

### Editor's Foreword – *Andy Clark*

Certainly not the quarter I was expecting, but nonetheless it's heart-warming that we can continue to support one another through a difficult period, with or without bell ringing. Clare also provides her insight into social distancing later in the newsletter, which I could certainly relate to. In this newsletter, we also remember Sue, John, Chris and Andrew who passed away. Finally, this edition includes a ringers' puzzle which I hope you'll enjoy completing.

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### Ringling Master's Report – *Arthur Reeves*

I'm writing this to you in very unusual times for us all, where circumstances are uncertain and people are feeling anxious and worried. Please know that my thoughts and best wishes are with you and your families.

I've often said that we as a Guild exist because together we are stronger – and can achieve more – than when we exist individually. Some of you may have thought that as ringing activities were suspended, the purpose of this Guild became void. Nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, I'd argue that it is now that we need each other more than ever before.

If you are worried about how you intend to organise your next round of shopping or if you'd simply like a chat with someone, email [smgcb@gmail.com](mailto:smgcb@gmail.com) and we will use our extended network to help make this happen. It has already been heart-warming to see ringers supporting others in many different ways.

And whilst we cannot meet up to practice, there could be opportunities for exploring some online platforms for social occasions and ringing theory. We have recently been trialing using Zoom for online Guild activities. Last week, I hosted a 'not a pub' quiz, which was well received by over 40 members and friends from across the country. This allowed us – as hosts and participants – a chance to 'try out' and explore what these platforms are like and how they might be used for further training. My view is that whilst online platforms cannot replace the face to face contact we have, nor the practical element ringing requires, it does overcome geographical barriers and provide an all-important contact between us in these challenging moments.

This past week or two we have therefore been trying out some proper theory sessions using Zoom. Simon Linford hosted a webinar on the theory behind touches of spliced and I have led one on what cognitive science can teach us about how we can learn more effectively. Both have been well attended and well received. We're grateful for members for their feedback (and patience, as we get to grips with unfamiliar technology and training tools!). If you are somebody who is yet to embrace these online platforms but would like to have a go, please get in touch with one of the Guild officers – we will happily have a 'dummy run' with you first and try to support you as best we can to get you set up.

Linked to the Guild training sessions, Clare is looking to host Saturday school sessions also on Zoom. So, whilst we are still developing a schedule, put these times in your diary for the foreseeable future:

- Wednesdays @ 19:00: Guild training session
- Saturdays @ 10:00: Birmingham School of Bell Ringing teaching session



The next events planned are a talk by Tony (Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> April) on coursing bells and how they can help us to learn a method, followed by Janet taking us through basic place notation (Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> April). Further details will be sent out via the Guild mailing list in due course.

Finally, as you'd expect, our Striking Contest on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> May will not be going ahead. Thanks to Nether Whitacre for agreeing to host and to Stella for beginning to prepare this for us. We will however have a Guild event (via Zoom!) on that same afternoon. Again, details will be sent out soon, but it is likely to include a baking session, quiz and the Business Meeting – so another date for your diary. And if you fancy hosting the quiz, I'd be very keen to hear from you! In the meantime, keep safe.

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### Workshops and Practices – *Phil Ramsbottom*

The workshop on 8<sup>th</sup> January was billed as 'beyond Bob Doubles', thinking methods such as St Simons and the like would get an airing. However, following some group discussion, it turned more into a 'how can we ring Bob Doubles better' and the evening was spent doing various exercises which included simply striking rounds properly, some slightly more 'in-depth' theory, ringing by rhythm and facing out of the circle. My thanks to Tony for being at the helm for this one and a very worthwhile evening as a result.

The Stedman Caters evening on 22<sup>nd</sup> January was a packed house with 16 people turning up. This is made all the more remarkable by the fact that 30 hours earlier there was only seven names on the list, so thanks to everyone who turned out to support this. Good to see the younger end of the Guild represented with Charlie and Kunal using the opportunity to stretch their abilities a bit further. A great evening all round.

A theory workshop billed for 12<sup>th</sup> February was another very well attended event with 10 students signing up. Using Plain Bob as a starting point, the basis for the event was to illustrate the very close connections and similarities between Bastow, Little Bob and Kent, thus demonstrating that learning a new method does not necessarily mean learning a whole new line. Thanks to Angie for being the support act on this occasion.

The entire 'tower supply correspondence chain' (myself included) missed the fact that 26<sup>th</sup> February was in fact Ash Wednesday, so sadly the Stedman Cinques planned for that evening didn't happen.

The 11<sup>th</sup> March workshop was by 'special request' – the idea being to have a Cambridge Minor 'warm-up' prior to a quarter being attempted. However it was decided early on that maybe the quarter peal wasn't the best idea and instead we turned our attention to getting through touches of Cambridge, Plain Bob Minor, Little Bob Minor and St Clements Minor, with the usual accompanying theory thrown in for good measure. As always, a very worthwhile and beneficial evening.

Sadly, for obvious reasons, that's as far as we've got this year. Rest assured though, all the tower bookings still stand so as soon as we are able to, the Wednesday night workshops can be back up and running again at a moment's notice.

My thanks as always to all of you who come along to support these events, either as a learner or a helper. Without you, none of these workshops would happen at all. Maybe during this enforced silence, some of you might like to give some thought to some topics or ideas for the workshops when we return to 'situation normal'? I'd very much appreciate hearing from you on this.

## Remembering Susan E Marshall – *Stephanie Warboys*

Susan Elizabeth Marshall died peacefully, aged 59. The Service of Thanksgiving for her life took place at St Peter's, Kineton, the church brimming full of family and friends, including a great number of ringers, many from the St Martin's Guild. She had been a full Guild Member since the rule change permitted those outside the traditional geographical territory to join and before that a non-resident life Member, as she had been involved in peal ringing at St Philip's Cathedral, Birmingham, on and off for nearly 40 years.

