

Words of wisdom from student ringers

by Birmingham Universities Society members



BIRMINGHAM UNIVERSITIES
SOCIETY OF CHANGE RINGERS

Starter for 10

One of the most pivotal choices many people will ever make is where to go to university, not only for the degree subject matter but for making friends for life. At this time of year, if you or someone you know happens to be in the middle of that process, please do look up the ringing societies at all the potential candidates. Being involved in extra-curricular activities alongside one's studies makes the whole uni experience more fun and more memorable, and grows leadership and teamwork skills. We all know that ringing is good for one's physical and mental health as well as being a great social blender.

Lucas Williams, Master of the Birmingham Universities Society of Change Ringers (universityringing.org/buscr/), has collected some thoughts from current student ringers, reflecting the modern experience. He told *The Ringing World* that there are surprising stories of young ringers from seemingly well-connected bands who arrive at university and don't make contact with their uni ringing society, possibly because they don't realise there is one. Make sure that doesn't apply to any young ringers you know! There are of course, other students who make this important life choice specifically for the ringing opportunities on offer!

Back in the summer (*RW*5957, p.580) Lucas wrote an article about the resurrection of the Birmingham uni ringers after several stalwarts had graduated and left town, and how they rebuilt to the thriving entity it is today.



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Charlotte Holiday

As a ringer of four years, when I told my home ringers that I was going to university in Birmingham, joining BUSCR became a non-negotiable. Although I had doubts before the first taster session, I decided "Why not? There's no pressure to go again." Little did I know that I would end up achieving my LTR Level Five and ringing eight quarter peals within my first term. The pace at BUSCR is much quicker than I had been used to so I often doubt myself before attempting new methods, but that just makes succeeding even more rewarding. My most recent quarter peal, St Clement's Minor, was perhaps the most nerve-wracking, given that I hadn't been able to complete a touch prior to the quarter attempt.

The social side of the society is something I've quickly settled into, even finding people who share my sense of humour. It has been noticed that I can do more talking than ringing on occasion. The connections between my home ringers and some BUSCR members have also made me realise the bell ringing community is more interlinked than I thought. From only being confident ringing

Plain Bob and Grandsire when I arrived, I've been able to add many more methods to my now ever expanding repertoire. Maybe soon I'll start believing people when they tell me I'll be fine...

Ben Wigley

Progress this year did not feel as linear as it did last year, but that's what has been interesting. Coming to university this year, my expertise was little more than being able to hunt with a slight idea of what "Bob Doubles" meant. There was certainly quite a big feeling of frustration in my mind every time I attempted the plain course, dropping the bell at each and every up dodge. Nonetheless, Lucas and others persisted in giving me valuable feedback until I had fixed my ways. Fast forward less than two months and here we were, ringing a 2020

with myself inside for my birthday; this was the moment I really felt that I'd accomplished something. At BUSCR, we didn't just stop here. Lucas pushed us all into the deep end, having me ring things I did not feel ready for, and as a society we've progressed a lot because of this. Having learnt something new, it made myself ever so slightly more useful, and hence invitations to ring a quarter became very frequent – this semester I've averaged one a week! These frequent quarters are a great way for me to refine my skills and everyone who I've rung with has provided me great feedback that has allowed me to progress.

Ringing at BUSCR under Lucas's leadership has given me a hobby that I've fallen in love with but also helped me create great friendships, and for those two reasons, the Friday practice nights always mark the highlight of my week.

Ioan Normington

Coming back to university does have its pros and cons. Firmly in the 'pro' side is being able to come back to ringing with BUSCR, with friends new and old. I have had the pleasure of ringing 22 quarter peals with the society this term (of the 26 rung for BUSCR overall) and I must say that while bob doubles does lose its charm after a while, the satisfaction of seeing someone ring their first inside does not. One of things I am particularly pleased by was calling an extended birthday quarter, a 2020, for Ben's (of the glasses variety) 20th birthday. I think that the most challenging thing that I've done this term is ring four quarter peals in a day (including one tower where I was

Success is not a finish line – Reflections on a good year

by Lucas Williams

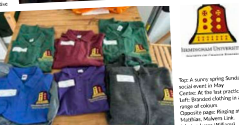
As the end of the academic year draws near, it's time to reflect on the year that has passed. It's a time to look back on the challenges we've faced, the successes we've achieved, and the people who have helped us along the way. This is a time to celebrate the journey, not just the destination.

First impressions matter. When I first joined the society, I was nervous and unsure. But the welcoming atmosphere and the support of the members made me feel at home. It was a relief to find a community where I could learn and grow.

