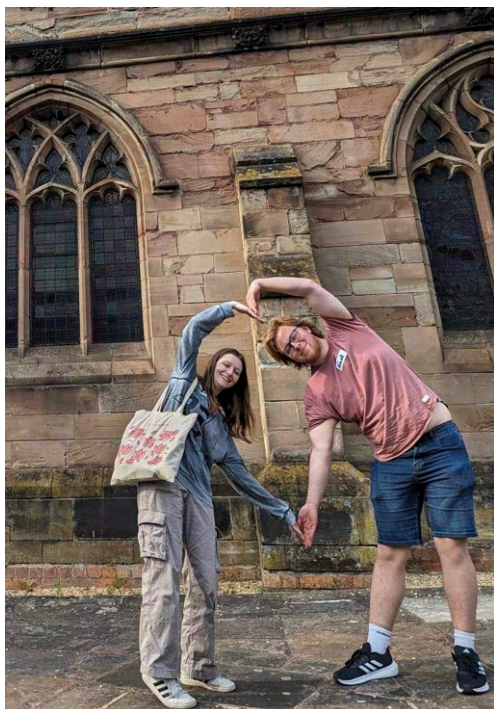


The Quarterly Newsletter of the St Martin's Guild - issue 49

The Guild Fun Day.

On a sunny spring day three teams of ringers from across the guild met for an afternoon of light-hearted bellringing challenges. After the great experience of last year's fun day, I was rather looking forward to this year. It certainly didn't disappoint! The fun day was held in Moseley, with the challenges split between St Mary's and St Anne's. We all met at St Mary's for a quick briefing and to meet our allocated teams and their respective leaders. I was in the ever-exuberant Charlie Linford's team.

Our first challenges were at St Anne's, so we set off for the short walk to the church... without the keys. Fortunately, Frank chased us there and delivered the keys so we could start our challenges. Anyone who has rung at St Anne's will tell you that they are not an easy set of bells, and that the sound they produce is in no way rewarding for the amount of effort they require. They certainly made a



challenging testing ground for a striking competition!

After raising the bells, we were straight into the first challenge - with no practice allowed - a whole pull and stand from rounds, and then from queens, kings and finally backgrounds. This was a tough challenge on the bells of St Anne's and probably the most stressful of them all! The next challenge was to ring an extent of a doubles method of our choice, with a catch: the band placement was to be drawn out of a hat. This challenge was done well by all teams and the judge for this challenge (Mark Eccleston) was very complimentary of all teams' efforts. The final challenge at St Anne's was to ring down in peal, catch in queens at the bottom and then ring the bells back up in peal. This proved to be a difficult challenge with various interpretations of queens given. After completing the challenges at St Anne's we set off for St Mary's, passing the other two teams as they made their way to St Anne's.

There were two challenges at St Mary's. Firstly, jump changes on 8. The bell leading was called to the back until rounds was reached again, or so we thought. After completing this once and standing, we had a quick read of the rules - each bell was supposed to be called to the back twice! We

quickly grabbed hold again and repeated the changes. The final challenge at St Mary's was to ring rounds on a variable number of bells. The tenor started off alone and, one by one, every other bell joined in until 8 bells were ringing. Then, in reverse order, each ringer stood their bell until only the tenor was ringing again. It proved a challenge to make sure the bell joining was in front of the next bell but didn't crunch on the tenor either. Once all teams had completed their challenges we all met at St Mary's for some much-needed cake and refreshments with a little bit of general ringing. Then it was time for the results! Team C leapt ahead with 13 points



whilst teams A and B battled it out for second and third place with 8 and 9 points respectively. A huge thanks goes to Mark Eccleston and Janet Horton for judging the challenges. The SMG committee then sprung a brief meeting on us giving updates from the various committee roles, welcoming new members, and running through the future events planned for the guild.

I have to say it was a very enjoyable afternoon and a much-needed break from the monotony of revising for exams. I am very much looking forward to joining in again next year.

James Mundy



The Solihull band aboard the charabanc!