Sue's family comprises five generations of ringers and she was taught to ring by her father, David J Marshall, at Long Eaton, Derbyshire. Sue's first passion was horses and she saved up from doing paper rounds, as a teenager, to buy herself a horse, which was a complete surprise to her parents! Sue rang her first peal, Plain Bob Triples, aged 17, and conducted her first peal – same method, same tower almost exactly a year later. By the time she moved to Bristol to study Biochemistry, she had really caught the ringing bug. She rang with the University of Bristol Society of Change Ringers (UBSCR) and was elected its Master. Unfortunately, shortly after going to University, she broke her arm in an accident. Such things did not deter Sue and whilst unable to ring, she 'conducted a peal' from outside the circle – though it was not recognised by the Central Council.

Arm mended and having received her first degree in 1981, she moved back to the Midlands, where she undertook her PhD at Loughborough. Peal ringing escalated, twice being third in the overall national peal ringing lists between 1980 and 1984. Her peal band travelled all over the country, covering great distances to ring peals at as many ten and twelve bell towers as possible. Ringers from Birmingham such as Fran Dodds and Andrew Stubbs were sometimes part of the band – in 'the old days', when both were quite keen on peal-ringing! The method of choice was Bristol Royal or Maximus. In total, Sue rang peals at 269 different 10-bell towers and 131 different 12-bell towers. Sue was a prolific and meticulous arranger of peals. Dropping out or failing to turn up met with 'zero-tolerance'. She would say 'no matter how bad you feel, you don't give up in a peal until you keel over'. The physical challenge of a peal was measured in the 'number of bananas needed'.

Sue was a very fine ringer – a top class striker, with an instinctive sense of rhythm, not easily disrupted by the striking faults of others. She could ring to the highest standards anywhere in the circle – from treble to tenor. She remains one of only three women to circle the tower on the challenging bells of St Philip's, Birmingham. What she really loved about ringing generally, and peal ringing in particular, was the focus and concentration it allowed her to bring to bear. In this she found enormous mental and physical satisfaction, acting as an engaging distraction from the frustrations of day-to-day living. Wherever she lived, Sue was an invaluable member of her local band and would always have time for and encourage those learning, especially to try a quarter peal and she would often do the arranging and conducting.

She rang in the first ladies peal of Orion Surprise Maximus and was proud of ringing in a unique fathers and daughters peal of Bristol Surprise Maximus at Towcester in 2003 for the Ancient Society of College Youths, including her and her dad, David, and her daughter, Rebecca, and her dad, Simon Melen (Guild Members: Eleanor Linford and her dad, Chris Kippin, and Andrew Wilby and his daughter, Hannah, also took part in this landmark peal). In total Sue rang 2,027 peals; 172 of these on handbells (including Stedman Cinques) and conducted 60 peals. Of this total, 655 were rung on ten bells, 525 on twelve bells and 29 on fourteen or sixteen. 297 were rung for the St Martin's Guild and St Philip's, Birmingham was her most popular and favourite peal venue, with 181 peals there spanning five decades.

Sue's enthusiasm for ringing was TOTAL and not at all limited to peal ringing. She is believed to be one of only two people to have rung 2,000 quarter peals, 2,000 peals and rung in more than 5,500 towers! She had rung at 5,690 different towers, which is an extremely high total and it was out tower-grabbing that she met her last husband, Graham Nabb. She moved down to Kineton, Warwickshire to live with Graham, who is a leader within the Association of Ringing Teachers (ART), which is responsible for the 'Learning The Ropes' teaching scheme used by the Birmingham School of Bell Ringing. Sue went to work at Warwick School, having trained to be a teacher, when her three children (Rebecca, Hollie and Tristan) had reached a suitable age, and she was very good at it. However, she never let teaching get in the way of ringing or, indeed, her enjoyment of outdoor activities and nature. Having retired early, she seemed to be busier than ever – exercising a friend's horse, long cycle rides, completing the Yorkshire Three Peaks Challenge and the Cotswold Way, many holidays with Graham, as well as tending to her now outstandingly beautiful garden, where sometimes she seemed to work from dawn until it was time to go ringing!

In late 2018, Sue was given the devastating news that she was terminally ill with stage 4 breast cancer and it looked as though the planned University of Bristol ladies peal of Cambridge Maximus at St Stephen's, Bristol in October 2018 would be her last. The news knocked her for six, but after confiding in friends and family and learning from the experiences of others, she decided to turn down chemotherapy in favour of living life to the full for however much time she had left.

On 12 January 2019, a peal day was organised in Birmingham where many of her friends and family gathered to ring (and listen to) two peals and a quarter peal. This was followed by celebrations in a local café where many of her friends and family shared amusing anecdotes of her life and stories and how her inspirational attitude had touched them. Sue absolutely loved the day and said it was 'like being at her own wake'. This day galvanised Sue – she was determined to fight back and set to work on a number of lifestyle changes. She reflected on all the things she wanted to achieve and created a bucket list, which came to be known as the 'Pink Fizz' list, since every time she ticked something off, she would raise a glass of her favourite pink bubbles to celebrate. Of course, many of the items on the list involved bell ringing and on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2019 she successfully rang her 2000<sup>th</sup> peal: 41 Surprise Minor.

