



**Annual General Meeting
Saturday 10th January 2026
Meeting to be held at Holy Trinity Sutton Coldfield**

Agenda

1. Welcome and apologies for absence
2. Remembering members who have died in 2025
3. Approval of minutes of the AGM 11th January 2025. (Enclosure 1 - page 2 below)
4. Matters arising from the minutes
5. Officer Reports (Enclosure 2 - page 8 below)
 - Financial Reports
 1. Treasurer - Malcolm Paulson
 2. Independent Examiners - Tom Horton, James Mundy
 3. 100 Club – Clare McArdle
 - Ringing Master's Report – Rachel Thomas
 - Henry Johnson Dinner Secretary's Report - Simon Linford
 - Archivist and Webmaster Report – Mark Eccleston
 - Safeguarding Officer's Report – Trish Everett
 - CCCBR Representatives' Report –Richard Andrew/Simon Linford
6. Election of Members
 1. Full Members
 2. Associate Members
 3. Life Members
7. Election of Officers and Officials
 - Officers
 - Master
 - Ringing Master
 - Secretary
 - Treasurer
 - Archivist & Webmaster
 - SafeGuarding Officer
 - Public Relations Officer
 - Officials
 - General Fund Trustees
 - Bell restoration Fund Trustees
 - Independent Examiners
 - Henry Johnson Dinner Secretary
 - CCCBR Representatives
8. 2026 Programme of Events (Enclosure 3 - page 19 below)
9. Henry Johnson Dinner 2026
10. Any other business
11. Date of Next Meeting - (Saturday 9th January 2027)
12. Meeting close

Enclosure 1

Annual General Meeting of the St Martin's Guild of Church Bell Ringers

Saturday 11th January 2025 1:30pm

Meeting held at Smethwick Old Church

Agenda

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

Eleanor thanked Janet Horton and the Smethwick team for the lunch they had provided. Janet wanted to particularly thank Jenny Sunter, Sarah Jones and Derek Harrison.

Apologies were accepted from:-

Alison Hodge, Andrew Brown, Angela Wakefield, Casey McLellan, Chris Mills, Clare McArdle, Cynthia Dodson, David Large, Denise Carr, Denise Large, Emma Clewlow, Gillian Stead, Helen Crosby, Jeff Carr, Jeff Webb, John Anderson, John Rogers, Jonathon Healey, Karin Dannehl, Lucas Williams, Luke Daniel, Matthew Healey, Mark Eccleston, Mike Dodson, Oliver Bouckley, Robert Vaughan, Robyn Tighe, Rowena Shipley, Steve Shipley, Sonia Field, Sue Rogers, Susan Healy, Thomas Healy, Tony Daw, Tracy Stevens, Trish Everett and Will Davies.

Eleanor confirmed that the meeting was quorate. A separate record is held of the 35 attendees.

2. Remembering members who have died in 2024

Richard Cann 1938 – 2024

A member of Solihull's local Guild for nearly 70 years and held most local Guild positions over that time including Tower Master 1991 - 1996. SMG member since 1955 and latterly made a life member. Henry Johnson Dinner chair in 2009. A humble, fun loving man who was a great advocate for the art of bell ringing.

We also remembered Audrey Flint and Judy Nestor, their passing having been shared with the Guild though they weren't members themselves.

A minute's silence was held.

3. Approval of minutes of the AGM 13th January 2024.

The minutes were approved.

4. Matters arising from the minutes

Simon Linford confirmed that the reprint of the peal book is a work in progress, the sub committee meets electronically. There has been some difficulty in obtaining the necessary data.

5. Officer Reports

5.1 Treasurer' Report - Malcolm Paulson

The report had been shared before the meeting. Malcolm brought to our attention that there had been a change of bank account due to charges at Lloyds so, we have moved to Metro Bank. He reminded us that payments must go to the new account.

The Bell Restoration Fund (BRF) stands at £34,144.57. More has been paid out than received this year. Beneficiaries being Aston, Northfield and Kingsbury, 3 towers want to apply for money in the

coming year. He would encourage anyone doing maintenance on their bells to consider applying for funds if they need them.

The Central Council is raising fees from 20p per member to 40p as of now and, rising further to £1 next year, to fund the 2030 plan. He proposed that subs be retained at the same level this year but increase to £12 from next year. Peal fees to remain the same.

The Standing Committee has increased tower fees from £15 to £20 for towers used for Guild events.

We are making increasing use of Mojo. Malcolm is preparing a guide to using Mojo which will be shared in the coming days for Henry Johnson Dinner ticket purchases and membership renewals. The system gives options for payments but our preference is for BACs because of the PayPal charges.

Malcolm thanked the Independent Examiners Tom Horton and Steve Horton, for their help and support, giving particular thanks to Steve who is standing down after 13 years.

Eleanor thanked Malcolm for his hard work.

5.2 Independent Examiners Report - Steve Horton & Tom Horton

They had nothing to add to the previously circulated report.

