



ST MARTIN'S GUILD

Autumn 2025 – Issue 54



RWNYC Birmingham 2025



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Upcoming Events

Nottingham Outing – Saturday 11th October



St Mary's, Nottingham (12, 35cwt)

Saturday 11th October 2025 will be the St Martin's Guild outing to Nottingham. Towers to include:

- 10:00-11:00 All Saints (10, 16cwt)
- 12:00 Old Market Square to hear Little John strike
- 12:00-13:00 St Peter (12, 22cwt)
- 14:45-16:00 St Mary (12, 35cwt)
- 17:00-18:00 Beeston (10, 17cwt)

There will be an evening socialising plan in Beeston - watch this space.

Exact tower fee cost to be decided when we know how many people are coming - last year it was £5 per person (although we have got one more tower this year).

Please use [this form](#) to let us know you are coming.

Main travel options

Train and tram - 08:09 train from New Street to Nottingham (arr 09:22) then tram to All Saint's and back, and then later tram to Beeston and back. Adult day return train ticket £26, tram day ticket £5.30

Car and tram - recommendation is to park at the Toton Lane Park & Ride (because this is most convenient for Beeston at the end of the day) which is then about 45 minutes from All Saint's by tram.

Moseley Outing to Malvern

Lucian Lupsan



The bell ringers of Moseley, Birmingham, embarked on a much-anticipated outing to Malvern on the 12th of July, eager for a day filled with ringing and history. Their first stop was the picturesque village of Madresfield, where the group gathered within the charming, beautifully painted church. The six bells there offered a mellow and harmonious sound, and as the bells rang out across the surrounding countryside, a quintessential British scene unfolded—one that seemed to bridge the past and present.

From Madresfield, the group continued onward to the impressive Great Malvern Priory. This ancient and magnificent building, steeped in centuries of history, houses a splendid ring of ten bells. The group relished the opportunity to ring a variety of methods and call changes, hoping that locals and visitors alike would pause to appreciate the music and the sense of tradition it carried.



Following a relaxing break and a satisfying meal at The Nag's Head, the group continued to Malvern Link, where an

“electrified” ringing session awaited. Here, the sallies in different colours following the electronics code, added a lively twist to the usual practice. Attempting call changes by colour proved fun, uniting everyone in a novel challenge.

After the energising ringing at Malvern Link, the ringers made their way to the National Trust's Croome D'Abitot estate. Amid beautiful surroundings, the bells attracted the attention of visitors, some stopping to compliment the ringing.



Overall, the outing to Malvern was a delightful experience for the bell ringers of Moseley. The combination of beautiful locations, the joy of ringing, and the camaraderie among the group made it a memorable day. We look forward to more such outings in the future, continuing our tradition of bringing the charming sound of bells to different communities.

Left-Handed Quarter Peal

James Ramsbottom

I can't remember when the idea first came to me, or why I suddenly decided to do something about it, but for some time I've wanted to ring a quarter peal where all the band ring "left-over-right". A few months ago I thought that it would be appropriate to do this on International Lefthanders Day, if such a day existed, and it turned out that it does - 13th August. (A rather suitable day of the month for a sinister group of people!) So I booked the bells at St. Paul's, Jewellery Quarter and started getting a band together.

This was a little more difficult than usual, as I could only ask other left-handed ringers, and because mid-August is never an ideal time to organise ringing. My original plan had been

to ring a 1313 Grandsire Caters, but I couldn't find 10 suitable ringers who were free on that date. However, following some head-scratching and suggestions from others, I managed to get a band of 8 ringers for Cambridge S Major.

And so we met and [rang a quarter peal](#). The planned date turned out to be particularly warm and we were all feeling the heat by the end, but we still enjoyed what we did. For the record, 2 of the band are natural left-handers - Rachel and Clare. The rest are all right-handed people who ring "left-handed".

After the success of this, I asked online to see if anything of this nature had been done before, and nothing was mentioned, which surprises me. Another auspicious first for the St. Martin's Guild, perhaps?

Heritage Open Day at Knowle

Stephen Shipley

At KPC we have been opening the tower to the public on special Church or Community events for well over 50 years. After Heritage Open Days were established in 1994, we decided to link into this and, with enthusiastic parish office support, the open day was extended to include displays and guided tours of the main body of the church by a local history group. Over the years this has been further extended to include village history walks provided by Knowle Society and, more recently, Visit Knowle has organised an Artisan Street Market on the same day!



