

Royal Naval Guild of Bellringers AGM 2017.

This year's AGM took place in the Northampton area on March 4th 2017, with sixteen ringers and three visitors. Yet again we were very lucky with the weather ~ it was chilly yet sunny and windy, with rain only during the meeting itself. The AGM followed a sumptuous tea.

In Medieval times, wool was the main industry in Northampton and by the 17th C noted for shoe making. This went on well into the 19th C, when brewing became important. Today, the main industries in Northampton are financial services, soft drinks, cosmetics and brewing. Interestingly, Northampton Town are nicknamed "The Cobblers".



Our first ring was at **St Peter and St Paul's, Abington** and was a 6 bell ground floor ring, where the new ring of 6 were dedicated in June 2006. We rang rounds and call changes, Grandsire, Plain Bob and Cambridge Minor. Fouled anchors were found on the walls of the church and in graveyard.

The second tower was **St. Giles, Northampton.** This was a large cruciform church in the town centre with an imposing central tower and a peal of 10 bells. As many of us were not used to ringing on 10 bells, the Caters methods were simply kept to rounds and call changes, Plain hunt and Plain Bob.



The last tower before lunch was the **Holy Sepulchre, Northampton.** This was a Norman round church with a 13thC chancel and a 14thC tower. It was a very impressive ground floor ring with 3 guiders (but they were easy to ring) and were Gillett and Johnston bells – who were renowned clock makers. Steadman triples, Plain hunt triples and Yorkshire major were rung.

A well-earned lunch was enjoyed at the Elwes Arms in Great Billing, once we found it!!

Our first tower after lunch was **St Mary Magdelene, Ecton**, with six bells and small but steep steps into the ringing chamber. Steadman, Grandsire, Plain Bob were rung with a couple of attempts at a mixed double method ~ St Clements and St Martins.



Our last ring of the day was at **All Saints, Earls Barton**. This ringing chamber was not for the faint hearted!! A very steep open ladder was required to get into it!! Again, Grandsire and Plain Bob were rang but the attempt this time at Steadman triples ended in failure. A claim to fame for the church was it was featured on the 1972 postage stamps issued by the Royal Mail as part of a set depicting village churches.



The usual Bell ringers' service was held here and Dennis Martin and Steve Lowman were remembered during the service and the Guild stood in Remembrance of them during the AGM.

All the bells were a delight to ring, despite some long draughts and very grateful thanks must go to Mike Brown for making all the arrangements and helping to make sure that the day went smoothly. Thanks should also be recorded to the ladies who made and served the teas – the best cups of tea ever!!

Anne T

