

OYEZ



January 2023

NUMBER 28

IN THIS ISSUE:

CHATTER FROM THE CHAIR

REPORTS FROM THE AUTUMN CLUSTERINGS - NEWBIGGIN AND DISLEY

TEAMS' ACTIVITIES – MAINLY CHRISTMAS 2022

LOOKING BACK TO THE OLDEN DAYS

CONFIRMATION OF DATE / VENUE – SPRING GATHERING AND AGM

COMMITTEE LIST, 2022 - 2023

Chatter from the Chair



Hello everyone and welcome to this first Oyez of 2023.

Once again thanks to Irene Merson for putting this issue together and also to everyone who has contributed to it. If you are reading this and thinking you really meant to submit something but somehow didn't quite get round to it, why not start the ball rolling for the next edition...

Our autumn Gatherings in Newbiggin and Disley were very successful and clearly enjoyed by all. It was really good to welcome new ringers both as individuals and as a full team as well as those who have missed events in the last couple of years. Thank you to all who contributed to the feedback opportunities, as your comments help the NW Committee and host teams plan for the future. We want to do the best we can to make our events friendly, worth-while occasions and be sure when a date for something in the future is announced, we all put it in our diary with anticipation. We are now in a better position to revert to our former pattern of a Gathering and AGM in the spring and so have

booked Knowle Green Village Hall, Lancashire on the 25th March. There will be details elsewhere and all team correspondents will be receiving invitations shortly. Within HRGB we are bound to have an AGM but it is only part of the day and we do endeavour to make it as interesting (and as short) as we can. AGMs often have a poor press – sometimes with good reason – but we do a lot in advance to fulfill our legal requirements yet give all who are present time and opportunity to have their say. The venue at Knowle Green is on the edge of the Ribble Valley and the Trough of Bowland and has good access from the M6 and M65. I'm looking forward to appreciating the beautiful location as when I went on a 'recci' in November, due to dense fog, I could hardly see across the road, let alone fields and valleys! The date is one of the four traditional 'quarter days' which in this rural area would have been significant as farm rents and the like were due. We promise not to make you queue up with cap in hand to pay your entry fee – or indeed fine you if you are late booking! When you receive the information about the day, don't leave it too late to tell us you want to come as the hall has a limited capacity due to fire regulations.

I hope that 2023 brings ample opportunities to enjoy, and maybe develop, our handbell ringing skills and that within our teams, ringers provide unlimited support and friendship. How many times have we heard how lovely people think bells are at Christmas and wanted to reply that actually they are lovely all year round! We are aware that some teams have not re-registered with HRGB and that all teams have been affected by the events of the last three years but surely it's now time to concentrate on what we can do with those we have got, and look forward to coming together. I hope to see many of you in March and in the following months.

With best wishes

Linda Parkington

It's been a busy time for the Region! Here are some reports of activities:

CLUSTERING AT NEWBIGGIN, 29 OCTOBER 2022.

TEAMS: GREYSTOKE, MARRON VALLEY, DEAN, EDEN VALLEY AND TANTONY RINGERS.

CONDUCTORS: MAUREEN AND ALAN.

Our massed ringing pieces were: Come Lasses and Lads, Crimond / Now is the Hour, Finale from the Royal Fireworks Music. It was good that we were able to practise these pieces beforehand, and having a conductor makes all the difference.

Teams' individual pieces were: Dean - Puff The Magic Dragon; Greystoke - Pastoral Symphony and the Ukraine National Anthem; Tantony – Grandfather's Clock. Thank you to the bellringer who came over to me and said that was brilliant! Eden Valley - Land of Hope and Glory. It was lovely to see a young girl playing with such enthusiasm. Marron Valley - Pieces from the Sound of Music, the first being My Favourite Things.

Break for Lunch. Thank you to Eleanor Gate for the lovely sponge cakes, also to Chris Ellison. Baking cakes has passed me by, but I do love eating them!

