

Editor's Foreword – Andy Clark

Welcome to the Q3 newsletter! Plenty to read about in this issue. Re-hangs, quarter peal milestones, training, striking competition wins, more training – and the list goes on! I'm always on the lookout for material for the newsletter, so don't be shy and do get in touch if there's anything you'd like to contribute.

Ringling Master's Report – Arthur Reeves



I suspect you will be aware that Birmingham was successful at bringing home the 12-bell trophy following the national competition at Southwark in June. I'm writing this the day after the St Paul's band reported their victory at the Worthington Trophy, the first time a Birmingham band has succeeded at this competition for some time. On behalf of the Guild, huge congratulations to both teams!

Guild members were also out in force for the Ringing World National Youth Contest hosted by us in July. Well over 150 young people came to Birmingham to compete against one another, as well as engage in a whole host of different activities put on by towers and ringers around the local areas. It was unfortunate that our own team of young people were unable to take part in the competition; however, they – like the others who came to Birmingham – did enjoy a great day out. Please see the write-up in the previous newsletter. Birmingham also recently welcomed those who had successfully completed Level 5 of the Learning the Ropes Scheme. Organised by Stef Warboys, the participants could practice methods as well as develop their ringing on higher numbers. Many thanks to all who have supported in these events.

Thanks are also due to Phil Ramsbottom, who has continued to co-ordinate focused 10 and 12-bell practices and quarters and 6-bell practices, and to Jack Gunning. Jack has been organising the Monday night peals from which many Guild members, including myself, have benefited from. He hands the responsibility over to Dickon Love and Jack Page.

The Standing Committee has been discussing provision for youth ringers in some depth. Gillian Eastwood has led the St Martin's Youths with enthusiasm over the last few years, and I know the young ringers involved have enjoyed her practices and gained much from them. However, we have struggled to recruit and our current participants keep growing up! The Standing Committee, along with Gillian, will reflect on how we move this forward. Brumdingers has continued successfully at their weekly Moseley practice, under Simon's stewardship. A group of eight youngsters are learning to ring and it is very impressive to see their progress over such a relatively short period of time.

Future Surprise Major practices
(Edgbaston, 4.30-6pm): 28th
October (note 4th Saturday) and
18th November

Surprise Major practices have continued, with stable numbers and ringing of everything from Stedman Surprise Triples (!) and Cambridge to 8-spliced and occasionally Glasgow. Simon hosted another successful Bristol Maximus practice. Most recently, I enjoyed joining the Boldmere ringers at their weekly practice and am looking forward to chairing the St Paul's AGM next week.

And very finally, many involved in the BSoBR have contributed towards a special edition of Tower Talk – keep an eye out for it!

10 / 12-Bell Programme – Phil Ramsbottom

Some of you may have noticed I've dropped the 'quarter peal' bit from the title both here and in recent correspondence. This has been to shift the emphasis away from scoring quarter peals and more towards a dedicated and focused practice which may result in a quarter being scored but without it being the main goal.



Stedman Cinqes in July was more of a consolidation – a refresher – for a couple of the band who rang without any problem at all. Also worth a special mention though are Helen Jarvis and Jonathan Townsend who have been regular supporters of these events this year and, as can be seen from the footnote, both scored their first quarter of Stedman Cinqes with this performance. August saw a super quarter of Grandsire Caters roll round at Moseley with David Denbigh on the treble and Trish Everett inside, ringing their first on 10 bells and flawlessly in the process –well done to you both. Nice to have Jane Boyle with us on this occasion too. Grandsire Cinqes was the chosen tune for September and with three firsts in it I felt that was pushing the boat out a bit. However, a perfectly acceptable quarter was scored and a big “well done” goes to Rebekah, Trish and Susannah; all of whom rang very well indeed.

Whilst I already have a few plans which will take the programme into next year, I am always keen to hear from anyone who would like to join the ranks of this high numbers club so please do get in touch. Ringing the treble to Caters is where it all starts and I'm more than happy to set up a practice evening first if you would prefer. Finally, can I mention all the regular supporters who give up their valuable time to trudge halfway across Birmingham and make all this possible – without you none of these events would ever happen. My sincere thanks to you all.