Emma Harris proposed that we accept the Treasurer's Report, retaining membership fees at the same rate which was seconded by Phil Ramsbottom. All were in favour.

5.3 100 Club Report– Clare McArdle

The report had been circulated ahead of the meeting. The 100 Club continues to go from strength to strength, just over £1k was transferred to the BRF. More recently it was agreed that the funds sit in the general fund for special projects and the balance transferred at the end of each year. Funds have been used to support students and helpers meet the fees for residential courses. Eleanor proposes the same this year but welcomes any other special projects requiring funds. There are spare numbers and we are all invited to join in.

5.4 Ringing Master's Report – Rachel Thomas

The report had been circulated before the meeting and Rachel brought to our attention the continuing mid-week Moseley practices which include interesting exercises. There have been a lot of achievements for members of the Guild this year including the Henry Johnson Dinner Day 12 bell peal rung by an all female band for the Guild. The ART Masterclass was expertly organised by Stef Warboys; it was encouraging to see so many novice ringers there who had achieved LTR Level 5 and were taking this opportunity to make progress. The Guild Challenge Day was a success and thanks given to the judges Mark Eccleston and Janet Horton. Mike Dodson was thanked for the hard work in organising the Walking Tour.

The Higher Numbers practices have been well supported and in August scored a QP of Grandsire Caters. The Guild Outing to three towers in Wellington and Shrewsbury was well supported and a

success despite some challenging return journeys! Congratulations to Elizabeth Wilby for her first peal, in some style, Stedman Cinques. Congratulations too for the longest ever handbell minimums peal completed by Luke Daniel and Elliot Daniel. It was noted that Eleanor, our Guild Master, had been the first woman to ring the new tenor at Southwark Cathedral. Rachel added her thanks to the unsung heroes in the Guild who regularly attend local practices, service ringing and maintain the expensive equipment that we are allowed to use every week. She thanked those who work behind the scenes to keep us ringing and she looked forward to another successful year.

Eleanor thanked Rachel for her hard work.

5.5 Henry Johnson Dinner Secretary's Report

This is a vacant position so the dinner is being organised by the combined efforts of Simon Linford who has negotiated with the Burlington Hotel and Clare McArdle who is dealing with ticket sales. We are looking for someone to step into this role and shadow arrangements for this year.

Tickets for this year are now on sale. 22nd February at the Burlington Hotel, tickets £47.50 and £35 for Students. We are encouraged to buy tickets via Mojo but for anyone without access, contact Clare via email.

Eleanor thanked Simon and Clare for their hard work.

5.6 Archivist and Webmaster Report – Mark Eccleston

The report had been shared before the meeting. Eleanor added that we hold a significant library that Mark works hard to maintain. The Ringing Worlds for 2021 – 2023 are being bound. A set for 2024 have been gifted by an anonymous donor. We are encouraged to use the library. Details are available on the website or through Mark. The most recent acquisition is the Ringing World publication 'Foolish Youths and Substantial Rewards'.

5.7 Safeguarding Officer's Report – Trish Everett

Trish's report had been circulated before the meeting. Eleanor reminded everyone that basic safeguarding should be completed by all and, the higher levels for those in Leadership roles. Details on our website or email Trish for advice for any safeguarding matters. It was confirmed that Basic Safeguarding training lasts for 3 years and that CofE training is transferable between towers.

5.8 CCCBR Representatives' Report – Richard Andrew

The report had been circulated before the meeting. Richard advised the Council's flagship project is 2030 and the increase in subscriptions is to support this. Details available on the CCCBR website. Eleanor thanked Richard for his hard work and in particular being the lead on the peal board project noting his recent article in the Ringing World. Richard said there had been good responses from Kings Norton, Moseley, Coleshill and Solihull. He hoped to receive details from St Martin's, St Phillips and Aston. To support the project photograph peal boards and make them available through BellBoard or send them direct to the project email at CCCBR.

6. Election of Members

6.1 Full Members

Alison Shah – Proposed by Sand Cooper and seconded by Malcolm Paulson

ART Student at Solihull who has just passed level 2 and is now a Sunday service band member.

Isabella Beaumont - Proposed by Sand Cooper and seconded by Malcolm Paulson

ART Student at Solihull close to achieving level 2 and now a Sunday service band member.

George Salter – Proposed by James Ramsbottom and seconded by Stef Warboys

George moved to Birmingham just over a year ago, having originally come from Suffolk and spent several years in Bristol. He is a very accomplished ringer and has joined the band at St. Martin's in the Bullring. He has rung in several Monday night peals at St. Philip's Cathedral. He is very enthusiastic and has a lot to offer to The Guild.

All were in favour.

6.2 Associate Members

Clare Baker, Adrian Baker, Angel Chiu and Michelle Zhou were proposed by Clare McArdle and seconded by Phil Ramsbottom.

Caroline Orlowska, George Bull were proposed by Simon Linford and seconded by Eleanor Linford.

All were in favour.

6.3 Life Members

Helen Crosby was proposed by Sand Cooper and seconded by Malcolm Paulson.

