

# NUSCR NATTER



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## President's Ponderings

Welcome to the 2017 NUSCR Natter.

A lot has happened this year, as I'm sure the following reports will testify. I have only been able to make it to a few of the events but at each one I have been struck by the energy and enthusiasm of the current committee, students and recent alumni. As Dee, my predecessor, said they are "a very special band of ringers".

In October I went to the first practice of the Autumn term where there were an amazing 11 new members, ranging from absolute beginners to those capable of ringing Surprise. Welcome to you all and may your association with NUSCR be long and happy.

If organising next year's 60th annual dinner wasn't a big enough challenge, the current committee also hosted this year's NUA brilliantly, turning in, I understand, quite a tidy profit. It was a great weekend, but better luck with the boat race next year, NUSCR.

I've mentioned the recent alumni already but Nottingham is fortunate that so many are able to stay in the area, joining in with NUSCR and other local practices and having a huge impact on the Nottingham ringing scene. Keep up the good work.

Change ringing on the NUSCR handbells is flourishing - thanks Ben - and, together with Esther's handbells, this has helped Tom and Christine's house to be a strong contender for leading quarter peal "tower" in the Nottingham District, if not the whole of the Southwell Guild.

Finally, the dinner. It's going to a great weekend with many generations already making an extra effort to reunite with as many as they can from their era and with the added attraction of an Inter-generational Striking Competition on the Sunday. One decade has a team leader who is determined to win. Let's make sure the other decades give her a run for her money.

Happy Ringing,

Roger

President NUSCR

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## Master's Mutterings

I had some pretty impressive boots to fill when I took over as NUSCR Master from Emily Hall at the AGM in February. It was an incredibly daunting prospect, especially with NUSCR having a big birthday party to plan!

I did not have a lot of time to settle into the role as I quickly realised I had to organise the NUSCR bands for the Crawford Cup. Our method band came first in the heats, with the call change band coming 3<sup>rd</sup>. At the finals we were beaten into second place by Beeston by half a fault! This may have been due to two of the ringers (who are capable of ringing Surprise Max) having method difficulties; apparently dodges are difficult in Plain Bob Doubles!

As the year has progressed, the day-to-day running of NUSCR became less stressful and I began to settle into the role as Master. Practices have been well attended all year, with all 10 bells being rung regularly; we've managed practices that have included Surprise Royal and some well struck call changes.

This year we have had a phenomenal influx of freshers to the society; they are a wonderful bunch that have helped make practices and the many socials so enjoyable. The regular attendees from among the freshers have included: Alex, Angus, Chloe, Daniel, Ed, Harvey, Holly, Ieuan, Izzy, Laura and Naomi. It is a pleasure to welcome them to NUSCR and I look forward to introducing them to the older members of NUSCR at the dinner.

We have had many successful tours this year with their reports featured later in this edition of the Natter. Thank you to all those that have helped with the organisation, transport and attendance at these hugely enjoyable events.

This year the committee have had a lot to organise. Not only have we been busy organising the 60<sup>th</sup> weekend ready for February but we were chosen to host NUA. The weekend, held in November, was a huge success and many new friendships were formed with the other student societies. We were granted permission to sleep in All Saints' Church and the ceilidh was done in traditional NUSCR style; plenty of baskets! The whole weekend ran without a hiccup and was great fun. For all the details of the weekend please see Ellis' report.

As this is our diamond anniversary, it would be lovely to see as many of you as possible in February. On behalf of the whole committee, we are really looking forward to celebrating with you and the whole weekend will be great fun.

Finally, I would like to say a massive thank you to my wonderful committee. They have been so supportive and have helped make the running of NUSCR so smooth throughout the year. I'd also like to extend my thanks to all the current NUSCR students and alumni who have supported the many practices and events that have happened this year.

Vic Halford

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## Peal Secretary's Scribblings

NUSCR has been rather busy in the last year, ringing a total of 76 quarter peals, one "official" peal and two peals with a NUSCR band plus Alistair Smith. 51 of the quarters and the "official" peal were in hand.

Some of the most notable achievements this year have been: first quarter peal for Emma Cracknell and Adam Wilmott, first NUSCR quarters for Edward Walker, first spliced for Adam, Esther Pilgrim's 150th quarter, Chris Field's 100th for the Society, Tim Poole's 1000th quarter peal and Esther's first handbell peal! This is by no means an exhaustive list and many others also achieved firsts and milestone achievements throughout the year.

