

Henry Johnson Dinner 2014

An excellent evening had by all ...



Simon Linford with Maurice & Margaret Edwards



Chris Mills, Paul McEvilly

Robyn Tighe



*All photos by
Andy Hardy*



Steve Horton



Andy Carr, Mike Rigby



Mike Dodson, Richard Andrew

Derek Bowman Smart

20th April 1939 – 18th March 2014

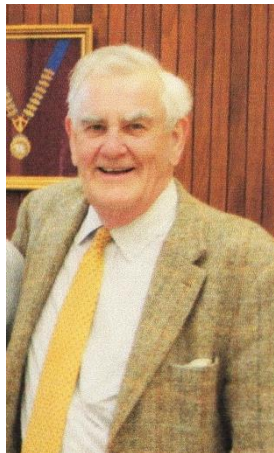
Derek was born in Doncaster and started school at Beechfield Boys School but moved to Upminster at the age of 8 and attended Brentwood School. He won a scholarship to Clare College Cambridge in 1957 and studied mechanical and electrical engineering, obtaining a first class degree in 1960.

He took a graduate apprenticeship with the Central Electricity Generating Board during which time he met Ann at Bradwell Power Station in Essex. They were married at Maldon in 1964. There followed a series of engineering appointments, including Station Manager at Ferrybridge C, Yorkshire. When the CEGB was privatised in 1989 he moved to Nuclear Electric plc., and on to personnel management, finally moving to Barnwood in Gloucestershire, the then headquarters of nuclear power, as the industry's Director of Personnel. Upon retirement in 2006 he was awarded an OBE for services to industry.

He always had an enthusiastic interest in helping young people and whilst still working he became a school governor at Arden Comprehensive School providing the education industry link needed. He remained a Governor for 20 years, 11 of which he was Chairman, during which time he oversaw the transition to academy status and the implementation of a 6th form. There is now a building at the school named after him.

In retirement he became Group Chairman of 1st Knowle scouts and set about rebuilding the dilapidated scout hut – Derek always made things happen.

When Arden was paired with Park Hall, a school in special measures in the North of the borough, he became Chair of Governors there and again guided it through the transition to academy status and oversaw the construction of a £25 million pound



rebuilding project. During this time he also managed to fit in being Chair of the Solihull Schools Forum helping to influence the culture of education across the Borough.

Derek would be the first to confess to limited ringing experience, but would never mention that he could hardly hold the rope because of Dupuytren's contraction in both hands. Despite this he managed to ring several quarter peals at Knowle and was a regular service ringer. When work was required on the bells or in the church Derek was always there offering his incredible knowledge, skill and practical experience. He chaired the church fabric committee. He also helped for many years at the Hereford Ringing Course.

His willingness to help led him to offer himself as Accounts Examiner when the St Martin's Guild was in need, a position he held for several years. When I was asked to organise the first Ringing Road Show for the Central Council in 1997 Derek was the first person I turned to for help. Together we designed the first show at Arden School and were both taken aback with the success. Again when the Council asked me to organise the last show in 2008 I turned to Derek and as usual he was willing.

I think this quotation by George Bernard Shaw comes close to Derek's view of life.

"I am of the opinion that my life belongs to the whole community and as long as I live, it is my privilege to do for it whatever I can. I want to be thoroughly used up when I die, for the harder I work the more I live."

John Anderson

2014 AGM

The AGM was held at Solihull, with the local band proving excellent hosts.

Mark Eccleston was elected **Librarian**, succeeding Richard Jones. The Library, which is kept in the ringing room at St Martin's, is actively managed and added to with an allocation each year from the General Fund. The new Guild website will have more information on what resources are available and how they can be borrowed.

The Guild elected a **PR Officer** for the first time for a number of years. Andy Hardy, who has recently learned to ring at Wishaw and is a regular attender of the Birmingham School of Bell Ringing put himself forward for the role, and has already got stuck into making more people aware of what a great hobby bell ringing is, particularly with social media.