Sheila's quiz, which followed lunch, was quite a challenge.

Our second half was a reverse of the morning. Eden - Trumpet Chorale. It was lovely. Antony - Tramp, Tramp, Tramp, a military marching song, and Gypsy Rover (I remember singing it at Sunday School to different words). Greystoke - Stranger on the Shore and Pomp and Circumstance. Acker Bilk would be proud to hear your version of Stranger on the Shore on hand bells, Maureen! Dean - The Rose and American Patrol, one of our all time favourites, to think it was written in 1885 / 1891 by Frank White. Made famous by Glen Miller and his band, it still gets our feet tapping to this day. Marron Valley - A compilation of themes from the Sound of Music: Lonely Goatherd, Climb every Mountain, The Sound of Music.

We finished with our three massed ringing pieces. Thank you, Alan for your help with 6/8 timing. Personally it is my favourite timing.

If I have missed anything out, I apologise. I was so busy with other duties, etc, I don't think I've done justice to my write up, which I love doing.

Norma Parke: on behalf of Antony, Dean and Marron Valley.

And now a report of the same event, this time from Sophie, one of our newest and youngest ringers. It came to me beautifully handwritten, too! Well done, Sophie! *Acting Ed*

My name is Sophie and I am 9 years old. I have been playing handbells with Eden Bells for about a year. My mum and brother also play in the group.

The Rally at Newbiggin was my first one, I enjoyed listening to all the other groups. The mass ring was a new experience for me and it was very interesting.

Everyone was very kind to me and one lady even showed me how to play 2 bells in one hand!

I love playing bells and I am excited about performing our Christmas pieces at our next performances.

HRGB NORTH WEST REGION CLUSTERING, 12th NOVEMBER 2022

METHODIST CHURCH HALL, DISLEY.

WHO CAME: KINDER, NORBURY, MARPLE, TANTONY, MAGULL, MINI MINIMS, PLUS SEVERAL "SIGNIFICANT OTHERS" (INDEPENDENT MEMBERS OF HRGB).

Massed ringing pieces were interspersed throughout the day: Come Lassies and Lads, Crimond / Now is the Hour, Finale from the Royal Fireworks Music.

Three ringers from the far Northwest travelled on the Friday afternoon and stayed close by at a Premier Inn: Gordon, Soo and Norma, from the Antony Ringers and Dean.

Kinder opened the solo pieces with Alexander's Rag Time Band, it was stunning. Antony slowed the pace down with a short, but very sweet piece: There's Music In The Air. Then



Norbury gave us Spirit of God / Skye Boat Song, a very nice piece. They were followed by Marple URC, who played a wonderful rendition of Glockenspiel, to set our feet tapping.

Beth and Jocie (Mum and Daughter) then captivated the audience with a splendid performance of The Three Lions. Well done Jocie, your Grandma would be very proud of your performance.

After Lunch - time to get our brains working with a quiz: 10 questions, the first person to raise their hand with the answer received a small gift. We then had a Bingo session with a difference – instead of numbers to cross off, each ringer was given the names of all the places Kinder has rung over the last 40 years.

Teams played their solos in reverse order for our second half, but first we had a lovely surprise. Irene and her daughter Eleanor, played 4 in hand: "Knees Up Mother Brown". Wow it was fantastic. We wish you all the very best, Irene and Eleanor.

Team Ringing Solos: Norbury - Musical Box. Beth and Jocie - Tragedy by The Bee Gees. Marple - Trumpet Tune. Tantony – Greensleeves. Kinder - Seranata.

Following a most welcome tea break, and the drawing of the raffle by Jocie, there was time for us all to go through the massed ringing pieces again.

A good day was had by all.

Tantony Ringers.



The ClusteRing in Disley was hosted by Kinder, and sub-titled "The Kinder Ringers Ruby Jubilee" because they had celebrated 40 years of ringing in 2021. This is their display, (not forgetting the cake, of course!) put together for the occasion.

