

The Quarterly Newsletter of the St Martin's Guild - issue 46

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Birthday celebrations.

Congratulations to Colin Baugh who celebrated his 80th birthday recently. Family and friends joined together on Saturday 16th September at The Farm, Monkspath, to celebrate with cake, bubbly and a chance to catch up. On Sunday 17th September, Colin's actual birthday, a quarter peal was rung for him at Shirley to mark both his birthday and his many years as Ringing Master.

Our thanks to Colin's family for organising this special event and best wishes to Colin for many more years of ringing.

On Sunday, 17 September 2023

Shirley, West Midlands

St James the Great

Tenor: 6-1-1 in B♭

1260 Doubles (2m)

Grandsire, Plain Bob

- 1 Lynda Cranmer
- 2 Gwen Albrow
- 3 Pat Hicks
- 4 Adam Knight-Markiegi
- 5 Richard Andrew (C)
- 6 John Cranmer



Rung to celebrate the 80th birthday (today) of Colin Baugh, long-standing tower captain of St James, Shirley.

St Martin's Guild Worldwide.

I don't get to ring in the Guild's "home territory" that often, though I do try to get to Birmingham each time I'm in UK and always enjoy the experience. But one of the things that attracted me to the Guild was its putting aside the traditional narrow geographical restrictions, often based on inappropriate ecclesiastic boundaries set centuries ago, and instead welcoming all comers. So, on the "put your money where your mouth is" philosophy, I applied to join a few years ago.

In keeping with that philosophy, I really don't feel that, as a ringer, I particularly belong in any sort of exclusive way to any one group, band or region. In Australia the concept of 'home tower' is waning. Certainly in Brisbane, where I live, we regard ourselves as 'Brisbane Ringers' rather than being specifically aligned to either the cathedral or St Andrew's, our two towers. More generally I ring, and feel that I belong, in any tower that makes me feel welcome, and these days that is pretty much every tower. I know there are still stories of people turning up to a practice when they are away from home, getting at best a grunt of welcome, and ringing only once or twice in the evening, but I can't say I've ever experienced this and I think it happens much less now than it did, thanks in part to SMG and similar organisations that are pushing for diversity and getting rid of boundaries.

Just at the moment I'm at the start of a tour of North America, having been invited by NAG, the North American Guild, to rung eight ART

modules to be held in Marietta, Boston, Washington and Quebec. I'm not much of a 'hat' person, but I suppose my 'ART tutor' hat would be the most visible one on this trip. But I deliberately wear my SMG and my Singapore ringing shirts quite often, and they always attract comment about the international nature of ringing. Quilla Roth, one of the NAG team, said of this trip *'It isn't often that we get to have UK/Australia/North America working together on an in-person project that spreads over 4 weeks.'*

So I feel that this trip is very much in the SMG spirit of breaking down geographical boundaries. At the time of writing I've just arrived in Boston after two very successful modules in Marietta, GA. I suspect that, like ANZAB, NAG does not suffer much from the ingrained poor teaching habits that I'm told existed, and perhaps still exist, in some English towers - often those that are isolated, meaning socially isolated rather than geographically isolated. Certainly I was made to feel very welcome in Marietta, and the standards exhibited by the attendees were high, leading to lots of useful contributions and discussion among all present. The intercontinental links forged this month will I hope remain active for a long time.

So on reflection perhaps the title "SMG Worldwide" is aiming a bit low. Do we have any members signed up for the planned trips to Mars?

David Smith



Back row - left to right:

Mary Platt - Marietta
Thomas Erb - Marietta
Mike Keen - Sewanee
Derek Wilsden - Marietta
Sawyer Gosnell - Atlanta
Ray Gotko - Sewanee
David Smith - TUTOR
Gill Snowden - Charleston
Charley Heilker - Marietta
John Solomon - Sewanee
Keith Henley - Sewanee

Front row - left to right:

Eileen Butler - Philadelphia
Judith Smith - Atlanta
Sally Karkula - Marietta
Alice Heilker - Marietta

Ringling Master's Report.