One effect of the restrictions we all had to work with during and following the Covid years was the pre-booking of tours so that we could control numbers in the tower and avoid queues. This works well – with eleven scheduled tours providing places for over 100 visitors on the day.



We approach this as a community event and not overtly as recruitment. All visitors get an opportunity to hear about ringing, experience ringing a few backstrokes or chime a bell, plus see the pendulum clock, the bells and (weather permitting) the view from the roof over the village and beyond.

The tours continue to be very popular and the donations collected (we don't charge an entry fee) are passed on to charities with local connections.

These images, from this year's open day, are courtesy of Visit Knowle; their video (please ignore their choice of soundtrack – nothing to do with us!) can be found on their [Facebook page](#).

Brumdingers Update

Susan Healy & Vicky Wilby

After a successful Ringing World National Youth Contest in July, Brumdingers is moving to a new practice slot on the second Saturday of the month (the 3rd Saturday when there is a Guild outing). Practice dates for the rest of the year as follows:

- Saturday 18th October
- Saturday 8th November
- Saturday 13th December

We are going to be moving around the guild to get experience of different towers and bells – venues to be confirmed shortly. New recruits are always welcome, if anyone is aware of any youngsters who would like to join us, please get in touch.

Learning to ring is also an ideal new skill for pupils in Year 9 / 10 looking to do their Duke of Edinburgh – now is the time to sign up!

A total of 14 youngsters including 5 Brumdingers enjoyed a Midlands Young Ringers outing to South Warwickshire in September ringing at 5 towers including Kineton and the 29 cwt Brailes which was a good test of

everyone's ringing style. A picnic in the church yard and some expert tree climbing added to the day.

Hopefully everyone spotted the [first quarter peal](#) by a Brumdingner band on bellboard recently

Edgbaston, West Midlands

St Bartholomew

Monday, 8 September 2025 in 42m

1260 Plain Bob Doubles

- 1 Matthew J Healy
- 2 Elliot J Daniel
- 3 Thomas E Healy
- 4 Elizabeth F M Wilby
- 5 Charlie Linford (C)
- 6 James T Ellis

First quarter peal by an all Brumdingner band.

Classy performance by all.

Finally, good luck to Charlie Linford a founding member of the Brumdingers who has graduated to Nottingham University – we will miss you and look forward to catching up soon.

CCCBR AGM in Sheffield

Richard Andrew

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 this year.

There was a full programme of events over the weekend, following the general format used at AGM weekends held in recent years, and this year including a Ringing Roadshow on the Sunday.

For Friday afternoon, ringing had been arranged at several towers on two approach routes to Sheffield, while in the early evening a general ringing session was arranged at Sheffield Cathedral, followed by an informal social event held in the nave of the Cathedral, with food and drinks (including some excellent real ales).

The main meetings of the weekend (Ringing World and Council AGMs) were held on the Saturday at the Niagara Conference Centre on the north side of Sheffield, not far from Sheffield Wednesday's football stadium at Hillsborough.

The Ringing World AGM

The AGM was chaired by board member Elva Ainsworth. She 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, which is a good worthwhile read. It was also reported that a new Blue Book (fitting in between the existing Green and Purple Books) will be coming out soon.

Major architectural changes will be needed to BellBoard, including protection against abusive AI bots, however, 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. A record number of teams (37) entered, and the Bullring provided an interesting challenge and a homely HQ to the young ringers taking part. 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 have included the establishment of a South West Ringing Course, which will take place for the first time this October at Millfield School in Somerset and has been 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.

More information about the Ringing 2030 strategy can be found on the [Central Council website](#).

The last part of the meeting was taken up with discussions and voting on two proposed motions, neither of which affect our Guild. The first was really procedural and to do with a tidying up of Council Rules, while the second introduced a separate class of membership from

smaller societies such as University and 'themed' Societies, such as Doctors and Firemen, who do not collect a regular membership fee from all their members. Societies wishing to transfer to this class of membership would be able to send one voting member to CC meetings and negotiate their affiliation fees at intervals. The main purpose behind this was to allow such societies to stay affiliated to the Council without having to pay the substantially increased affiliation fees following the increase to £1 per member, due to take effect in 2026. After much discussion, this Motion was also passed by the meeting with a substantial majority (84%).

Ringing Roadshow



This was held at the Niagara Conference Centre after Sunday morning ringing at towers in and around Sheffield, 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 (YCRA).

