

MASTER'S REPORT
to the
Annual General Meeting of the Society
on
9th March 2020

Summary

This is the end of my first year as Ringing Master and most of the time it has been thoroughly enjoyable. The ringing has given me a lot of pleasure, the antennas faculty issues have not.

There is plenty happening across a diverse range of activities that includes service ringing, peals and quarters, competition ringing, and practices. A number of individuals have achieved personal successes during the year, especially our younger ringers, and as a band we have notched up a few milestones too. Practices span everything from Plain Bob Doubles to spliced maximus, which is challenging at times but also a source of great satisfaction when someone achieves a personal milestone or when the quality of ringing is good.

The amount of time the Society's Officers and many individuals spend on non-core activities is high, for example, arranging local peals and quarters, Hawkear enhancements, the St Clement's initiative, and the antennas faculty. These contributions make a real difference for all of us and I thank everyone who gets involved and gives of their time.

In the following sections I have covered the regular activities of the Society along with other noteworthy events across the year.

Service Ringing

This covers what we ring, the quality of our ringing and attendance on Sundays, along with ringing for particular occasions.

Sunday morning ringing

Most Sunday mornings we continue to ring a combination of Grandsire, Stedman, Cambridge and Bristol, and reasonably often we are able to ring a short touch of Phobos and Bristol spliced. The quality of our morning ringing is generally good and occasionally very good. We sometimes let ourselves down by making too many method mistakes, which disrupts the ringing.

Attendances on Sunday mornings is quite variable though we almost always are able to ring all 12 bells at some point. For the first time in many years on Sunday morning 14th September we did not have enough ringers to ring anything on 12 bells.

Evensong ringing

Evensong ringing usually extends to touches on eight bells though we do sometimes manage 10-bell and 12-bell touches. Touches of Grandsire on all numbers are common, and occasionally we will ring a touch of 8-spliced major. The quality of the ringing can be somewhat mixed, though this is more than made up for by the relaxed and friendly atmosphere.

Usually eight or more ringers come along, however, there was one anomaly on Sunday 23rd June when we met just three.

Attendances at morning and evensong ringing

The year-end figures provided by Frank King show that average attendance dropped in 2019 to 16.9 (18.6 in 2018). This can be accounted for by ringers moving away from the area last year, and shows that it only takes a change in the attendance levels of one or two ringers to make a noticeable

difference. This figure is below the long-term mean of 18.0 though back to where we were 20-30 years ago, as illustrated below:

Decade	Mean of the Average attendances
1990s	17.0
2000s	20.0
2010s	17.0

Other ringing to mark particular occasions

There was ringing for Chris Johnson's memorial service held at GSM on Saturday 27th April. Many Youths and Guild ringers have fond memories of Chris.

We rang for three weddings during the year, two in July and one in September.

There has been an unusually high number of occasions marked by the tolling of a bell:

- As a mark of support to all those affected by the fire on the 15th April at Notre Dame the 11th bell was tolled on Thursday 18th April
- The tenor bell was tolled on 20th May for the memorial service of a former mayor of Cambridge
- The tenor bell was tolled on Monday 2 December as a mark of respect to the victims of the London Bridge terrorist attack
- On Thursday 16th January the tenor bell was tolled for a funeral

On Friday, 20 December the Society rang a quarter peal of Stedman cinquos to honour the life of Jack David Merritt at his funeral service in the University Church.

Practice nights

The main Monday practice starts at 7pm and finishes at 9pm. Beforehand there is usually a learners' practice that starts at 6.30pm.

The learners' practices are run by Jonathan Shanklin. They can range from teaching beginners to ringing rounds and call changes or plain bob on 5 and 6 bells. What is rung depends a lot on who is there and how many helpers turn up.

For the main practice numbers early in the evening can be low, and sometimes we do not have enough to ring on twelve bells until gone 8pm. To make the most of the early part of the practice, I have introduced a 'Method of the Month' as launched by the Ringing World where we can ring musical methods with a variety of structure that have all featured in Project Pickled Egg. This has proved popular for many. For 2020 the Ringing World has introduced Pathways and we are following the Yellow pathway for ringers who can already ring some surprise major methods, starting at step 3.