Helen has been an SMG member since 1974 and is a member of the band at Shirley.

Rowena Shipley was proposed by Sand Cooper and seconded by Malcolm Paulson.

Rowena has been an SMG member since 1974 and is a member of the band and Tower Captain at Knowle.

All were in favour.

7. Election of Officers and Officials

7.1 Officers

Master Eleanor Linford

Ringing Master Rachel Thomas

Secretary Sand Cooper

Treasurer Malcolm Paulson

Archivist & Webmaster Mark Eccleston

Safeguarding Officer Trish Everett

Public Relations Officer Kirsty Gifford

Those currently in role were proposed by Jon Townsend and second by Steve Horton.

All were in favour

7.2 Officials

General Fund Trustees

Arthur Reeves & John Fielden were proposed by Eleanor Linford and seconded by Sharon Wall.
All were in favour.

Bell Restoration Fund Trustees

It was noted that Don Finnemore, who had been in the role, was not in good health.
Tony Daw and Jon Townsend were proposed by Eleanor Linford and seconded by Mike Keeble.
All were in favour.

Independent Examiners

Tom Horton and James Mundy were proposed by Eleanor Linford and seconded by Graham Kelly.
All were in favour

Henry Johnson Dinner Secretary

No appointment was made but Emma Harris will discuss the role with Simon Linford.

CCCBR Representatives

Richard Andrew and Simon Linford were proposed by Eleanor Linford and seconded by Arthur Reeves.

SMGs long history and association with CCCBR was noted and it was felt that we should continue to have a strong role and our succession planning for reps should be considered.
All were in favour.

Eleanor thanked all for their hard work over the last year and in the year to come.

8. 2025 Programme of Events

The proposed 2025 programme of events had been shared before the meeting and it is planned to share a pdf version for display in local towers. Events will be advised in the Monthly Updates and in social media. They included the first Saturday of the month Surprise Practice (with the exception July due to the clash with the RWNYC), The midweek Moseley practices on the third Thursday. Fourth Wednesday Higher Numbers. The major weekend events being the Henry Johnson Dinner, the Spring Guild Event, city centre towers and general meeting. An away Guild Outing 11th October, provisionally Nottingham via public transport.

9. Henry Johnson Dinner 2025

Arrangements are being made for a Chair for next year to be announced at this year's dinner. There is some nervousness about attendance as this year is the BUSCR 70th year dinner. Occasional attendees to our dinner are encouraged to make a special effort to attend this year.

10. Three Events Challenge - Rachel Mitchell

There is a proposal to relaunch this scheme this year.

11. Any other business

11.1 Emma Harris thanked the Solihull band for having helped with ringing for the Aston Villa supporters carol service. Great feedback had been received from those that had heard the ringing. It is noted that it is the club's 150th year anniversary this year.

11.2 Simon Linford – Ringing World National Youth Contest

It is anticipated that 300 young ringers will be welcomed and we will need lots of assistance. We are encouraged to email Clare McArdle to offer help there being many different roles with varying degrees of commitment. The School will not be running that day.

11.3 Simon Linford – items donated to the Library by Alan Ainsworth

Alan Ainsworth was a driving force in ringing at the Cathedral in the 60/70s and in record length 12 bell ringing. The papers relate to a record length of Glasgow Surprise Major being the longest composition with bobs and singles at the lead ends. Soon afterwards a Lancashire team rang a composition with half lead singles and took the long length record. The papers show the controversy at the time.

The papers also include details of the longest peal of Stedman Cinques and its composition which included 'escape routes' so that it could have been called round earlier if needed.

11.4 Sheldon practices

Margaret Burling advised that her workshops had continued over the last year. She invited anyone with anything they would like to practice to get in touch with her. In the coming week they would be helping people to ring Plain Bob Doubles.

Eleanor thanked Margaret for organising the practices which have the additional incentive of refreshments afterwards!

12. Date of Next Meeting

Saturday 10th January 2026

13. Meeting close

The meeting closed at 2:15pm followed by general ringing.

Enclosure 2 - Officer's Reports

Treasurer's Report

Membership

We have 277 members (7 up on 2024). All members should receive an email in the next few weeks requesting the membership fees for this year. Please use membership MOJO. A link to MOJO will be in the email you receive and a link to MOJO can be found on the Guild website. The easiest way to login is by using your email address, (you don't have to remember a password).

Total subscriptions collected in 2025 were £1,930.00 which is about the same as 2024.

For 2025 it is proposed to increase the subscription to £12 with a 50% concession rate. With the Central Council increasing their subscription in 2026 to £1 per member, it is thought that this increase will be enough to cover this increase as well as other rising costs.

General

Donations of £146 were received. The Guild website does have a number of books available for people to buy. We have sold 15 Diagrams Book from the Snowdon series to people outside of the Guild, making a small profit. New pricing was introduced in 2025 where non Guild members have a higher price.

Insurance

Handbell insurance and Public Liability insurance were both renewed. Our Public Liability insurance covers all ringers engaged in Guild activities.

