

Ringling Master's Report 2021

What a peculiar year. This year has been characterised by the partial and variable return of ringing within covid restrictions. Various different guidelines were sent to us from national government and the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers. These were interpreted individually by church incumbents whether Deans, Rectors, Vicars or Church Wardens, not forgetting the responsibility for individual towers and individual ringer's own risk assessments. This has, inevitably, led to a spectrum of responses. I am aware that we have some ringers who will, in due course, be keen to return, but who have not yet seen their way clear to restart.

Prior to the restart all of our previously active towers were contacted to establish if any support was needed. Whilst some welcomed this approach, none were aware of having such a need.

In response to the loss of ringers there have been examples of towers coordinating to form a local cluster, for instance, St Mary's Peterborough and Glinton have supported each other and have on occasions combined their practices for mutual benefit. Inevitably there have been some towers that have not yet restarted, like Kings Cliffe, but who remain confident of restarting in the future.

There have also been practice nights that we have lost, on a more long-term basis like Bulwick. It is of some concern that there is no longer a tower within the branch where Cambridge Minor is regularly offered. If developing ringing is like climbing a ladder, ours has some missing rungs.

In an attempt to fill in these gaps with cross border learning opportunities contact was made with Rutland and Thrapston branches. They are, however, in a very similar situation. St Martin's in Stamford and even as far as Market Deeping, both in Lincolnshire, are very much part of the ringing opportunities available to Peterborough branch members locally, and I make no apology for mentioning them here.

The branch 8 Bell Practice has survived the restart. We have managed to attract the ringers necessary to reestablish surprise major ringing. This has in turn provided the opportunities for those wishing to make their first steps in 8 bell ringing with Plain Bob Major.

Cross-border cooperation at the Cathedral has brought together ringers from Peterborough, Rutland and Kettering branches as well as Lincolnshire and Ely ringers. With the support of the Guild ringing master a 12 bell practice, once a month, has been established. This venture has been supported by the installation of a Hawkear system to electronically analyse ringing and striking.

Striking was the focus of two workshops this year that were delivered by the branch drawing on the support of Cathedral ringers. These were targeted to Warmington and Nassington both of whom have bands of enthusiastic developing ringers led by Alex and Hilary respectively. There were also two quarter peals rung, one of Plain Bob Minor at Cotterstock

and one of Cambridge Surprise Minor at Nassington both of which were arranged as striking workshop events.

The Ringing School continues to be successful at bringing new people in and getting them ringing. From this we can look forward to the Wittering tower developing its own practice.

The challenge to maintain the standard of ringing opportunities locally will only be met with continued development of our towers into clusters and for ringers to be brave enough to seek out those opportunities, even if they are outside their tower, over a boundary or outside their comfort zone.

That's all,

James Thorpe