<p>Birmingham, West Midlands St Martin Tuesday, 25 July 2017 in 55 mins (39–1–19 in C) 1301 Stedman Cinqes Composed by J P Ramsbottom</p> <p>1 Arthur J Reeves 2 Victoria Wilby 3 Phil Ramsbottom 4 Matthew King 5 Helen R Jarvis 6 Angie Wakefield 7 Richard Andrew 8 James P Ramsbottom (C) 9 Jonathan B Townsend 10 Mark Eccleston 11 Simon Linford 12 Andrew Clark</p> <p><i>1st of Stedman Cinqes: 5 and 9 - what took you so long!</i></p>	<p>Moseley, West Midlands, St Mary Wednesday, 23 August 2017 in 49 mins (18–0–9 in F) 1259 Grandsire Caters</p> <p>1 David Denbigh 2 Simon Linford (C) 3 Mike Dodson 4 Trish Everett 5 Jane Boyle 6 Dave Bassett 7 Richard Andrew 8 Malcolm J Paulson 9 Jonathan B Townsend 10 Phil Ramsbottom</p> <p><i>1st on 10 bells: 1 and 4</i></p>	<p>Aston, West Midlands, SS Peter and Paul Tuesday, 26 September 2017 in 54 mins (24–2–18 in D) 1320 Grandsire Cinqes Composed by PJ Flavell</p> <p>1 Rebekah Horton 2 Tony Daw 3 Trish Everett 4 Rose Horton 5 Helen Jarvis 6 Susannah Moore 7 Richard Andrew 8 James Ramsbottom (C) 9 Janet Horton 10 Phil Ramsbottom 11 Jonathan B Townsend 12 Jonathan Healy</p> <p><i>1st on 12: 1, 3 and 6 1st blows on 12: 3</i></p>
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Peals Report (July to September) – Mark Eccleston

A number of successful peals have been rung for the Guild over the past three months. The first peal on the augmented bells at Castle Bromwich was rung on 9th September 2017 (see panel) including a first pealer: Mathew Williams.

Other notable performances include:

Jack Page conducted yet another peal of the complicated 'Particles' peal at St Philip's. The calling of this composition requires complete attention to detail – there are 215 changes of method and 120 'calls' (including calls made in 10ths place, 8ths place, 6ths place, 4ths place and 2nds place):

<http://bb.ringingworld.co.uk/view.php?id=1179083>

Rose Horton rang her first peal of Surprise Royal, Cambridge at St Philip's with the Monday evening band:

<http://bb.ringingworld.co.uk/view.php?id=1179879>

For his birthday, Jack Gunning organised and conducted a peal of 'Cyclic Six' (6-Spliced Maximus), again rung at St Philip's with the Monday evening band:

<http://bb.ringingworld.co.uk/view.php?id=1180811>

George Salter travelled up to Birmingham from Bristol to ring a handbell peal with the Thursday evening band at St Chad's (Stedman Triples – what else!):

<http://bb.ringingworld.co.uk/view.php?id=1181779>

A true arrangement of Thomas Edwards' 1792 (false) peal of Stedman Triples was rung by the St Chad's band on 7 September. Edwards' peal is the earliest known peal length composition of Stedman Triples and was re-arranged for truth by Guild member Andrew Ellis:

<http://bb.ringingworld.co.uk/view.php?id=1187690>

Emily Hall, from Nottingham, and Cameron Waters, from Bristol, joined the St Philip's Monday evening band on 11 September for a peal of Bristol Maximus. It was Emily's first on 12 and Cameron's first in the method and both rang very well:

<http://bb.ringingworld.co.uk/view.php?id=1188160>

Castle Bromwich, West Midlands

SS Mary and Margaret

Saturday 9 September 2017 2h59 (10-3-14 in Ab)

5090 Cambridge Surprise Major

Composed by B D Price

- 1 Paul E Bibilo
- 2 Mathew Williams
- 3 Catherine R Taylor
- 4 Stuart C W Hutchieson
- 5 James M Stanton
- 6 Andrew J Ellis
- 7 James P Ramsbottom (C)
- 8 Gordon R Birks

Rung to welcome Mark Hopkins as new Rector of the parish.

First peal on the restored and augmented ring.

First peal: 2.

Guild Walking Outing – Angie Wakefield

Saturday 8th July saw a hardy cohort of members and companions descend on Banbury Railway Station to set off on what is with ease one of the most pleasurable events on the Guild calendar – the annual 'Walking and Ringing Tour'.

