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Chatter from the Chair



Hello everyone and welcome to this first Oyez of 2025.

I'm writing this the day after our GatheRing and AGM in Bolton. It was great to see all who managed to attend; I hope somebody responded to my plea and that you'll be able to read about the day further in this issue. We heard Kinder, Norbury, St John's Flixton, Marple and Llandudno ring as teams and Beth with Jocie as a duo. Not every team had all their ringers but it didn't matter as we don't have a policy of temporary transfer fees! It shows how flexible and friendly our members can be when they fill a gap or two in another team. How sad it would be if a team couldn't perform just because they had someone missing... We enjoyed a variety

of pieces in a fairly informal setting and each was warmly received.

Irene successfully led us through the William Gordon arrangement of 'Men of Harlech', with its nice and steady first page followed by the intricacies of his typical variations on the next. Some serious concentration and counting resulted in a very creditable performance at the end of the session and repeated again to end the day. Beth showed

how a very familiar 'Twinkle Twinkle' can be varied to make ringing interesting to both ringers and audiences. Thanks to Sandra Winter for making her arrangement available to us. Beth also demonstrated how bells can be shared by off-table ringers, giving us an opportunity to try out the technique of weaving, and spoke about traditional long-set layouts. Jocie shared conducting a final play-through and as I glanced round the room, it was obvious how much everyone was enjoying the fun of it all. For a few, it was their first event and for others it was a 'slightly longer than they care to remember' event and if that doesn't sum up what HRGB membership is all about, then I don't know what does.

I am delighted that we have three new NW committee members and thank Carl, Jeanette and Sue for volunteering. They will be invaluable in the organization of future events and hopefully bring new ideas to the meetings. I'm also pleased that Anne will continue on the NW Committee after standing down as Treasurer. Anne is our Oracle about past events and can usually delve into publications and programmes to find out who played what, where and when. Which leads me very nicely onto our Regional Golden Jubilee Celebration at Lostock, Preston on Saturday 10th May. Please support the day if you are able and don't worry if there's only two or three of you – or indeed just you! You won't regret it, with a very special 'guest conductor and arranger', some great massed ringing pieces and a couple of Masterclasses as well as cake. Who could ask for anything more? More details and how you might contribute to the day on the booking form. We look forward to seeing you!

Happy Ringing in the coming weeks as the days get longer and the temperature rises.

Linda Parkington

The following was written the day after the GatherRing and AGM on 15th March at Bolton by one of our new Committee members, Sue Ardern. Thank you, Sue!

SATURDAY MARCH 15TH 2025 AT ST AUGUSTINE'S PARISH HALL, TONGE MOOR, BOLTON.

This NW Region Handbells AGM & GatherRing ran smoothly, with six teams or part-teams and assorted 'significant others' in attendance.

The massed ringing was suitably tricky! & well-led by Irene & Beth. Then the essential AGM necessities were quickly sorted - with grateful thanks to Linda, Irene and Anne, and new committee members coming forward. Lunching followed - a time for catch-up chats and refreshing our faculties.

Then on to solo team ringing - a fine variety of different pieces from the various groups. I think we all felt challenged when Beth introduced weaving techniques (& we had a good demo from Jocie too). So we could all come away with some good positives, to inspire our future handbell ringing. The only problem is that I keep finding Men of Harlech going round & round...!

In doing our research for the Golden Jubilee Celebration at Lostock on May 10th, it's become clear that a full record of the pieces played on these occasions is very useful! So here it is, with thanks to another new Committee member, Jeanette Jenkins:

Massed Ringing - Men of Harlech, arranged by William Gordon and part of the HRGB Music Scheme. Twinkle Twinkle, a special arrangement by Sandra Winter and used with her permission.

Team Ringing: First round:

Llandudno HR - Aura Lee; Mini Minims (Beth & Josie) - Dancing through life – Wicked;
St John's Flixton HR - Ode to Joy; Marple URC HR - Rustic Wedding; Kinder Ringers -
Caribbean Carnival; Norbury HR - St Anthony's Chorale.

Team Ringing - Second Round:

Mini Minims - Six from Six; Marple URC HR - Shepherds Hey; St John's Flixton HR - Singing in
the Rain; Norbury HR - Lord of the Dance; Kinder Ringers - You Are My Sunshine

And here are some photos from Bolton – again, thanks to Jeanette!



Marple URC

Handbell Ringers



St John's Flixton Handbell Ringers



Kinder Ringers



Llandudno Handbell Ringers – with Beth in the background. Was she tearing her hair out?



Norbury Handbell Ringers (Jeanette was not on loan – she's a Kinder Ringer too!)