NUSCR have rung for various notable occasions, including a quarter peal during the reception of Phill Ridley and Hannah Smith's wedding at the church next door. Apparently, Phill stopped midway through the speeches to go outside and listen! We also rang a quarter peal for the University of Nottingham's Carol Service of Grandsire Caters.

With the influx of new ringers this year, we are looking forward to ringing more in the future with them

Esther Pilgrim

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## Dinner Weekend Report 2016

The weekend kicked off, in true NUSCR fashion, at the pub. It was great to see familiar faces and to be introduced to NUSCR alumni. The alcohol began flowing and was to continue throughout the weekend.

Saturday ringing was due to start at 9:15 at the first tower of the day; Sproxton. Unfortunately, I missed the majority of it, courtesy of my lift for the day, Dan and Lucy. I rang in a set of brisk call changes and coming from a tower with a light ring of 8 it was lovely to be back on light bells! The really cold interior of the church provided great motivation for people to quickly catch hold for the next ring. When the ringing down started, a few of us nipped out into the churchyard to go geocaching; we were successful much to the delight of Lucy. Then everyone piled into their cars for the very short drive to the next tower; Saltby.

The church at Salty was even colder than Sproxton; which many did not think possible. Unfortunately, due to the cold, we had to ring on the very damp, stiff ropes. The ringing circle was small so there were a few incidents when neighbouring ringers caught each other's ropes by accident. The coldness of the church encouraged people to wait in the church yard where a large game of catch broke out, using a rugby ball borrowed from the Wignell children. As well as the rugby game, more successful geocaching was useful in entertaining the younger children and in keeping some of the current NUSCR students warm; walking round the churchyard was very useful in returning feeling to a few ringers very cold feet.

The pub agreed on for lunch was in Grantham and by the time I reached it, following a tour of the car parks of Grantham, most people had already ordered food. Lunch was a very social meal with NUSCR occupying a large proportion of the ground floor of the chosen Weatherspoons. During lunch, the freshers were introduced to everyone and some of the older students were tested on their skills at remembering faces and the names attached to them.

Following lunch everyone migrated to the nearby tower. The 12 bells at Grantham provided the opportunity for people not used to ringing on 12, including myself, to have a go. Plenty of rounds and call changes were rung, and then the more advanced ringers took over and successfully rang Bristol maximus; despite Emily Hall's attempts at sabotage.

The final tower of the day was Whatton-in-the-Vale which concluded an excellent day of ringing. A wide variety of methods were rung at this tower, ranging from Superlative and Yorkshire major as well as rounds and call changes; perhaps more methods could have been rung if it were not due to Chris Fields incompetent standing of the treble. The ringing at the final tower ended promptly as everyone was keen to get back to their various hotels to begin getting ready for the highlight of the weekend; the dinner.

The 59th annual NUSCR dinner began with a pub session at one of the local pubs near the hotel. Following a quick pint, we moved on mass to the hotel for the meal. The meal itself was delicious with everyone washing it down with plenty of wine. Following the food came the speeches. There was a lot to get through as this year

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saw the election of a new NUSCR President; Roger Lawson. The guest speaker, John Fisher, gave a thoroughly interesting and entertaining speech comparing the different 'types' of ringer which everyone was able to relate to. In her speech as ringing master Emily Hall embarrassed all of this year's freshers; Thanks to her the society has been made aware of the reasons why Nottingham lost the 2016 NUA boat race.

Once all the speeches had finished, it was time to migrate to the bar to top up our glasses ready for the ceilidh. As a fresher, I had been warned about the famous NUSCR ceilidh and I wasn't disappointed; as many people told me before the dancing started: "you haven't ceilidh properly until you've got the bruises to show for it."

The ceilidh was a huge success; the 'Strip the Willow' was the dance that got the most laughs. Thanks to Phil's lack of coordination, because of alcohol, I can say it was the most hilarious Strip the Willow I've ever danced. It provided some quality entertainment for those watching our set.

For some, the evening ended shortly after 12:30. However, some students remained at the bar until 2:00am. Therefore, it was great to see so many of them right and early for Sunday service ringing.

The final day of the NUSCR weekend started with ringing at All Saint's. Due to the large turnout, all 10 bells were rung; Ringing ranged from rounds and calls on 10 up to Cambridge royal. Following the ringing, everyone walked into the city centre for breakfast at Weatherspoons before the midday peal at St Peter's.