This year's route took in three eight-bell towers in North Oxfordshire: St John the Baptist, Bodicote (8-1-4) in A, St Mary the Virgin, Adderbury (24-0-14) in D and St Peter and St Paul, Kings Sutton (14-2-0) in G.

We moved between towers through a landscape which would have seen Constable plant his easel and never leave. The sun shone brightly as we made our way across fields and over styles, enjoying the flora and fauna as we went, with Charlie Linford's gutsy rendering of "Yellow Submarine" helping to keep us moving!

The first opportunity to ring came at Bodicote. The team of volunteer gardeners in the churchyard took a lot of pleasure in our accompaniment as they worked.



Two action photographs! The right photograph shows the group approaching the distinctive tower at Kings Sutton, with the sun beating down.

A three-kilometre walk took us to the hefty eight at Adderbury, hung in a magnificent medieval church with many fine carvings inside and out (see photograph overleaf). Much needed drinks and a good lunch were had at The Bell Inn before we made our way to Kings Sutton, its one hundred and ninety-eight foot tower and ornate spire visible for miles. Afternoon tea in the nearby Bell House rewarded us at the end of ringing.

As always, the day brought together ringers of all ages and stages from the most accomplished to those just starting out. Each session catered for all abilities and I was particularly pleased to see a couple of the Level 1/2 BSoBR class trying out their skills (you should see them now!).

Everything ran without a hitch, due entirely to Mike Dodson's thorough research and planning. He and Cynthia walked the route at least twice before the day and I'm told that his customary attention to detail

even included a spot of topiary here and there to ensure our safe passage through the hedgerows. Mike doesn't claim to have power over the elements but even the weather was perfect.

Many, many thanks to Mike and Cynthia for a great day out.



The left photograph shows Charlie Linford demonstrating a fine backstroke technique at Kings Sutton and the right photograph shows some of the ornate wood carvings at Adderbury.

Castle Bromwich – ringing again! *Bill Dargue*

The old six and two new bells are ringing out again across Castle Bromwich, hung in a purpose-built cast-iron frame with all new fixtures and fittings.

A bequest of Lucy Williams in 1952 in memory of her husband enabled the recasting of the 1717 bells of St Mary & St Margaret's church. John Williams was the village blacksmith and a long-time bell ringer. Although Lucy's bequest produced a good Gillett & Johnston six, sufficient funds were never raised to renew the unsatisfactory frame nor to augment to eight as intended.

Four years ago, the bell ringers decided to try to realise the ambitions of their predecessors 65 years previously. A target date of 2017 was set, the tercentenary of the recasting of the bells in the medieval timber-framed church. A charitable trust was set up with the Earl of Bradford and Viscount Hereford as patrons. An ancestor of the former installed the bells of 1717, while it was an ancestor of the latter whose bells rang from the medieval church.

Castle Bromwich ringers commissioned Taylor's to undertake the restoration as they provided a complete service with no need for us to manage the project.

The task of raising over £100,000 began. A generous donation by an anonymous member of the church congregation kick-started the fund-raising with innumerable smaller donations, events such as quiz nights organised by the ringers and grants from trusts and charities, including a welcome grant from the Guild's Bell Restoration Fund. A substantial donation by the Heritage Lottery Fund finally made the project possible.



In September 2016, the casting of two new bells at the bell foundry was witnessed by members of St Mary & St Margaret's church. The sight of the white-hot bell metal poured at 1000°C into hand-made moulds to create the new bells was never to be forgotten.

The old frame was taken out in March 2017 with members of the church and local ringers helping to remove many tons of material from the tower. The 1952 six were sent to Loughborough for cleaning.

The rehang began in July with the Taylor's bell hanger, Andy Ogden supported again by local volunteers and ringers from across the city. This was seriously heavy, dirty and physically demanding work and the Castle Bromwich ringers are very grateful to those who helped out. A new cast-iron frame was installed on steel beams to hang the eight bells with all new fixtures and fittings.

A service of blessing was held when the bells returned using the 1952 service sheet which had been found in the belfry during dismantling. And five weeks later, the bells were ready to ring at a special dedication service at the end of August.

We're grateful to Simon Linford for organising the first quarter for the dedication service using ringers who had helped with the installation. The first peal on the bells was conducted by James Ramsbottom with mainly Guild members and local ringers James Stanton and Mathew Williams, the latter ringing his first peal on the first peal of the new installation.