We set off for our annual outing one Saturday in May, this time to the beautiful countryside of Derbyshire. Gorgeous weather and gorgeous views, all the more beautiful for the elevated view from the coach.

Our first stop was Youlgreave. We started with coffees at the bakery, all very civilised, even if the payoff had been an early start. Unfortunately, despite the meticulous preparations we were let in a little late, but we still got to ring the lovely 12 with their resonating tenor. Perhaps better listened to outside as the little bells were somewhat drowned out when heard from the ringing room.

We were then off to Darley Dale and perhaps the real reason for the trip. Darley Dale had been the home tower for several generations of Malcolm Paulson's family (our Tower Captain). So, it was marvellous that Malcolm's father, mother, sister and daughter were able to join us there. In fact, Malcolm's grandfather had rung peals at each of the towers we visited and peal boards and notices recorded the presence of Paulson's wherever we went. Sadly, Malcolm's father is no longer able to ring, but Malcolm and his daughter tread in their families footsteps. Malcolm recalled climbing the ancient Yew Tree in the graveyard as a child and playing in the old stone coffin outside the church. Quite emotional for the family and fun for us to trace their links and hear from the locals the importance of the Paulson family to the ringing community.

On to Ashover for lunch where we made use of the various pubs. Several of us also ended up at the Tuck Shop for ice creams - well, it was a warm day! These 10 bells were perhaps the best ring of the day, an easy-going ring in a beautiful setting. We rather enjoyed the board displaying each of the bells' inscriptions. Some of which were quite fun like, 'I sweetly tolling men do call to taste on meats that feede the soule' and 'My roaring sounde doth warning give that men cannot heare always live'. My favourite was, 'All men that heare my mournful sound repent before you are in the ground'.

Off to Matlock where, having rung some truly lovely bells elsewhere, the bells were a little less easy going on the ear. One of the band hoped none of the locals was trying to

have an afternoon nap! It's here that we had our team photo on the oh so many steps which lead down the hill to the west end of the church and on into the church and past the font. I've never seen anything quite like it before but it was the perfect solution to a church built on a hill. Here the item of real interest was the Crantses or maiden's garland. Only a few historic specimens survive from the early 19th Century. They were part of a custom of carrying garlands or crowns before the coffins of unmarried women.

And finally, via the winding narrow 'top road', which avoided the traffic of Matlock centre, we arrived at Wirksworth. This interesting church sits in its own grounds, hidden by the houses and shops around it, so that the best view of it had been glimpsed as we drove through the town at the start of the day on our way to the first tower. We really enjoyed the bells here, but they did ring rather heavily.



We were then rewarded with dinner at the Hope and Anchor. Gillian, our organiser, directed the waiting staff as if she was conducting an orchestra and managed to get them to serve in double quick time. All the right meals went to all the right ringers - most of whom had forgotten what they'd pre-ordered some weeks earlier! And yes, no names mentioned but trousers were loosened!

Our outing meant that we'd missed the SMG General Meeting, but with an update received and having their certificates prepared, Malcolm was able to both thank Gillian for all her hard work and then present two members of the band with their SMG membership certificates.

So, with another super outing over and a long but wonderful day, we arrived back in Solihull. The coach driver had been such a star and had risen to the challenge of our chosen route through some tiny villages. He told us that despite the narrow roads and the ridiculous parking he was already looking forward to seeing us again next year!

Sand Cooper



St. Dunstan's Day at Aston.

Aston tower in Birmingham has 12 bells, though not that many ringers! We have recently found 4 recruits who are just about to put together hand and backstrokes. After ringing on Sunday, the recruits and the ringers joined the service where we were introduced to the congregation and blessed by the vicar.

Margaret Griffin

Solihull's Visit to the Parlour.

You may have seen the Bells for the Borough article in the last Newsletter and seen the photograph of Malcolm, our Tower Captain, introducing the Mayor of Solihull, Councillor Mrs Diana Holl-Allen MBE, to bell ringing. Well, she so enjoyed her visit that she returned the compliment by inviting the band to visit her parlour. Along with members from other local community groups we were entertained to refreshments before a tour of the Civic Suite. We were made very welcome and we learnt so much - particularly about the artwork. We loved the view of the 'topiary engagement ring' which really isn't so clear from ground level. The silverware is very impressive and we heard how the mace should be carried and that its club end is ceremonially used to protect the monarch.