Whilst it's probably more usual with these reports to reflect on events of the past three months I'd like to begin with a couple of things more to do with taking ringing forward. The Central Council has recently produced a couple of short videos (you may have already seen them) aimed at illustrating, not only to new recruits but also the general public, what ringing is all about. The footage illustrates bell handling and teaching at its very best and all the ringing seen and heard is good quality. The videos can be viewed [here](#) and [here](#). They are, in my opinion, the best promotional videos any ringer or tower could possibly wish for. Put simply, they are brilliant. Can I therefore suggest that Guild towers add at least one if not both of these links to their website or social media pages and use them to their full advantage. If your tower doesn't have a social media presence (there are Guild towers which don't) maybe see if it's possible to include a link or two on the church's own website or other platform they might have. In both cases consider adding the links to other locally related media pages. It's not about running a recruitment campaign, it's simply about raising awareness.

Also on the 'going forward' front, I've become aware of a few members who have been looking for practice nights beyond their own tower where they might be able to improve and/or develop their own skills, be it a new method or some other aspect of ringing. Whilst this desire to improve is only ever a good thing, it's worth bearing in mind that visiting elsewhere can sometimes put additional pressure on a tower which may already be stretched catering for its own band. As such, whilst a visitor may well receive a warm welcome (which is a given in ringing circles) and a high level of support, it may only be for 10, possibly 15 minutes of the practice at best. In short, the time allotment is never going to match what can be achieved by having a dedicated 90 minute practice. I was in exactly this position many years ago when my local band were not able to support my eagerness to progress. I started arranging my own practices for my own benefit and was pleasantly surprised at the support I got from other ringers in the locale. Looking back, this was by far the best thing I ever did to further

my ringing career and I can't recommend it highly enough to all ringers everywhere.

Moving forward some 50 odd years, based on this positive experience, a few years back I came up with the Three Events Challenge as a means of encouraging members to arrange ringing events purely for their own benefit. It's had plenty of mentions in previous newsletters and emails and by word of mouth, but I'm still coming across Guild members who are totally oblivious to it. So, here it is again. Full details of what it is and how it all works are on the [Guild website](#). Please take a moment to have a look at it and think about how you could benefit from it. Some Guild members have taken up the Challenge, have improved their skills and would be willing to chat to you about it should you have any queries. Additionally, I'm more than happy to help anyone get started with this, including finding suitable helpers. So maybe next time you find yourself twiddling your thumbs wondering which practice night to visit in order to have a go at whatever it is you're trying to achieve, maybe ping out an email or three instead and start arranging your own practice nights. You'll be amazed at the progress that can be made and it's vastly better than clogging up someone else's practice night.

As for what else has been happening since June - the Brumdingers are to be congratulated on their efforts at the Ringing World National Youth Contest held in York on 8th July. In total there were 23 teams taking part and a more detailed report on this can be found elsewhere in this newsletter. On a similar front, on Saturday 23rd September the St. Philip's Cathedral band not only entered the Robert B Smith 12 Bell Contest but also hosted the event with support from the Cathedral. A jolly good day was had by all and, as above, you can read more about this also elsewhere in this newsletter.

Having restarted in June the Wednesday evening workshops through July and August covering Single Oxford, Bastow and Little Bob, improving bell handling and also foundation skills were all well attended. In addition to these workshops, the special practices at Sheldon run by Margaret Burling every 3rd Wednesday continue to be well attended, well structured and very successful. I'm very grateful to Margaret for taking the

