Clappertrappings

Newsletter of the North Staffordshire Association of Change Ringers
Ringing the changes across the county

www.nsacr.org.uk **Spring 2022**

HELLO SPRINGTIME!



We hope you enjoy this spring edition of Clappertrappings which comes with our grateful thanks to everyone who continues to support us by contributing, in whatever small way. We really enjoy the feedback that tells us you are enjoying ClapTraps and look forward to writing about our ringing successes and achievements very soon.

Helen Thurstan and Lydia Ernest, Editors.

NSACR PROGRAMME FOR 2022

Keep up-to-date with events online at **www.nsacr.org.uk**. When attending events where tea is served, please email your details to **teas@nsacr.org.uk**

Saturday 5th March 2022: Alton (8)

This meeting is a combined new members event and quarterly business meeting.

Timetable

2:30 - 3:00pm Introduction to the Association for New Members
3:00 - 4:00pm New Members and Helpers only ringing
4:00 - 5:00pm Afternoon Ringing for all members
5:00 - 6:15pm Tea and Business Meeting
6:15 - 7:30pm Evening Ringing for all members
During tea we will hold a 100 Club Draw.

Saturday 2nd April: Barton under Needwood (8)

Afternoon ringing will take place between 2pm and 4.00.

Saturday 7th May: Horton (6)

Ringing between 2pm and 4.00.

Saturday 4th June: Platinum Jubilee

Ringing for the Platinum Jubilee of Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, when we are hoping as many volunteers as possible will ring across North Staffordshire. It is hoped that this will be a big plus for the Association and further details are given on page 7.

Saturday 11th June: Six-Bell Striking Contest at Checkley (6)

If you are new to ringing, or have not yet encountered a Striking competition, you can read the rules on our website. The last one was in 2019, and you can see the results in our Autumn 2019 newsletter:

https://www.nsacr.org.uk/pdf_files/newsletter/2019_09_web_version.pdf

Programme for this year

3pm-5pm: Six bell striking contest

5pm-6:15pm: Tea, Results, Business meeting

6:15pm-7pm Evening ringing

Deadline to add your name for the tea is Wednesday 8th June. Please email:

teas@nsacr.org.uk

North Staffs Practices
Tim Hine, Ringing Master

When I've asked what sort of ringing events people would like, some have put in a plea for targeted *practices*. That would be an event where you rehearse / work on a method to help you improve. One person said: *Could there be events aimed at skill levels – one for say Plain Hunt on 5 up to Plain Bob Minor at a nice easy 6? Or an 8-bell practice at a certain level, eg Bob Triples? Or a Surprise Major practice could work. Or a 12-bell practice say aimed at maximus, Cambridge and above…*

It would have a general aim and skill level stated up-front. Having a name on the tin. It would be like your ordinary tower practice, but the size of the association means we would hope to get good steady ringers to make a better practice for various people.

Aren't North Staffs Saturday events practices then? Not really. If I have understood the situation correctly, on these days we aim to ring "putting our best foot forward". And it is not quite the same as training either, because that is much more intensive. Currently we do not have an Education Officer but these practices – if we had them - might help fill the gap perhaps…

If you're interested in practices like that – talk to me or email me – contact details as per the Handbook. Keep a look out for the first event. We're only going to be doing it if there is interest and support from some good steady ringers and I am looking for them as well as improvers!

Please do let me know what you think of this. Email me at:

RingingMaster@nsacr.org.uk

TALK FROM THE TOWERS
Stoke Minster, Ray Daw



L-R Josie Martin, Andy Grove, Trevor Lock, Selwyn Jones, Ray Daw & Wendy Daw

The photo above was taken at Stoke Minster on 5th February, prior to an attempt at a Quarter Peal of Cambridge S Minor which was unfortunately lost! So much for taking a photo before the event!

The photo was taken on Josie's mobile phone and as I received it, realised it was "wrong way round" with Josie on the RHS.

I found out how to "flip" it on my computer before I sent it to Bellboard.