In June we contemplated entering a band for the 'Robert B Smith' 12-bell competition to be held on the last Saturday in September. This is a competition aimed at developing 12-bell teams, making it ideal for us in Cambridge where we have a lot of excellent ringers who do not necessarily ring in our band for the National 12-bell contest. The test piece was a 2-course touch of Little Bob max, which we rang at most practices through the summer months, and the focus was on striking. In the end we decided not to enter as we did not have quite enough ringers.

Further enhancements to Hawkear meant that in July it was available via a weblink and as a result it was possible to view the outputs from our striking shortly after finishing each touch either on our mobile devices or via the main console. This we used to review our striking of the touches of Little Bob Maximus, including some basic training from David Pipe on how to interpret the outputs. Many thanks to everyone who helped make these enhancements to Hawkear, and especially to Dave Richards.

Hawkear has become an established feature of Monday practice nights and it is great to see so many ringers taking a look at the outputs immediately following each touch. With the right encouragement and more training this should help us to improve the striking across all our touches. It is still early days and we will continue to make enhancements to the tool, improve how it is implemented for use, and develop our thinking on how to get the most from it. I am not going to go into details on Hawkear as there is a separate report, however, I have found that it has made a positive contribution to our ringing on practice nights, as well as for service ringing and competition practices.

For the first time that I can recall we held practices of some form on every Monday during May and June. In recent years we have not rung on Spring Bank Holiday Monday and the first Monday of June. This time we held a couple of shorter 12-bell contest practices on a couple of those evenings, which went well. It is likely that we will repeat this in the coming year.

Something I enjoy about our practices is that ringers with a diverse range of abilities come along, which I think is great to see and something to be encouraged. On one memorable occasion we rang a touch of Plain Bob doubles immediately followed by four leads of Bristol max. This does make practices challenging to run and I'd be the first to admit that some practices don't work out as well as I had hoped. Occasionally, we have had some poor touches where it is not obvious who is getting any benefit from them. Sometimes I have overloaded the touch, however, sometimes our more experienced ringers have failed to maintain the framework within which an improver can find their way. Sticking to your line, doing your homework, checking Hawkear, standing-behind and guiding, there are many ways we can all help improve our collective ringing.

This year we have seen many ringers advancing to Bristol maximus for the first time, and I anticipate that this will continue into 2020. This is a big step because there are not any obvious steppingstones from Cambridge to Bristol. When we have enough to ring spliced it is usually Phobos and Bristol, and occasionally we are able to add Ariel and Zanussi to the mix. For the first time in many years we rang three leads of Avon (twice) at one of our February practices.

Attendance at practice nights is rather unpredictable, for example, they were well attended throughout July but numbers were slow to pick up again in September after the summer holidays. On the plus side, when numbers are down this has afforded us the opportunity to ring more touches with our learners and improvers and to practice our striking. On the not so plus side, we can have an entire practice with no touches that are mistake free and struck really well. That does not mean that they are not worthwhile practices, they are invariably beneficial and rewarding, however, they can be a little dispiriting for those who are essentially always just filling in. In an attempt to provide something for our most experienced ringers, in future, on one practice a month there will be more emphasis placed on ringing spliced maximus and extending our single method repertoire. This is a small change to our practices that is aimed at making them more enjoyable for our most experienced ringers. In the coming months we shall see whether this has been successful.

Ringling highlights

This section covers ringling achievements by individuals and our band that are of note, striking competitions and ringling events that we have hosted.