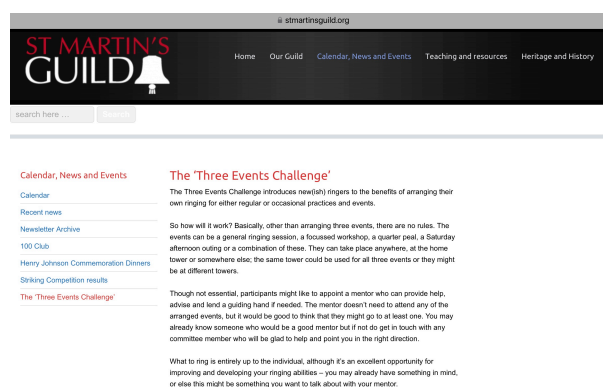
trouble to run these very valuable events and also to Alan Cottrell for the excellent cheese scones post ringing. The higher numbers practice at Solihull is now very well established and is regularly well attended. Both Malcolm Paulson and Sand Cooper are to be thanked for doing an excellent job getting these going and inviting the guest leaders beforehand. I'm grateful to them both for their efforts in arranging these practices and making Solihull bells available on a regular basis. The monthly surprise major practices have also been increasing in attendance, so much so that by the time you read this the October practice will have morphed into an evening of several quarter peals. I'm grateful to Eleanor Linford who has been doing an excellent job arranging and running these practices. Finally, the Thursday morning ringing at Moseley St Mary (for which Trish deserves a special 'thank you' for the excellent tea and cakes) has continued as normal and is always well enough attended. Well, when I say 'normal', the dumbbell currently standing in the church has been brought in to use on three separate occasions. A young local couple with a small infant happened to be passing and asked, "How hard is it?" They soon found themselves pulling a few backstrokes on the dumbbell as did two patrolling uniformed officers from the West Midlands Constabulary a few weeks later. Most recently a young mum from the temporarily relocated Mother and Toddler group came over saying she'd always 'fancied a go at bell ringing' and again this demand was quickly sorted out, courtesy of the dumbbell. She was actually very good and did a perfect backstroke set after only a couple of minutes. It's worth remembering in these situations that whilst these people most likely aren't going to walk in to a tower any time soon to learn to ring, that's not to say they won't spread the word to their friends and colleagues about their experience, and who knows where that might lead to. As I've already mentioned

once in this report, it's all about raising awareness.

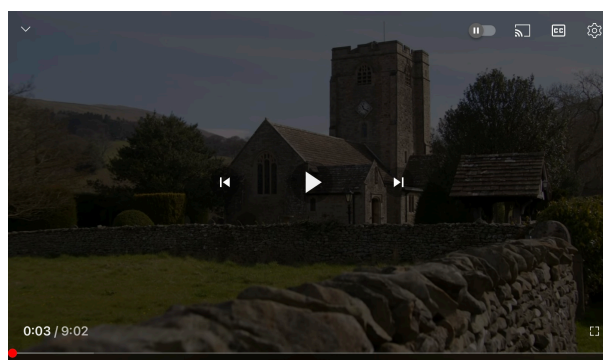
As always, my thanks go to everyone who is arranging or supporting any of the many ringing events which now occur every month (not all of them publicised), be it extra practices, workshops, quarter peals, or simply general ringing. It all adds up to an incredibly active and progressive Guild of which every member can be rightly proud.

In closing, can I remind members that if any individual or band would like help or support with anything, be it say learning a particular method or organising a special practice, then please do get in touch and I'll see what can be done. Thank you.

Phil Ramsbottom



The screenshot shows the St Martin's Guild website. The header includes the logo and navigation links: Home, Our Guild, Calendar, News and Events, Teaching and resources, and Heritage and History. The main content area is titled 'Calendar, News and Events' and lists several links: Calendar, Recent news, Newsletter Archive, 100 Club, Henry Johnson Commemoration Dinners, Striking Competition results, and The Three Events Challenge. The 'The Three Events Challenge' page is highlighted, showing a description of the challenge and its purpose.



Brumdingers News.

The highlight of this quarter of the year was the trip to the Ringing World National Youth Contest, which was held in York. We took a squad of 10, 8 of whom rang the test piece and two reserves. Team captain Charlie Linford decided that rather than enter the method competition and ring Minor, it would be better for the team to include more members and compete on eight, so an eight bell call change band was entered. This added Susan, Thomas and James to five of last year's team (we lost Caoimhe). The team did very well given their relative inexperience, coming joint 6th out of 17 teams, ahead of teams who recruit from a far larger area.

