

SCY Master's Report

Our mission continues to be: *to provide an inclusive, top-quality environment for 12-bell ringers and maintain excellence in church service ringing.* I hope that this report provides a good reflection of what we have achieved this year and encourages discussion on what we want to do in the year ahead.

I want to start the report by highlighting the incredible service from members of the Society.

- **Phillip Hensman:** He has been the most consistent service ringer for the past 2 decades, and has finally stopped his streak at 1105 consecutive services, a record I doubt will ever be broken anywhere. We wish him well during his break, and look forward to welcoming him back.
- **Frank King:** On 14th April 2026, Frank will have served 50 years as the University bellringer and as the clock keeper of GSM. We look forward to congratulating him on this milestone.
- **Catriona Agg** will celebrate 10 years of continuous active membership with the SCY, **David Pipe** and **Cecilia Pipe** will celebrate 20 years, and **George Unsworth** will celebrate 40 years.

Progress

We are largely on track with our three-year targets, with highlights including [Sam Spencer](#) ringing his first peal on 12, [Stella Johnson](#), [Sam Brown](#), and [Sam Canning](#) ringing their first quarters on 12. In addition, three ringers conducted their first quarters on 12. Other achievements include our 4th place finish in the National 12-bell contest, arguably our strongest performance on heavy bells since our victory in Liverpool back in 1990.

Targets/Milestones for the next three years	2024-2025 Status	2025-2026 Status
40 active local Bristol Maximus ringers	29	32
25 active local Cyclic 6 ringers	17	20
50 local ringers for 12-bell QPs	40	43
8 Conductors for Bristol Maximus and beyond	5	5
All-local long length peal at GSM	N/A	Not achieved
To ring an SCY QP or peal on more than 12 bells	N/A	SCY Bullringing trip
Two local ringers to ring their first peal on 12	0	1
To come top 5 in 2025, 2026, and top 3 in 2027 for the National 12-bell contest	7	4
NEW: To average 22 ringers for Sunday morning	18.6	19.5
NEW: To average 15 ringers for Evensong	10.2	12.2

- **Method Complexity:** Cyclic methods now account for 17% of Monday practices (7% in 2024). Increased Monday attendance has effectively eliminated ringing on fewer than 12 bells. Method complexity on Sunday mornings remains similar to previous years, with a stronger focus on 12 bell ringing (>90% in 2025). Sunday Evensong has 50% of touches on 10 bells or more, with Stedman Cinques rung most weeks during autumn.
- **Striking:** This remains our primary metric. 2025 saw the highest proportion of 3 to 5-star touches on record, both in practices (42%) and on Sunday mornings (80%). Consistency on Sunday mornings has also improved, with 40% of services having 4-star ringing. Sunday evensong is at a 1-star level, but occasional 4-star touches show strong potential.
- **Attendance:** Our attendance for Sunday morning remains stagnant (19.5), whereas Evensong attendance average is on the lower end (12.2). Evensong probably has the best attended ringing in at least the last 15 years, and the main drive is due to younger ringers.

Pathways to improvement

Individual: Individuals must take ownership of their own progression. This year, we have increased the number of standers behind learners, specifically for striking, to help individuals get more out of each touch. Additionally, it is good to see that several learners who have prioritised core skills (e.g., handling, listening, rhythm) over method ambition, have made remarkable progress over the past year.

Band: This year, we have focused on getting clean and consistent pull-offs to get more settled opening rounds. I have also actively encouraged conductors to provide feedback for the band after a touch. Looking forward, I aim to develop a "house-style" for our ringing (unified hand stroke gap, more consistent peal speed) to particularly address our inconsistent leading. We also aim to develop HawkEar further to provide a bigger-picture analysis.

The "Rhythm Setter" Gap: Data shows a quality spike at 19:37 on Mondays, when experienced ringers tend to arrive (or the touch after). To bridge this gap, we are hoping to use "ringing with Abel" to help provide a framework and to help develop more "rhythm setters".

Environment for developing ringers

We face a "leaky pipeline" in the 30-60 age demographic (only 25% of regular attendees). To counter this ageing profile, we need to put extra effort into recruiting and retaining 20-30-year-olds.

Resources: With 30+ attendees per practice, with only around 16 having rung a peal of Bristol Max, our established ringers are stretched thin. The improvers' session continues to be a valuable resource for those with little experience of 12-bell ringing. Additionally, weekly quarter peals and monthly extra practices have been organised to meet demands where we fall short on Mondays. I am grateful to the established ringers who continually give up their time to help others develop.

Culture: WhatsApp engagement, social outings, and "mid-practice chocolates" have helped bring us together closer, and I believe we have an inclusive and welcoming culture. However, we can continue to improve on how we integrate newly joined ringers. Specific examples could be giving positive and constructive feedback to learners, saying a friendly hello and goodbye when arriving and leaving, calmer conducting comments, organising pre-practice socials, or post-Evensong ice creams.

Final Notes

Our relationship with the church continues to be strong, and I am very grateful to the clergy for leading us in prayer before our service ringing. I am also grateful to Julie Crockford, the Church safeguarding officer, for working closely with us to form a procedure for under-18s to ring with us regularly.

I want to thank the officers for their hard work running the society, particularly the outgoing Secretary, Patrick Brooke. Additional thanks go to the GSM tech team for ensuring that HawkEar and Abel run smoothly, Jonathan Shanklin for organising the handling and improvers' sessions, Kirsten Hawkins for organising quarter attempts, Jonathan Nash for the monthly extra practices, Catriona Agg for coordinating our contest entries, Liz Orme for organising the Birmingham and London outings, and David Pipe for leading the 12-bell squad.

Finally, I want to convey my gratitude and appreciation to every member of the Society for your support, patience and understanding in my first year. There is no doubt that the role of Master is an arduous one, but seeing our developing ringers progress has been incredibly rewarding. I have thoroughly enjoyed the role and am very much looking forward to the years ahead.

Greg Chu