Despite stubbornly rebelling her whole life, her younger daughter Hollie along with her fiancé finally started 'learning the ropes' and thanks to some fantastic tuition from Graham, Sue and their friends, they both scored their first quarter peals on Mothering Sunday. The Pink Fizz list also included a family quarter peal at Long Eaton covering three generations (including her father, sister and all three of her children), as well as her son, Tristan's first peal: Bristol Surprise Major at Kineton. In the first half of 2019, Sue was busier than ever and sometimes ringing eight or nine peals in a week! It was almost impossible to believe there was anything wrong with her, most healthy people wouldn't have stood a chance of keeping up with her energetic lifestyle! With the first Pink Fizz list fully completed, another and then a third were drawn up.

In her final few weeks, Sue spent time at Warwick Hospital before moving to Myton Hospice, compelled to accept that her health was declining, seven months after the initial diagnosis. She loved it at the Hospice – it was peaceful and quiet with beautiful gardens, fantastic supportive staff and close to home. Sue was so in demand, that she needed a diary to ensure she wasn't swamped with visitors! The Pink Fizz lists had completely captured the imagination of her friends and the wider ringing community via Facebook. As Sue moved to her final resting place, she left to the sound of Pink Fizz Alliance Major on Kineton bells – this was one of the few details of the occasion that she had not planned or specified herself.

There were 28 peals, 38 quarter peals and other performances rung in memoriam of Sue. Two of the peals rung for the St Martin's Guild are particularly memorable: Bristol Maximus, which was her daughter, Rebecca's, 100th peal and Stedman Cinques, the composition having been specifically commissioned by Sue from Mark Eccleston for the occasion, both at St Philip's. As a permanent memorial to Sue, the bells of Radway, Warwickshire (within earshot of her final resting place) are due to be augmented to six with a new treble, cast by John Taylor & Co before Christmas, to be known as 'Sue's bell'. Unfortunately, the installation has been delayed and the first peal on the new ring – due to have taken place on the first anniversary of her death – will, no doubt, be a further casualty of the Coronavirus pandemic.

Her indefatigable spirit and determination to live life to the full was encapsulated by the Pink Fizz lists and her children are in the process of completing the unfinished third list. She was an inspiration to all she rang with and to the wider community where her spirit touched so many people. She will be missed but always remembered for her passion, ambition, focus and down to earth, compassionate nature.



**Birmingham, West Midlands**

St Bartholomew, Edgbaston

Sunday, 19 May 2019 in 2h 44 (10–0–14 in G)

5040 Spliced Variable Cover Triples and Major (3m)

2464 Bristol Surprise Major; 1344 Stedman Triples; 1232 Double Norwich Court Bob Major; 62 com, 14 changes of cover bell

Composed by M R Eccleston

- 1 Christine Mills
- 2 Jack E Page
- 3 Susan E Marshall
- 4 Stephanie J Warboys
- 5 Clare McArdle
- 6 Mark R Eccleston (C)
- 7 James P Ramsbottom
- 8 Alistair J Cherry

Circled the tower: 3 (an event from Sue's 'Pink Fizz' list)

*(this was Sue's last peal for the St Martin's Guild, and the band photo is to the left)*

## Remembering John Conduct – Louise James

*John Conduct learnt to ring at Erdington in 1943 and went on to ring 27 peals for the Guild in the 1950s and 1960s. He died in December 2019, and his obituary, below, has been written by Louise James, a ringer from Devon. John's obituary was published in the Guild of Devonshire Ringers' newsletter: 'Ringing Round Devon'. We have permission from Louise, and the GDR newsletter editor, Ian Campbell, to republish this.*

Many of you may not have heard that John died on 9<sup>th</sup> December, a few days short of his 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday. Mention his name to anyone who knew him and the response is always 'such a kind man', 'a lovely man, modest, helpful', 'a brilliant striker'. A well-respected ringer from Cornwall once said that it was such a pity that because the striking competitions included a raise – something that John's health could not entertain – one of the best strikers in the county could not take part.



John learned to ring in 1943, on muffled bells, at Erdington. His father also rang there and they were both in the choir. He later went on to become tower captain. He regularly attended the 43ers reunions until they stopped due to dwindling numbers. When he was courting Jean he told her not to expect to see him in the week as he would be out ringing. When he and Jean married, he rang before the service, linking the two great loves of his life. Jean became a ringing widow while they lived in Birmingham, as John was off most Saturdays ringing as well as Sundays for services and a couple of practice nights in the week. His records show that he rang 91 peals (conducted one) and 259 quarter peals (44). He was happy on all numbers. He was always interested to hear where I had rung on my travels, and would quite often relate details of peals he had rung there, who was in the band and the conductor. He rang quite a bit in the early years with the Beresfords. He could not have known that he would be ringing with them and the next generations in more recent times.

The family moved to the West Country in the late 60s, ringing at Stratton with Harry Stacey, Charlie Sanguine and Henry Trewin amongst others. As well as ringing, he inscribed several peal boards for Stratton – calligraphy being one of his many talents. His daughters, Susan and Debbie, learned to ring at Stratton but gave up after a couple of years. John was thrilled that Debbie took it up again more recently at Alphington. By this time, John and Jean had moved to Oxford but they still visited Devon from time to time, and John was happy to go ringing with Debbie, but sorry that he could only sit and watch on recent trips.

John was keen to help learners progress and had a way of explaining things that everyone understood. He enjoyed conducting too and always had his little book to hand, often passing you a piece of paper with a touch that he thought we would enjoy. He particularly enjoyed calling Stedman. He was always happy to travel for some good ringing, and was a regular in the St Brannock's Society quarter peals, but he still hankered to ring one more peal while his health would tolerate it. For Jean's birthday in October 2008 he chose four-spliced at Bridgerule (where he and Jean were living). We were all relieved when it came round. After they moved to Oxford he rang for a while at Radley until the walk up the church path became too much for him.

