



## The 2nd Trinity Shield Competition – Washington DC

by David Henry



*Washington National Cathedral* (Photo David Henry)



*The ringing room* (Photo Charlotte Pacey)

The 2018 Second Annual Trinity Shield 6- and 8-Bell Striking Competition took place on Saturday, 20th October at Washington National Cathedral in DC. The event brought together some 54 ringers from six ringing centres across North America, making it one of the largest ringing events of the year on this side of the Atlantic.

This event originated last year at Trinity Church Wall Street in New York, and the plan was that it would be an annual event hosted by Trinity. But that and all other plans for the year at the Trinity tower were upended when it was learned in April that the church, along with its iconic bell tower, were to be shuttered for two years for a massive renovation of the interior of the church, along with the installation of a new pipe organ of significant dimensions. The complete closure of the tower was an unexpected development, and the sudden cessation of ringing and lack of a home base, albeit temporary, has dealt quite a blow to the Trinity ringers. Our projected

return date is May 2020, though as we've learned, nothing is cast in stone, and we may be pleasantly surprised.

Aware of our situation, the Washington Ringing Society graciously offered to host this year's striking competition, and we were glad to accept their offer. After six months of no local ringing – which for many has meant no ringing at all – the Trinity ringers were especially glad for the opportunity of a weekend of ringing at multiple sites within easy reach of Washington National Cathedral, home base for this year's event.

While billed as a striking competition, the event has several objectives outside of competition: to strengthen the quality of ringing in North America; to refine and develop skills at both the individual and band level; to learn from the observations of the judge and from each other; and perhaps above all else, to provide an opportunity for ringers of all skill levels and from various towers and regions to socialize together and

to get to know one another, building a sense of community among ringers; not least among these noble objectives is the opportunity to have some good fun. We were very fortunate to have as our judge Mark Regan, the Ringing Master of Worcester Cathedral in England, whose vast experience as a ringer, teacher and advocate of ringing needs no elaboration. His presence was greatly appreciated and enjoyed over the course of the weekend.

The competition weekend began on Friday evening with ringing at the Old Post Office, an historic building which has seen several incarnations since its beginnings as a Post Office, the latest of which is a high-end hotel with an imposing view of the dome of the Capitol from its front entrance. The Ditchley Foundation of Great Britain presented the ring of ten change-ringing bells to the US Congress in 1976 as a gift to celebrate the bicentenary of American independence, and the bells were permanently placed in the Old Post Office clock tower in 1983. The federal government retains ownership of the building and maintains the bells as an operating part of the structure, and the National Park Service provides interpretive tours of the tower. From there we crossed the Potomac and continued ringing on the fine eight-bell ring attached to the elegant new chapel of the Virginia Theological Seminary (VTS). Erin, Stedman, Grandsire, Cambridge, Superlative, Double Norwich, Plain Bob, Plain Hunt and rounds and call changes filled the allotted ringing time at both locations, followed by a well-earned visit to a nearby pub and restaurant.

Saturday began with an hour of general ringing at VTS, after which ringers assembled at the sumptuous Washington National Cathedral, ascending the central tower, where Sue O'Neill of the Washington Ringing Society led the organization of a delicious lunch for us. General ringing followed on the beautiful ten-bell installation of the Cathedral,



*Ringers gather in the ringing room in Washington Cathedral* (Photo Charlotte Pacey)

during which the press was present, and an article about change-ringing appeared in the evening edition of the *Washington Post*.

The competition was expanded this year to include both eight- and six-bell ringing, accommodating more skill levels than last year's competition on eight bells only. Eight bands were enlisted for the competition, evenly divided between six- and eight-bell bands: Boston, one eight and one six; New York, one eight and one six; Washington DC, one light eight, one heavy eight, one six consisting of new handlers; and one six-bell scratch band consisting of ringers from various locations. The six-bell bands had the choice of ringing 120 rows of rounds-and-call-changes or an extent of Doubles, and the eight-bell bands rang a pre-assigned touch of Grandsire Triples. Bands began with an eight-minute warmup followed by their judged performance. An audio-visual feed enabled everyone assembled in the enormous lower chamber of the Cathedral bell tower to see and hear the bands performing above.

The whole company gathered at a local restaurant that evening, and over drinks and hors-d'oeuvres, Mark Regan thoughtfully critiqued each team's performance, with helpful comments on strengths and areas that could bear improvement. The winner of the eight-bell competition was announced as the band of the Washington Ringing Society for their performance of Grandsire Triples; the winner of the six-bell competition was the scratch band that rang Stedman Doubles; the prize for the "Heifer Bowl" (which has an interesting background) went to the band of newer ringers from DC, for what Judge Regan considered "the most determined ringing." Congratulations to the winning teams! All participating teams were thanked and applauded, and a fine three-course dinner followed which everyone enjoyed. We were saddened to learn that Sue O'Neill, who had worked so hard in the preparation of lunch and rang as one of the team members of the winning eight-bell band, broke her foot at the restaurant. All of us wish her well in her recovery from this misfortune.