There were several mini rings, another essential part of any ringing roadshow, including a new 'Peals on Wheels' Mobile Belfry (see accompanying photo), designed by Matthew Higby & Co, which was having its first outing and attracted favourable comments from those who tried it out.

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; 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; and finally a talk by Gareth Davies on 'Ringers...a scandal to the Church, and a disgrace to themselves', a research project arising out of his latest book (see Ringing World AGM report above), investigating what people thought of ringers nationwide and how and why attitudes to them changed in the 19th century.

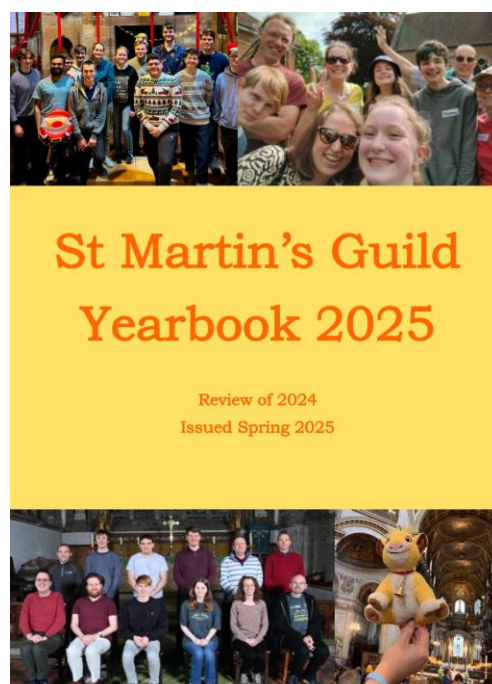
Thanks are due to the Yorkshire Association members and their excellent organisation of the weekend. Next year's meeting (2026) will be hosted by the Coventry Diocesan Guild in Rugby

Guild Yearbooks

Sand Cooper

As best we can, we have arranged for a copy of the Yearbook to be sent to each of our towers. A huge thank you to the network of 'ringing couriers'. I think our furthest travelled Yearbook would be one that set out at Towcester before being taken to Moseley then on to Solihull, Shirley, Sheldon and Castle Bromwich before reaching Coleshill! However, if your tower hasn't received a copy do shout up to Sand at smgcbr@gmail.com. And, if you'd like to take a look then you can use this link

<https://stmartinsguild.org/wp-content/uploads/SMG-2025-Yearbook-review-of-2024.pdf>



RWNYC Birmingham 2025

Alistair Donaldson – Solihull

I arrived at 9am on Saturday morning, it was grey but the forecast rain seemed to have passed by overnight, so Plan A was adopted, putting up the little Higby 8-bell mini-ring on the grass outside St Alphege Church, Solihull right by the main road. The helpers made short work of erecting the "tower" and we were ready for the first of the Young Ringing teams to have a go on the little bells on their way to grab the lovely sounding 21cwt 12 above. I was worried that there would be too much sonic confusion with 2 sets of bells ringing at once, but it was in fact quite harmonious!



We were kept very busy with a procession of Teams until 11:30 when we were granted a Lunch break as the "real" competition got under way elsewhere. A few more Teams dropped by during the afternoon, but it wasn't so hectic - and the breaks allowed us to recruit 4 enthusiastic locals

James Ramsbottom – St Paul's, Birmingham

My day started very early as I needed to be at St. Paul's by 7am to help erect the 2 mini-rings in the churchyard. About 15 fairly willing volunteers had 2 hours to complete before the first team of young ringers were due to arrive. Once this was done we all dispersed to where we were needed for the rest of the day - I didn't have to go very far as I was helping running the ringing on the full-size tower bells at St. Paul's. This was done with the help of about 6 other ringers, some local and some not. But before things really got going, I hot-footed it to St. Philip's to ring for the ordinations which were taking place that morning. The Youth Contest is a very big thing but the world doesn't stop for it!

Returning at about 11am, I arrived for the start of a steady stream of teams which lasted almost without break until 4:30pm. All the teams were allocated half an hour at St. Paul's, but that included time on both mini-rings and getting up and down the tower, and often coincided with

who happened to be passing and wanted to give ringing a go! I do hope they take up the offer of a trial on the real bells in the next week or so.



All too soon the last Team left and we hurriedly took the little "tower" down and stashed it back in my car - allowing Sand and I to dash for St. Martins to hear the results. All in all a great day: the highlight for me was seeing the Young Ringers in their bright t-shirts help each other to master these little bells - quite different to handle from "normal" bells.