Five **new members** were elected:

James Ramsbottom (City)

Jeff Thomson (Wishaw)

Julianne Hormann (Edgbaston)

Trish Everett (Moseley)

Alistair Cherry (BUSCR)

Laura Davies of BUSCR and now St Martin's became a full member having previously been a Non Resident Lifer.

Two new **Life Members** were elected - Stephen Shipley (elected 1974 and a former Treasurer and Independent Examiner) and David Ingram (elected 1956).

The concept of **Area Ringing Masters** was done away with at least for the time being. With the move away from northern and southern area practices in favour of practices more focused on the level of the practice, the concept of areas is no longer useful and the Guild will be considered as a single area with practice run by the Guild Ringing Master.

The **2015 Henry Johnson Dinner** will be chaired by Chris Mills.

The Standing Committee apologises for confusion over the publication of quarter peals rung for **Rod Pipe weekend**. The system for linking quarter peals together using a flag on BellBoard did not work as it was expected to.

The Birmingham band cantered through to the final of the **National 12 Bell Striking Contest** with a joint first place in the Eliminator at St Sepulchre's, Holborn.

St Mary's Handsworth is still in an inter regnum although the churchwardens are hoping to start interviewing candidates soon. And at neighboring **Perry Barr**, Fr Crispin Pailing has announced that he is moving on to become Rector of St Nicholas, Pier Head, a church with a fine ring of 12 bells, so there will be an interregnum there also.

Castle Bromwich



This view of the bells could be a thing of the past, all being well. It's finally happening. Castle Bromwich bells are going to be refurbished and an extra two bells added.

After many years of talking about doing something about the notoriously odd struck bells, things are starting to happen. The band has finally launched a project to bring the bells up to date and to make them a ring of eight to be proud of.

A Heritage Lottery Fund application will be submitted in by the end of this month, then the fund raising starts in earnest. The target date for completion is 2017, which will be the tri centennial of the first bells in Castle Bromwich.

In support of the appeal, the weekend of 9-11 May is Castle Bromwich Beer & Heritage Festival. Castle Bromwich ringers are opening the church tower to visitors. There will be a beer festival at Castle Bromwich Hall Hotel, the church, tower and community hall will be open, Castle Bromwich Hall Gardens are hosting a 1940s re-enactment and there will be stalls and

events around the Castle Bromwich Conservation Area. (There is a festival website at <http://www.castlebromwichfestival.co.uk/>.)

They are also hoping for a fair bit of bellringing to go on and, as the small band will be busy showing visitors up and down the tower and letting them have a go at tolling a bell all weekend, they'll be hard pressed to do any serious ringing themselves.

Some local bands have promised to go, and there is even the threat of a peal. If any towers would like to bring a band for a quarter or just a grab, please contact bill.dargue@btinternet.com . You are welcome to just pay a visit or go to beer festival! For more information on the restoration project, have a look at <http://cbbells.webs.com/>

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The new website is taking shape, led by Tony Daw and with a lot of initial work by Matt McArdle. Converting the content from the old website into the new much more flexible format is time consuming so the website is still work in progress, but any comments are welcome and should be sent to Tony.

Anyone who has rung at **Smethwick** lately will have seen the scaffolding around the tower. Last summer the tower roof started leaking - which meant that the ringers of 4 and 5 got a shower when they rang. We are pleased to say that the tower roof is being fixed and, at the same time, we are making the most of the scaffolding being up by having the brickwork repointed and some of the stonework replaced. We have been able to keep ringing so far and the only mishap has been a shredded extension cable which someone had left looped around a stay. The moral of the story is that, even if you think that the workmen know how to leave things, keep checking.

The new vicar, Rev Deb Buckley was installed in February and we are looking forward to ringing a peal/quarter in her honour once the scaffolding is down.

The bands at **St Martin's Birmingham** and **St Alphege Solihull** have elected new leaders, with James Forster and Sand Cooper succeeding Michael Wilby and Clive Day respectively.

Two more **advanced courses** are coming up. Firstly on 10th and 11th June Simon Linford will run a course demonstrating how thorough knowledge of a very small number of Surprise Minor methods can be turned into a world of opportunities.