100 Club

At last year's AGM it was decided that the surplus from the 100 club could be used for other appropriate purposes. At the end of 2024 the surplus from the 100 club was £1,399. £480 was spent supporting learner ringers and helpers on residential courses. This left £919 that was transferred to the BFF at the end of the year. The 100 club surplus for 2025 was £1,270.

BRF

The BRF supported one tower this year with an expenditure of totalling £404. This meant a net inflow of funds of £741.86. The fund currently holds funds to the value of £34,886.43. We currently have two future applications in progress to support Coleshill and St Paul's Jewellery Quarter.

Bank Change

We successfully moved the Guild bank accounts to Metro Bank. We no longer have separate bank accounts for the 100 club and the Henry Johnson Dinner. However, Metro have now informed us that they too are going to start charging. The charges are less than those at Lloyds and they also offer a higher rate of interest on the savings account. It is my intention to move the BRF accounts away from Lloyds to Metro Bank so that all the accounts are in the same place. Hopefully this will happen early in 2026.

Peal and Tower Fees

The Standing Committee are keeping the tower fees paid to tower for Guild events at £20. Going forward this will include towers used by the Brumdingers.

Peal fees to remain at £0

Receipts and Payments for the year ended 31 December 2025											
RECEIPTS		General	Peal	Library	Training Fund	100 Club Surplus	100 Club	HJ Dinner	BRF	2025	2024
Subscriptions	Full	1,840.00								1,840.00	1,838.36
	AM	90.00								90.00	80.00
Subscriptions Pre-paid										0.00	0.00
Apportionments										0.00	0.00
Donations		146.80							0.00	146.80	174.29
HJD Ticket sales						4,638.00				4,638.00	4,285.62
HJD Ticket sales 2026						300.00				300.00	0.00
HJD Beer						257.75				257.75	0.00
Merchandise / Book Sales		466.20								466.20	67.10
Interest		107.95							267.48	375.43	409.83
100 Club Subs						2,296.00				2,296.00	2,373.25
ART Award		250.00								250.00	0.00
Other Income		209.00								209.00	311.00
100 Club surplus					1,270.23				919.38	2,189.61	2,497.88
Total Receipts		3,109.95	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,270.23	2,296.00	5,195.75	1,186.86	13,058.79	12,037.33
PAYMENTS											
Apportionments										0.00	0.00
Paypal and Bank Charges		58.21					15.77	61.11	42.50	177.59	0.00
Membership Mojo Fees		95.00								95.00	0.00
Guild Insurance & Handbell Ins		382.79								382.79	377.21
BRF Paid Out									402.50	402.50	2,674.32
Ringing World	- binding									0.00	0.00
	- advertising	0.00						66.00		66.00	48.00
Central Council:	- Fees	108.00								108.00	54.20
	- Library	10.00								10.00	10.00
	- Reps Exp	214.10								214.10	0.00
Guild Activities		860.00								860.00	711.00
Year Book Printing		183.52								183.52	0.00
RWNYC		40.00								40.00	148.80
Library			192.00							192.00	174.18
HJD Dinner Expenses 2025							4,110.00			4,110.00	3,940.31
HJD Dinner 2026 Deposit							460.00			460.00	287.00
Merchandise / Book Purchases		316.50								316.50	145.00
Directory Printing										0.00	0.00
Meeting expenses / general admin		27.22								27.22	143.08
Other Expenses		0.00						49.82		49.82	148.50
Training					480.00					480.00	200.00
100 Club Prizes						1,067.40				1,067.40	2,392.40
tfr of unused 2024 100 club surplus to BRF						919.38				919.38	1,098.50
tfr of 2025 100 club surplus to general fund						1,270.23				1,270.23	0.00
Total Payments		2,295.34	0.00	192.00	0.00	1,399.38	2,353.40	4,746.93	445.00	11,432.05	12,552.30
Increase/(decrease) in Funds		814.61	0.00	(192.00)	0.00	(129.15)	(57.40)	448.82	741.86	1,626.74	(514.97)
Opening Balance		4,559.44	1,242.53	49.55	195.69	1,599.80	57.40	2,321.35	34,144.57	44,170.33	44,685.30
Closing Balance		5,374.05	1,242.53	(142.45)	195.69	1,470.65	(0.00)	2,770.17	34,886.43	45,797.07	44,170.33
Cash and Bank Accounts											
Metro Bank Current Account				Main	100 Club	HJD	BRF	Total	Current A/c	Savings A/c	Total
				8,140.47	(0.00)	2,770.17		10,910.64	123.13	10,787.51	10,910.64
Bell Restoration Fund							34,886.43	34,886.43	1,281.06	33,605.37	34,886.43
									45,797.07		45,797.07

Supplementary information:

Membership at 31 December:

2025:	277 Members - (inc 5 LVP, 21 LM, 16 Assoc, 131 Full, 82 Conc (65+), 22 Conc (Ed))
2024:	270 Members - (inc 5 LVP, 21 LM, 10 Assoc, 126 Full, 85 Conc(65+), 23 Conc(Ed)) 1 unpaid
2023:	271 Members-(inc:5 LVP, 20LM, 25 Assoc)
2022:	278 Members-(inc:5 LVP, 17LM, 10 Assoc) 36 Unpaid (19 from previous yr)