News from Josie Martin

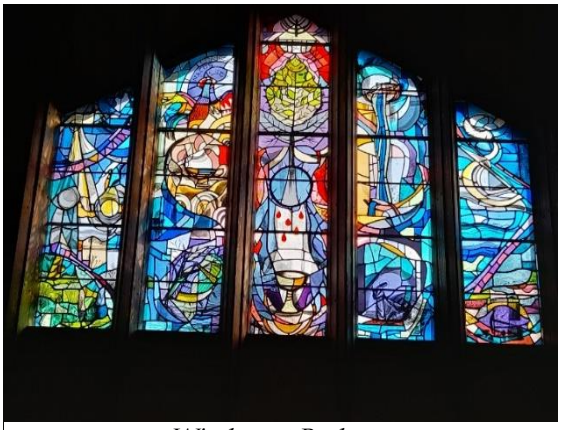
Keele outing, February 26th

We decided to do something we have not done for a while. Visit other towers! Phil arranged an itinerary that meant we would experience lighter bells, which we all enjoyed very much. Josie is the photographer in this case and she and I had a quick chat about how it felt ringing lighter bells, and she agreed that at first, it certainly did feel like pulling the bells out of the tower! Phil explained that the ringers should let the sally rise, then pull the sally, then let the backstroke rise; most of the band did manage to control their bell.



The Participating Band (taken at Whitmore)
back row L-R: Tom, Imelda, John, Pauline, Steve, Roland, Phil;
on the bench, Dave, Howard, and Denzil

The band all met up at Barlaston to start the short itinerary which saw them travel locally in Staffordshire, with a delightful stopover at Josie's house for lunch and culminating with tea at Woodlands.



Window at Barlaston

Barlaston

6 bells, tenor 5-0-11 in D



Cedar Tree at Barlaston

The old church had a ring of five, cast by Blews of Birmingham in 1876. In 1933 the third of this ring became cracked and was re-cast by Taylors of Loughborough. In 1979 the four old bells were re-cast into the front five of the current six, keeping the re-cast third as the tenor of the new ring. Not long after this the church was badly affected by mining subsidence and a new church was built at the expense of British Coal.

Whitmore

6 bells, tenor 3-2-0

In 1954 there were three bells in the tower, two from the seventeenth century and one from the fifteenth century. Unfortunately, the mediaeval bell had a large piece missing from the lip, so when the bells were rehung, this bell was replaced by a new one cast by Taylors. The old bell is now on display in the church.

In 2002 renovation work to the tower required the bells to be removed, and Phil Gay suggested that the bells should go back as a five, using two bells supplied by the Keltek Trust. The rehang was done by Matthew Higby, using wheels made by Phil, and soon after the five were in use another bell became available to complete the six.

Woodlands

8 bells, tenor 0-3-19

Phil and Rowena Gay began to collect bells in 1978, and by 1987 they had put together a ring of six, which were opened in 1992. Two trebles were added in 1997 to complete the eight. Only three of the bells, the treble, second and seventh, were cast for the ring, the others were second-hand. Six different founders are represented.

Treble & second	Bowditch and Higby
Third	Warner
Fourth	Thomas Mears
Fifth & Sixth	Charles & George Mears
Seventh	Eijsbouts
Tenor	John Taylor

The frame and fittings were made by Phil with much help from friends.

News from Keele 9

Phil Gay

As is often the case, several of our band were away for Christmas, but we were fortunate to have ringing visitors. We rang for the midnight service at ten on Christmas Eve, and although Stedman didn't come round we did manage a course of Cambridge, the first for a service for quite a while, helped by Simon Gay and Tina Stoecklin. After Christmas lunch we rang call changes on five in the garage with a family band. Josie Martin had returned from her three-month visit to Africa, and I helped her ring two at Madeley (again Christmas depleted) on Christmas morning. On the following day we did one better, as my daughter Sally was also visiting and did her first ringing for four years, infuriatingly well as usual. Simon had noticed that December 28th was the 75th anniversary of the first peal of Glasgow, and slightly to my surprise I was able to put together a band to ring a commemorative peal in the garage. We were pleased to get this peal, as it was some time since some of the band had rung Glasgow.