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

John was a member of several ringing groups in Devon and Cornwall, so when arranging the quarter peal in his memory it seemed only right to include ringers from those groups and the towers where he had been a regular helper: Ancient Society of College Youths, Guild of Devonshire Ringers, Truro Diocesan Guild, St Brannock's Society, Taw, Torridge & Tamar Midweek Group, Marhamchurch and the northern branch of the Truro Diocesan Guild. We were delighted that Jean and Debbie were able to listen to the ringing.

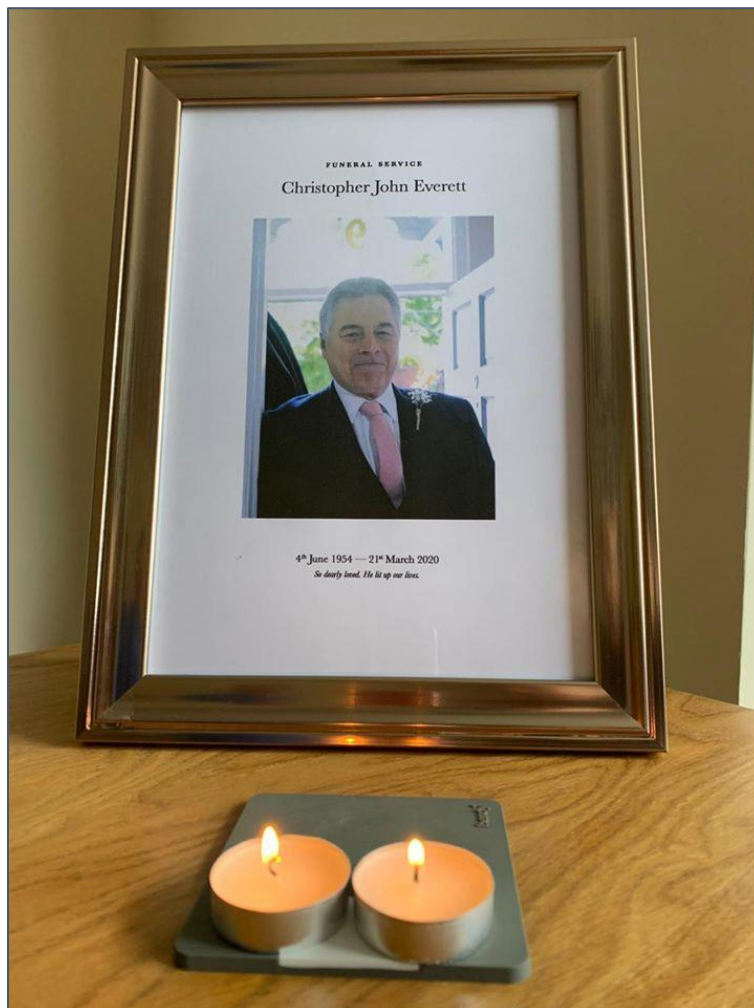
In his last letter to me he said, 'Oh I do miss my ringing'. Not as much as we will miss you, dear friend.

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### Remembering Chris Everett – Clare McArdle

Chris Everett, husband of Trish our Safeguarding Officer, died peacefully on 21<sup>st</sup> March. His funeral was held on Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> April. Due to the current social distancing measures, only the six closest members of Chris' family, Trish and their five children, were able to attend his funeral. Other family members, friends and Guild members who knew lit a candle for Chris at the time of his funeral.

Our thoughts and prayers are with Trish and her family at this sad and difficult time. Rest in peace Chris.



### Remembering Andrew Stubbs – Clare McArdle

Andrew Stubbs died on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> April after a short illness.

Andrew, Life Vice President of the St Martin's Guild, held the position of Master for 11 years. He served as Master of the Ancient Society of College Youths in 1968 and held the office of Treasurer from 1981 to 2006. He held prominent positions within the Central Council and the Ringing World and was a long serving member of the OUS and St Paul's Cathedral Guild. A full obituary will be published in due course.

A man of great influence and infinite wisdom, he will be sorely missed. Rest in peace Andrew.





### Workshops Work! Keith Whitehead

The January & February workshops at St Alphege, Solihull, were based around Spliced Plain and Little Bob Minor. We're not ready for a spliced quarter peal yet but the highlighted quarter peal of Little Bob Minor is a step in the right direction, especially as it was a first for three of us and only the second for another!



#### Solihull, West Midlands

St Alphege

Sunday, 1 March 2020

1280 Little Bob Minor

- 1 Jen D Hickman
- 2 Sand J Cooper
- 3 Linda M Whitehead
- 4 Malcolm J Paulson
- 5 Keith D Whitehead
- 6 Mike Dodson (C)

Remembering Mary Bartholomew and Peter Jowett.

First of Little Bob: 1, 3, 5

50th together: 1, 3

### Brumdingers – Simon Linford

Brumdingers was going strong up until the moment we stopped, and a particular shame as some of them have moved onto method ringing and were getting really quite keen. Many of them have been enjoying Saturday mornings at BSoBR – Susan, Max and Lex at Harborne, along with Elizabeth Wilby; Orson and Robbie are now learning plain hunting and having a few handling tweaks from the watchful eye of Phil at St Paul's and Kunal has been going along to the Level 5 group at Northfield.

The Thursday evening practices have continued to be well attended, with as many as nine sometimes. The most recent joiner has been Elliot Daniel, who has been taught at BSoBR and very usefully brings his dad along as a helper.

We are keeping practices going at the moment on a Thursday evening via Zoom, with most of them logging into Ringingroom last Thursday to ring some Twinkle Twinkle Little Star and attempt some Plain Hunt. It may need the tutors to master it first! The highlighted quarter peal managed to have the most Brumdingers in it of any quarter so far.