BRF funds committed:	£
Coleshill - Rope Guides	893 Plus VAT
St Paul's - Clapper refurbishment	Unknown

Summary analysis of General Fund:

Ongoing 'operating' income & costs	£
Subscription income	1,930
Year Book Printing	(184)
Library	(192)
Insurance (Member & Handbell)	(383)
Central Council (Fees & Library)	(118)
Central Council Rep Expenses	(214)
Guild Activities (Net of receipts from outing)	(651)
Meeting expenses & general admin	(27)
Bank and Mojo Charges	(153)
Interest	108
	<u>(1,814)</u>
	116

Discretionary' income & costs	£
Merchandising & Books	150
Sundry donations	147
Local Support for NRWYC	(40)
ART Awards	250
Training Bursaries	(480)
	<u>27</u>
	143

Bank reconciliation	
Balance per cash book	45,797.07
Less unpresented cheques	
Chq in hand	0.00
Cash in Hand	0.00
Balance	45,797.07
Balance per bank statements	
GF	8,140.47
100 Club	(0.00)
HJ Diner	2,770.17
BRF	1,281.06
BRF 30 Day	33,605.37
	<u>45,797.07</u>

Malcolm Paulson

Independent Examiners Preliminary Report

Tom and I have examined the Guild accounts in our role as independent examiners. There were no concerns in the accounts raised by us. A few typographical errors were corrected but the overall balance was correct. We wish to recommend that the Guild members adopt the accounts.

Tom Horton & James Mundy

100 Club Report

January 2025		August 2025	
Eleanor Linford	£49.00	Michael Wilby	£49.50
Christine Barnell	£14.70	Steve Askew	£14.85
Geoff Ridgway	£4.90	Mike Dodson	£4.95
February 2025		September 2025	
Jen Hickman	£49.00	Joanne Goodall	£49.50
Olly Bouckley	£14.70	Colin Baugh	£14.85
Angie Wakefield	£4.90	Sonia Field	£4.95
March 2025		October 2025	
Margaret Burling	£49.50	Jeff Webb	£49.50
Rebekah Horton	£14.85	Eleanor Linford	£14.85
David Flint	£4.95	Deborah Chard	£4.95
April 2025		November 2025	
Luke Daniel	£49.50	Olly Bouckley	£49.50
Derek Harrison	£14.85	Luke Daniel	£14.85
Rebekah Horton	£4.95	Mike Rigby	£4.95
May 2025		December 2025	
Margaret Burling	£49.50	Luke Daniel	£49.50
John Eaton	£14.85	Vicky Wilby	£14.85
Stephen Shipley	£4.95	Margaret Burling	£4.95
June 2025		Christmas 2025	
Alison Hodge	£49.50	Olly Bouckley	£94.88
Janet Horton	£14.85	Rowena Shipley	£47.44
Trish Everett	£4.95	Tamsin Lane	£47.44
July 2025		Will Bosworth	£11.86
Malcolm Paulson	£49.50	Luke Daniel	£11.86
Olly Bouckley	£14.85	Sonia Field	£11.86
Olly Bouckley	£4.95	Jonathan Townsend	£11.86
		Money Raised	£1324.40

Clare McArdle

Ringing Master's Report

As with my report at the last AGM, I'm now pleased to say I've been Ringing Master of the Guild for another successful year filled with events.

Our last AGM, held at Smethwick Old Church, was well attended with a packed tower for general ringing after the meeting.

The regular guild practices are well attended with lots of people making progress in their ringing. The Higher Numbers at Solihull, Special Practices arranged by Margaret Burling at Sheldon, Midweek Moseley practices run by Steve Horton, and the Surprise Major practices at Edgbaston have offered a range of opportunities.

There have been a couple of workshops specially arranged for some members to focus on specific achievements. An ART level three-targeted workshop and a special stedman focused practice we organised to target specific aims.

The spring outing was a home fixture in May with ringing at St Philip's Cathedral, St Martin's in the Bullring and St Paul's in the Jewellery Quarter. It's events like this that remind me how lucky we are to have some incredible rings of bells right on our doorstep, and we gave lots of people a chance to ring on 16. Though the most impressive part of the day was how efficiently the business meeting was run after the ringing was done.

The Ringing World National Youth Contest was held in Birmingham this year and without the gargantuan effort of our members this would not have been the success it was. Well done to the organisers, and to our Brumdingers for winning the 6 bell competition. An additional well done to those that rang in the first all-Brumdingers quarter in September at Edgbaston.

While on the subject of competitions, the cathedral band were pipped to the post by Melbourne in the Robert B Smith Trophy, an impressive achievement given that two of the band were Brumdingers. I think it's for the best if I don't mention the national 12 bell competition results...

Our very own Lucas Williams arranged a super successful ART M1 course at Edgbaston this year which was fully booked. Thanks to Lucas for all his effort.