Ringling achievements

We had a number of individual ringling achievements during the year that deserve a mention. In no particular order:

- Jimmy Yeoman rang his first handbell peal of spliced in May
- Sue Marsden rang her first peal of Bristol Max in July
- Akiko Saito rang her first quarter peal on 8 of Plain Bob major in August
- Hannah Campbell rang her first quarter peal of Bristol Max in September
- Alessandra Learnount, one of our young Society ringers, rang her first peal in December

- Henry Pipe, Alfie Pipe and Jimmy Yeoman rang in a long length of Bristol Surprise Royal in December. The average age of the band was just 18 years, 29 days
- David Pipe was one of the conductors of the longest peal of spliced, rung in December
- David Pipe (cond), Jonathan Agg and I rang a handbell peal of Orion Surprise Maximus in December with Simon Melen ringing four bells

We also had a number of achievements as a band that are worth a mention:

- On Saturday 7th September a reunion peal of Stedman cinques was rung at GSM by the Cambridge Youths band that won the National Twelve Bell Striking Competition in 1987, four of whom are still regular Sunday service ringers at GSM.
- On Saturday 21st September the Society rang a 'Star Wars' cyclic peal of spliced maximus was rung at GSM. Some of the methods pealed for the first time are named after different worlds in the Star Wars movies
- On Sunday 29th September 12 members of our band travelled to St Martin's, Birmingham and rang a quarter peal of Bristol sixteen
- On Thursday 21st November the Society rang a peal at GSM of 'Classic' cyclic maximus (6 methods). This was rung on the date of the 20th anniversary of the first performance of this composition with these methods

Striking competitions

This year we entered two bands in the 6-bell Cambridge District striking competition held on 8th June at Duxford. I am delighted to say that we came 2nd and 3rd.

At the National 12-bell contest final held in Exeter on 22nd June the Cambridge band came 9th overall. Three members of the band have not rung in a 12-bell final before; John Peverett, Henry Pipe and Alfie Pipe. Thank you to David Pipe for leading our efforts and putting us through our paces.

Hosting ringing events

We maintain good links with the EDA, ART¹, other local bands and the National 12-bell contest organisers, and hosted the following events during the past year:

- The EDA Steeplekeeping course on 20th July
- An EDA practice on 10th August
- A joint band of GSM and Royston ringers rang a quarter peal on 11th August
- An ART Teaching Bellhandling training course on 29th September
- A National 12-bell contest judges' orientation session on 19th January 2020
- An ART M2 ('Moving on from rounds') course this year on 12th January

Peals

Below is the list of peals rung for the Society from January 2019 to the end of February 2020. The Society rang 14 peals during this period, nine tower and five handbell.

28-11-2019	University Church of St Mary the Great	tower	5040	Spliced Major (23m)
21-11-2019	University Church of St Mary the Great	tower	5016	Spliced Maximus (6m)
26-09-2019	University Church of St Mary the Great	tower	5000	London No 3 Surprise Royal
21-09-2019	University Church of St Mary the Great	tower	5038	Spliced Maximus
18-09-2019	3 Ditton Lane	hand	5120	Bristol Surprise Major
07-09-2019	University Church of St Mary the Great	tower	5009	Stedman Cinques
31-07-2019	Kingie Lodge, Invernessshire	hand	5016	Stedman Cinques
13-07-2019	University Church of St Mary the Great	tower	5088	Bristol Surprise Maximus

¹ Association of Ringing Teachers

10-05-2019	Gable Farm Cottage, Reach	hand	5056	Spliced Surprise Major (8m)
04-05-2019	University Church of St Mary the Great	tower	5042	Cambridge Surprise Maximus
25-04-2019	University Church of St Mary the Great	tower	5024	Kenninghall Surprise Major
31-01-2019	University Church of St Mary the Great	tower	5040	Spliced Major (13m)
09-01-2019	53 Covent Garden, Willingham	hand	5088	Bristol Surprise Maximus
05-01-2019	53 Covent Garden, Willingham	hand	5056	Yorkshire Surprise Major

Quarter Peals

Below is the list of 22 quarter peals rung at GSM from January 2019 to the end of February 2020 involving SCY ringers.