Thanks very much to the team of helpers Sand arranged to help me with teaching and crowd control all day - couldn't have done it without you!

other teams' slots. The School Room (immediately below the Ringing Room) was a useful place to allow teams to pass as they changed over. Even experienced ringers struggle with St. Paul's bells, and it was suggested to all teams that less experienced ringers avoid the flighty trebles. This was a smart move as we survived the day with no broken stays! A clapper did fall out at one point, but this was one one of the mini-rings and was very quickly repaired.

Once the final team finished, I, once again, had somewhere else to be. I'd promised that I'd go to St. Martin's to help ring changes on 16 for some of the more promising contestants. Having finally touched a bell rope for the last time that day, I headed for the Woodman for some much-needed refreshment and social interaction with friends from around the country. The perfect end to a long but very satisfying day

Tommy, Ben, Oliver – Edgbaston

We arrived early at the tower to ensure everything was prepared for the 130 or so participants and their chaperones who would be arriving throughout the day. Although for many of us it was our first time helping out at the RWNYC, everyone quickly found their role and got stuck in. Some headed straight to the tower to hang the event banner and ensure everything was up to mark, while others turned their attention to the refreshment table, arranging as many pieces of cake as we could onto the table. We couldn't help but wonder how many we'd be taking home at the end of the day, certainly not expecting them all to disappear so quickly.

Tommy – I spent the day as the steward in the tower, welcoming the teams of young ringers, helping them get started and making sure that the rules of the competition were adhered to. There were some challenging moments to deal with at times, including some rope issues and some tears from the young ringers, but overall it was very rewarding and enjoyable to see so many young people ringing together without any help from adults!

Ben – As the first teams began to arrive, the front of the church quickly filled with nervous young ringers. But despite their nerves, many found comfort in the cakes, flocking to the refreshment table. In a hurry to serve the growing queue, we even managed to knock over a mug. Thankfully, that turned out to be the only mishap of the day!

Sand Cooper – So, when can the RWNYC come back to Solihull?

We loved being an open tower for the RWNYC and loved having a mini-ring at Solihull. There was a real buzz on the day and how great to see so many young ringers coming to our tower.

We welcomed ringers from as far away as Cornwall and Kent. Many of them were easily spotted in their team t-shirts. And we met a few team mascots including Oscar, a rather large stuffed Octopus!

It was a long day which kicked off at about 8:30am as the volunteers started to arrive. To make up the numbers where the visiting bands needed a tad of support, we had volunteers in the tower who barely saw the light of day, a rather long shift with few breaks till late afternoon. Then there was the bottom of the tower team with strict instructions as to which coloured wrist bands could climb the stairs and, those who helped assemble and oversee the mini-ring for the day. Alistair Donaldson very kindly brought the Maplestead mini-ring over. It arrived in the back of his estate car and was put up remarkably quickly.

Oliver – Whilst from my perspective it was mostly a day of washing and drying, refilling kettles, and running to the local co-op for extra milk, being a volunteer was a wonderful experience, if nothing else to merely observe the goings-on of the competition. Despite being such a small contribution to the day, it felt brilliant to be a part of something much bigger than myself, and to, for the first time, witness the true scope of ringing as an activity outside of my own little circle of a university society, and to see our church used not only to perform test pieces, but to also act as a temporary hotel for one of the teams! To see the amount of young people involved, and the range of people we got to interact with and talk to, from all across the country, was truly inspiring, and a day I would more than happily be involved with again.



Under his clear instruction the various parts emerged from the car and it all started to come together. The RWNYC signage went up, the volunteer wrist bands were issued, we liaised with the vergers and the west end was opened up for visitors. We were ready for the off!



It wasn't just early starts in Solihull. Margaret and Alan were volunteering at the St Phillips ringing for the ordination services. They'd jumped on the train and mingled with those off to the cricket at Edgbaston and those arriving early for the Black Sabbath concert at Aston. Birmingham was having a busy day! Our guys then dashed back for their afternoon mini-ring slots.

Not sure how many steps I got in that day, circling the church checking on the next volunteers as they arrived at the church hall to offer refreshments, the foot of the tower and the mini-ring, making sure no one had any issue and thanking everyone before they left. Then there was encouraging young ringers away from the mini-ring and into the tower for their ringing slots, just to keep the day moving. Oh and of course there was a plumbing job when one of the church loos needed attention!