Our Autumn outing took the guild to Nottingham for a tour of four of the city's towers. We were treated to some excellent bells, beer and weather. Thanks to Eleanor for organising.

Finally I'd like to thank everyone for their efforts in organising, running and attending all the events throughout the year. The Guild has only been made what it is by you.

I'll be stepping down at the next AGM, so we will be looking for the next Ringing Master... If anyone is interested, please get in touch.

Here's to another successful year for the Guild.

[Rachel Mitchel](#)

Henry Johnson Dinner Report

The run up to the 2025 Henry Johnson dinner gave the organisers sleepless nights as numbers were hovering around a loss-making 70 with a couple of weeks to go. But the late bookers brought the

final attendance to 96 and a comfortable surplus of around £300. Eight of the tickets were concessionary tickets to younger members.

Michael Wilby chaired the dinner with a general ‘historical links’ theme. Our senior Life Vice President John Anderson again made the long trip from his home in Stamford with his family and we were pleased to see him. We introduced a series of wine takings, which hasn’t traditionally been a feature of HJ dinners but works well at other dinners and enables various different groups and aspect of the Guild’s activities to be recognised over the course of the evening. After dinner speeches were delivered by Oliver Bates and Ann White, with David Pipe delivering the final Health of the Chairman.

Doing our own beer contributes about £150 to the surplus, but this is only because the close relationship the Birmingham ringers have with the Wellington enables us to get beer from their cellar at cost price. The hotel adds £3 a pint ‘corkage’ and we are still able to serve it at approximately market price. A tricky aspect of this is whether to order three or four polypins based on an assessment of the drinking capacity of those who have booked!

We are keeping things the same again this coming year – the Burlington is booked although for a minimum of 100 diners, so please do come. We try and make the dinner accessible for all Guild members, guest and friends, regardless of their experience, and complete tables from towers are very welcome. Each year the price creeps up and we have had to take the plunge for 2026 and allow it to hit £50, but this compares well with other large ringing dinners and hopefully we’ll be able to keep it at that for at least a couple of years. The Chairman for the 2026 will be Will Bosworth, Editor of The Ringing World, and alumnus of Birmingham University.

The dinner is on Saturday 28th February and tickets can be booked via the Guild website.

[Simon Linford](#)

Archivist and Webmaster Report

In previous years I have begun the Archivist’s Report by noting the value and importance of our historic library. The bulk of our collections are housed in the ringing chamber at St Martin’s, with some additional modern items held in the School Room at St Paul’s. As a Guild we should feel very proud of this resource. Our historic research collections are amongst the very best collections in the country; but please do remember that more modern items can be borrowed by any Guild member. We hold many training volumes, and we have items which are suitable for new recruits as much as for more experienced ringers. I have not arranged for the binding of the 2024 issues of The Ringing World. These will be bound, alongside the 2025 issues, during 2026. We use a specialist binding company based in Gloucester and the 2025 issues of The Ringing World have been gifted to the library by an anonymous donor.

Our library continues to grow through purchases, gifts, donations and bequests. I’m particularly grateful to those Guild members who, over the years, have contacted me to offer new additions for our collections. As always, I encourage members to make use of the Library.

If any member is interested in learning more about the library, please contact me or take a look at the relevant webpage on the Guild website:

<https://stmartinsguild.org/heritage-and-history/library-and-archives/>

[Mark Eccleston](#)

Safeguarding Officer's Report

Safeguarding continues to be a high priority for the Church of England.

I have continued to give safeguarding support and advice as required, and continue to liaise with the diocesan safeguarding team.

Safeguarding training requirements for Bellringers continue to be

Basic Awareness:

ALL ringers

Foundation:

All Tower Captains

Bell ringers supervising or teaching under 18s

These courses can be accessed via the Church of England Safeguarding training portal: the link is

<https://safeguardingtraining.cofeportal.org/>

The guide to using the portal is

<https://www.cofebirmingham.com/content/pages/documents/guide-to-using-the-training-portal-and-creating-a-profile-edited-june-2023.pdf>

Leadership:

Tower Captains of 'major' towers, (e.g. Cathedral) and/or with young (under 18) bell ringers in their tower. For the Guild this is considered to be Birmingham Cathedral, St Martin's, St Paul's JQ, Moseley and Solihull.

The leaders of Brumdingers will also complete this training.

Enhanced DBS check:

Required for Tower Captains/bell ringers who are supervising or teaching young (under 18) ringers. Where bell ringers practice/ring weekly a check of the barred list for the child workforce is also required.

Where 'vulnerable adults at higher risk of abuse' (e.g. those with care and support needs) are being supervised/taught, consult the Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinator/diocesan safeguarding team re DBS eligibility.