Then for six consecutive Wednesdays in the summer, starting 30th July, there will be a Surprise Major course at Edgbaston, with an

intensive opportunity to cement knowledge of existing and new methods.

Arthur Reeves (St Martin's) was a keynote speaker at the AGM of the Association of Ringing Teachers. Arthur gave a polished and entertaining presentation on the organization, successes and lessons of the St Martin's Guild summer camp. The talk was filmed and is now trending on YouTube (search for Association of Ringing Teachers)



Arthur being introduced by Pip Penney

Solihull, St Alphege
Sunday, 2 March 2014
1260 Grandsire Triples

- 1 Triona M Jowett
- 2 Jen D Hickman
- 3 Keith D Whitehead
- 4 Linda M Whitehead
- 5 Sand J Cooper
- 6 Malcolm J Paulson
- 7 Richard J Cann (C)
- 8 Ted Cloete

For evensong and in thanksgiving for the lives of Gerry Walker (1926-2013, father of 4), Ian Carnochan (1933-2014, uncle of 5) and Peggy Smith (1927-2014, mother of Kathryn Hughes of Whitechapel Bell Foundry (who learned to ring at this tower)). Also a birthday compliment to the conductor.

TEN YEARS ON John McDonald remembered

'A toad has to pass a very severe examination before he can become a dragon.' John McDonald shared with Henry Fearn a love of Ernest Bramah's Kai Lung books, and was fond of this forbidding epigram – sometimes quoting it in reference to peals of Stedman Triples and the peculiar difficulties in achieving them. However, memorial peal ringers met at St Chad's Cathedral Birmingham on 20th January to mark the tenth anniversary of John's passing, and Thurstans' 5-Part was duly rung. Afterwards the band was joined by friends in The Bull nearby. Some of us in the gathering, hearing those Kai Lung words mentioned in reminiscence, seemed to hear again in the mind's ear that cheerful lyrical voice, so often a source of encouragement, friendship and amusement, lost to us now so long.



In fact John was by no means an excluding, fire-breathing kind of ringer. He was a brilliant teacher and had a great ability and willingness to explain apparently complicated matters with insight and clarity. As a leader and peal conductor he had that rare quality of making the team feel ambitious and

proud of belonging whatever the undertaking. There was much more of Henry V than Kai Lung. Triumphs with him were often hard-won – we used to say that we didn't go for any peal we knew we could get. So no shame ever attached to losing a peal: it was all good practice and the happy times sitting around a pub table were so much the longer.

It was John's gift to convey enjoyment in ringing life, and outings and holidays were a part of this scene. In his final years he organised monthly 'Last Wednesday' days out among friends. This group continues to meet for ringing and lunch, and an informal commemoration by them has been arranged for the end of January.

John developed a special interest in Triples and it would have gratified him to know that this field continues to flourish in Birmingham. The touches of Stedman Triples always rung at St Chad's on Sundays are a weekly reminder of this legacy. In handbell Triples peals a remarkable collection of battle honours has been accumulated in recent years by John's old friends Alan Burbidge and Charles Webb and their band; he would have been thrilled by Mark Eccleston's conducting form: Gott in Himmel! On tower bells Alan's 'Variable Treble Grandsire', now an established part of the Birmingham repertoire, would surely have earned a McDonaldian accolade. And in the last few months Scientific Triples, including its multi-bob form, has been under rehearsal (as John would have put it) at St Paul's at Thursday evening practices led by Richard Grimmett.

But we may continue to wonder whether we will ever make it into that amiable, admirable category of dragons to which John so clearly belonged.

R.L.J.

The 59th annual **BUSCR Dinner** was held on 25th January at Edgbaston Palace Hotel. After a 3 course meal came speeches from guest speaker Will Bosworth and 2011-2013 ringing master Fran Cinderey, and a short notice handbell touch of Cambridge Minor rung by Laura Davies, Alistair Cherry and Louis Suggett.



After this the real entertainment began as the hotel's house DJ got into full swing. Highlights included a 25 minute

Grease medley and the revelation that Louis Suggett knew all the words to Ice Ice Baby by Vanilla Ice. We look forward to next year's dinner!