Woodlands Wednesday

Keele, Staffordshire, Woodlands

Tuesday, 28 December 2021 in 2h 22 (0–3–19 in A♯)

5280 Glasgow Surprise Major

Roger Baldwin

1 Philip W Gay

2 Paul Jopp

3 Michael Wilshaw

4 Anthony P Cotton

5 Harold Dowl

6 R Jean Nixon

7 Simon J Gay (C)

8 Tina R Stoecklin

On the 75th anniversary of the first peal of Glasgow. First touch of Glasgow (aged 75): 6.

Another commemorative peal was planned for January, to mark the sixtieth anniversary of a peal at Keele on January 13th 1962 which was Michael Wilshaw's first, our second for Ray Ballard and me, and his fourth for David Danby. Some of us didn't feel up to ringing a peal on big bells, so we decided to ring a quarter at Keele and a peal at Woodlands, both bands re-inforced by friends who had been ringing together since the sixties. Unfortunately, Michael tested positive the previous week, so we had to postpone the ringing, which was not totally straightforward as Ray now

lives near Peterborough. His next planned visit to Staffordshire was in the middle of February so we decided to go for February 16th and hope everyone stayed fit.

On January 15th I began to teach a new learner for Madeley. He was a very apt pupil and eight days later he rang for Sunday service for the first time, call changes on five. Daily lessons work! On January 26th we welcomed a new member to the Keele band. Ben Crisp is a first year student who comes from Yorkshire. On the following day I went to Shenstone for the funeral of John Daubner. John was a major contributor to the mobile belfry, both in the building phase and when it was in use.

There was no service at Keele on February 6th so we organised extra ringing in the afternoon to mark the 70th anniversary of the Queen's accession., and we look forward to doing something more ambtious in June.

On February 16th we managed a quarter but not a peal, which was lost just after half way after some good ringing.

Woodlands' Wednesday

Keele, Staffordshire

St John

Wednesday, 16 February 2022 in 43m (8–0–2 in G♯)

1260 Minor (2m)

Two methods: 720 Kent TB; 540 Plain Bob

1 Raymond J Ballard

2 Philip W Gay

3 K Peter Jones

4 Dennis Latham

5 David J Danby

6 Michael Wilshaw (C)

Rung to celebrate the 80th birthday of Geoffrey Davies, our great friend and also a superb ringing mentor to all the band. Also, to recognise 60 years of peal ringing for David (first peal, 22/12/61 at Hanley), Raymond (first peal, 27/12/61 at Hanley) and Michael (first peal, 13/1/62 at Keele), all being peals that were organised and conducted by Geoff. Michael's first peal was rung in these two methods. Paul Atkins and Harold Dowler also wish to be associated with this tribute.

This was my first quarter on big bells for over two years, and I found it quite hard, still regaining match fitness.

Dilhorne – Jackie Kent, TC

Accession Day marks the anniversary of the reigning monarch taking the throne, which in the case of Her Majesty the Queen is 6 February 1952. The Dilhorne Band were particularly thrilled to be able to celebrate this anniversary on 5th February 2022 and ring to mark the beginning of The Queen's Platinum Jubilee.



Dilhorne Band after ringing call changes for HM the Queen on Accession Day; L-R: Gill, Helen, Jackie (TC), Margaret, Linda, Sue

Stafford, Nigel Horritt

Unfortunately, we still don't have an update in terms of timescales as we have experienced more delays. We are hoping to hear soon and any update will be on our website.

This project started before Covid, and like everyone else, we have suffered because of it, but I do think it helps to review where we are, and what we have achieved. It's a massive testament to everyone who has been involved in any way, from hands on stuff with the bells to simply buying merchandising.

So, here's an overview for you.

We raised £355 from selling the mugs and Tea Towels and £331 form the Christmas cards. Currently the total project cost is sitting at £168,000 with local labour discount, it is more like £184,699.

