



Congratulations to Jordan Lawley (front), pictured after his first peal (Cambridge Surprise Minor)

Peal Week 2015: Six won, three lost!

by Stuart Hutchieson

LWASCR Peal Week is a highlight of Challenge Month and an opportunity for members to gain experience of peal ringing, supported by a strong band. Once again, thanks to Stuart Hutchieson for organising (and ringing in all but one of) the peals.

Stuart writes: We had a fairly modest target to beat this year! Last year's peal week achieved only 50% success and we were determined to do better.

Things started well with a successful, if slightly exciting peal of 8-Spliced enabling Dawn and David to score their first. However Monday was less successful with unfortunate losses of Grandsire Triples at Tettenhall (due to a terminal mistake that didn't get caught in time) and Plain Bob Major

at Coseley (due to the indisposition of one of the band.) Both attempts had been going well and seemed on course for completion with some very good ringing.

The only other loss was on Friday where an attempt at Brown Edge lasted 15 minutes when the tenor slipped wheel, as it had been threatening to do all along. We rang a quarter and it continued to do it every few minutes so we will hopefully come back in the future when it has received the necessary therapy.

Quick peals at Walsall and Armitage (enabling Jordan to ring his first peal in fine style) rounded things off with an improved success rate of 6 out of 9. Thank you to all those who took part, to the towers we visited, and

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especially those who helped with organising.

The Peals:

14th February Abbots Bromley (St. Nicholas), Spliced Surprise Minor (8m). *First of 8 spliced: Dawn Grundy, David J Crump*

18th February Abbots Bromley (1 Preedy's Close) Plain Bob Major. *First handbell peal as conductor: Michael J. Platt*

19th February Cannock Plain Bob Major. *First of Bob Major: David L Towell*

20th February Aldridge Vectis Surprise Minor

21st February Walsall Cambridge Surprise Maximus. *First of Cambridge Maximus: Christopher P. Wilton*

22nd February Armitage Cambridge Surprise Minor. *First peal: Jordan M A Lawley; First of Cambridge Surprise Minor: Matt Gallon*

Full details of the peals can be found online:

<http://bit.ly/1C81meX>

Learning to ring..with a bit of technical help

Several local towers are equipped with simulators. Three members describe their experience in using the latest technology – in this case **Abel** simulator software.

Tamworth, St. Editha: Using Abel to teach ropesight

Tamworth ringers were very grateful some years ago for a donation from Eric Speake's remembrance fund, which enabled an Abel multi bell interface to be purchased.

It's twenty years since Eric's death and it is fitting that we have now updated our equipment to include a wide screen short throw computer projector and drop down projection screen.

The projector is capable of producing very wide images from close range but obvious limitations mean we have kept

the images within a seven foot frame.

If any ringers wish to see or use this equipment to further rope sight training please contact Andrew Else on: mail@andrewelse.plus.com

Nikki Harris and Jayne Cowdale describe a training session on the Abel simulator at St John the Baptist, Keele

Recently Nicki and I were fortunate to spend a whole morning with Phil Gay for some intense bell practice. We knew there would be a simulator involved and from past experience, we didn't know how we'd get on. However, Phil used the equipment to the max - simulator and big bells, and with his excellent teaching skills we had a really productive morning.

The simulator at Keele is a standard Abel package which is connected to sensors on the six bells, so it can be used in a variety of ways. All the bells can be rung in silent practice mode, which Phil uses on Tuesday evenings for a learners' practice. The

other common way of using the system is for one ringer to practice with a perfect band. In this mode, the system can be configured so the bell rung by the student can represent any bell for the method; we did some of that by ringing the fourth as the tenor. We also both rang plain hunting using the treble and the second.

Another exercise devised by Phil, exploits the useful facility of disconnecting the external signal for a bell, allowing it to be rung by the student without making a sound. Having done this, Phil rang another bell to a method and asked us to ring the silent bells and shadow his speed. We were able to learn the physical rhythm of hunting or dodging without having to worry about what our performance sounded like. Both of us rang together to practice plain hunting and Plain Bob inside, it was lovely to get the feel of the bell and practice controlling it without any pressure – real or imagined.

We had physics lessons, a bit of history, useful analogies, Phil's endless patience and understanding, nice hot coffee and we even bought some jam! It was a win win for everyone, super enjoyable and we learned loads!