Sand Cooper

Don't forget the Guild Outing to Wellington and Shrewsbury 12th October 2024

Have you saved the date?
Further details will follow including suggested trains and requests for expressions of interest. We'll be visiting Wellington in the morning and in the afternoon we'll be off to Shrewsbury to ring at both St Chad's and St Mary the Virgin.
All aboard the train to Shropshire!



Bell Sunday at Moseley.

Bell Sunday was marked again at Moseley this year, and proved not only to be a valuable exercise for promoting bellringing to the rest of the congregation, but also gave focus for no fewer than four first quarter peals!

Although Bell Sunday fell on the same day as the launch of Christian Aid week, the vicar still managed to find a slot in the service for some handbell ringing, as well as combining the two themes of bells and Christian Aid in the same sermon, and including Ding Dong Merrily on High (which doesn't actually have any words in it relating to the Christmas) as the final hymn.



The handbell ringing worked really well. Exactly 12 children in the congregation volunteered to come forward and take a bell, which was very lucky as I had 12 bells, and after getting them to stand in order from highest to lost (a comedic opportunity in itself), I got them to ring Queens, Kings, and finally memorise a sequence. The Head of Music thought it was the best intergenerational service there had ever been!

The quarter peals gave four of the Moseley learners the opportunity to ring their first quarter, all ringing the tenor behind to Doubles. [Sarah Chilton](#) got us started before the morning service at St Mary's, and then [Debbie Chard](#) rang one after the service. [Vicky Cheshire's](#) quarter was then down at St Anne's after the service there, while [Peter Sweeney](#) rounded things off before Evensong back at St Mary's. 13 ringers took part in addition to the four learners, and the quarters were called by three Linfords and Clare McArdle.

Simon Linford

A first for the Guild.

I was very pleased to ring [my first QP](#) for the Guild yesterday. It was a rather last minute tag on to the National 12 bell comp weekend visit.



Arthur and Mark wanted to ring at Widcombe. Nicholas said, 'How about a Quarter?' As the guys are all so much better ringers than me, thoughtfully, they asked what I would like to ring. It seemed like an opportunity not to be wasted... and hey presto... first as Conductor..!

Since 50% of the band are SMG members, and two others have been to this year's Henry Johnson dinner as guests, it seemed like a good opportunity for another first too!

Sonia Field

St Martin's Guild

On Sunday, 16 June 2024 in 45m
at Widcombe, Somerset, St Matthew
tenor, 12cwt in F#
1320 Cambridge Surprise Minor

- 1 Nicholas C Field
- 2 Sonia Field (C)
- 3 Arthur J Reeves
- 4 Mark R Eccleston
- 5 Patrick C Bridges
- 6 Josh D P Jones

First as C of surprise minor

Ever the Bridesmaids?

St Paul's comes second in the National Call Change Competition at Bristol.



On Saturday 1st June, six members of the St Paul's band travelled to Bristol for the second National Call Change Competition.

"Call changes?" I hear you ask. Yes... but not quite as most of us know it! In many towers in

Cornwall, the ringers don't learn methods, but instead perfect a ringing performance that starts with the bells down, and consists of ringing them up in peal, ringing a set sequence of call changes (with closed handstroke leads) and then ringing the bells down again in peal.

The Guild's own Simon Linford had the good idea of bringing this challenge to the wider ringing community, and last year the inaugural National Call Change Competition was held in Moseley. Although that contest was won by a Devon band, St Paul's finished a close second last year, so we had high hopes of another strong result this time.

Preparation.

We opted for the same practice regime as last year: two dedicated practices in the week leading up to the contest. We wanted to practise on bells of a similar weight to this year's contest tower, the Lord Mayor's Chapel in Bristol, and the lovely ring of six at Great Barr met the brief perfectly. Our thanks go to Denise and David Large for accommodating us.

