whilst we're well on our way to achieving our target, we still have a way to go. We're currently planning events to raise that extra bit of money, and it would be brilliant to see some of you there. Again, there will be announcements regarding closer to the time.

Many thanks to everyone who has helped so far, whether it's been donations, advice, or just your moral support. Every little helps.

Thank you for everything and we hope you have a very good new year!”

The **ALE** (Adult Learners Event) at Moseley was very well attended. 9 learners attended with 11 more experienced ringers enabling ringing from rounds up to Grandsire Caters. We then moved onto the six at St Anne's. The ALE was preceded by lunch at the Wetherspoons opposite the church, and concluded in the Prince of Wales.

Clare and Simon gave a presentation to the congregation at **Handsworth** one Sunday morning, setting them the challenge of enough of them learning to ring in order to be able to have a local band to welcome their new vicar, as and when that happens. A number expressed interest. Work in progress!

A lack of entries in recent 8 bell striking contests prior to the **October meeting** saw it being replaced this year with a mini-outing. Ringing was at Perry Barr and Aston, followed by a reasonably attended meeting at St Barnabas Erdington at which we were able to welcome Roy Followell, Diana Martin, Andrew Hardy and Nigel Crowther as new members. Evening ringing continued at Erdington until we had had enough.

October saw a review meeting of the **Birmingham School of Bell Ringing** at the newly reopened Woodman. This brought together the organisers, tutors and students to discuss what was going well and what might be changed. It was very constructive, with generally very positive thoughts about how it was all going, but recognition of how much

work the organization was, and how this needed to be shared in order for it to be sustainable.

The **School continues to make progress**, with the third tower opening at the start of this 'Term'. One of the students, Andy Hardy, has written the following:

"Last Saturday at the Yardley tower 3 school has now shown the true worth of the Guild school. A comment from Chris Mills was heard as 'how confident we all looked as we rang plain Hunt ' with students ringing several inner bells and treble -a huge step forward for us all.

Students that day were Brenda Thompson, Annette Jones and Andy Hardy of Wishaw and Roy Followell from Coleshill. Comments similar to this will be reverberating throughout the school tower one, St Paul's Jewellery Quarter and the recently started tower 2 at Handsworth.

We are sure this method or accelerated learning will benefit all, the Guild, students and bell ringing in general. Congratulations go to all those Guild members who instigated this programme of learning, and of course all the helpers who turn out each Saturday and give up their time for this wonderful hobby of ours."

Considerable progress has been made by many members at the **School**. On November 30th, John Anderson signed off five students who had passed through Tower A at St Paul's

and who had gained their Learn the Ropes Level 1 certificates. These were:

Julianne Hormann (Edgbaston – BUSCR)
Jeff Thomson (Wishaw)
Judy Nestor (Polesworth)
Christine Barnell (St Anne's Moseley)
Kate Bouckley (Perry Barr)



Four Tower A graduates

Before graduating from Tower C with the Learning the Ropes Level 3, ringers need to have rung at least two quarter peals. Lisa Greenway from Northfield was the first student of the school to ring a quarter:

Birmingham, Northfield

St Laurence
Friday, 22 November 2013
1260 Plain Bob Doubles

- 1 Lisa Greenway
- 2 Clare McArdle
- 3 Simon JL Linford (C)
- 4 Stephen W Horton
- 5 Anthony M Daw
- 6 Tracy Stevens

First Quarter Peal at first attempt: Lisa Greenway

This was followed by Brenda Thomson from Wishaw:

Birmingham, Yardley

St Edburgha

Saturday, 30 November 2013

1260 Plain Bob Doubles

1 Brenda Thomson

2 Christine Mills

3 Clare McArdle

4 James P Ramsbottom

5 Simon JL Linford (C)

6 Michael Rigby

First Quarter Peal at first attempt: Brenda Thomson



Lisa and Brenda receiving certificates

Boldmere recovered well from a broken tenor clapper thanks to Simon Adams and Taylors. During evening service ringing on 22nd September there was a loud thump from the belfry above and the tenor stopped sounding. After getting the bell down the clapper was found lying on the belfry floor. Further examination revealed that the shaft had broken off at the narrowest point just below the eye. The eye was still in the staple firmly attached to the bell. The clapper is a drop-forged, wrought iron original from 1906 Dave Reeves was concerned about providing a suitable replacement having heard horror stories of modern spheroidal graphite cast iron or wooden shafted alternatives.



Fortunately Taylors were able to offer a repair option. They machined a new steel top end for the clapper – the eye with about a foot of shaft. This was scarf jointed onto the old shaft by a blacksmith (a member of the Worshipful Company of Blacksmiths) who specialises in fire welding. The opportunity was taken to quarter turn the clapper to present an unworn new face of the clapper ball. The clapper was refitted on 6th November and all is well so far.

You might have heard about a quarter turned bell but how many quarter turned clappers do you know of?!

BUSCR News

BUSCR has had a brilliant autumn term with lots of new students joining. They have made use of the BSoBR to help students to master handling a bell more quickly so they can join the well attended Edgbaston practices. Deputy Master, Andrew, organised a tour to St Chad's, St Paul's and Harborne to welcome the new students. Over the Christmas break Iestyn rang his first peal at Armitage, Staffordshire.

The Standing Committee has decided that given the importance of the universities to the Guild and the City in particular, there needs to be better communication between the Guild and BUSCR. To achieve this the Master of BUSCR (whoever it is as the time) is going to be co-opted onto the Standing Committee.

St Mary's Moseley have had the first peal on the new bells

Birmingham, Moseley

St Mary

Sunday, 20 October 2013 in 3h 13m

5039 Grandsire Caters

Composed by R W Pipe

1 Richard B Grimmett (C)

2 Stephanie J Warboys

3 Frances Dodds

4 John H Fielden

5 Clare McArdle

6 Richard L Jones

7 Simon E Adams

8 Andrew C Ogden

9 Anthony M Daw

10 Ian Bryan

The first peal on the bells

Other peal ringing achievements in the quarter included:

- Alastair Cherry and Laura Davies, newly arrived at BUSCR, both ringing their first Stedman Triples in hand (Alastair's first peal of Stedman full stop!)
- 5300 Stedman Cinques at the Cathedral for the Fabian Stedman Tercentenary
- Brian Price 21 part silent and non conducted on handbells

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

Level 3

Carl Jenkins, Lisa Greenway (Northfield)

Level 4

Rob Pinnock (Harborne)

The Guild has a **new website** in production. Although it is not yet complete with content, the new site sits at www.stmartinsguild.org and you will be able to see and hopefully admire the clean new design. Much thought has gone into the design and navigation, with Matt McArdle building it in WordPress. A key thing we wanted to achieve with the new website was that someone finding it who was interested in learning to ring would be captured and pointed in the right direction, whilst also making it easy for members to find out what is going on.

Forthcoming events:

The new website should now be a much more reliable source of news on forthcoming events. It is a Google calendar and will be much more reliable than a calendar on a notice board.

However please make sure you have the following in your diary!

Sat 22nd Feb – Henry Johnson Dinner

When we welcome back Maurice Edwards as Chairman.