



Lichfield Cathedral from Beacon Pool | Used under CC license, courtesy of BSoUoEo on Flickr

Newsletter



December 2017

www.lwascr.org.uk

We've done it again!

by Derek Giddins

Well, we have done it for a second year running! Yes the L&WASCR have won the diocesan striking competition contested against the Shropshire and North Staffordshire associations.



The venue chosen this year for the competition was Albrighton, Shropshire, on 23rd September.

The competition has two sections: a 6 bell and an 8 bell contest, with the 6 bell teams going first and the test

piece consisting of 240 changes of Minor or Doubles.

The draw took place, and you guessed it, we were the first team to ring which normally is not good. However we didn't need to worry, as under the watchful eye of Geoff Pick, our 6 bell team well and truly set the benchmark with a very good standard of Plain Bob Minor.

In the 8 bell contest, each team rang 168 changes of Stedman Triples. After a shaky practice, Mike Platt, our conductor pulled us all into line and we managed an acceptable test piece.

Judges for the day were Tim and Shelia Wellen from Welshpool, who after giving comments on each band's performance, presented the shield to our two team Captains and Ringing master Helen Jarvis.

Next year we would very much like to be able to add a youth section to the competition, so could I ask all towers to encourage their young ringers to join our youth ringing group which meets once

a month? Under the direction of Anne Ogden we successfully managed to obtain second place overall in this year's National Youth Striking competition held in Birmingham.

Many thanks to Anne for her hard work in developing youth ringing in the society over the last few years, as sadly after an accident, she passes this responsibility to Derek Giddens for the next year. All the best for your recovery Anne!

Next year's event is in London, it's a great day out and it would be great to see some new young ringers at the monthly youth practices with a view to putting in a team not only for the national competition, but also for the diocesan competition in September 2018. Contact Derek:

youthringing@lwascr.org.uk



Colton out and about by

Tayeed MacPherson

For the third time, Jason Walker has kindly arranged a day out for us to ring in Hereford and surrounding area. Jason learned to ring at Colton and was a prominent member of the band until he moved to Bangor to study Music at the University of Wales. He now lives and works in Herefordshire.

The wind & rain didn't dampen our spirits as we made our way to our first tower. We were met by Jason & Nicky Aubrey (Captain of the bells for Hereford Cathedral) to ring at S. Mary, Marden where we felt at home with the newly refurbished six bells.

This was followed by the six bells at St Peter, Pipe & Lyde which are not rung regularly and required more effort to ring as they are on old fixtures and fittings (last re-hung in 1888).

We were ready by then for our bring & share lunch at Jason & Kris's home. Having consumed too many sandwiches and drinking several cups of tea, none of us felt ready to ring as we headed to Hereford where the towers were all within walking distance.

We enjoyed ringing on 8 bells at St. Nicholas and All Saints before braving the 218 steps to the ringing chamber at Hereford Cathedral.

With the help of local ringers, we all had a go at ringing rounds and call changes on 10 bells. With much

coaxing and encouragement from Nicky, a few of us rang the back stroke to the tenor bell (weighs nearly 34cwt and is about 500 years old).

The day was most enjoyable, our thanks go to the Hereford ringers who were very kind and made us feel at ease and very welcome.



From L to R: Norman, Beryl, Ken, Gwen, Polly, Jason, Brenda, Viv, Tayeed, Peter

Welcome to the new Ringing Master

Helen Jarvis was nominated and elected Ringing Master for the Society at the recent AGM.

Helen writes a few words to introduce herself:

I learnt to ring at Bilston in 1973 and rang there until the late nineties when I joined the band at Lichfield Cathedral. For at least 35 years I have regularly been involved in teaching bell handling and find it very satisfying to see someone that I've taught make progress and enjoy their ringing. I look forward to meeting many of you over the next 12 months.



Contact Helen:

ringingmaster@lwascr.org.uk

The Gibson family of Wolverhampton

by Lucy Smith

This was supposed to be the story of why a fellow ringer from Wolverhampton was awarded the Military Cross in WW1, but it developed a remarkable twist and became a fascinating picture of some of his family.

I did some research some time ago into our Society casualties in WW1 and have been pleased that local people have also tried to find out more about them, and have been most impressed and encouraged with the various ways they have been commemorated on the centenary of their deaths.