As of this week, we have raised £158,860 which unfortunately still leaves us around £9,000 short.

As a reminder, the scope of the project covered:

- Moving the Hanley Bells
- Tuning 9 & 10
- Two new trebles to make a ring of 12
- New steel frame (all 12 on same level)
- Flat 6th to create a light ring of 8
- Viewing platform above the bells
- Stafford original bells to return as clock bells (1,2,3,6 & 8)
- Stafford 5th to be hung as a training bell
- Electronic clock
- Electronic Sanctus bell mechanism
- Electronic sound control
- Museum in the clock room, with section of old bell frame, and other bell parts, with the drum Carilion on display
- Dumb bells and simulators

When you put it like that, it is a massive project. It's obvious how much work has been done, and we know we still have a way to go to raise that last and final amount that we need to finish the project. I know we will all celebrate at the commissioning event which we hope will be some time later this year.

Masked Ringers of Betley

Robert Bailey, Tower Captain of Betley, has the honour of not only ringing for the Queen's Accession, but who also rang for the Queen's Coronation 70 years ago.



The Masked Figures of Betley wonder if this is the last photo of them in masks….fingers crossed!

Ringers in photo described

Denzil Spencer holding the tenor rope;

Anne Becket with hands clasped in front;

Robert Bailey, middle with purple jumper - Tower Captain;

Linda Berman wearing black mask;

Sue Cheetham with a cap hanging over her head;

Terry French with his head on the first aid

Missing from photo - Wendy

The Betley ringers skilfully ring to very high standard under Robert's leadership, ringing plain bob doubles and minor, reverse canterbury, grandsire and kent and raise and lower in peal twice a week.

They leave their bells up at backstroke when there is evensong, twice a month, also a great skill.

Robert is busy splicing the rope tops which are weathered near the louvres.

The Betley ringers would like some younger learners to join them so that the soundscape of Staffordshire will resound for another 70 years into the future.

PLATINUM JUBILEE

Tim Hine

What has happened so far?

I am writing this in February and there has already been quite a bit of ringing for the Platinum anniversary of our Queen's accession. To see that early participation across the Country, go to BellBoard:

https://bb.ringingworld.co.uk/event.php?id=14418

When is the main event?

The main Platinum Jubilee celebrations run for four days from Thursday 2nd June to Sunday 5th June.

What ringing opportunities are there?

The whole weekend is good for celebratory ringing. Also, there is a Service of Thanksgiving at St Paul's on Friday 3 June – a good opportunity. (Time of service still to be released.)

Where can I get more definite information?

There was a good preview by Vicki Chapman here:

https://cccbr.org.uk/2022/01/12/hm-queens-jubilee/

For updates, keep an eye on the North Staffs website:
https://www.nsacr.org.uk/

Where can I put up a record of our ringing?

Again, a BellBoard event has been set up, where you can record ringing over the course of the weekend's celebrations; and please don't forget to share it with the Editors, so all of our ringing for Her Majesty can go into Clappertrappings.

https://bb.ringingworld.co.uk/event.php?id=14297

ACCESSION RINGING FOR HER MAJESTY - FEBRUARY

(from RW – 16th February)

Abbots Bromley – Rounds, Call Changes and Firing

Alrewas – 1260 Grandsire Doubles

Brewood - 1260 Grandsire Doubles

Cannock – 1250 Lincolnshire S Major

Caverswall – Call Changes

Dilhorne – Call Changes

Eccleshall – 1280 Rutland S Major

Haughton – 70 Rounds

Keele – Call Changes

Lapley - 1260 Grandsire Doubles

Madeley – Call Changes

Penkridge - 1260 Doubles (3m/v)

Rugeley – 260 Doubles (2m)

Stoke Minster – 360 Minor (3m) and Doubles

Stone – 108 PB Minor and 1260 PB Royal

Whittington – Call Changes and Grandsire

RETURNING TO RINGING

Tim Hine, Ringing Master

Perhaps you are a Tower Captain with this question:

Where can I go for advice on returning to Ringing?