#### Moseley, West Midlands

St Mary

Sunday, 9 February 2020 in 41m

1260 Plain Bob Doubles

- 1 Orson Gee
- 2 Simon J L Linford (C)
- 3 Eleanor J Linford
- 4 Malcolm J Paulson
- 5 Sara C Paulson
- 6 Charlotte D Linford

First away from the tenor: 1

### **First Performance of 'Pendulums' by Andrew Woodhead – Ros & Tim Martin**

There are methods, there are Call Changes, and there are occasionally attempts by composers to include bells in pieces of music. Some of these fall flat for the ringers, because they are asked; 'can you just ring this?' and the answer is, unfortunately, no.

Composer Andrew Woodhead took the trouble to watch and understand the sounds, processes and patterns of bellringing before he presented 'Pendulums' to the band at St Paul's in the Jewellery Quarter and asked them whether they could take part in a performance of it at the 'Ideas of Noise' festival on 8<sup>th</sup> February.

What he challenged the band to ring, in the Autumn of 2019, was deceptively simple. Each of eight bells would ring at a consistent and comfortable speed. What made it a fascinating piece of music was that each of the bells rings at a different speed, the treble the fastest, the tenor slowest. The cues for speed were delivered through earphones, and the ringers were successful only if they could ignore the rest of the band and focus only on their own bell and the electronic beeps.

Like the Apollo program, it turned out that this was an endeavour that could have some unexpected lasting benefits. No, we have not invented a new type of non-stick saucepan... but the idea of trying to ring a bell accurately given only an auditory clue, was picked up by several of the band as a potential way of improving general listening and bell-handling skills and would be fairly easy to add to a course for learners, using just a smartphone, free metronome app and some headphones. We had to work out exactly where your hands are when the bell sounds, and exactly what the time lag is between pull and sound. These are transferrable skills into the quest for ever-better striking.

During the piece, which started with everyone firing at the same speed before diverging gradually into rounds, unexpectedly familiar rows appeared – Rounds, and Queens. Also new but recognisable patterns occurred such as pairs of bells ringing together, or half the bells firing then the other half. At the end, the bells returned to firing.

Meanwhile, in the church, a 6-piece ensemble improvised alongside the ringing, layered with Electro-Acoustic field recordings from churches, bells and related found sounds.

The whole performance, which included ringing up, a touch of Grandsire (on the front eight, just to keep things interesting!) and ringing down, lasted about an hour and was heard by an audience mostly comprised of students. The bells were used to good effect creating a unique soundscape including some moments of haunting melody. The audience received the work enthusiastically and the ringers were given a very warm round of applause when they descended from the belfry.

As ringers we are often focused on the qualities of evenness and regularity in our ringing and this was a real opportunity to hear the bells as a musical instrument in a way that is rarely considered.

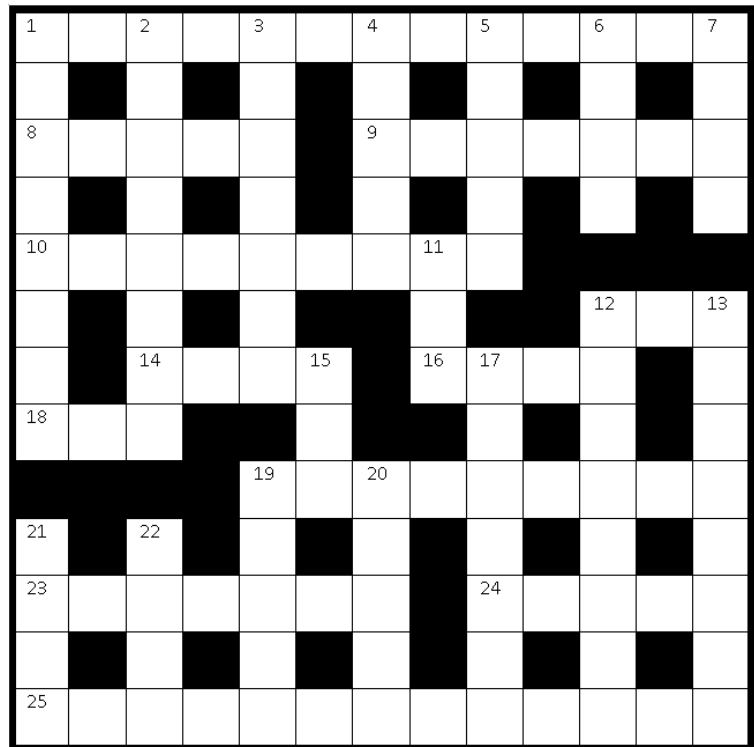
### Bell Ringer's Crossword Puzzle

With the lockdown ongoing, we hope you will enjoy this puzzle that has been provided anonymously by a member of the Guild.

Ten clues (marked by asterisks in the table below) are for entries which are bell ringing-related terms: these clues are (mildly) cryptic, and beyond the fact that they are to do with bell ringing, lack any further 'definition' (though most lead to the names of methods – hopefully not too obscure!).

The remaining clues are all normal and non-cryptic.

Good luck, and the answers can be found on the back page of the newsletter. No cheating please!