DEAN'S BELL RINGING CONCERTS, NOVEMBER / DECEMBER 2022

Greysouthern W. I. Tuesday 15th November. 1.30 -2.00pm.

It was a pleasure to go back to Greysouthern W I to play for them once again; we had to book a time before the Local "Portable" fish & chip van arrived, as we hadn't to pinch his spot for parking.

We played: Puff the Magic Dragon, Miss Marple, Sakura, a lovely piece of music, timing was just perfect for this piece; then on to Loch Lomond, The Rose, Make me a Channel of your Peace. After a few practices we had mastered Lapping: so we were able to add that to our programme - YAY!!! Last but not least, we finished with American Patrol.

Hundith Hill, Cockermouth. Carers Concert: 8th December.

This was a concert with a difference. Our "audience" was the West Cumbria Carers, who look after their loved ones.

Today we were background music, as they arrived to take their places for their Christmas Lunch. We didn't have to do any "inbetweeners", usually spoken by Margaret and Norma.

We decided to play: Do you Hear What I Hear, Walking in the Air, God rest you Merry Gentlemen, Winter, Christmas Medley. Although there was "chatter" amongst the audience they were listening, joined in with "Jingle Bells", and gave a round of applause.

MILLFIELD, KESWICK, 16th December

Our second concert was for six ringers, then eight ringers.

Our first piece was: Away in a Manger, Infant Holy. Our Christmas medley was quite a long one, going from 1 carol to another, from 3/4 to 4/4 then 6/8. I felt we had done it justice. We played Silent Night, then with eight ringers: Do you Hear what I Hear, Walking in the Air, Winter, Jingle Bells, We Wish You a Merry Christmas.

AGE UK, ALL SAINTS HALL, COCKERMOUTH. 19th DECEMBER, 1pm

This was our second concert in which we were back ground ringers; It was more or less the same programme as our previous one, with six ringers.

It was hard going - this audience was very noisy, so that we could hardly hear ourselves ring. But we enjoyed it all the same; as long as we provide these lovely audiences with some

Christmas Spirit, (no Vicky, not the one from a bottle!), then we've made Christmas special for them.



TANTONY'S CONCERT, 28th DECEMBER 2022

ST JOHN'S CHURCH, BIGGRIGG. CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL, 10am to 12noon.

It was a very wet day, the audience for the first part was the three church wardens (I THINK)! Tea, coffee, biscuits, mince pies plus mulled wine were the refreshments. The church looked spectacular. Then one of our friends from Marron Valley HR arrived, Margaret Howarth and her friend Heather, and more church people.

Our programme set off with: Merry Christmas Medley part 1: Angels from the Realms of Glory, God rest Ye Merry Gentlemen, Unto Us a Son is Born, Once in Royal David's City, Joy to the World.

We continued with Corde Natus, In Dulci Jubilo, Past Three O' Clock, O Little Town of Bethlehem, Away in a Manger, Deck the Halls with Boughs of Holly, It Came Upon The Midnight Clear and I Saw Three Ships. We followed this with Merry Christmas Part 2: Rudolph The Red Nose Reindeer, and Winter Wonderland.

Then on to: Quelle est cette odeur agreable, O come, All Ye Faithful, The Huron Carol, The First Nowell, See Amid the Winter Snow, Ding Dong Merrily on High, Mary's Boy Child, The Holly and the Ivy and Silent Night. Merry Christmas Part 3: I Saw Three Ships, In Dulci Jubilo and We Three Kings. Quem Pastores, Joy to the World, The Sussex Carol, Infant Holy, Jingle Bells, A Child is Born.

We Finished with Merry Christmas (4) and coda: The Holly Bears a Berry, and Merry Christmas. Antony received a nice compliment from one person, on our smart turnout. They liked our uniform and thought we looked much better than the team who had performed at the Royal Albert Hall on TV over Christmas!