The peal was supposed to begin shortly after 12:00pm. The band had been arranged in advanced, however, due to illness, one member of the band was indisposed. So at 11:55am I got a call from a member of the band asking if I'd be willing to take the free rope. Reluctantly I agreed and made a quick dash from the pub down to the church.

A new stay had been put on the 6th following a breakage. When we reached the ringing chamber, we found all bells, except the 6th, up at backstroke. We began to ring it up when we hit a small problem; The new stay was a fraction too long and was hitting the fame as the wheel rotated. The bell was lowered back down and part of the band disappeared upstairs to inspect the stay and work out a solution to the problem. It was decided that the simplest thing to do was to remove the stay and then proceed with the peal. However; even with several spanners and plenty of manpower, the stay did not budge. Plan B was to try to saw a couple of inches off the top of the stay but due to the lack of a saw that plan didn't solve the problem. Eventually, it was decided to abandon the peal of Cambridge royal.

In order to still ring something to celebrate the dinner weekend, it was suggested that the band should split and ring two quarter peals; one on the back six of the tower bells, and another on hand bells. I remained up the tower and rang in the tower quarter; we were successful with 1320 changes of Cambridge Surprise minor in 47minutes. The hand bell band decided to ring Plain Bob minor but sadly did not score the quarter. After the ringing, we gathered on the roof for a group photo before making our way, rather quickly, to the pub.

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This weekend was a brilliant success and would not have been possible without the endless planning, dedication and hard work that has gone into organising it. Thank you to Dee for her endless support as NUSCR president and to Emily Hall and her committee for their tireless efforts into the running of this year's NUSCR dinner weekend.

And finally, I would just like to wish Roger Lawson good luck in his new role as NUSCR President.

Vic Halford

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## NUA Hit Nottingham

With a spring in my step on a cold Friday afternoon, the time came to pack my bags and head off back to the city of my university days for NUSCR's stab at NUA.

Having loaded my car with supplies for the weekend (beer) I headed up to Beeston where we transported a shed load of food over to All Saints Church in Radford. Having stocked the church for the throng of drunk ringers due in the next few hours, NUSCR master Vic and I headed into town.

With the army of northern ringers formed in The Roebuck Inn, we wolfed down some food and plenty of beer before NUSCR led the way to St Mary's for the evening's ringing. The bells sounded wonderful as usual, but the evening wasn't without a bit of drama, as former NUSCR master Emily Hall had a slip up with the tenor, causing her fingers to suffer some damage! Bravely, she soldiered on for the entire evening, and after a good session of all things bobs, singles and call changes, it was time to head to the Organ Grinder for many more beers.

NUSCR led the way once again, with two splinter groups (one led by me) which were so keen to race each other there, ringers were left scattered across the city centre! With many more beers under our belts and with the last few late comers crammed into the small pub, we eventually staggered over to All Saints, where we bedded down between pews in the church - a first for NUA if I'm not mistaken.

The evening wound down with our master getting into a fit of giggling so strong she had to be taken to a quiet corner to calm down for about 15 minutes, before we finally turned in.

We were woken in the morning by the church cleaner, who got a bit of a shock finding many sleeping and coloured caterpillars on his church floor!

We headed over to Beeston for our morning's striking competition and some well-deserved spoons breakfasts. Fuelled up, we took the tram into the centre of Nottingham to cram into St Peters, even spilling out onto the roof for some panoramic views.

The party then jumped onto the tram to go all the way out to Hucknall, for some delightful later-afternoon ringing on some delightful bells.

The main party then headed to Basford, at which point Vic and I broke off to head to Beeston and ship the stacks of sandwiches and nibbles over to Mansfield Road Baptist Church for our energetic ceilidh, hosted by the Nottingham Ceilidh Club.

The night had buckets of sweat, stacks of food and drink and some long lines of dancing pairs and wild baskets.

After a quick beer pit stop at the local Tesco, we raced back to All Saints for the annual boat race. This year's was a little quieter than usual, many spectators were

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packed into the yard, yelling support in whispered tones so not to wake the neighbours. Leeds once again emerged victorious (personally, I think they take it far too seriously), but thanks to a sublime Guinness downing effort from Matthew, NUSCR were very far from last this year.

The next morning, we made it upstairs to ring All Saints' service in, before venturing back to the Roebuck for more breakfasts.