The **handbell ringers** continue to break new ground in the field of incredibly difficult peals of Stedman Triples

Birmingham, West Midlands
 RC Cathedral of St Chad
 Thursday, 13 March 2014 in 2h 9m
5040 Stedman Triples
[Composed by John Noonan \(Noonan's "6 singles"\)](#)
 1-2 Alan S Burbidge
 3-4 Charles A S Webb
 5-6 Mark R Eccleston
 7-8 Paul E Bibilo
 Rung silent and non-conducted.
 A variation of John Noonan's celebrated peal of 1799, in which the number of singles is reduced from 22 to six.

At the **BUSCR AGM**, Alistair Cherry was elected Master, pictured here in familiar pose at the Henry Johnson Dinner.



Pinnock is congratulated on ringing his first peal:

Birmingham, West Midlands
 St Paul, Jewellery Quarter
 Monday, 17 March 2014 in 2h56
5040 Stedman Caters
[Composed by M R Eccleston](#)
 1 Anthony M Daw
 2 Mark R Eccleston (C)
 3 Clare McArdle
 4 Gordon R Birks
 5 Richard Pinnock
 6 Simon J L Linford
 7 Paul Needham
 8 David M W Threlfall
 9 William R Haynes
 10 Alan G Reading
 First peal: 5.

Other peal ringing achievements in the quarter included James Ramsbottom and Laura Davies ringing their first of Orion.

... and two consecutive peals at Birmingham Cathedral in January saw two very complicated compositions rung, the difficulty of which was demonstrated by the number of attempts needed (more than one each!). First a composition of Spliced Cinques (Erin and Nirerin), followed by this little number:

Birmingham, W Mids
Cathedral Church of St Philip
Monday, 3 February 2014 in 3:27 (
5136 Spliced Surprise Maximus (8 Methods))

672 each Alnilam, Betelgeuse, Saiph, 624 each Alnitak, Bellatrix, Mintaka, Orion, Rigel, 81 com, atw.

Composed by A G Reading

- 1 Susan E Marshall
- 2 Mark R Eccleston
- 3 Paul N Mounsey
- 4 Simon J L Linford
- 5 Adam A Brady
- 6 Paul McNutt
- 7 Christian M Peckham
- 8 Graham M Bradshaw
- 9 Alan G Reading (C)
- 10 Paul E Bibilo
- 11 Thomas W Griffiths
- 12 Michael P A Wilby

This composition is rung for the first time. It contains all seven of the Orion above methods that are named for stars in the constellation plus Orion itself.

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

Level 5

Richard Pinnock (Harborne)

Level 3

Brenda Thomson (Wishaw), Roy Followell (Coleshill)

Congratulations on **first quarter peals**:

Roy Followell, Andy Hardy

Other quarter peal achievements:

Jonathan Thorne – 1st of Cambridge Minor (and also first touch!)

Andy Carr – Stedman Caters

to mark 45 years service at Northfield

The band at **Knowle** continue to ring quarter peals for Sunday service with the following of particular note:

2 Feb - for the wedding of Rebecca Shipley to Halisi Drysdale

9 Feb - for William Mills's 85th birthday who rang in the quarter. William is one of our most senior active members.

23 Mar – in memory of Derek Smart

Forthcoming events:

Sat 3rd May – Tewkesbury Shield

Sat 28th June – 12 Bell Final, Oxford

Sat 5th July – RWNYP

Sat 10th May – 6 bell contest and Meeting at Northfield

10th/11th May – Castle Bromwich festival

Tue 10th Jun and Wed 11th Jun

Surprise Minor course, towers TBC

Wed 23rd Apr – Youths practice

Wed 28th May – Youths practice

Wed 25th Jun – Youths practice

(All at St Paul's Jewellery Quarter)

6 Wednesdays from 30th July

Surprise Major course, Edgbaston

28th July – 2nd August

Summer Camp, Handsworth

Phew! Just crammed it into 8 sides! SL