02-02-2020	1250	Phobos Surprise Maximus
20-12-2019	1311	Stedman Cinques
14-12-2019	1282	Cambridge Surprise Royal
11-12-2019	1280	Spliced Surprise Major
06-12-2019	1280	Cambridge Surprise Major
08-09-2019	1344	Bristol Surprise Maximus
25-08-2019	1344	Plain Bob Major
18-08-2019	1254	Grandsire Cinques
11-08-2019	1275	Stedman Caters
27-07-2019	1280	Cambridge Surprise Major
09-06-2019	1250	Yorkshire Surprise Major
08-04-2019	1260	Plain Bob Doubles
08-04-2019	1260	Plain Bob Minor
07-04-2019	1254	Grandsire Cinques
31-03-2019	1346	Cambridge Surprise Maximus
24-03-2019	1344	Phobos Surprise Maximus
10-03-2019	1250	Lancashire Surprise Major
10-03-2019	1320	Grandsire Cinques
07-03-2019	1344	Spliced Surprise Major
24-02-2019	1280	Cambridge Surprise Major
21-01-2019	1260	Plain Bob Doubles
13-01-2019	1287	Stedman Cinques
06-01-2019	1346	Cambridge Surprise Maximus

Other non-ringing matters

St Clement's

This initiative continues to be driven forward by Barry Johnson. At the EGM in June the Society gave its continued support of the establishment of a new ringing centre at St Clement's church and agreed to cover some initial fundraising expenses. A significant amount of work progressed over the summer months, with a lot of effort being put in by Melissa Nash, Barry, Dave Richards and me. This period saw the launch of a new website, the collation of multiple lists of potential contacts, and the preparation of faculty materials. The pace has slowed as discussions with St Clement's representatives became rather convoluted and the faculty process met with some unexpected resistance. The initiative is still very much alive and hopefully, will soon be able to progress more quickly.

There is a separate report and therefore I will not go into more details here.

Antennas in GSM tower

September to November 2019 was an extremely busy and demanding time for those of us involved in discussions on the possible installation of antennas in GSM tower. At our EGM on 21st October the Society passed a motion reaffirming our objection to any renewal of the faculty application, and during this period there were many meetings and correspondences between the ringers, the vicar and the church as negotiations between the church and NET progressed.

Our collective contributions caused the faculty process to stall and have been pivotal in reaching where things now stand. We have provided much of the evidence to make the case that the original faculty application process was deeply flawed, Barry Johnson has produced an addendum to the original Statement of Significance setting out all the aspects that were missed, and the Faulkes' Bell Fund Managers have written to declare their interest. All these materials were sent to the vicar and the church is pursuing negotiations. We will continue to provide support wherever we can.

It is very unlikely that there will be a request for an extension to the lapsed faculty but, although quite unlikely, there could still be a new faculty application at some future time. The focus of discussions has moved to finding a resolution to the existing contract between the church and NET, however, things have been quiet for some period and it is difficult to gauge what that might mean.

New church access control system

Hopefully, all regular ringers at GSM will have been issued with a keyfob. Although we started handing out keyfobs last August we are still waiting for the system to be made fully operational by the church. There have been some teething problems.

New peal board

I hope everyone has noticed the long-awaited peal board in the ringing room. Frank King has kindly supplied me with an explanation of what the symbols and notations mean, see below:

THE PARTICLES PEAL BOARD

The new peal board in the GSM ringing room records the 2012 peal of Spliced Maximus which was the first peal to include methods which have come to be known as "Pipe's Particles". These methods were all composed by David Pipe and are named after fundamental particles in Physics.

Rather than simply listing the methods by name, they are shown on the peal board somewhat more cryptically, using symbols commonly found in Physics text books. Fundamental particles are often classified in groups and two important groups are:

The QUARK group and the LEPTON Group

Quark and Lepton are two of the methods in the composition.

Quarks come in six so-called flavours:

UP CHARM TOP

DOWN STRANGE BOTTOM

This group of six is shown as symbols on the peal board. All six are the names of methods in the composition.

There are also six different Leptons. None of them were used as names of methods but they are shown as a second group of six symbols on the peal board in order to symbolise the Lepton group as a whole. The names are:

Electron Muon Tau

Electron-neutrino, Muon-neutrino, Tau-neutrino

The peal is shown as being in 10 methods; there are still two more to account for.