Safeguarding advice for bell ringers is available:

- on the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers:
<https://cccbbr.org.uk/safeguarding/resources/>
- from the St Martin's Guild of Church Bell Ringers
- on the Church of England Birmingham website:
<https://www.cofebirmingham.com/safeguarding>

It is worth noting that the **Code for Ringing** which the CCCBR have produced can be freely used and adapted by towers and ringing societies who wish to develop their own code of conduct. It summarises the values of the ringing community and its expectations of all who ring, in their interactions with other ringers and when representing ringing at large.

It states the following

Every ringer, ringing leader and ringing society plays their part in creating a safe, welcoming environment and in representing ringing to both church and public.

This recommended checklist for ringing societies summarises the values of the ringing community and its expectations of all who ring, in their interactions with other ringers and when representing ringing at large.

ALWAYS

1. Create a tower environment where all feel safe, respected, welcomed and valued.
2. Create a positive learning environment where feedback is timely and supportive.
3. Respect your surroundings, the tower, church and the community where you ring.
4. Understand and observe others' personal boundaries.
5. Ring responsibly, with the well-being of your band and visitors in mind.
6. Look out for others' safety, raise concerns promptly and know what to do if you witness unacceptable behaviour.
7. Make sure all your interactions, online or in person, show empathy and courtesy.
8. Consider the impact of your words and actions on others; apologise if you're at fault.
9. Uphold the safeguarding policies of your parish and the ringing societies to which you belong.
10. Take pride in being part of the ringing community.

NEVER

1. Engage in, trivialise or endorse any form of abuse, bullying or harassment, or let these go unreported.
2. Engage in banter or language which could make someone feel demeaned, threatened or unwelcome, whether in person, by phone, online or via social media.
3. Undermine, ridicule or intimidate a less experienced ringer.
4. Personalise disagreements; deal with the issue, not the person.
5. Allow your decisions as a ringer to be compromised, by prejudice or any other cause.
6. Act unlawfully in your role as a ringer or in a way that brings ringing into disrepute.

If you witness unacceptable behaviour and are not sure how to respond, contact your parish or association safeguarding officer. Where someone is in immediate danger or requires urgent attention, call your local authority's children's or adult social services team, or the police on 999.

For safeguarding queries or advice I can be contacted as follows

Mob 07968 362501

E mail trish_everett@hotmail.com

Trish Everett

CCCBR Rep's Report

This year's Central Council AGM weekend was held in Sheffield from Friday 5th to Sunday 7th September and was hosted by the Yorkshire Association of Change Ringers who are celebrating their 150th anniversary in 2025.

The Ringing World AGM

The AGM was chaired by board member Elva Ainsworth, who reported that the surplus for 2025 is £20K (down on 2024's figure of £34K) but there is still a seemingly unassailable drop in subscriptions, with the company relying on BellBoard donations and merchandise sales.

New publications this year have included Viggers Ringing Records and also 'Foolish Youths and Substantial Rewards', a book by Gareth Davies taking a look at the history of ringing in Cambridge over the last 500 years. It was also reported that a new Blue Book, fitting in between the existing Green and Purple Books, would be coming out soon (this is now available from the Ringing World shop).

Major architectural changes will be needed to BellBoard, including protection against abusive AI bots, but its basic functionality will remain free of charge.

Regarding the 'Ringing World' itself, plans for monthly publication have been put on hold, and the focus has been on exploring options for the digital product, as this should be more attractive to younger ringers.

Jo Cresshull was once again the chief organiser of the 2025 Ringing World National Youth Contest (RWNYC), this time hosted by our own Guild in Birmingham, with a record number of teams (37) entering. A question was asked as to how much further the contest can grow, and Elva Ainsworth responded to say that they may be reaching the limit, but need to be as inclusive as possible. The 2026 contest is scheduled to be held in Nottingham.

Central Council Meeting

Saturday afternoon was mostly taken up by the annual meeting of the Council, chaired by the President, Tina Stoecklin.

After a few admin items, and the Annual Report of the Council Executive, a summary was given of the key points from the workgroup reports, each in turn. Several workgroups are now working on various aspects of the Ringing 2030 strategy, an initiative developed by the Council to create a sustainable future for bellringing, raising wider public awareness of it and establishing new sources of recruitment for new ringers.

Regarding Ringing 2030 in general, key points of progress included the establishment of a South West Ringing Course, which took place for the first time in October at Millfield School in Somerset and was heavily oversubscribed. This follows on from the successful establishment of the North West Ringing Course back in 2022' usually held in Lancashire and also heavily oversubscribed. There are plans to establish a further regional course in the near future.

Next, the Forward Plan for 2026 was discussed, and included plans for each of the three Pillars of Ringing 2030. In summary, these were as follows:-

- Pillar 1 (Marketing) - There have now been several recruiting events. Continue elaboration with ringing associations, helping to support marketing awareness and recruitment events on the ground. Work with scouting and guiding groups.
- Pillar 2 (Recruitment and Development) - Highlight centres of excellence and places actively recruiting. Continue to develop a network of contacts. Continue to build and develop young ringers' hubs.
- Pillar 3 (Environment) – Update our existing technical and engineering resources to reach new audiences. Create concrete guidance for ringing groups negotiating a change of use for churches with bells. Training and awareness to ensure that bellringing is welcoming to everyone.