TANTONY RINGERS



FROM KINDER RINGERS - A BUSY DAY, CHRISTMAS 2022

During the morning of our double-concerts day it started to snow. Whilst it may have looked festive the fact that our ringers are scattered throughout the High Peak area could have been a nightmare. However, Mother Nature was on our side as the roads had cleared in time for us to make our first journey, which was to a Care Home in Congleton. Once there, we were warmly greeted by the organiser for whom we had played at his previous Care Home pre-Covid. More than 25 residents were duly assembled and joined in enthusiastically whenever possible, singing and clapping along to all the carols and Christmas songs. A welcome drink and chocolate biscuits ended the afternoon with promises to book us again for 2023.

The weather had improved for our journey back to Stockport where we just had time for a brief stop at Anne's to have our packed teas, and some of Emma's cake, before continuing to our evening engagement. This has become an annual Christmas booking with an a capella choir from Stockport, although we had also joined them in a recent concert in October which raised £643.00 for the British-Ukrainian appeal.

A lovely warm church awaited us along with a large audience, despite the event clashing with the World Cup Final. (Would it have been the case if England had been involved?) It has become traditional now for us to accompany the choir in their opening song, *Ukrainian Bell Carol*, better known to us as *Carol of the Bells*. This lively piece set the tone for a very varied evening of music. We began our first solo spot with Robin Benton's *Jingle Bells Fantasia*, a piece we have enjoyed working on in recent months. We followed it with *In the Bleak Midwinter* and *Joy to the World*. After playing his solo a guitarist joined the choir for *The Story of Silent Night*, a very appropriate and moving telling of the historic beginnings of this favourite carol. The ladies of the choir then sang the first verse in German, as it was originally performed in 1818, before we were all invited to join in.

During the interval we were kept up-to-date with the football score and also the rather disturbing news, plus photos, of a white-out in Disley, which fortunately had improved by the time we had to set off for home.



The second half of the programme began with *In the Silence*, a choir piece accompanied by oboe and bell chimes, before we played our second set of solos. This was followed by *Christmastime*, another song we have now traditionally been invited to accompany, which went well despite very little rehearsal with the choir. Our final involvement came in supplying the percussion parts for *Feliz Navidad*, a fun piece which ended a successful evening and another invite to take part again next Christmas. We had had a frantic few weeks reorganising the team and including 2 ringers making their debut Christmas performances with us, but felt we had ended the year on a high.

The Quartet also undertook some daytime events, at each the audiences enthusiastically joining in which makes it more enjoyable for us. At a WI concert our planned programme was changed for us by a request for particular carols. Fortunately we found that, when things are going so well, it is possible to oblige, even without rehearsal!

NORBURY HR - AN AFTERNOON AT THE MUSEUM

This Christmas, Norbury Handbell Ringers were asked to perform at Macclesfield Silk Museum as part of their Christmas Activity Programme. It was unusual to be playing among some venerable pieces of historic machinery, including the Ribbon Loom which produced tags for Doc Marten Boots. The museum also has the original Jacquard Loom responsible for producing the famous Macclesfield silk scarves, buttons, pictures and even silk maps used by RAF parachutists in the Second World War.



The visit allowed us to browse the shop for last minute handmade Christmas presents and enjoy a cup of tea from the Vintage Tea Room. Having decided to play our bigger Christmas pieces it was quite a challenge getting five tables into the Blue gallery to accommodate the bigger bells. Carl's height came in handy for adjusting the museum mood lighting to focus on our music. The concert went down well, particularly with the Probus Club who had made it their mission to visit and asked some very intelligent questions.

HANDBELLS FOR SALE

The following advertisement is on the HRGB website, but as the handbells are in the North West Region, Daniel Blythe has requested that it be put into this edition of Oyez:

Set of 12 English Handbells (G-C plus F sharp). Well used but in good condition, wooden box included. Offers in the region of £900. Can be viewed in Conwy or south-west Sheffield. Contact Daniel Blythe danielblythe@blueyonder.co.uk or phone 07875 214928.