The Youth Contest is always a showcase of branded team shirts, with the different groups being readily identifiable in their team colours. Last year a couple of teams moved up to hoodies from the usual polos and tees, but this year the Brumdingers absolutely stole the show! Bucket hats.

I think it was Elizabeth and Charlie's idea, and I sorted bucket hats with the Brumdingers logo on the front and, inexplicably to most of the adults present, the word 'SLAY' in gold capital letters on the back. A number of team leaders were overheard ruing the fact they they had not thought of bucket hats, and we expect to see many more next year.

Brumdingers practices have now moved to once a month on a Thursday evening and at a slightly later time, for various reasons. The first monthly practice came at the end of September with 10 young ringers present. The plan is to supplement that monthly practice at Moseley with Saturday or Sunday outings once a month, as well as joint events with other young ringers' groups.

Simon Linford



Central Council AGM Weekend at Ipswich.

This year's Central Council AGM weekend was held at Ipswich and was hosted by the Suffolk Guild who are celebrating their centenary this year. James Ramsbottom and Richard Andrew attended this as CC Reps for our own St Martin's Guild.

There was a full programme of events over the weekend, following the general format used at the AGM weekend held at Nottingham last year, but with the main exception that there was no mini roadshow this time. On the Friday there were several Ringing Development Sessions, organised by the Council in conjunction with the Suffolk Guild and held in local towers near Ipswich, covering topics aimed at different levels of ringing, such as 'Moving on to Minor/Major/Surprise Major'. In the evening there was general ringing on the fine 12 at St Mary-le-Tower in Ipswich, followed by an informal social event at a nearby pub, which was enjoyed by all who attended.

The main meetings of the weekend (Ringing World and Council AGMs) were held on the Saturday at The Hold, a heritage and conference centre run by Suffolk County Council in conjunction with the University of Suffolk. The morning started with a Central Council Workgroup Reception, with informal displays by the various workgroups about what they do, with a good supply of tea, coffee and biscuits available.

The Ringing World AGM.

The rest of the morning was devoted to the AGM of The Ringing World Ltd, chaired by Paul Jopp. He reported that 2022 had produced a surplus of over £26K, after a deficit of over £12K in 2021. An even larger surplus is expected for 2023, and these recent surpluses are partly due to two big Royal events, and the associated ringing donations. However, 2024 is likely to be a tougher year, as no significant Royal events are anticipated and also an increase in postage rates is expected from Royal Mail.

New publications this year have included the Little Green Book (a prequel to the Purple Book) and 'Criblines - Treble Dodging Royal'.

There are also some new Christmas card designs available.

Elva Ainsworth reported on a successful RW National Youth Competition in York this year, with an increase in the number of entries over last year. Next year's event will be in London (July 2024).

Elva also reported on the survey that the RW carried out in Spring 2023. This showed that people like BellBoard, front covers and special editions in particular. There also appear to be two basic groups of readers - those aged 61-80 who like the weekly RW publication as it is, and those under 60, who would like a less frequent publication without performances. One possible way of addressing this discrepancy might be to trial a new approach to sit alongside the current weekly publication.

Central Council Meeting.

Saturday afternoon was mostly taken up by the annual meeting of the Council, chaired by the President, Simon Linford, who would be standing down at the end of this meeting after four years in office. David Kirkcaldy, as Deputy President, would also be standing down.

The first main item on the agenda was an application to affiliate to the Council from the Central European Association, which has about 30 members. This was voted through.

After a few admin items, there then followed the usual succession of reports from the Council Executive and the various Workgroups. Items of particular note from these reports included the following:

Public Relations Workgroup.

Vicki Chapman, the workgroup leader, said that the 'Ring for the King' campaign was probably the biggest we had ever undertaken. Also, there are now two new promotional videos 'Discovering Bellringing' and 'Enjoyment from Bellringing' available for free use by anyone, which can be found on the Central Council's [YouTube](#) page.

Stewardship and Management Workgroup.