A list of known casualties was printed in the Society reports of the time, but it has to be borne in mind that of over 90 towers in our area only 34 had members, so it is almost certainly true to say that there are probably other local ringers who died whose names we do not know.

Another list was a Roll of Honour of 101 members who were on active service, or had served in the forces by the end of the war: 91 in the army, seven in the Royal Flying Corps or Royal Air Force and three in the Royal Navy. However, the list would have been changing constantly throughout the war and was reliant on accurate information given by each tower correspondent.

Three members, Leonard Bate of Kingswinford, William Wall of Rushall and Frank Ward of Willenhall are recorded as having received the

Military Medal and one man, Harold Deighton Gibson, the Military Cross. The cross was awarded to officers and the medal to other ranks, both given for acts of gallantry and outstanding bravery. I thought I would turn my attention to these awards and see if I could find out when and why they were given.

Although every award was published in "The London Gazette", the official journal of the government, details were scant. Unfortunately information on the acts of bravery for the Military Medal were not kept; thousands of awards were made and there were obviously more pressing matters of importance to see to. So, I concentrated on discovering more about Harold Deighton Gibson, the recipient of the Military Cross.



St. Peter's church, Wolverhampton. Courtesy of Roger Kidd (cc license)

He was a member of St Peter's, Wolverhampton band. Although he himself was born here, his family came from elsewhere; his father, Frederick John Gibson, was born in Chesterton on the outskirts of Cambridge in Cambridgeshire County gaol, where his father, Barnabas, was the Governor.

Frederick became a pharmacist by profession and eventually took over the long-established chemists and druggists at 93 Darlington Street, Wolverhampton, which I believe is now the premises of Age UK. It was here that Harold was born on the 18th July, 1893, later in the year

being baptised in St Peter's on the 1st November. He was one of the six children of Frederick and Gwenllian Bertha (her maternal grandfather was Welsh although she herself was born in Sheerness in Kent), the daughter of another chemist.

The siblings were given the names Mary Gwenllian, Ivor Frederick, Charles Prosser (Gwenllian's maiden name), Harold Deighton, Kathleen Wulfrun and Ida Gladys. On the 1911 census Harold was described as a bank clerk, a profession he was to pursue for the rest of his working life.

In 1912 Harold joined our Society (then called "The Society of Ringers for the Archdeaconry of Stafford" or "The Stafford Archdeaconry Society" for short) as a member of St Peter's band. On the 19th June, 1913 he rang the 4th in a peal of Grandsire Caters at St Peter's, conducted by the legendary Herbert Knight, with the footnote claiming it to be the first peal rung by an entirely local band. However, his life was soon to reach a dramatic hiatus with the declaration of war and his enlistment into the North Staffs Regiment.

Harold Deighton Gibson was mentioned twice in "The London Gazette": firstly in the edition of the 14th September, 1915, which says: "The Prince of Wales's (North Staffs. Regiment). Private H.D. Gibson, from the Staffs. Yeomanry to be Second Lieutenant. Dated 15th September 1915". According to the society report, he was in the 137th Trench Mortar Battery in the Staffs Yeomanry, North Staffordshire Regiment.

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The second instance was the citation about the medal:

"Military Cross: Supplement to the London Gazette, 26th July 1917

Second Lieutenant (acting Lieutenant) Harold Deighton Gibson, North Staffs. Regiment: For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty when in command of mortars during an attack upon enemy trenches. His forward guns were completely buried by hostile shelling, but he succeeded in bringing them back ready to fire again, although a terrific barrage was going on at the time. He also took charge of a party of infantry who were left without an officer, and led them forward and established bombing posts. He set a very fine example to all ranks".

It could not have been long after his return to civilian life that in 1918 he married Doris E. Phillips, the daughter of a furniture dealer and auctioneer whose family lived at 217 Tettenhall Road, Wolverhampton.

It is not clear whether he resumed his ringing after the war, but his name does not again appear in the Society Reports. It is difficult to learn much about his life at this time; however, he did resume his banking career, and was moved around the country, being in Lowestoft in 1921 and on the 1939 Register he and his wife were living in Chichester in Sussex, where he is described as a bank manager in the National Provincial Bank.

On this register his mother, Gwenllian, now a widow, was residing at 52 Waterloo Road, Wolverhampton, the 'proprietor of a chemist's' business'. She died in Wolverhampton in 1960, aged 63.