MARRON VALLEY CHRISTMAS CONCERTS

On the 24th November we were invited to play for the Thursday Club at Ullock Village Hall. Eight Ringers were able to attend. We included a selection from the Sound of Music, Finale from Handel's Firework suite, Crimond / Now is the Hour, Winter from Vivaldi's Four Seasons, and Jingle Bell Rock.



Our Christmas Concert was held on 3rd December at the Methodist Church, Keswick, for the closing Carol service of their Christmas Tree Festival. We rang some solos, some pieces for the audience to sing along to, and some pieces accompanied by a lady on the piano (a new experience for us), again with the audience invited to join in. We had a visitor from Essex, who had contacted Norma - Susan Duke, Secretary of the East Anglia Region (*see photo below*).



Yes, a Bell Ringer also, who was at Keswick on holiday at the time. We invited her to ring our last carol with us, and boy, she was a good strong ringer! We rang Winter, Jingle Bell Rock, O Come All Ye Faithful, Infant Holy, Away in a Manger, Jingle Bells and We wish you a Merry Christmas.

On 6th December, we were playing at Clendon Grange Care Home, Clifton, Near Workington. This was a new venue for us and the best audience participation ever, same programme as our 3rd December concert.

Finally, on 12th December, Holmethwaite House, Keswick. The journey through to Keswick was just spectacular to say the least. Picture postcard, all the trees, lake and mountains breathtaking. Once again we repeated our previous programme, and an enjoyable time was had by all.

TWO OPPORTUNITIES TO LOOK BACK TO THE OLDEN DAYS

*An interesting piece from Handbell Ringing by CW Fletcher 1888, chapter III "The Players".
This should give ringers a few chuckles!*

"It will not be necessary to delay the formation of your company till the bells are delivered, and here, on the threshold of our venture a question rises which has been agitating the body politic for years – "Women's Rights." It has hitherto been the almost invariable custom to exclude ladies from participation in the pleasures of handbell ringing, and before deciding whether they shall or shall not form part of the company there are numerous points to be taken into consideration. First of all, it would not do to have only one; her position would neither be agreeable to herself, nor conducive of the best harmony amongst the "male items" of the company. We arrive at this point, therefore, that if we admit ladies at all there must be at least two of them. And, why not? Their presence (especially if good-looking) will add an additional charm to an already attractive entertainment, and what more appropriate when there are *belles* to be rung than that the ladies should be there."

Now Don't Glaze Over...

Some time ago, I had the opportunity to trawl through some early *Reverberations* (ie from November 1969) and made a few notes, thinking they may at some point fill a space in one of our issues of *Oyez*. I came across them recently whilst looking for something else (as you do) and thought I'd share some facts and figures. Perhaps I need to get out more, but they proved rather fascinating. I hope you find them as 'interesting' as I do!

There are many references to some 'early' teams with whom many of us are so familiar, including Higher Walton, St Mary's Reddish and Norbury, and details of who attended National Rallies and played in the evening concerts. They record an increasing number of registered teams, the cost of membership fees, adverts for sets of bells for sale and early HRGB merchandise and even music.

As of 1st Nov 1969, 535 individual members were registered with HRGB across 27 English counties and 1 in N.Ireland.

Apologies to those who don't understand the following (this being pre-decimal):

Advertisements in *Reverberations* cost 1/- a line

Individual Adult HRGB membership was 2/6 per annum with Juniors at 1/6 and Life-Membership was £1-0-0. Badges were 4/- including postage.

By November 1970 there were 90 registered teams. The opportunity of paying a Life Membership to 'get the Society off-the-ground' ended and they were now to be known as Founder Members. The seemingly long-awaited HRGB ties would be available by the end of the year at the cost of 22/6.