Don't be afraid to ask for help. We are all here to support each other. If you're struggling, don't be shy to reach out. We'll be there to help you through it.

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With a high focus on teaching and learning, we've achieved a lot. We've grown as a society and as individuals. We've made a difference in the world.



ringing the third on the stairs) and while I have rung peals in the past, I think it is much easier to get it all done with at once then chopping it up into four bits.

While it is certainly good to see ringers from previous years, Lucas and I are lucky to be in the position of watching people that we taught only a year ago from scratch, teaching brand new recruits themselves. I am immensely proud of all the work that last year's intake have been doing with this year's, but it is somewhat surreal to see someone who I was telling to move up the backstroke every few blows not so long ago telling it to a brand new recruit themselves!

Nikolai Komar

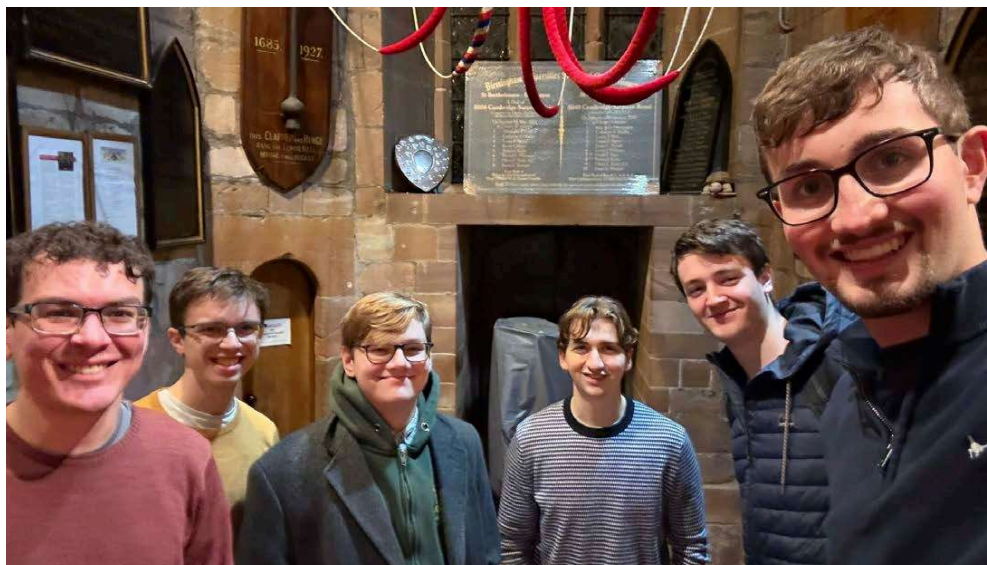
There have been a number of highlights for me across the term. Unfortunately, my first attempt at conducting was not one of them – there's not much you can do when a rope breaks halfway through. Thankfully I have been able to conduct several quarter peals since, which has been a rewarding if highly stressful experience. Meanwhile, on Saturday 1st November we rang four quarter peals in a day, ending with my first Stedman Triples. I'm not sure the word exhaustion does that day justice, but I was delighted we succeeded. Ringing my first surprise method later in November brought a similar sense of relief. Lucas's words that day were, "I think we've completed bell ringing." This has since turned out not to be the case.

The most rewarding aspect of all this has been ringing side-by-side with those that last year learnt alongside me and those that were tirelessly teaching us throughout. Without them, I wouldn't have so readily rung 24 quarter peals in the last three months; without Lucas's pathological commitment to putting bands together, I wouldn't even have had the chance. So for all of this, I am incredibly grateful!

Rob Carr

I came to Uni in Birmingham as an existing ringer, so joining BUSCR was at the top of my to-do list. As a member, I have the opportunity to teach, to ring things that challenge others, and to ring things that challenge myself. In the three months I've been in Birmingham, I have rung in thirteen quarters for BUSCR. I conducted three of them, three were new methods, and one was 12-spliced surprise minor. This was one of the most challenging quarters I have participated in, and it is in preparation for a 41-spliced peal attempt in the new year.

Through our Ringing Master Lucas, I have also attended the more advanced practices at St Paul's and St Martin's, where I have managed to ring some new Royal and Maximus. The year before I joined, BUSCR had recruited 15 new ringers. It's amazing to see how some of these people after such a short career in ringing are now at a level that



they can teach others to continue BUSCR's growth. I am very grateful to Lucas for the incredible work he puts in to organise, help and encourage all members of BUSCR whatever level they are at, and I feel so lucky to have been welcomed by such a lovely group of people!

