

THE HULL HANDBELL PROJECT

Promoting double-handed change ringing throughout East Yorkshire

Newsletter Number 6, April 2017.

News Roundup.

Hull Tuesday morning practice (older but no wiser)

Lesley has upgraded from tapping Abel on screen to using the “motion controllers” and Handbell Manager. We have seen an immediate improvement in her confidence on Tuesday mornings, the change was very obvious, and reinforced our view that Handbell Manager is a significant learning aid that is here to stay.

We reach our first birthday this month. Sadly some have fallen by the wayside during the year, but those who have stayed the course, through the ups and downs of family illness and bereavement gave us the springboard for the October 2016 workshop and all the handbell ringing that has followed. A bubbly birthday is justified!

Ros Baxter joined “older but no wiser” towards the end of 2016, she is on her way to becoming a very competent exponent of the art and science.

We have learned a great deal in the space of a year, and to borrow a phrase – ***“We’re just loving it”***. See the accompanying story entitled: ***“Two Rusties and a Handbells Virgin”***.

Sutton

There was a practise session with Gwynneth Moffat in mid-March. Following a warm up long touch of Plain Bob we rang courses of Double Bob, Reverse Bob, Little Bob, Bastow Little Bob and Treble Bob Hunting.

Barrow / Melton Ross

Both the handbell ringing and the haul of raffle prizes at the B&D Dinner was impressive. The Fairtrade cookies and

chocolate should go down well on the upcoming holiday.

A quarter peal attempt towards the end of the month was unsuccessful, but the ensuing practice enable Barry Peachey make further progress away from 7-8, and showed also that we need to continue to develop the skills in the band.

Market Weighton

A session with Karen at Weighton enabled us to ring a 240, a 180, and a 144 of Bob Minor and a plain course of Double Bob was very nearly achieved much to the surprise of all owing to the state of tiredness caused by putting the clocks on, and lack of practice.

B&D Dinner

Chris Munday’s bells made a good sound to Plain Bob Major in the formal session.

But James Blackburns’ new set of 12 (15C) also had an outing with re-elected President and Vice-President (Richard Gibson and John Atkinson) adding to the numbers. It’s good to have another change ringing set in the area, I have no doubt they will be well used in the fullness of time. Barry Peachey made another breakthrough with ringing his first course of Plain Bob Major away from 7-8.

Learning Change Ringing on Handbells

Different people memorise patterns in different ways, some people are best with words, some with pictures, some with numbers, some with movement. The only consistent factor is memory works by association. In handbell change ringing the physical act of moving the bells reinforces the patterns that have been learned by rote and by counting. So memorise and practise, again and again, is a key to success.

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This is where the use of the simulator (Handbell Manager / Motion Controllers / Abel display) is a major help. The physical movement becomes part of the learning, and the absence of either handbells or a band doesn't stop your progress.

Part of the progress in learning is to assimilate skills so that they can be used on "auto pilot", i.e. with minimum effort. The classic example is that the three hunting patterns on 6 bells become an automatic part of ringing Plain Bob Minor. Autopilot mode only comes with extended practise which is why quarter peal ringing is so beneficial. ***Ringing a quarter peal of Plain Bob Minor is the handbells equivalent of Base Camp when climbing Everest, it should be everyone's first goal.***

How do we move on beyond Plain Bob?

There are two parallel avenues to travel. The first is to increase the complexity of the methods being rung, the second is to increase the number of bells. Most people would see the increase in the number of bells as an easier route, Plain Bob Major is often achieved before Norwich Surprise Minor.

With towerbells the skill of memorising a blue line in full detail with well-developed ropesight will stand you in good stead. On handbells, because of the more intimate relationship with the method, there are more skills involved, which brings us back to the preferred learning technique. You can get intimate with a method, by learning lines, grids, numbers, patterns.

Given that we focus mainly on treble dominated methods, "treble watching" becomes another fundamental skill to be assimilated.

For people coming up to "Base Camp" in the near future we are planning to hold a

"Handbells: Going beyond Plain Bob" workshop on 1st July.

ART Conference, Basingstoke, March 2017.

Chris and Pete made the schlep to Old Basing Village Hall for the Association of Ringing Teachers handbells day. The event marked the launch of "Knowing the Ropes – Handbells", a structured and certificated progress scheme for double handed change ringing.

It was interesting to see where our approach in East Yorkshire was independently validated in the LtR – Handbells workshops, and where it was shown to fall short. Equally there are things we have done which go beyond what has been built into the LtR scheme.

I would encourage anyone starting on the handbells journey to register with the scheme, and equally any tower captain wishing to maximise their learners' potential should encourage them to join up. <https://smartringer.org/ltrh/> refers.

If there are any learners that want to learn the dark arts of change ringing on handbells and to have the certificates to say they have done, we will support their ambitions with tuition and advice as necessary, and especially with practice opportunities.

Historical note.

50 years ago.

2nd March, 1967 saw the first handbell peal by the newly formed Hull Colleges Guild. Peter Church from Nottingham and Geoffrey Randal from Coventry were joined by Alan Bridges from Derby. Alan had access to a set of handbells and also had a flat down Park Street, in Hull. Three further handbell peals followed in the year.

And in 1977

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3rd April, 1977, just 40 years ago, saw the last handbell peal of major rung for the B&D. Graham Smith and Maris Stephenson (later Midgley), joined John Atkinson and Peter Church for 2hrs 21 minutes of Plain Bob. John is the most experienced and competent ringer of 1-2 we have ever seen in East Yorkshire. The peal was rung in a flat above the chemist's shop on Beverley Road, Hull, opposite the Haworth Arms.

Diary:

2017:

- Hull meetings: See website
- April 29th 3rd Regional Handbells Day at South Cave, Noon – 17:00
- July 1st Handbells Workshop – “Going Beyond Plain Bob Minor”

The calendar is a challenge in April, go to www.handbellringing.org.uk home page for the latest updates.

Handbell Change ringers wanted:

Do you want to start handbell change ringing at your tower? And don't know how to start? Drop me a line, we can help.

Handbells Journalists wanted

Send in your news snippets, we would love to hear from you.

Who is ringing what?

peter@pchurch.org.uk