The first suggestion of 4 regions appeared – NE, NW, SE & SW.

The notice of membership costs reflects decimalisation (beginning on 15th Feb 1971) as Adults 5/- (25p), Juniors 2/- (10p) and Team Registration 10/- (50p)

500 people were present at the Annual Rally in May 1971 which was at Lancaster Town Hall. The following year saw 800 applicants for the National Rally in Cambridge. By September 1971, the number of registered teams had risen to above 100 for the first time.

The April 1972 issue includes a serious concern that @ 6p per copy, the two issues per year of *Reverberations* used up half the annual adult subscription. 12 months later it is noted that the cost of printing it has risen to £61.50.

For anyone thinking the issues of one-member teams and payments are new...
'With effect from January 1973, each team Secretary or Treasurer to be issued with a receipt which will show the number of members of each type paid for. On the reverse side, there would be a list of individual members.' Apparently during the previous year 'many teams' were not paying their subscriptions until September or October. (*Tut tut!!*)

I'll leave you to imagine how much time must have been spent making the decision that from January 1974, subscriptions were raised to 35p (Adults) / 20p (Juniors). Clearly it wasn't an issue as by then there were 147 registered teams, with just over 1000 members.

Linda Parkington

DON'T FORGET THIS IMPORTANT DATE!

The North West Region Spring Gatherings and AGM will be held on

Saturday, 25th March 2023

At

Knowle Green Village Hall, Clitheroe Road, Knowle Green, Preston, PR3 2YQ

More details and Booking Forms soon.

FUTURE EDITIONS OF OYEZ

We are still looking for an Editor for Oyez. If you feel that this is something you may like to take on, please don't be shy – get in touch with Linda or Irene!

For the time being, please submit articles / photos to Irene Merson – irene@mersons.co.uk.
Articles in Word, please, and photos as jpegs.

We can now go back to the pre-Covid annual cycle of our regional magazine:

Issued at the beginning of February, press date 20th January

Issued at the beginning of June, press date 20th May

Issued at the beginning of November, press date 20th October

NORTH WEST REGIONAL COMMITTEE, 2022 - 2023

CHAIR	SECRETARY	TREASURER
<p>Linda Parkington</p> <p>50 Belbeck Street Bury Lancs BL8 2PX</p> <p>Tel 0161 797 6325 lindaparkington@btinternet.com</p>	<p>Irene Merson</p> <p>14 Baildon Way Skelmanthorpe Huddersfield HD8 9GY</p> <p>Tel 01484 865304 irene@mersons.co.uk</p>	<p>Anne Hopley</p> <p>83 Woodgrove Court Peter Street Hazel Grove Stockport SK7 4GH</p> <p>Tel 0161 258 6404 anne.hopley1@talktalk.net</p>
NEC REPRESENTATIVE	NEC REPRESENTATIVE	JUNIOR LIAISON
<p>Beth McCord</p> <p>bethmccord@hotmail.com</p>	<p>Kate Worthington</p> <p>kate@lakesideneedlecraft.co.uk</p>	<p>Beth McCord</p> <p>bethmccord@hotmail.com</p>
COMMITTEE MEMBER	COMMITTEE MEMBER	COMMITTEE MEMBER
<p>Alan Cox</p> <p>stedmanhse@gmail.com</p>	<p>Chris Ellison</p> <p>chrisghr@btinternet.com</p>	<p>Sheila Harris</p> <p>sheilaharris436@gmail.com</p>
COMMITTEE MEMBER	COMMITTEE MEMBER	
<p>Margaret Hubbard</p> <p>magshubbard05@hotmail.co.uk</p>	<p>Norma Parke</p> <p>johnparke333@btinternet.com</p>	
OYEZ EDITOR	REGIONAL WEBSITE MANAGER	
<p>(Vacancy)</p>	<p>Jeanette Jenkins</p> <p>jeanette.jenkins1@ntlworld.com</p>	