Across	Down
1* Surprisingly rich now – twice over? (13, two words)	1 Child (8)
8 Employing (5)	2* Quick curtsy following marriage? (8, two words)
9* Wrecked tandems (7)	3 Clear (7)
10* Band writhing in Hell before start of service (9)	4 Sounded through the nose (5)
12 Mine; card game (3)	5 Water grasses (5)
14 Small furnace (4)	6 Poetic foot of two syllables (4)
16 Of the mouth (4)	7* Captain finally found in cabin? (4)
18 Tease (3)	11 Sign (3)
19* Side rang terribly around back of tower (9)	12* Flat shilling? (8, two words)
23 Rower (7)	13 Young big cat (8, two words)
24 Isometric (5)	15 Neither (3)
25* Bet broken belt needs repairing (13, three words)	17 Fundamental (7)
	19 Full range (5)
	20 Girl's name; musical (5)
	21* Bowl (for a white rose?) (4)
	22* Free rein (4)

## Thoughts on Social Distancing – Clare McArdle

Just three weeks ago we were wondering how the emerging threat of the Coronavirus pandemic might affect us as individuals, within about 48 hours the shock realisation that all ringing would be suspended was upon us. I was at the ART conference at Hilton in Derbyshire with around 100 other delegates and was due to fly out on holiday the next day. By lunchtime I'd decided I wasn't going to risk going and by 18:30 my flights had been cancelled by the airline. I decided (relatively early) to suspend Birmingham School of Bell Ringing sessions and all ringing at Harborne – I felt distinctly uncomfortable about this and worried a lot about whether my fellow ringers thought I was overreacting.

From that point on, my whole social structure collapsed like a pack of cards. All my work dried up immediately; within days I couldn't go and visit my mother in sheltered housing; my sleep patterns were disturbed; my diary went from full to empty. I'm sure I am describing what has happened to everyone reading this.

I have just listened to an uplifting interview with Terry Waite, who was held hostage in Beirut for four and a half years about 30 years ago. He was kept blindfolded and chained to a wall for 23 hours and 50 minutes each day. He slept on the floor and had no access to the outside world. He described how he coped with such extreme isolation. First of all he had to come to terms with his fears about his future and for his family. His mindset told him that he couldn't change things, he didn't know if he had a tomorrow, but he did have today – he lived for the moment. His particular way of coping was to write books in his head.

Terry Waite is an extreme example for us, given the length of time and the extreme deprivation he was subjected to. However, there are things we can take away from what he shared about his time in captivity: We can reframe our thinking about this time we all now have in a positive way. Instead of feeling we are 'stuck' at home, we can start thinking we are 'safe' at home. We can't change what is happening, but we can live for today. Form a structure for the day and try to use your time creatively. Most of us have access to books, TV and a certain amount of social media – many of you will be both giving and receiving support this way.

I am pleased to say that I have discovered reserves of resilience that I didn't really know I had. My immediate concerns were for others – my mother, as I've already said; other friends and ringers at my tower. Once lockdown for vulnerable groups was announced other concerns arose. We have quite a number of Guild members who fall into the vulnerable group category. Between us, Guild officers have contacted all of those members to check that they have a support network and to offer help if they haven't.

I've noticed a change in the way that I contact people. Before I preferred email or text messages, reasoning people could read them when they had time, worrying that a phone call might disturb them. Now I am ringing people and having a chat and a laugh with them. I speak with my mother on FaceTime and have much chattier and longer conversations with her. The number of WhatsApp groups I have created or joined has exploded. I've discovered Zoom – along with the rest of the world it seems...

We are now two weeks into social distancing measures and all of a sudden I'm busy again – and so are lots of other people. I've had coffee with the St Martin's band, chaired a Standing Committee meeting, run a Harborne practice, been to Brumdingers, attended an ART Management Committee meeting, participated in a planning meeting for next year's HJ Dinner, oh and arrived late to the St Martin's Guild 'not the pub quiz' –

all on Zoom, a virtual meeting room where you can host or participate in face to face chat. If you haven't heard of Zoom, it is a really easy app to use and install onto desktop or mobile.

If you are sitting at home worrying that your ringing skills will decay during this enforced lay-off – don't. Guild Officers, the Association of Ringing Teachers, the Central Council and ringers all over the world have mobilised and are applying themselves to developing resources and delivering virtual training at all levels of ability. It's a hive of activity. Very soon you will be hearing about resources to download and webinars you can attend. Think of the time you will be able to spend really getting to grips with call changes, counting places, learning methods, learning to conduct or compose. That time is now (well nearly...).

Much of this technology is new to us too – Arthur's brilliant 'not the pub quiz' last week was a bit of an experiment so we can see how the Zoom platform works. It works very well.

Of course, somethings don't change. The 100 Club continues as it did, with the monthly draw live on Facebook. We will be holding a virtual Guild meeting, incorporating a virtual Guild 'Bake-Off' on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> May. Look out for details on the Guild website, by email and on the Facebook page, soon.

I hope you are all keeping safe and well. Look out for each other and keep together socially as bands – WhatsApp and Zoom are great for this. Check on the vulnerable, ring people for a chat. If you do have concerns for yourself or another guild member, Guild Officers may be able to help if you get in touch with us (smgcb@gmail.com).

I don't know about 'social distancing' – the lockdown measures have necessitated changes in how we approach things. We have had to slow down and think about ourselves and those around us. I don't know about you but I think I feel closer to many more people.

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### **Ringling Returns – James Ramsbottom**

Following the suspension of all ringing due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Central Council has already started making plans for what will happen as and when we are allowed to ring again. There will be a campaign called #RinglingReturns. The name comes from the same idea as the Ringling Remembers campaign of November 2018, and the use of the hashtag (#) in the title allows for people to talk about it online and easily link their posts to other posts on the same subject.

It is very difficult to say exactly what form the ringing will take at this stage, as we have no idea when the suspension will be lifted. It will most likely happen quite suddenly, so watch your emails for news of when we may be asked to ring.

But it does go beyond starting to ring bells again. It is quite possible that several ringers, especially those who haven't been ringing for long, will drift away during this period and not return once we can ring again. Please make an effort to remain in contact with your own local bands so everyone is aware when ringing starts again, and everyone is encouraged to return. Without ringers, there can be no ringing.