The pace of learning at BUSCR is far quicker than at my home tower

Edmund Roberts

Captivated by the enchanting soundscape of Worcester Cathedral's magnificent bells, I began my ringing journey in September 2023. I was struck by the fascinating blend of intellectual, physical and social requirements involved in handling the largest and loudest musical instruments. The Cathedral Teaching Centre provided an excellent playground to learn the art of bell handling. As my confidence improved, I gained valuable experience by visiting towers far and wide. It became apparent just how much variation exists between towers in terms of the effort and energy expense required to achieve good striking.

Prior to moving up to the University of Birmingham earlier this term to study Medicine, I was well aware of the existence of BUSCR and its excellent reputation. Thus, I turned up to the first Friday practice of the term with much anticipation. Practices have been very productive and accommodate all ringing abilities. In particular, it has been excellent to ring alongside and support so many new recruits. It seems the future of BUSCR is in very capable hands.

There have been many ringing and social opportunities throughout the term. Notably, the BUSCR Christmas outing was a particular success. The itinerary involved a train trip

stopping off for tower grabs in Bickenhill and Hampton in Arden followed by a meal and ice skating in Coventry. The day was suitably festive and most definitely unique. It has also been excellent to ring a number of quarter peals. My first of Cambridge Minor, Grandsire Caters and first as conductor stand out as particular highlights.

I am quite sure BUSCR will continue to go from strength to strength. It has been excellent to immerse myself in the local ringing scene. I very much look forward to advancing my skills over the coming years in Birmingham.

Fraser Wood

Having started ringing at the beginning of the year, I was made well aware of BUSCR by ringers at my home tower before I even came to Birmingham.

I was also lucky enough that my friend Rob, who first introduced me to ringing, came to Birmingham as well, allowing us to continue our ringing journey alongside each other – albeit at different levels.

Before joining BUSCR, I could only ring rounds and call changes, and had participated in one quarter peal. Since the beginning of this academic year, I have rung in three more quarters and been to 10 towers in the area. The most notable and enjoyable of which was of St Martin's Bob Doubles, my first quarter off the tenor. The pace of learning at BUSCR is far quicker than at my home tower, but this is a welcomed change. I have been pushed to progress by friendly teaching and constructive advice and it has led to improvements that I am very pleased with.

Not only is the ringing at BUSCR productive and enjoyable, but the social aspects of the society are also great. Every practice provides a welcoming and fun atmosphere, and I can safely say I get on well with everyone there. The social outings have been very enjoyable, providing a nice mix between ringing and leisure. The quality of the society as a whole is a testament to the committee, who work well to keep ringing and social outings running smoothly.

Oliver Mumberson

Whilst not having been a part of anywhere near the same number of quarters as some of the other members, it's certainly been a joy to be a small part of this amazing accomplishment that the society has achieved. It's certainly a relief now I've done my first quarter on a moving bell, and now making my way into my method debut with bob doubles. My main takeaway simply how much faster it went than tenoring – it finally made sense how people could ring four in one day and not feel like they'd aged years! Every single quarter and practice I come out of I feel more and more confident, and despite some personal setbacks, I've never stopped being thankful for all the friends around me who have continued to support me in my learning.

My second quarter peal was with my former maths teacher, Eleanor Linford

What has been particularly enjoyable is ringing (quite literally!) alongside people that I began learning with last September. Despite different levels of progress, it was certainly rewarding for me and Ben to both ring our firsts of different things on 1 and 2, truly appreciating how stuck in to this new hobby we all are. The commitment from everyone in the society to creating a space that is both so dedicated to intense progress and teaching, but also so welcoming and chatty is truly astounding – not enough acknowledgement is given to all of the hard work put in behind the scenes to make things like this happen so smoothly!

Isla Casserley

While I have only rung two quarter peals with BUSCR, they were both very rewarding. It felt quite daunting going into my first quarter as I was surrounded by talented ringers that I did not want to let down, resulting in asking for extra practice at the other towers I ring at (which I would not normally do).

This feeling quickly faded, as the other band members were both welcoming and encouraging throughout. My second quarter peal was with my former Maths teacher, Eleanor Linford, it was good to be able to achieve my first surprise with her!

The experience of the people in BUSCR has allowed my ringing to progress much quicker than it did before university. The faster pace has gently pushed me out of the comfort of ringing familiar methods. Without members giving up their ringing time to stand with me while I was learning new methods, I would not have been able to ring my first Surprise Minor quarter successfully. A lot of time and effort has been contributed by the members of BUSCR and without their support, myself and many others would have been unable to progress the way we have.