Alison Hodge, the workgroup leader, spoke about the trilogy of online documents covering aspects of running towers which the workgroup has developed over the last few years. She asked those present to spread knowledge of these documents as widely as

possible, so this is our attempt to do this. Details are as follows, including the links where they can be found:

Belfry Upkeep (for steeple keepers):
<https://belfryupkeep.cccbr.org.uk>

Belfry Projects (advice for those organising bell restoration projects):
<https://belfryprojects.cccbr.org.uk>

Running a Tower (for tower captains):
<https://runningatower.cccbr.org.uk>

These online documents contain a wealth of useful information on these topics, much of which was formerly available in various CCCBR publications and other formats. The online format makes them easy to update, so they are not static documents. We encourage ringers to use them as much as possible.

Simon Linford then covered the Council's Forward Plan for 2024, including a Strategy to support the Ringing 2030 initiative, based on Three Pillars:

1. Publicity and Marketing - Raise awareness of the art of bellringing and promote it as a social and voluntary activity.
2. Recruitment and Development - Encourage the development of local and regional structures to recruit potential new ringers and lapsed ringers, then ensure expectations are met as they progress.
3. Quality Environment - We have to create a quality environment that makes people enjoy ringing and want to stay doing it.

Elections of Trustees to the Executive then followed, with Tina Stoecklin being elected as President and Vicki Chapman as Deputy President. There was a close election for the vacant post of Ordinary Trustee, with Ian Roulstone being elected over Alison Hodge by just one vote.

The last part of the meeting was taken up with discussions and voting on three proposed motions as follows:

Motion A - The reduction of the annual subscription rate of Small Societies from £20 to £10 was approved by the meeting.

Motion B - A contentious motion to reduce the number of CC Representatives. After much discussion (somewhat curtailed by the need to finish the meeting by the venue's closing time), it was clear that the majority feeling was against this motion, and it was defeated. The number of CC Representatives remains as before.

Motion C - To endorse the proposal by the Historical & Archive workgroup that the Council Library should be moved to be housed by the Loughborough Bellfoundry Trust. This was approved by the meeting.

Next year's meeting (2024) will be hosted by the Guild of Devonshire Ringers.

A convivial social event was then held in the evening at St Peter's by the Waterfront community centre, including a Beer and Cider Tasting, with hot food (curries).

Ringing 2030 Q&A session.

This was held at St Clement's church in Ipswich after Sunday morning ringing at towers in and around Ipswich. It was titled 'Building a Strong Future for Ringing', and was led by the outgoing President, Simon Linford. It covered aspects of the Ringing 2030 initiative and also the Three Pillars discussed at the AGM the previous day, focusing on various questions, such as what is the logical unit for organising ringing? (e.g. county) and the possibility of having a central membership system. If we get all young ringers into the Young Change Ringers' Association, is it possible that they might just grow (through universities and working life) into becoming the Change Ringers' Association?

Afternoon development sessions.