The last band left us at 4:30pm, by which time we had cleared up and locked up in the church hall, the mini-ring was being taken apart and put back in the car. Then it was off to St Martin's in the Bull Ring for the results and on to Woodman for a catch up and wind down. What a fantastic day. I think all the teams had a go on the mini-ring and I think most of the volunteers did too! Whilst many of the young ringers had never rung on a mini-ring, they took to it like ducks to water while many of our experienced ringers giggled as they grappled with the whole concept. We also giggled when Rob, our tallest volunteer, could just effortlessly reach up to rethread ropes that came awry whilst everyone else needed Alistair's step ladder. We were chuffed that our youngest local new recruit, who has just turned 10, was able to have a go. She quickly mastered the art of mini-ringing despite how strange it felt to her. Several members of the public showed interest and chatted to the volunteers about ringing and we've arranged a tower tour for them to see if any want to take it further.

I think all our volunteers enjoyed the camaraderie of the day and the fun amongst fellow ringers and friends. A huge shout out to all those that helped make the day special in Solihull but particularly to the ringers who spent much of the day in the tower while the rest of us enjoyed a rain free warm day, to Alistair for the mini-ring and also to our volunteers from Knowle and Shirley who between them covered a huge number of hours across the day

Edgbaston Rebushing

Ioan Normington

During the summer of 2023, after halfway through a peal the tenor clapper seized up and stopped striking due to the heat, we decided that we needed to rebush the clappers in the tower. It took a little bit of time to work out when and which clappers we would be taking out to rebush, but we decided on doing the back seven in during the Easter of 2025.

We decided to do this during Easter, simply as most of our students would be away at home, and so the bells would be out of use. The removal and later reinstallation of the clappers itself wasn't too bad a job, done by our deputy master, with the instrumental (and much appreciated) help of Tony Daw. Each took around an hour; and involved some notable tight squeezes underneath the 2nd and 3rd.



The clappers were sent to Taylors for a full refurbishment and overhaul, with the whole cost of the work totalling £805, 50% of which came from a grant by the St Martin's Guild, for which we are extremely grateful and made the entire project possible.

Guild Open Day

Margaret Burling

Alan & I set out early on 10 May to catch our train into Birmingham for a day of ringing. The first tower was Birmingham Cathedral where Rachel was in charge. I had rung here before, but it was many years ago. The range of experience among ringers was amazing and although I was quite nervous I was quickly put at ease and managed to ring some rounds and calls. I was surprised and excited to have the chance later to ring a Bob course of Grandsire Caters (something I had been working on at Higher Numbers Practices). I was pleased and re-assured to have a stander behind (Charlie) and managed to complete it with reasonable success. (Thanks to Charlie!)

As there was quite a long break for lunch we walked with Robin (fellow ringer from Solihull) to The Exchange in Centenary Square where strangely enough we met another ringer from Solihull – Linda who was there with a sewing group.



After a fine lunch we had a slow walk to St Martins in the Bull Ring. The last time I had rung here was on the 12 (prior to 1991) so I was interested to hear what the 16 sounded like. It took my ears a while to get used to all 16. When I rang it was on the back 12 (coming from Solihull my ears were more attuned to that!) Eleanor was in charge here and did a wonderful job of organising us in a tight space which did utilise the table and chairs in the middle of the tower for those listening.

After a long walk to St Pauls in the Jewellery Quarter we were met by Phil who took charge of the ringing session there. Having rung here many times previously at Special Practices (usually with Phil) but mainly for the Ringing School we felt quite at home here.



I had never been to The Bull in the gun quarter before; indeed I'm not sure I knew a gun quarter even existed? I followed a large group of others who obviously knew where they were going. It was a tight squeeze to fit us all in for the meeting, but due to Eleanor's efficiency it was over very quickly and we got down to the final serious job of the day – eating a tasty meal and drinking!

Birthday Peal Update

Emma Harris

As you will no doubt have read in the last newsletter it was my birthday at the beginning of the month and I attempted a peal. Unfortunately I did not bag it (shame as I can't now claim a birthday peal), however, we had enough time to do a [quarter peal of Grandsire Triples](#). The biggest issue was that it was a hot day! Hopefully we can do it in the autumn when the weather is cooler.

A really big thank you goes to Simon Linford for organising it and the other ringers who came and help ring with me. I had a great day out and thanks also goes to Aldridge for allowing us to ring their bells.

Although I did not get the peal I have learnt a lot about ringing the tenor which should translate to other bells. That was the secondary aim of the exercise. So in a way I have gained a lot from the experience.