



Handbell Ringers of Great Britain - Registered Charity No 298945(England) and SCO038918 (Scotland)

North East Region eNews - October 2023 - 1

Greetings everyone, here are news and reports from around the region. Please also note dates for your diaries.

Best regards

NATIONAL RESIDENTIAL RINGING WEEK 2023

The biennial National Residential Ringing Week took place at the end of July this year at The Edge, Sheffield University. This venue is fantastic, with wonderful facilities for ringers, excellent food (with dietary requirements very well catered for), and good accommodation on site. I live in Sheffield so attend as a non-residential ringer, going home every night to my own bed, though the majority of this year's 90 ringers – including 12 juniors from Hong Kong and their leader - stayed on site.

There are three guest conductors at the event. This years were Kate Sawallisch, originally from the USA but now resident in England; Nick Hanson from the USA; and Emily Li, from Hong Kong but now living in Toronto. All the conductors choose three pieces of music which participants buy in advance (and should prepare before the event starts!), and rehearse them during the week in a fairly intensive rehearsal schedule, broken by welcome refreshment, lunch and dinner breaks. This year's music included some of the most challenging I've ever encountered at a Ringing Week (including a piece of music written by Emily Li and graded at Level 4), and the participants made a really good job of doing them justice.

Ringing Week begins with registration on Monday morning. As I live only 10 minutes' drive from the venue I have offered to register participants for the last few years, which is great fun and allows me to meet up with friends from all over the UK in a relaxed atmosphere. Rehearsals start early afternoon and continue after dinner in the evening, finishing at about 8:45pm. Rehearsals continue all week, apart from Wednesday afternoon, when there is free time and a visit for anyone wishing to participate in it - this year's visit was to Chatsworth House and Gardens – and there is a sumptuous meal in a different dining room on Wednesday evening. Friday afternoon sees a dress rehearsal and a final concert in the evening. This year's audience was tremendous, with about 100 people there to listen to us, including some very well behaved grandchildren as well as ringers from other teams, friends, families, and the National Chairman of HRGB all the way from Kent. After the concert there is a mass exodus to the bar, and the weekends after breakfast and clearing away on Saturday morning. Many thanks go to all the teams and individuals who loan bells, chimes, foams, etc, thus making the event possible; and to Aidan and his team of dedicated helpers who set everything up on Sunday and Monday.

I think I attended my first Ringing Week in 1999, hosted by Malcolm and Lysbeth Wilson in Dunblane. I had only ever played 4-in-hand in a small team and the thought of playing completely different music in a completely different style with completely different (and often foreign) conductors really appealed to me. I enrolled, bought my music, looked at it, and then phoned Malcolm Wilson in a slight panic to tell him that I didn't know what a lot of the terms and symbols used in the music meant. He explained briefly, and then said 'You'll be fine, Helen.' And I was – and I've never looked back! I've played some fantastic music, met some wonderful people, learned a lot about different styles of music and have had great fun at all the

events I've been to – including two International Symposia, several UK Bronze and nearly all the Ringing Weeks since 1999.

If you have seen the adverts for Ringing Week and thought about it but not taken it any further, why not be brave and apply for the next NRRW in 2025? I can guarantee that you'll have a great week, learn a lot, meet some wonderful like-minded people, and come away feeling very proud of yourself.

Helen Foley

Dronfield Handbell Ringers



Clifton Village Handbell Ringers

We were very privileged to perform at the HRGB event at Heritage Quay in Huddersfield University in July, where the HRGB archives are now stored. At the event there were archive pictures and one of the pictures showed the Clifton team around the early 1900's. On this photo you could see that they were using the bell table cover that we still use today. Although the front of the cloth is in good condition the part where we place our bells is now wearing very thin. We believe the cloth was manufactured by AW Hainsworth, of Pudsey, near Leeds. They are very busy at the moment as they have had lots of publicity because they supplied a lot of material for the King's Coronation; flooring, furniture and uniforms. Also they have recently had a visit, to their mill, from the Princess of Wales, who has close family connections to the firm. Hainsworth have agreed to help us in the process of sourcing a suitable protective material to cover and protect the original bell cloth. To help fund this we hosted a coffee morning at a local church and raised over £100. We are planning further fundraising events to help ensure we can continue to use our original bell cloth.

Best wishes from Caroline and David Sunderland, Clifton Village Handbell Ringers