Society towers with simulators:

- Alrewas
- Armitage
- Great Barr
- Lapley
- Lichfield (Cathedral)
- Tamworth



The simulator in action at Tamworth

Striking competition report

by Jean Nixon

Seven teams entered this year's Striking Competition at Colwich, where we were well looked after by the local



The winning team – Lichfield Cathedral



Cannock receive the call changes trophy

band, led by Lisa Ellis.

The competition was keen, particularly among the gold standard teams and although one or two people found the low ceiling a bit of a challenge, there was generally a good standard of ringing.

The Judge, Chris Adams of Eccleshall, gave brief comments

on each piece of ringing and then awarded the Henry Butler Shield to Cannock B and the Henry Follis Cup to Lichfield Cathedral, who beat Cannock A and Aldridge by a narrow margin and Abbots Bromley by a bit more.

Penn, with the help of their mascot, Bob the monkey, were delighted to complete the test piece, making up for last year. Darlaston were unfortunately unable to complete their test-piece: perhaps they should find a lucky mascot for next year?

We hope to have an even better turn out next year, so please think about entering a team.

Getting ready for next year's competition? Take a look at this handy guide to common striking errors and how to correct them: <http://bit.ly/1HtzS84>

Drayton Bassett project update

by John Mulvey

The structural survey of the tower, requested by the DAC was carried out by Adrian Dempster, a structural engineer and ringer just before Christmas and the tower given the all clear. By mid-February, all paperwork and drawings required by the DAC were prepared and sent off to the diocese. These were approved by the DAC at their meeting on March 17th.

On the fundraising front, the two retired ringing groups have presented me with a gift of £100 each and a number of ringers have given donations.

In January I was informed that the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers had been left some money in a will and that applications were to be invited from bell projects. As soon as the advert appeared inviting applications, I submitted the forms. At the beginning of March I heard that my application had been successful and that a grant of £1,000 had been offered for the work at Drayton Bassett. Fantastic news!

The appeal leaflets have now been printed - thanks to Matt Gallon for his help in their preparation. A meeting will be held with Linda Hayes, the appeal village contact, to arrange for their distribution. In the near future, I am going to write to local businesses and also bands at Society towers to see whether they will support the appeal.

Watch out for details of another fund-raising quiz evening to take place in June.



One of the Taylor bells, donated to the Drayton Bassett scheme

New committee members

by Matt

Gallon

We're pleased to introduce two new committee members to you this year – Jayne Cowdale and Nicki Harris. Jayne and Nicki are concentrating on public relations and will be on the look-out for interesting stories to share with the local press and media, as well as raising the profile of the Society in the Diocese more generally.

Nicki says:

I started ringing at St Bart's in Penn 18 months ago.

I have found ringing to be my little piece of heaven, my get-away and I thoroughly enjoy it. I ring call changes, plain hunt and plain bob on the treble and I do a lot of covering on the tenor. I have rung at several other towers too.

Jayne introduces herself:

My name is Jayne Cowdale, I live in Penn, Wolverhampton and I ring at St Bart's Church.

My role on the committee is Public Relations Officer alongside Nicki Harris.

If you'd like to contact Nicki or Jayne, please use:

Nickiharris936@gmail.com and
cowdale@tinyworld.co.uk



Nicki Harris



Jayne Cowdale

Diary dates

Please make a note of the following events, coming up (full details on the website):

- ✓ 18th April, Outing to Northampton (own transport)
- ✓ 21st April, Tuesday Daytime Band
- ✓ 16th May, Young Persons Event
- ✓ 19th May, Tuesday Daytime Band
- ✓ 30th May, Surprise Major Practice
- ✓ 16th June, Tuesday Daytime Band
- ✓ 20th June, Full Meeting



Challenge Month

What did your tower achieve in February? Send your stories to newsletter@lwascr.org.uk for inclusion in the next newsletter and/or the website.

100 Club Update

Lucky winners of the 100 Club draw at the striking competition were:

- ❖ 1st John Bark
- ❖ 2nd Cherry Bellini
- ❖ 3rd Tony Marsden
- ❖ 4th Dave Towell



Wanted for the website and newsletter:

- Peal and quarter peal announcements
- Short stories & anecdotes
- Behind the Louvres histories etc.

Send to newsletter@lwascr.org.uk, or complete the online form at:

<http://bit.ly/1xvpF82>

If you'd like to try your luck and help raise money for the Bell Restoration Fund, please contact Linda Pick: lindapick@totalise.co.uk or download an application form from the Society website.