A requirement of the Heritage Lottery Fund grant is to attract more ringers to the tower, so we'll be hoping that bands from Guild towers will come and help us achieve that in the near future.

Milestones at Solihull!

Keith and Linda Whitehead of Solihull rang their 150th and 200th quarter peals respectively in August, but unfortunately not the same one, despite best efforts to co-ordinate! Well done to Keith and Linda on reaching these milestones. The photograph shows the band for Keith's 150th quarter peal, at Solihull.



Solihull, West Midlands

St Alphege
Sunday, 6 August 2017 in 47 mins
1280 Plain Bob Major

- 1 Kathryn J Price-Feraud
- 2 Richard J Cann
- 3 Linda M Whitehead
- 4 William G R Davies
- 5 Keith D Whitehead
- 6 Michael G Dodson
- 7 Malcolm J Paulson
- 8 Guy E Darvill (C)

For Evensong and to celebrate the ordination of Fr Sam Gibson, our new curate, as Deacon.

First QP since July 1983: 1.

150th QP: 5.

Knowle, West Midlands

SS John the Baptist, Lawrence and Anne
Sunday, 27 August 2017 in 42 mins (9–3–7)
1260 St Clement's College Bob Triples

- 1 Linda M Whitehead
- 2 Judy Yates
- 3 Jill Erskine
- 4 Ruth E Shepherd
- 5 Ann Smart
- 6 A J Barnfield
- 7 Stephen Shipley (C)
- 8 Keith D Whitehead

200th quarter peal: 1. For evening service and with compliments to Linda on her birthday and to Jill who celebrated her 70th birthday on 21 August. Also, remembering Pte Thomas Duffin, Royal Warwickshire Regiment, who was killed in action on 24 August 1917, aged 38.

Brumdingers – Simon Linford

Brumdingers is going from strength to strength! There are eight children on the roster, although school commitments mean that on average we have about five each week. Five is however sometimes quite enough!

Most of them are now able to ring rounds for short periods of time. Sara Paulson has come on rapidly in the last couple of weeks since joining and has now joined Charlie, Sonny, Orson and Esther in having their LtR Level 1 certificates.

Caramel wafer bars (in abundance in the photograph!) are very much part of Thursday evening. Whether making Jenga towers from them, or hiding them around the ringing chamber for the Moseley ringers to find, they are a source of much amusement.

Handbells also feature and we are trying to keep handbell and tower ringing at an equal level of competence. They all therefore practice ringing handbells in rounds at the moment and we have started to introduce Plain Hunt.



As more of the Brumdingers get to be able to ring rounds it will be a bit easier to manage, and if you have any more youngsters who would like to come along please let Clare or me know.

Association of Ringing Teachers (ART) Masterclass: Janet Horton

The ART Masterclass, held on Saturday 16th September, is a chance for ringers who have completed the Learning The Ropes scheme during the previous year to have a special day out. As last year, the day was ably organised by Stef Warboys.

We all met up at Stef's office overlooking St Philip's. There were nine students from around the country together with some parents and tutors who had also travelled. In addition, there were local mentors for each student, and helpers to make up the numbers needed to ring.

Stef had asked me to mentor one of the attendees. I was a little apprehensive at the idea of looking after a total stranger; after all I usually tutor level 2 and they could be ringing anything by now! My student was Gaye, who although she has a lot of experience of Doubles, hadn't rung much on higher numbers.

We started off with some listening exercises; some were harder than others. Then we split into two groups; half going to St Philip's and half to St Paul's. Gaye and I went to St Philip's first, and then to St Paul's (where we were able to sneak downstairs for a welcome cup of tea!). The ringing varied from Rounds on 10 or 12 through to Surprise Royal and Stedman Cinques.

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

Then everyone congregated at St Martin's for some more ringing including some rounds on the 16, followed by presentations and photograph opportunities. You too can hold the 12-Bell Trophy!

At last it was over and we were able to go for a refreshing pint at the Woodman, followed by a meal for the helpers and some visitors who were staying overnight.

The next day, two quarter peals were rung for a couple of the students - a first of Treble Bob Major and a first of Royal.