I know that many Guild members are keeping as active as they can in ringing right now, often through social media and online ringing resources. Please keep this up (not that many of you need to be told that) and I hope to see you all again once we're allowed outside again.

## **The Henry Johnson Dinner – *Fran Cinderey***

*If the HJ Dinner were a touch of Stedman Triples (starting on the 7<sup>th</sup>)...*

### **Dodging at the back – with a bob to keep you there!**

The Birmingham Council House is the setting for the annual Henry Johnson Commemoration Dinner at the end of February. The Banqueting Suite provides a fine setting as ringers dodge around each other in their finery, trying to reach the bar. To keep them at the back a bit longer, Richard Postill provided a picture quiz of Guild Towers from unusual angles – resident members and visitors alike were left scratching their heads.

### **Down into double dodge 4-5**

As everyone made their way towards the front, the splendid table plan and arrangements made by dinner secretary, Jenny Sunter, ensured minimal dodging for all to find their seats. Imagine my delight at having graduated from the back student table to Table 5... which turned out to be at the back of the room (that said, the advantages of that will become clear).

### **In quick**

Madam Chairman, Gill Postill, welcomed the assembled guests, inviting Dean Matt Thompson to say grace before the meal began. The quick work here represents perhaps the shortest of the speeches.

### **Double dodge 4-5 up**

I'm sure that no one reading this really wants to know what everyone ate but I won't let that stop me. The starter, served to the guests at the table, was roasted sweet potato soup with a griddled scone. Just the one set of double dodges.

### **Dodging in 6-7 up**

A buffet station, rather than table service, showed the advantages of sitting at the back. Seeing others walk past with their plates of beef steak, fish pie or mushroom and spinach chilli gave time to carefully consider the best choice. And if that choice was the wrong one being closest for going up for seconds (bob).

### **Dodging in 6-7 down**

Repeat with dessert – with seconds of course (bob).

### **Double dodge in 4-5 down**

Coffee or tea with mints, of course.

### Go in slow

With everyone well fed and content, the main entertainment for the evening could commence. Despite being the slow work, with speeches from a range of interesting speakers interspersed with handbell ringing, all were kept captivated.

Gill Postill, secretary of the Birmingham Cathedral bell ringers, ringer at St James Shirley and chairman for the evening, opened the programme with toasts to both Her Majesty the Queen and the memory of the late Henry Johnson. In her speech, Gill recalled how this 132<sup>nd</sup> dinner was only the 4<sup>th</sup> time that the dinner had been held on 29<sup>th</sup> February. In her tribute to Henry Johnson, Gill revealed that she had been baptised in the same church as Henry Johnson – St Chad's Lichfield.

Following this, a toast to the guests and visitors was proposed by Clare McArdle, now Guild Master of the St Martin's Guild. All in attendance gave a round of applause but no one more enthusiastically than retiring St Martin's Guild Master Simon Linford. As well as welcoming those ringers who had travelled great distances to attend the dinner, Clare did her bit for ringing harmony by introducing John (attending his first HJ dinner) to fellow ringing widowers so they could compare notes after the speeches.

In response, Phil Rogers recalled his feelings at ringing in Birmingham including with the late Rod Pipe. On the whole this was a feeling of being nervous apart from the times he was terrified!

As a break in proceedings, a faultless handbell touch of Stedman Triples was expertly rung by Michael Wilby, Alistair Cherry, Mark Eccleston and Arthur Reeves (see band photograph overleaf).

Halfway through the slow work, the programme continued with Julia Cater proposing a toast to the continued prosperity of the St Martin's Guild. Julia's recount of time with the well-loved former resident Guild members Maurice and Margaret Edwards was well received along with her attempt to replicate their accent. She spoke fondly of the Guild and remarked on how its reputation continues to grow with its cutting edge Monday night band at St Philip's Cathedral; 12 bell band and Birmingham School of Bell Ringing to produce 'made in Birmingham' ringers.

In his response, Michael Wilby proposed a round of applause to congratulate Simon Linford on his new role as President of the Central Council. In going on to propose the Health of the Chairman, Michael spoke with affection for Gill. Although he recalled how Gill could be ruthless with rotas, this is outweighed by her generosity with jelly babies for which she is known and loved.

Dodging some more (with a single and bob should bring it round).

With the slow work drawing to a close, ringers and non-ringers were left to mingle and socialise until 'that's all' was called. A successful touch of 123 changes of Stedman Triples.

(Apologies from the author that her composing ability couldn't turn that into 132 changes and still relate it to the dinner).

*With thanks to Tracy Stevens for providing the photos.*





## An Update from Simon Linford (President of the Central Council)

So what is it like now being President of the Central Council rather than the St Martin's Guild? Over the last few months the amount of work has really ramped up. I am doing a lot more work than the St Martin's Guild took, but spending a lot less time actually ringing. A few weeks ago I added up the number of hours I had spent on Council business, including travel, in one week and it was 35 hours! And that is while still having a full time job, going to two practices and ringing a peal on the Monday night. That was a bit exceptional, but there is a flood of things to deal with.

Most of it is good positive things, generated from spending the first three months of my term of office generating a new set of strategic priorities for the Council, which are now going to be published in the Ringing World. They have been sent to all associations and CC Reps with general agreement all round. A bit ambitious, but a good start! There is no doubt that there is a serious amount of work to do to enable ringing to thrive.

The most difficult part of the job though is dealing with the 'naysayers', people who think that knocking the Central Council is good sport, those who want to see the negative in everything and tell social media their opinions, those who liked the old way the Central Council worked and would like to see the new structure fail. My predecessor recently said to me 'I hope you are keeping your thick skin'. I know what he meant.