BUSCR's Autumn Term Firsts

Edgbaston, W Mids. (S Bartholomew) 3 Dec, 2025 Doubles (5m): Benjamin J D Wigley 1, Charlotte M Holiday 2, Nikolai A S Komar 3, Ioan B G Normington 4, Lucas J Williams (C) 5, Elizabeth Tennant 6. 1st multiple methods: 2. Longest length: 1, 2, 3. 1st date touch: 6.

Moseley, W Mids. (S Anne) 28 Sep, 1260 PB Doubles: Oscar A Hornberger 1, Elizabeth M Tennant 2, Nikolai A S Komar 3, Edmund M C Roberts 4, Ioan B G Normington (C) 5, Benjamin J D Wigley 6. 1st Q of the academic year for BUSCR, rung by all current undergrads.

Edgbaston, W Mids. (S Bartholomew) 8 Oct, 1260 Grandsire Doubles: Benjamin J D Wigley 1, Lucas J Williams (C) 2, Ioan B G Normington 3, Edmund M C Roberts 4, Nikolai A S Komar 5, Benjamin G Williams 6. 1st in m: 5.

Moseley, W Mids. (S Anne) 12 Oct, 1260 PB Minor: Lucas J Williams (C) 1, Ioan B G Normington 2, Alistair Benford 3, Lydia Redman 4, Nikolai A S Komar 5, Thomas R Groves 6. 1st minor: 5. Welcoming Lydia to Birmingham.

Edgbaston, W Mids. (S Bartholomew) 15 Oct, 1260 Doubles (5m): Lucas J Williams 1, Elizabeth Tennant 2, Edmund M C Roberts 3, Nikolai A S Komar 4, Ioan B G Normington (C) 5, Benjamin J D Wigley 6. 1st mixed doubles: 3, 4 & as C.

Selly Oak, W Mids. 18 Oct, 1296 Bourne S Minor: Nikolai A S Komar 1, Casey McLellan 2, Ioan B G Normington 3, Janet A Horton 4, Robert Carr 5, Lucas J Williams (C) 6. 1st treble bobbing: 1. 1st in m: 3, 5.

Edgbaston, W Mids. (S Bartholomew) 22 Oct, 1260 PB Doubles: Lewis S McEwan 1, Lucas J Williams 2, Frank Agar 3, Ioan B G Normington 4, Nikolai A S Komar (C) 5, Benjamin J D Wigley 6. 1st on treble. 1st as C.

Edgbaston, W Mids. (S Bartholomew) 22 Oct, 1260 Stedman Triples: Austin J Paul 1, Casey McLellan 2, Ioan Normington 3, Robert Carr 4, Alistair Benford 5, James Ramsbottom (C) 6, Lucas J Williams 7, Nikolai Komar 8. 1st on 8: 8. 1st in m: 5. £8

Sheldon, W Mids. 28 Oct, 1344 Grandsire Triples: James Ramsbottom (C) 1, Lucas J Williams 2, Thomas Groves 3, Edmund M C Roberts 4, Nikolai Komar 5, Robert Carr 6, Ioan Normington 7, Oscar Hornberger 8. 1st on 8: 8. 1st inside on 8: 5.

Edgbaston, W Mids. (S Bartholomew) 29 Oct, 1296 Spl S Minor (12m): Isla Casserley 1, Daniel J Page (C) 2, Lucas J Williams 3, Thomas R Groves 4, Robert Carr 5, Jimmy L Yeoman 6.

Belbroughton, Worcs. 1 Nov, 1260 Spl Doubles and Minor (2m): Robert J Carr 1, Ioan B G Normington 2, Nikolai A S Komar 3, Edmund M C Roberts 4, Lucas J Williams (C) 5, Thomas R Groves 6. 1st variable stage: 1,2,3,4,6.

Cookley, Worcs. (S Peter) 1 Nov, 1260 Spl Minor (2m): Lucas J Williams (C) 1, Thomas R Groves 2, Edmund M C Roberts 3, Ioan B G Normington 4, Nikolai A S Komar 5, Robert Carr 6. 1st Little Bob: 3,4,5. 1st Spl: 3,5.

Selly Oak, W Mids. 1 Nov, 1251 Stedman Triples: Thomas Groves 1, Ioan Normington 2, Lucas J Williams 3, Nikolai Komar 4, Robert Carr 5, Steve Horton 6, James Ramsbottom (C) 7, Jimmy Yeoman 8. 1st Stedman: 4.