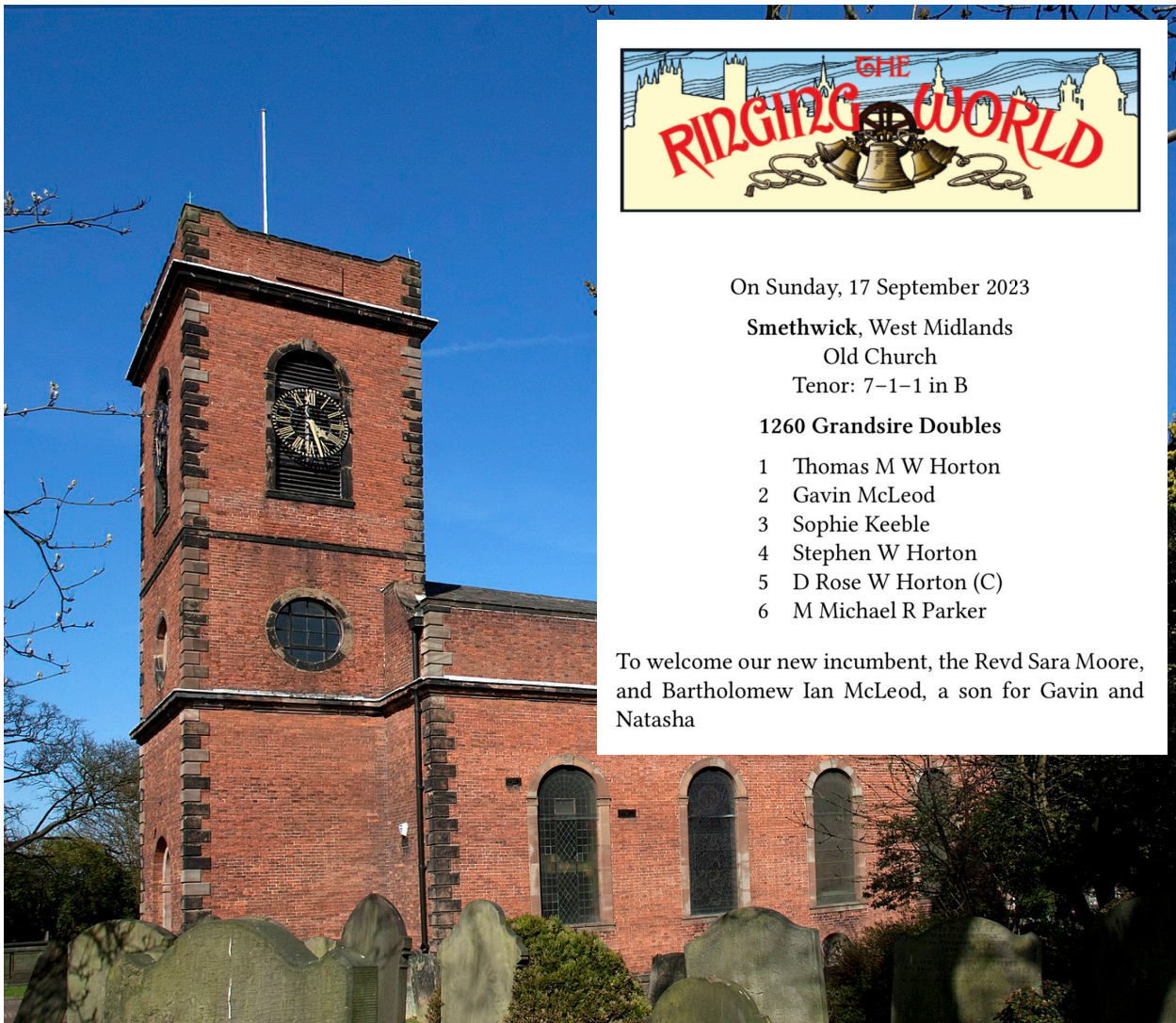
The weekend's events concluded with some more development sessions, held at several Ipswich towers and covering topics such as belfry maintenance, basic conducting, rope splicing, change ringing on handbells, and ringing up and down in peal.

Thanks are due to the Suffolk Guild members for their excellent organisation of the weekend.

Richard Andrew and James Ramsbottom (Guild CC Representatives).

Newborn celebrations.

In an email from Janet Horton on the 22nd August:
Gavin McLeod (Smethwick) and his wife Natasha have welcomed a new arrival Bartholomew Ian born 15th August. We are hoping to ring a quarter so watch out for that. Not got a date yet.



On Sunday, 17 September 2023

Smethwick, West Midlands
Old Church

Tenor: 7-1-1 in B

1260 Grandsire Doubles

- 1 Thomas M W Horton
- 2 Gavin McLeod
- 3 Sophie Keeble
- 4 Stephen W Horton
- 5 D Rose W Horton (C)
- 6 M Michael R Parker

To welcome our new incumbent, the Revd Sara Moore, and Bartholomew Ian McLeod, a son for Gavin and Natasha

Stop press.

The fifth Robert B Smith 12 bell competition was held at Birmingham Cathedral on Saturday 23rd September. The cathedral band and other volunteers from the cathedral hosted a well-planned day which saw 7 teams competing from across the Midlands. It was won in convincing style by the home team, who had been practicing hard and managed to produce a top-class piece of ringing on the cathedral's challenging bells. More about this in the next issue.

James Ramsbottom