Quarks combine together; for example two Ups and a Down make a Proton which is often shown as a triangle with an Up at two vertices and a Down at the third. Along each edge of the triangle there is a special so-called exchange particle called a GLUON. This is the ninth of the 10 method names. It is depicted on the peal board as a vertical spring-like feature between the Quark group and the Lepton group.

The tenth method in the composition was not named after a particle; it was PLAIN BOB. This is not shown as a separate symbol but the zig-zag representation of the Gluon can be thought of as also symbolising the path of the hunt bell in Plain Bob.

On a historical note, the composition was originally referred to locally "The Quark Peal" notwithstanding that Quark and its six flavours account for only seven of the 10 methods. The wider ringing community quickly started talking about "Pipe's Particles" and that term has survived the test of time!

F.H.K.
9 Feb 2020

Brief roundup of other news and events during the year

The annual punting trip took place on Monday evening 27th May. There was just one punt this year and a good time was had by those who went.

This summer's evening meal instead of a practice was at Bill's Cambridge restaurant in Green Street on Monday 3rd June; thank you Dave for organising. Around 10 of us went and there was plenty of good company and good food to be had, making this an enjoyable evening.

The annual friendly CUG vs. SCY rounders match took place at Jesus Green on Sunday 16th June. There was a good turnout of Guild members but the Society was a bit low on numbers. I gather that Team Pipe led the Society to a win and one of the rounders bats broke!

On Sunday 30th June Phil and I hosted a summer BBQ at our house in Orwell. The weather was fabulous and there was an excellent turnout. We all had a great time.

On 21st September the Society held its informal dinner. This year we went to the Luk Thai restaurant at The Cricketers and enjoyed a range of Thai food. There was a good turnout with 28 of us enjoying the occasion. We welcomed as guests our vicar Adrian Daffern and Joye Rosenstiel, one of the church wardens, Ed Cearns, Chaplain to the Marketplace, and Toni Papenfuhs who is on a one-year placement at GSM.

Late last year we received an unusual inquiry from a non-ringer whom we understand is autistic. He sent us his ideas on a new method and asked that we ring it and name it. This has been followed up by Cecilia Pipe with a letter explaining method construction, ringing preferences and naming conventions, finishing off with some further suggested sources of information on bellringing composition.

Celebrations, Welcomes and Farewells

In April Ali Brooke celebrated her 60th birthday with family and friends, ringing a peal of Cambridge max. at GSM.

Our warmest congratulations went to Stephen and Katherine on the birth of George Alexander Croxall in August.

In September Alan Winter celebrated his 70th birthday with a peal of London No 3 Surprise Royal at GSM.

Early in the year Will Bosworth departed Cambridge for Peterborough. He will be much missed though we still meet him at ringing events and on other occasions, and many of us often ring peals

with him. Since moving Will has become Ringing World Editor, and we wish him every success in this challenging role.

Towards the end of the year we wished Oli and Megan Bardsley a fond farewell. They have moved to the Oxfordshire village of Sutton Courtenay, Oli to start a new job at Culham Centre for Fusion Energy and Megan to start a new job at the John Radcliffe hospital in Oxford. I'm sure we will still see them from time-to-time.

In conclusion

This has been an enjoyable first year (second time around) for me as Ringing Master and I hope to be elected to carry on for another year.

I thought my first stint as Ringing Master was extremely busy, what with delivering the new bells project. However, I would observe that there is a much broader range of demands on the Ringing Master today than there was just 10 years ago, and I don't see this ever diminishing. As a Society we should perhaps consider introducing a deputy role to share some of the workload.

Looking forward, at our AGM I will be sharing the plans I have for peals and quarters in 2020, and I am delighted to say that from the beginning of 2020 Jimmy Yeoman has been organising many of the peal attempts at GSM; this has already been a great help. There are a few other areas where I would like to make some modest improvements, such as our website, our calendar and H&S matters. These I will be sharing at the AGM.