

Hull Handbells Project, Annual Review, December 2022.

The covid-19 pandemic negatively impacted all bellringing, which is quintessentially a team activity. Whilst some face to face handbell ringing has now returned, the numbers of people regularly involved in 2022 was significantly lower than the number in 2019. With the decision by the Beverley and District Ringing Society not to support Change Ringing on Handbells (March 2022) our ability to grow the numbers of handbell change ringers was restricted, and we took the decision to focus on improving stamina and skills amongst those involved.

That focus centred around Peal attempts on Tuesdays plus opportunistic practises and quarter peals.

A total of seven handbell peals were rung split between Minor (3) and Major (4). The most notable peal in 2022 was Yorkshire Surprise Major conducted by Sam Austin with the local band made up to strength by Simon Humphrey. This was the first peal of surprise in the area (on handbells) which included local ringers.

Other footnotes included most Minor methods to a handbell peal for over 50 years for the local society, and several personal achievements.

Quarter peals are the bedrock of change ringing. The length is sufficient to promote the assimilation of the ringing skills associated with a new method, and to develop stamina and concentration which can be applied when pushing the boundaries of method ringing. 2022 was the 3rd best year for handbell quarters in this area, 50 being scored. This was accompanied by a swing back towards ringing physical bells rather than ringing simulated bells across the internet, and represented 1 in 4 of all of the B&D Quarters in 2022.

Single Oxford Bob, Double Oxford Bob and Buxton Bob were methods rung for the first time in the area, and the list includes much more Kent and Oxford Treble Bob than in previous years.

Towards the end of the year we held some method sessions which included a 12-bell practise. Suffice to say we need more practise yet before Maximus will be seen in our records, but the potential has been demonstrated.

Geographically we have rung in three main locations in East Yorkshire, West Hull, Kirk Ella, and Market Weighton, and we have supported the diaspora in north Lincolnshire and Elland in West Yorkshire. Damien Garwood (Elland) and Rebecca Legowski (East Hull) continue to be stalwart supporters of handbell change ringing in spite of being registered blind.

Change ringing on handbells is an under-utilised resource, both as a teaching aid for tower bell ringers, and as a means of gaining publicity for change ringing in general.

Part of our publicity effort has included a number of date touches, in 2022 we marked:

- 1968 Triple Trawler Tragedy
- 1972 50th Birthday of Hull Truck Theatre
- 1930 Amy Johnson's landing in Australia
- 1994 Mick Ronson's final album
- 1536 Pilgrimage of Grace

Looking towards 2023 we can be confident of more achievements on all stages from Minimus to Maximus, but it will require concerted effort. To that end we would welcome new people of any age group; we know how; we know how to teach; we just need the people to work with.

Peter Church, December 2022.

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