The weekend concluded with service ringing for the Sunday services of VTS, National Cathedral, and the fourth area tower of the DC ringers in Frederick, Maryland. Many people participated in bringing this event about, but special thanks are due to Stuart Barton, Deputy Ringing Master of the Trinity Ringers Association for his tireless and unflinching dedication; and to Rob Bannister, Ringing Master of the Washington Ringing Society, for his deft management of countless logistics.

The efforts of all the above, the participation and attendance of all 54 ringers, and the delightful presence of Mark Regan combined to bring about a most memorable and enjoyable 2018 Trinity Shield Competition. We hope this event will continue and that it will grow to encompass more towers and regions within North America. We note a pattern emerging of the event being organized by New York and won by DC. We New York ringers are none too quietly hoping that that pattern will soon be changed – especially after we are once again ringing in our much-loved home tower!

## Roll of Honour of ringers killed during WWI

by Alan Regan, Steward of the Rolls of Honour

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The Roll of Honour published here shows those ringers that died from 01/12/1918 to 31/12/1918. Of the ten remembered here, two are buried in France, one is buried in Belgium, one is buried in Egypt, one is buried in Greece, one is buried in Italy and four are buried in England.

On 01/12/1918 British and United States troops crossed the German frontier. British troops entered Cologne on 06/11/1918 and crossed the Rhine at Cologne on 12/11/1918.

On 04/12/1918 the demobilisation of the British army began.

The influenza outbreak which had started in January 1918 continued to take its toll, as you will see from the following Roll of Honour.

In the preparation of these Rolls of Honour, I have received much help with family history research from Yvonne Cairns of Jesmond, Kathryn Pearce of Bradoc, Beverly Faber of Stamford CT, and David Willis of Braunton (and Central Council Biographies Committee), with additional assistance from David Underdown, Joanna Dorling and Jennifer Sparling – I am most grateful for this help.

As with those previously listed in the Rolls of Honour, I hope that ringers will commemorate those that went before them and who died during World War I by ringing at their local towers; perhaps a special touch on a practice night or Sunday or maybe a quarter peal or peal. I would be very pleased to hear if you plan any commemorative ringing; **do let me know and put any performances on BellBoard.**

Further details of the Central Council Rolls of Honour can be found at: <http://www.cccbr.org.uk/rolls/>

**Sapper Edward (Ned) Gent**, Whittle-le-Woods, Lancashire. Died 01/12/1918 age 34. Royal Engineers 13th Anti-Aircraft Searchlight Sect. Service No.466351. Commemorated at Whittle-Le-Woods (St John) Churchyard, England, Grave in south-west part. Born 11/11/1884. One of seven children, six surviving at the 1911 census. Son of John Gent of Glencoe House, Whittle-le-Woods and the late Mary Gent (née Garstang, died 1915). Husband of Annie Gent (née Knowles) whom he married on 14/04/1909 at St John's Whittle-le-Woods, of Lytham View, Whittle-le-Woods. Father of Bessie Gent (born 03/11/1914). He rang his first peal, ringing the tenor and conducting Plain Bob Major at Whittle-le-Woods on 01/02/1913. He rang in and conducted a peal of Plain Bob Major at Chorley (RC) Church on 27/09/1913;



*Ned Gent in uniform, photograph from internet, via David Willis*

the footnote to the peal reported that the "go of them is anything but good". He rang a peal at Chorley Parish Church, also Plain Bob Major, on 27/09/1913. He worked as a blacksmith for Mr B. Harrison in Chorley before enlisting. On Armistice Day, 11/11/1918, his 34th birthday, he wrote to his father and sisters "did ever anyone have a more blessed birthday gift ... no more dodging bombs and shrapnel, and machine gun fire". He had written to his family describing life in the trenches and how he had "seen some pitiful sights" in Verdun, Lens, Bethune, La Bassée, Vimy and Lille. After three years of active service in France he was given leave of a few days; after walking from Wigan railway station to Chorley in cold, wet and windy November weather he succumbed to influenza and pneumonia and died within days of reaching home. A memorial peal of Kent TB Major was rung to his memory on 21/04/1923 at Whittle-le-Woods, which was conducted by William Lancaster. Born: Chorley. Enlisted: Unknown. Resided (1911 Census): Paradise Row, Whittle-le-Woods.

**Private Louis Henry Gardiner**, Deddington, Oxford Diocesan. Died 02/12/1918 age 22. Oxford and Bucks Light Infantry 2nd/4th Bn. Service No.200238. Commemorated at Doullens Communal Cemetery Extension No.2, France, Grave I E 1. Born first quarter of 1896. Husband of Ellen K. Gardiner (née Clifton), whom he married shortly before his death in 1918, of Laurel Cottage, Barford St Michael, Oxfordshire. Born: Woodstock, Oxfordshire. Enlisted: Unknown. Resided (1911 Census): Chapel Square, Deddington with his uncle, Walter Gardiner.