Janet's student, Gaye Soule, receiving her Masterclass certificate from Guild Ringing Master, Arthur Reeves, at St Martin's



The Masterclass in full flow at St Paul's: (left to right) Toby Hibbert of Caistor, Lincolnshire who rang his first quarter peal of treble bob major on the Sunday, supported by his tutor, Alistair Cherry, with Arthur Reeves and Janet Horton concentrating hard on the ringing!



All the students and their tutors with most of the helpers at St Martin's

New Dean at Birmingham Cathedral – 30th September

Despite some concerns about a band being available, due to various other ringing commitments falling on the same day, Gill Postill successfully gathered a band together to welcome the new Dean – The Reverend Canon Matt Thompson. From the original nine definite and two possibles, the possibles materialized and seven wild cards turned up, one having been encountered on Gill's train journey in. The service went well and the Cathedral was full. The service sheet is shown in the photograph.

And Changes at St Martin's

St Martin's Birmingham has said goodbye to its Rector of many years, Rev Stewart Jones, who is going to become Vicar of Barlaston, Stoke on Trent.



BUSCR Report: *Susannah Moore*

After a lovely long summer break, the students have descended back upon Birmingham which only means one thing – BUSCR practices are back! The students attended a society fair at UoB and after getting to the Guild at 07:45 (a time many of us haven't seen in years!) we started to assemble the Lichfield Diocesan Mobile Belfry. Phil Gay guided us through the art of putting together the LDMB and after a short while the bells were ready to be rung! We spent the day ringing, showing others how the bells are rung and trying to persuade freshers that they want to come to BUSCR.

I think our success at freshers' fair really showed at the first BUSCR practice with 21 people in attendance (a number I have never seen at an Edgbaston practice before). We had a few people turn up who had never rung before, which was lovely to see, so we spent time teaching them to ring and explaining how ringing works. They also all had a chance to go up the tower and look at the bells. But we managed to ring methods in between and reminded some of the returning students how to ring, after they somehow managed not to ring all summer! Hopefully after such a good start to the BUSCR practices the society will go from strength to strength, but only time will tell.

The Worthington Memorial Trophy – *Angie Wakefield*

Readers of the April-June edition of the Newsletter may recall the Guild Ringing Master recognising the achievement of the St Paul's band in finishing a close second in the Tewkesbury Shield 10-bell striking competition held on 6th May – a first striking competition for several of the band.

That performance inspired our Ringing Master, Richard Grimmett, to suggest that the band members who are continuing to develop their 10-bell skills might embrace another opportunity to take those skills into contest ringing by entering the competition for the W.W. Worthington Memorial Trophy, to be held on 30th September at the church of St George in Ticknall, Derbyshire.

The aim, as in Tewkesbury, was to put together a band which balanced those developing skills with seasoned expertise, a band whose objectives were to benefit from practising together and ringing in competitive conditions, whatever the outcome on the day. The test piece was to be a course of Cambridge Surprise Royal.

Going into the competition, I don't think that any of us held victory as a realistic ambition but as judge Ian Roulston's remarks upon the "strong leadership from the back bells" and the "little bells" being rung "very well indeed" strayed into references to "toe tapping stuff" and "panache", we dared to hope.

The "science part" detailed the faults recorded and put the matter beyond doubt: St Paul's 44, Derbyshire DA 58, Leicester 101, Beeston 124, Chester 156.

The trophy has spent the majority of its years in the care of the Derbyshire Diocesan Association but is now getting used to life with a tower band. The commitment to achieving good striking and the strong and inclusive team spirit at St Paul's will have it feeling at home in no time.

The Band (anti-clockwise from front right):

- 1 Chris Mills
- 2 Vicky Wilby
- 3 Angela Wakefield
- 4 Richard Jones
- 5 Fran Dodds
- 6 Graham Kelly
- 7 Alistair Cherry
- 8 Jack Page
- 9 Richard Grimmett
- 10 Tony Daw



Photography
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Lawson

Photography
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And finally – a Day Out in Herefordshire with Fran Cinderey

Fran Cinderey, formerly BUSCR Ringing Master and a former regular at many towers in the Guild, organised a day trip to Herefordshire on the August Bank Holiday Monday. The band came from far and wide, including ringers from Herefordshire, the Forest of Dean, South Wales and of course Birmingham. You'll see some familiar Birmingham faces in the photograph below, taken after ringing at Hereford Cathedral – the final tower of the day.