This style of ringing takes a bit of getting used to. Firstly, the bells 'pitch in' to start the raise, meaning they all strike rounds in the first row. Secondly, there is no handstroke gap, so the rhythm of the ringing feels quite different. Finally, there is no 'miss' before the 'catch' at the end of the lower, so it all stops quite suddenly and there is a greater risk of an errant chime after the catch! It's all quite intense and physical compared with method ringing.

The Contest.

There being 13 bands, a pre-draw placed bands into timed groups, so we knew we had an afternoon slot. This was almost our downfall as our slot was moved forward owing to a band dropping out on the day, and Tony's train was a bit late... He dashed across Bristol and arrived just in time to ascend the tower!

Our 'peal' went reasonably well but the bells were more odd-struck than Great Barr, and we didn't feel we'd quite given our best effort.



Still, we were quite happy enough to find a pub and pass the remaining time until the results in typical ringers' fashion!

The Results

We were honoured to have the experienced Devon call change judge, Owen Borlase, as chief judge, ably assisted by Chris Kippin. Repeating last year's results, St Paul's came a creditable 2nd to the excellent Devon band, Kingsteignton. We were once again awarded the accolade of 'Top Muggles' (non-Devon band...).

It was a very enjoyable day out, and we look forward to aiming to go one better on 7th June 2025, when the competition will be hosted by Stroud Valleys.

Victoria Wilby

1st	6	11	KINGSTEIGNTON
2nd	8	21	BIRMINGHAM ST PAULS
3rd	7	26	BRISTOL
4th	4	30 ³ / ₄	BOW
5th	5	36 ³ / ₄	EXETER ST DAVID
6th	9	37 ¹ / ₂	CHELTEMHAM
7th	12	40 ³ / ₄	TIVERTON
8th	11	42 ¹ / ₂	SOUTH BRENT
9th	3	42 ³ / ₄	BATH AND WELLS
10th	10	47	STROOD VALLEYS
11th	13	52	KERNOW CALLIES
12th	2	55 ³ / ₄	ISBROADHEMPSTON
13th	1	91 ³ / ₄	ALTON

Bell Sunday at Solihull.

The Solihull ringers once again took part in Bell Sunday. In fact, we made the most of it and managed two bell Sundays in a row! 12th May we were welcomed to the 11 O'clock service and 19th May we joined The Junction.

First time around the morning started with a couple of band members taking bell shaped biscuits to the OBH to add to the usual



refreshments following the earlier service. This was quite a feat. Between them, 4 members of

the band had made in excess of 90 biscuits which all had to be baked and ready by the Friday because our ringing outing was the day before. (I should never have shared the link to the Bell Sunday site, our Rector was most impressed by another church's photo of their biscuits!) The rest of the band were in the tower as usual, ringing between the services. After we had finished ringing, we raced down the stairs to the door straight into church where our Verger met us and once the choir had processed past, he verged us to our seats. As we passed the altar we placed a rope on it and model bells and large handbells in front.



Hymns, readings and the sermon all included bell references and both readings were read by bell ringers. After the service the remaining biscuits were served.

The Junction, which is a service for primary school children and their parents, did not meet in person on the 12th May so, not wanting to be left out, they had invited us to join them on the 19th May. In fact, this was lovely because it is actually the closer day to St Dunstan's, the patron saint of bell ringers. We took with us handbells which we used to 'walk' plain hunting, but, of course, we had the smallest of our handbells with us so that all of the children had the opportunity to have a go at jingling a bell. During their craft time 3 of the older children joined us to have a go at plain hunt, initially being guided along but as you can imagine, they quickly got the hang of what we



were doing. One of them, albeit only 9, is already asking for a tower tour and is interested in learning to ring. Result! Not sure what was more fun that morning - the hand bell ringing or watching the band join in the actions along with the children's singing!

What was really special though is that the children at the Junction have made us some bell bunting as a thank you for joining them. We're really rather proud of it!

Sand Cooper