Ten ringers rang a very nice quarter of Grandsire Caters at All Saints, which marked the end of a fabulous weekend. The ringers, battered beyond belief, staggered to the train station, or to their respective homes.

All in all, it was a hectic, busy but thoroughly successful NUA, with NUSCR showing how you balance the beer, the banter and the bells.

Ellis Whitehouse



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## Summer 2016

NUSCR's successful Summer Tour 2017 to Shrewsbury began at Friday lunchtime on 16th June. Despite some questionable navigation and the M6, we arrived early at the first destination: a pub in Shropshire. Soon after arrival, we were joined by a selection of ringers from both Nottingham and Birmingham, and sat 'enjoying' the weather before taking over, I mean joining, a local practice night at Hodnet, an excitingly shaped eight-bell tower with some rather scared looking locals.

After a swelteringly warm night in the Atcham Memorial Hall, kindly vacated by the Atcham Lady Masons, we set off the next morning for our second tower, the six-bell tower at St Lucia in Upton Magna. After some successful ringing, we moved on to our second tower, Holy Trinity at Leaton, which had a beautiful church garden, which was less warm than the ringing chamber. The next tower, St Chad's in Shrewsbury itself, was the only twelve-bell ring of the weekend, which is always exciting. There, the less confident of us observed some excellent ringing by the more confident and better trained, and all enjoyed being in a slightly larger space in the midday heat. Breaking for lunch, and exploring Shrewsbury gave everyone the chance to cool off a little before returning for the final tower of the day, St Mary V, also in Shrewsbury. Here, those of us who hadn't attended NUA 2016 were introduced to some ringing tricks, such as switching from rounds to reverse rounds or Queens in one stroke. The evening was passed in a haze of food, handbells, and sunshine, before another warm night.

On Sunday morning, we rang for the morning service at the only church dedicated to St Eata, in Atcham; a six-bell tower with a ringing balcony, where the congregation could watch the ringing in progress. Unused to ringing with an audience, this was slightly terrifying. Despite our proposed plan to drive across the border and invade Wales, we stopped a little short, and found ourselves in Bridgnorth. While half the group joined the Severn Valley Railway at Bridgnorth, the other half explored the town, and managed to secure a surprise extra ring at St Mary Magdalene's, an eight-bell tower with a fantastic view, and some rogue Christmas decorations. In the evening, reunited, we visited the (exceedingly sweaty) Holy Trinity at Meole Brace, where we rang all eight bells to begin their evening service.

Another warm night in sleeping bags was followed by packing away all our worldly possessions, and the newly acquired Gnorman the Gnome, ready for the home journey. On the way, we stopped at Uppington church, also called Holy Trinity, but this time with only six bells, for one last hurrah before parting ways with our pals from Birmingham and heading back to Nottingham. Many thanks to Emily for organising the whole shebang, and for all of those we cajoled and bullied into driving for giving up their petrol and cars.

Emma Cracknall

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## Freshers Tour

This year's tour had an excellent turn out with a good mix of freshers and existing NUSCR members; however, due to a forgetful ringing master; Scruffy was unfortunately unable to make it this year.

The day started off with ringing at St Phillip's & St James', Ratby. The ringing ranged from some well struck Bob Major to some decent rounds for the freshers that were only just progressing with their backstrokes. Vic provided a breakfast of Chocolate rice crispy cakes which disappeared quickly.

Next on the itinerary was lunch at the Spoons in Daventry. Unfortunately; due to delays on the motorway, some people didn't get an opportunity for lunch due to being needed to make up numbers for ringing at Daventry (Sorry Chris F & Co...)

During lunch, each of us got a taste of Dan's somewhat interesting pint, before clearing our pallets with something that was actually potable!

Ringing at Daventry ranged from some good Call Changes all the way up to some excellent Cambridge Royal. Ringing finished with a service touch of Stedman Caters for a baptism that was happening in the church.

The penultimate tower in of the tour was Cold Higham which was a nice, light 6. We had some nice grandsire and some lovely fast Cambridge Minor.

The final tower of the day was Whilton, a harsh sounding 8. Ringing here was good although some people didn't like the bells, so the entertainment provided by a toddler was preferable!

As is always the way with NUSCR, the day finished with the Pub. Dan was relieved to find they served pints that he could actually enjoy, and the food was Delicious.

Overall the day was a well organised event which everyone seemed to thoroughly enjoy. Many thanks to everyone involved in the planning of such a smoothly run day.

Edward Walker