I thought that this was the end of the story, until I found a dramatic twist to the tale. Quite by chance, I came across a website called 'Wolverhampton's War' – Lost Voices from the Great War' which contains paragraphs about notable people connected with Wolverhampton, and included in them is a piece about Charles Prosser Gibson, the elder brother (by one year) of Harold. He won an exhibition to Dulwich College and enlisted in the Royal Engineers; he served in France from 1915 and was mentioned in despatches before he too was awarded the Military Cross. So far I have not traced this citation. How proud their family must have been to have two recipients of the M.C. Both brothers survived the war. In 1922 Charles married Ethel Annie Hughes, who lived in Penn.

However, Charles and Harold were not the only members of their family to make a mark on Wolverhampton's history, for their sister Mary became a well-known painter, exhibiting at the Royal Academy of Arts during the 1940s and 1950s. and frequently in Birmingham and Wolverhampton. She belonged to a group of artists who met regularly in Wolverhampton. A painting of her by Robert Jackson Emerson was presented to Wolverhampton Art Gallery and this can be seen on the internet. She also taught leatherwork, needlework and bookbinding at Wolverhampton School of Art. She was living with her mother in 1939.

Harold and Doris must have moved to Devon at some point, as Doris

died in the Bideford area in 1984 and Harold in the Exeter area in 1975. Charles died in Bridport in 1978.

There are still unanswered questions to solve, as well as the exact details of the two awards. Did the other three siblings make their mark on Wolverhampton society in any way? (Ivor was a housemaster at Charterhouse School in 1939) Did Ivor and Charles learn to ring? Above all I am intrigued why Harold was given the middle name Deighton! (I do have an idea about that, but it is nothing to do with this story....)



The Military Cross

Remembering Howard Burton of Rushall

by Ann Jones

At Noon on 14th October, 2017 we rang our bells to commemorate one hundred years since the death of a Rushall ringer, killed in World War One.

Born in 1896, Howard Burton (recorded as a member of the Staffordshire Archdeaconry Society of Bell Ringers in 1912), was working as an errand boy when he enlisted and was the son of William Alfred and Annie Florence Burton, of 64, Emery St., Walsall.

He gained the rank of Second Lieutenant in the Third Battalion, the South Staffordshire Regiment and is buried in Dozinghem Military Cemetery, Belgium. We rang rounds, 21 rounds of Queens, 21 rounds of Kings and tolled the tenor 21 times to mark his age when he died. We also honoured a great uncle of Diana Wilkes, also killed in 1917, Charles R. White.



The grave of Howard Burton

New members congratulations!



Congratulations to the new Society members elected at the Womborne and Trysull meeting in November.

These are (l-r):

Helen Glover (Penn), Robert Turner (Trysull) and Linda Gatehouse (Bloxwich)

A Cambridge Minor triple at Drayton Bassett

Well done to the ringers that took part in the three quarter peals of Cambridge Surprise Minor at Drayton Bassett on 25th November. Two of the quarters included firsts of treble bob - for Kevin T Jackson and Andy Hardy.

The first quarter was in memory of four-legged friend Bella (pictured)



Diary dates

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

- ✓ 29th December, Youth ringers' practice, Shareshill, all under 21s welcome who can safely ring rounds.
- ✓ 20th January, New members' meeting, Bilston
- ✓ 1st-28th February, Challenge Month
- ✓ 17th-24th February, Peal Week
- ✓ 17th February, Skittles evening, The Swan Brewood
- ✓ 17th March, 6 Bell Striking Competition (venue TBC)



Thank you to the newsletter contributors of 2017

Many thanks to all contributors to this year's newsletter.

You'll notice a few white spaces in this quarter's edition. If you'd like to help fill the next one, do get in touch with Matt Gallon, via:

newsletter@lwascr.org.uk or
07791769756 with any articles, announcements, congratulations etc.

100 Club Update

Lucky winners of the last 100 Club draws were (at the AGM and Nov meeting respectively):

- ❖ 1st Michael Wilson
- ❖ 2nd Dennis Clive
- ❖ 3rd Karen Malpas
- ❖ 4th Tony Marsden



- ❖ 1st Geoffrey Dann
- ❖ 2nd Bloxwich Tower
- ❖ 3rd John Mulvey
- ❖ 4th John Allen

Happy Christmas!



The Society wishes all its members and friends a very happy Christmas and a successful ringing New Year!