I am getting the benefit of the doubt though from most quarters. Most ringers want the Council to be effective and want ringing to thrive. I said at the start that if the only thing I achieved was to get more people appreciating what the Central Council does, respecting it, and wanting to help, then that would be a good start.

Finally, one thing that is a great help is the example the St Martin's Guild has set in terms of how a small association can achieve things, and the understanding of ringing at all levels that being Master of the St Martin's Guild gave me. The Guild has a status out of proportion to its scale, and not a week goes by without something the Guild as done being referred to. I hope that in return some of things I can now influence on a wider scale may be of benefit to the Guild in the future.

The influence of the St Martin's Guild is clear at this tri-partite meeting between the Ringing World, ART and the Central Council!



### The 100 Club – Clare McArdle

Please see the table for the Q1 results. Well done to the winners and thanks to all for participating!

January	1 <sup>st</sup>	17	Phil Sealey	£49.50
	2 <sup>nd</sup>	52	Gill Fielden	£14.85
	3 <sup>rd</sup>	90	Christine Barnell	£4.95
February	1 <sup>st</sup>	53	Tony Daw	£50
	2 <sup>nd</sup>	43	Richard Andrew	£15
	3 <sup>rd</sup>	62	Will Davies	£5
March	1 <sup>st</sup>	34	Richard Andrew	£50
	2 <sup>nd</sup>	19	James Ramsbottom	£15
	3 <sup>rd</sup>	89	Brenda Thomson	£5

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### Horton Handbells – Janet Horton

Rose and I rang our first quarter on handbells last weekend (see panel).

When we realised that we were not going to be able to do any tower bell ringing for a while, the Hortons' thoughts turned to what we could do instead. There are only so many games of Bananagrams that one could play. So we asked Clare whether we could borrow the set of handbells from out of the ringing room at Harborne. This was before lockdown, so there was nothing to say that one of us could not drive and collect them.

We started gently with the four of us ringing Rounds on eight and trying a few call changes. Then some Plain Hunt on four with one bell each. We progressed by fits and starts to Rose and I ringing Plain Bob Minimus, firstly with the numbers in front of us, and then progressing to ringing without the numbers. Firstly one extent, then a couple, three. How many could we do? This was a problem as we couldn't count extents and keep ringing. So to ring a quarter we were going to need help. We enrolled Steve as Umpire. The first time we tried, it fired out after Steve said 10. The next time it fired out because he didn't say 10! Finally we got used to him saying the number of extents and we did the whole thing.

#### Edgbaston, Birmingham

147 Poplar Avenue  
Sunday, 29 March 2020 in 31m

1272 Plain Bob Minimus

1–2D Rose W Horton  
3–4Janet A Horton

First quarter in hand by both. Umpire: S. W. Horton

Future targets would be for Rose and me to ring another but on the opposite pairs. Also for Steve to ring his first quarter. We are also looking at Reverse Bob Minimus.

**Malcolm's Peal of Stedman**

Well done to Malcolm Paulson on scoring his first peal of Stedman. This was originally attempted in the Stedman Triples weekend we had last June, but was unsuccessful, so it's nice that this has finally been resolved.

**Selly Oak, West Midlands**  
 St Mary  
 Saturday, 18 January 2020 in 2h 50 (12–1–17 in G)

5040 Stedman Triples  
 Composed by BD Price

1 Alan S Burbidge  
 2 Graham R Kelly  
 3 Andrew J Ellis  
 4 James P Ramsbottom (C)  
 5 Malcolm J Paulson  
 6 Alexander P Frye  
 7 Andrew V Brown  
 8 Jonathan MP Thorne

First of Triples: 5

**Solution to the Puzzle (see notes overleaf)**

1	D	0	2	U	B	3	L	E	4	N	O	5	R	W	6	I	C	7	H	
	A			N				E		A			E			A			U	
8	U	S	I	N	G				9	S	T	E	D	M	A	N				
	G			O				I		A			D			B			T	
10	H	A	N	D	B	E	L		11	L	S									
	T			B				L								12	P	I	13	T
	E			14	O	V	E	15	N			16	O	17	R	A	L			I
18	R	I	B						O					A			A			G
								19	G	R	20	A	N	D	S	I	R	E		
21	Y			22	E			A												R
23	O	A	R	S	M	A	N							24	C	U	B	I	C	
	R							I							A		O			U
25	K	E	N	T	T	R	E	B	L	E	B	O	B							

### Explanations of Cryptic 'Bell Ringing' Clues

Across	Down
1* Surprisingly rich now – twice over?: DOUBLE [anagram of RICH NOW] = <b>Double Norwich</b>	2* Quick curtsy following marriage?: UNION followed by BOB = <b>Union Bob</b>
9* Wrecked tandems: Anagram of TANDEMS = <b>Stedman</b>	7* Captain finally found in cabin?: (captai)N “found inside” HUT = <b>Hunt</b>
10* Band writhing in Hell before start of service: Anagram of BAND “inside” HELL before S(ervice) = <b>Handbells</b>	12* Flat shilling?: PLAIN followed by BOB = <b>Plain Bob</b>
19* Side rang terribly around back of tower: Anagram of SIDE RANG “around” (towe)R = <b>Grandsire</b>	21* Bowl (for a white rose?): “YORK” means “bowl” (a particular type of ball) in cricket, and is also implied by “white rose” = <b>York</b>
	22* Free rein: Anagram of REIN = <b>Erin</b>

NB In cryptic crosswords, words and terms such as ‘surprisingly’, ‘wrecked’, ‘writhing’, ‘terribly’, ‘needs repairing’ and ‘free’ as used in the above clues are ‘indicators’ for anagrams.

Words and terms such as ‘start of’, ‘back of’ and ‘finally’ are indicators for a particular letter in a word of a clue (e.g. ‘start of service’ = S).