A GRAND DAY OUT AT ALTON

Alton Village Hall was the excellent venue for a “Spring into Summer” Handbell Rally hosted by the local team in the West Midlands. A general invitation had been sent out to all teams within easy travelling distance and six accepted, representing four different HRGB regions.



Two members of Kinder, plus Kate from Sale, left the NW and headed south to Staffordshire, where we were given a very warm welcome with coffee and biscuits on arrival.

The first massed ringing session was, appropriately, Sandra Winter's arrangement of Spring from The Four Seasons led by Kate. Attention to detail about tempo, volume variation and implementation of techniques

to create maximum interest in pieces is close to her heart and she encouraged us to apply these in her conducting.

This was followed by the first of the team solos. Dronfield, from the NE, chose 12-bell pieces, but were a ringer short, so enlisted the Kinder Two to help. Fortunately, we play The Arrival of the Queen of Sheba and Wild Mountain Thyme with our Quartet, so were not totally unfamiliar with them, although it was quite daunting playing different notes and from staff notation.

The next massed ring was another Sandra Winter arrangement – this time the traditional Trumpet Hornpipe. This was rather poignant for us as it had been specially commissioned for Norma Parke, a very enthusiastic member of the NW committee, who we sadly lost last year. Rowena, from the WM, was tasked with guiding us through this lively, fast-moving piece, which is all malleted, and great fun to play.

The team from Stourport-on-Severn representing the SW region then rang Amazing Grace as their solo.

Helen from the NE led the next massed ring – Waltzing Matilda, a piece for 4 octaves in which the bass ringers from Alton and Knowle were encouraged to make the most of their parts and play loud! The variations had been arranged by Lysbeth Wilson and “mucked about” by Rob Willis, giving time and key changes which added interest to this popular tune.

Kinder don't like to attend events and not play an individual piece, so our solo items were Knees Up Mother Brown on 8 bells and the 12-bell Shepherd's Hey, in which Kate joined us

to ring her 4 bells off-table whilst we did our usual 4-in-hand. Our special thanks to Kate for agreeing to do this and successfully playing without any rehearsal.

The mood was calmed down for the last Massed Ringing piece, Golden Slumbers, which Wendy (WM) conducted. This included suspended mallets, martellatos and lots of contrasts in volume and speed to enhance the lovely arrangement by Angela Jones.

After lunch there was the opportunity to further improve the interpretations of the 4 massed ringing tunes, interspersed again by team ringing. Brailsford from the EM played Cwm Rhondda and Parade of the Tin Soldiers on their 2 octaves of bells. Dronfield, now with Philip, not us, rang My Grandfather's Clock and contrasted this with Jesu Joy of Man's Desiring. As host team, Alton ended the solo ringing on their 5 octaves plus chimes impressively playing A Grand Celebration and the beautiful Highland Cathedral.

A tea break with a vast array of delicious home-made cakes, the drawing of the raffle and answers to the ongoing quiz preceded a final play-through of the pieces we rang all together. It had been a wonderful day with lots of really good ringing, techniques practised with excellent conductors and new music to, hopefully, add to our full-team repertoire. The return journey over the hill tops with amazing views of Staffordshire and Derbyshire was an added bonus. We hope to return for another great day in October.

Kinder Ringers

Note from Irene – Details of other Regions' events are shown on the HRGB Website and in Reverberations. Contact the Regional Secretary if you're interested in attending.

HANDBELL RINGERS OF GREAT BRITAIN - NORTH WEST REGION

Draft Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at the Parish Hall, St Augustine's Church, Tonge Moor, Bolton on 15th March 2025, commencing at 11.30 am.

Present: Independent Members Linda Parkington and Irene Merson. 31 members representing the following teams: Kinder Ringers, Llandudno HR, Maghull Parish HR, Marple URC HR, Mini Minims, Norbury HR, St John's Flixton HR, Saddleworth HR, Sale HR.

The Meeting was chaired by Linda Parkington (Chair), who began by welcoming everyone.

Apologies for Absence were received from Gresford HR, Hoad View HR, Janet BurrIDGE, Sheila Harris, Karen Holt, Susan Wareham and Kate Worthington.

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 16th March 2024 had been circulated to members. It was proposed by Beth McCord, seconded by Brenda Wise and agreed without opposition that they be accepted as a correct record and signed by Linda Parkington.

Matters Arising from the Minutes - None

Correspondence – No correspondence had been received.

Chair's Report – This had been circulated to members before the Meeting. Linda referred to the events which had taken place in the Region, mentioning the continued trend for part

teams to attend and the way the Committee had responded to this. Organisation of the National Rally in April had taken up the beginning of the year, and Linda thanked everyone who had worked together to make all these events successful. Anne Hopley would be stepping down as Treasurer, and Linda thanked her for all her work, especially in ensuring that the Accounts reached the National Treasurer in good time. She also thanked Beth McCord and Kate Worthington for representing the Region at National Executive Committee meetings, and Irene Merson and Margaret Hubbard for deputising when required. Linda ended by indicating her intention to step down as Chair at the 2026 AGM. The Chair's Report was accepted by the meeting.