Stone, Worcs. (Blessed Virgin Mary) 1 Nov, 1272 Cambridge S Minor: Nikolai A S Komar 1, Edmund M C Roberts 2, Ioan B G Normington 3, Thomas R Groves 4, Lucas J Williams 5, Robert J Carr (C) 6. 1st surprise inside: 2.

Moseley, W Mids. (S Anne) 2 Nov, 1260 Grandsire Doubles: Robert J Carr (C) 1, Lucas J Williams 2, Charlotte M Holiday 3, Thomas R Groves 4, Ioan B G Normington 5, Fraser J Wood 6. 1st Q with BUSCR: 3 & 6. 1st Grandsire inside: 3.

Edgbaston, W Mids. (S Bartholomew) 9 Nov, 1260 PB Doubles: Lucas J Williams 1, Charlotte M Holiday 2, Benjamin J D Wigley 3, Ioan B G Normington 4, Nikolai A S Komar (C) 5, Elizabeth M Tennant 6. Half-muffled for remembrance. 1st inside: 3. 1/2.

Edgbaston, W Mids. (S Bartholomew) 9 Nov, 1260 PB Doubles: Lucas J Williams 1, Elizabeth M Tennant 2, Benjamin G Williams 3, Nikolai A S Komar 4, Ioan B G Normington (C) 5, Charlotte M Holiday 6. Half-muffled for remembrance. 1st inside: 3. 2/2.

Edgbaston, W Mids. (S Bartholomew) 12 Nov, 1320 Cambridge S Minor: Daniel J Page (C) 1, Isla Casserley 2, Nikolai A S Komar 3, Ioan B G Normington 4, Lucas J Williams 5, Eleanor J Linford 6. 1st S: 2 & 3. Rung half-muffled due to steeplekeeper apathy.

Edgbaston, W Mids. (S Bartholomew) 18 Nov, 2020 PB Doubles: Nikolai A S Komar 1, Alistair Benford 2, Benjamin J D Wigley 3, Lucas J Williams 4, Ioan B G Normington (C) 5, Benjamin G Williams 6. Happy 20th Birthday to (Glasses) Ben today! Longest length: 1, 2, 3, 6 & as C.

Moseley, W Mids. (S Mary) 19 Nov, 1259 Grandsire Caters: Daniel J Page 1, Lucas J Williams 2, Ioan B G Normington 3, Matthew King 4, Edmund M C Roberts 5, Nikolai A S Komar 6, Michael Chester (C) 7, Robert J Carr 8, Oliver C Bates 9, Jimmy L Yeoman 10. 1st on 10: 5, 6. Happy Birthday to Edmund (& Daniel) for tomorrow.

Edgbaston, W Mids. (S Bartholomew) 23 Nov, 1260 PB Minor: Benjamin J D Wigley 1, Lucas J Williams 2, Frank Agar 3, Charlotte M Holiday 4, Robert J Carr 5, Nikolai A S Komar (C) 6. 1st minor: 1, 4 & as C.

Edgbaston, W Mids. (S Bartholomew) 26 Nov, 1260 Grandsire Doubles: Oliver J Mumberson 1, Benjamin J D Wigley 2, Lucas J Williams 3, Charlotte M Holiday 4, Nikolai A S Komar (C) 5, Ioan B G Normington 6. 1st on treble. 1st Grandsire: 2 & as C.

Edgbaston, W Mids. (S Bartholomew) 26 Nov, 1320 St Martin's Bob Doubles: Fraser J Wood 1, Benjamin G Williams 2, Ioan B G Normington 3, Lucas J Williams 4, Nikolai A S Komar (C) 5, Charlotte M Holiday 6. 1st on treble: 1. 1st St Martin's - 2 & as C.

Edgbaston, W Mids. (S Bartholomew) 30 Nov, 1260 PB Doubles: Benjamin J D Wigley 1, Nikolai A S Komar 2, Benjamin G Williams 3, Edmund M C Roberts (C) 4, Robert J Carr 5, Fraser J Wood 6. 1st as C.

Edgbaston, W Mids. (S Bartholomew) 3 Dec, 1260 St Clement's CB Minor: Benjamin G Williams 1, Charlotte M Holiday 2, Ioan B G Normington 3, Nikolai A S Komar 4, Robert J Carr (C) 5, Lucas J Williams 6. 1st minor: 1. 1st in m: 2, 4, 5.

Edgbaston, W Mids. (S Bartholomew) 13 Dec, 1260 St Martin's Bob Doubles: Lewis S McEwan 1, Lucas J Williams 2, Benjamin J D Wigley 3, Ioan B G Normington 4, Nikolai A S Komar (C) 5, Charlotte M Holiday 6. 1st in m: 3.

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Ringing
Titles

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