Ringing Roadshow

This was held at the Niagara Conference Centre on the Sunday, and was the first Roadshow held since 2022.

As usual, there was a good selection of exhibitors covering many aspects of ringing and including the Association of Ringing Teachers (ART), Avon Ropes, Big Wilf's Bell Muffles, CCCBR Publications, John Taylor & Co (bellfounders), The Ringing World and the Young Change Ringers Association (Y CRA).

There were several mini rings, another essential part of any ringing roadshow, including a new 'Peals on Wheels' Mobile Belfry, designed by Matthew Higby & Co.

There were also several talks during the course of the day, including 'Ringing 2030 – a Yorkshire Association perspective' by Andrew Slade, President of the Association, and a talk by Linda Garton on how the Bedfordshire Association has been undergoing a restructuring over the last few years and some of the issues raised which may be of benefit to other associations.

Briefings by the Ringing 2030 Recruitment and Development workgroup

Several of the Council's workgroups are engaged on various aspects of the Ringing 2030 project. In particular, the Ringing 2030 Recruitment and Development workgroup are now running a series of online briefings covering various aspects of their work on the 2030 project. These are open to all interested ringers to attend, and in each case, time is set aside for questions and further discussion after the main briefing has finished. The first of these took place on 16th November and covered topics such as residential ringing courses and development materials, including bell handling posters and model bells. Future briefings are scheduled for 8th February, 7th May and 23rd August in 2026 and will cover further activities being undertaken by the workgroup in connection with Ringing 2030. For those interested, details on how to register and attend the online meetings are likely be sent to guilds and associations secretaries, so you should be able to request details from our Guild Secretary nearer the date of each meeting.

Link to Ringing 2030 project info

As the Ringing 2030 project will continue to be a major initiative by the Council over the next few years, there is now a heading for it on the top-level menu of the Council's home page which can be used to access full details about the project via the following address: -

<https://ccnbr.org.uk/ringing-2030/>

[Richard Andrew/Simon Linford](#)

Enclosure 3 - 2026 Programme of Events

	Saturday	Sunday	Weekdays
January	3 Surprise Major (Core 7 plus Jovium) 10 AGM - Smethwick 17 Brumdingers 24 31 BUSCR dinner	4 11 18 25 1	15 Midweek Moseley 21 Sheldon workshop 28 Higher numbers
February	7 Surprise Major (Core 7 including Superlative) 14 Brumdingers 21 28 HJ Dinner	8 15 22 1	18 Sheldon workshop; 19 Midweek Moseley 25 Higher numbers
March	7 Surprise Major (Core 7 with Kenninghall instead of Cornwall) 14 Brumdingers 21 Midlands young ringers event 28 12-bell competition qualifiers	8 15 22 29	18 Sheldon workshop; 19 Midweek Moseley 25 Higher numbers Holy week
April	4 Surprise Major 11 Brumdingers 18 25 Surprise Major (Core 7 plus Ashtead)	5 Easter Sunday 12 19 26	6 Bank Holiday Monday 15 Sheldon workshop; 16 Midweek Moseley 22 Higher numbers
May	2 Surprise Major 9 Brumdingers 16 Spring event (inc business meeting) 23 30	3 10 17 24 31	5 Bank Holiday Monday 20 Sheldon workshop; 21 Midweek Moseley 27 Higher numbers 25 Bank Holiday Monday
June	6 Surprise Major (Core 7 plus Norwich) 13 Brumdingers 20 12-bell competition final in York 27 Walking tour - tbc	7 14 21 28	17 Sheldon workshop; 18 Midweek Moseley 24 Higher numbers
July	4 R/wNYC in Nottingham; Surprise Major (Core 7 plus Bolonium) 11 Brumdingers 18 25	5 12 19 26	15 Sheldon workshop; 16 Midweek Moseley 22 Higher numbers
August	1 Surprise Major (Core 7 plus Turramurra) 8 Brumdingers 15 22 29	2 9 16 23 30	19 Sheldon workshop; 20 Midweek Moseley 26 Higher numbers 31 Bank Holiday Monday
September	5 Surprise Major (Core 7 plus Adelaide) 12 Brumdingers 19 SMG outing to Oxford 26 Robert B Smith Trophy	6 13 General meeting (online) 20 27	16 Sheldon workshop; 17 Midweek Moseley 23 Higher numbers
October	3 10 Brumdingers; Surprise Major (Core 7 plus Glasgow) 17 24 31	4 11 18 25 1	15 Midweek Moseley 21 Sheldon workshop 28 Higher numbers
November	7 Surprise Major (Core 7 plus Cassiobury) 14 Brumdingers 21 28	8 15 22 29	18 Sheldon workshop; 19 Midweek Moseley 25 Higher numbers
December	5 Midland young ringers event; Surprise Major (Core 7 plus Belgrave) 12 Brumdingers 19 26	6 13 20 27	16 Sheldon workshop; 17 Midweek Moseley 23 Higher numbers tbc