Secretary's Report – This had been circulated to members before the Meeting. The activities of 2024, including the National Rally, had taken up most of the Committee's time, and the increasing reliance on the Committee rather than teams to host and organise events was noticeable. A new development was a donation to the Region of a 12 bell set of Malmark handbells, which were now on long-term loan to Llandudno Handbell Ringers. In conclusion, Irene gave advance notice that she intended to step down as Secretary at the 2026 AGM. The Report was accepted by the meeting.

Treasurer's Report – This had been circulated to members before the Meeting. Anne Hopley began by stating that she was not standing for re-election as Treasurer, but would remain on the Committee if elected. She was pleased to report a surplus at the end of 2024, but the income from events had fallen due to the lower number of teams participating. The Zoom licence had again proved invaluable for Committee meetings and for the planning group for the National Rally in April 2024. The Report was accepted by the meeting.

Presentation of Accounts – The examined Accounts for the year ending 31st December 2024 had been circulated to members before the meeting. It was proposed by Carol Cosham, seconded by Sue Ardern and agreed without opposition that the Accounts be accepted. Anne thanked the Accounts Examiner for his help while she had been Treasurer, and this was endorsed by the Committee.

Election of Officers and Committee Members:

The following postal nominations had been received:

POST	NOMINATED	PROPOSED	SECONDED
Chair	Linda Parkington	Catherine Roche	Molly Rennie
Secretary	Irene Merson	Maureen Williams	Jenny Bicknell
Treasurer	Sheila Harris	Audrey Ulyett	Victoria Daley
NEC Representative & Committee Member	Beth McCord	Jo Healy	Sheila Cooksey
NEC Representative & Committee Member	Kate Worthington	Joan Ball	Carolyn Walmsley
Committee Member	Anne Hopley	Brenda Wise	Sue Ardern
Committee Member	Margaret Hubbard	Elizabeth Roche	Ruth Swanson
Committee Member	Sue Ardern	Carl Harris	Chris Kynaston
Committee Member	Carl Harris	Lesley F Walker	Wendy Atkinson
Committee Member	Jeanette Jenkins	Susan Evans	Susan Wareham

It was proposed by Brenda Wise, seconded by Elizabeth Roche and agreed without opposition that the above Officers, NEC Representatives and Committee Members be elected.

As there had been no nominations for Junior Committee Member it was agreed that Beth McCord would continue as Junior Liaison on the Committee. The new Treasurer would need to be involved in arranging for an Examiner of Accounts, so it was agreed that the Committee should make this appointment.

Regional, National and International Events –

Regional – the Region's Golden Jubilee will be celebrated on Saturday 10th May 2025 at Lostock Hall Community School, near Preston. Details will be sent out shortly, and the event will be suitable for members to come either in their teams or separately. Plans will be made for more events later in the year, and members were urged to contact the Committee with ideas for future activities.

National – the 2025 National Rally will be held at Milton Keynes, from 11th to 13th April.

The Northern Bell Orchestra will hold its Concert on 7th June 2025 in Sale.

National Residential Ringing Week will be held from 4th to 8th August 2025 in Sheffield.

International – The 22nd International Symposium will be hosted by the UK in Aberdeen from 4th to 8th August 2026 – members were urged to take advantage of this rare opportunity.

Any Other Business – None.

Date and Place of the next Annual General Meeting – It was agreed that the date and venue would be set by the Committee as soon as possible and published to members in the usual way.

The Meeting closed at 11.55 am.

NORTH WEST REGION GOLDEN JUBILEE CELEBRATION

SATURDAY, 10TH MAY 2025 AT LOSTOCK HALL ACADEMY, NEAR PRESTON

By now you should have received details and a Booking Form for this once-in-50-years event! All our planning has been aimed at giving everyone, whether they come with a full team, a part team or on their own, a chance to participate fully in all the activities of the day.

So – get those forms in quickly to ensure your place, and we'll see you there! If you haven't received details, please contact Irene.

NEXT EDITION OF OYEZ

NEXT PRESS DATE: 20th May 2025 - For the June Edition of Oyez. Let's have lots of reviews of the Golden Jubilee Celebration – and tell us all about your own ringing! Please submit articles / photos to Irene Merson – irene@mersons.co.uk. Articles in Word, and photos as jpegs, please.

NORTH WEST REGIONAL COMMITTEE, 2025 - 2026

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