Answer: Have a look at the North Staffs website. You will see an easy link to the current health advice (covid 19 update). It's carefully produced, mainly by a retired senior doctor.

You can find the Central Council website - one click from the home screen from the North Staffs Association's website. Have a look at "Survival and Recovery" there. It includes a Survival and Recovery toolbox with ideas for you to produce your own plan.

If this is you, have you considered a residential course? I have listed a few below, but a word of warning, get your application in early, they get booked up quickly!

Bradfield ringing course

18-21 August 2022

http://www.bradfield-ringing-course.org.uk/home.php

North West ringing course 1

1-14 August 2022

https://nwringingcourse.uk/

Hereford ringing course Spring 2023

http://www.herefordringingcourse.org.uk

Essex ringing course Spring 2023

http://eacr.org.uk/education/course.html

The Council site also has ideas if you are thinking about recruitment.

https://cccbr.org.uk/resources/recruitment-and-retention

100 CLUB

Our February draw usually takes place at the New Members meeting. However, this year that meeting was cancelled. We therefore held the draw on Sunday 13th February and taken a video, which is available on the website (www.nsacr.org.uk).

The lucky winners were:

1st Barry Gooding - Rolleston

2nd Chris Wilde - formerly Uttoxeter

3rd Ray Daw - Stoke Minster

4th Lisa Horritt - Stafford

The next draw will take place at the March quarterly meeting. Good luck everyone!

CENTRAL COUNCIL BUSINESS

https://cccbr.org.uk

We wanted to remind you that the Association still needs more reps for the CCCBR from the membership as Jan and Tim Hine resigned at the AGM in December, when John Hall took over…but

we could do with two more reps. Talk to either Tim (who is now Ringing Master) to find out more, if you are interested. It's a position that will give you lots of opportunities, not just to ring in many different towers, but to meet people from all over the country practising and teaching the art of bell ringing, whilst at the same time enabling the Association to take advantage of new initiatives.

INTRODUCING

The Young Change Ringers Association

An article by Matt Jerome caught my eye in the Ringing World (820/10 September 21) about the Young Change Ringers Association, and as I cannot possibly make it any better than it already is, I asked permission to repeat it in our edition of Clappertrappings. So, for those of you that may have missed this edition, please see below. It is so encouraging to see the enthusiasm, thought and commitment coming from this young team formed from the consultations the Central Council had a year or so ago. The article below tells you why and who and what.

Reproduced from the Ringing World, with grateful thanks to Matt Jerome (Author) and Will Bosworth (Editor of RW)



Matt Jerome

Over the past year, a small group consisting of myself, Emily Hall, Elena Brake, Josephine Leggett, Sam White, Elisha Small and Charlie Linford have been setting up the Young Change Ringers Association (YCRA). *(All the Founding Members are on the website.)* This is an Association for anyone young enough to handle a bell, up to the age of 30, with the aim to be an Association for young ringers, by young ringers. We are a diverse group, from all over the country, with a wide range of ringing and life experiences.

About the YCRA

There are two key elements to the Association. The first is a mentoring scheme, allowing young ringers to be matched to a mentor or become a mentor themselves. Mentors will be over 18 and assist mentees with anything, from method ringing to bell maintenance, to organising an outing, to mental wellbeing. The importance of safeguarding cannot be understated, and we understand this. All mentors will have a DBS check, safeguarding training and a rigorous safeguarding policy has been written to ensure the safe of all our members.

The second element is three large, organised events a year, spread throughout the country around the Easter, Summer and Christmas school holidays. The aim of this is to show young ringers that there are lots of other young ringers about, who they can ring and have fun with. Covid-19 has made vent planning tricky; however, plans are in place for a Christmas event this year, based around the school holidays in a central UK location. The Association aims to give members the tools to develop as ringers as people too. Ringing is an extremely valuable skill to have on a CV – think of everything it gives you (teamwork, independent study, leadership, to name a few). It is understandable why young

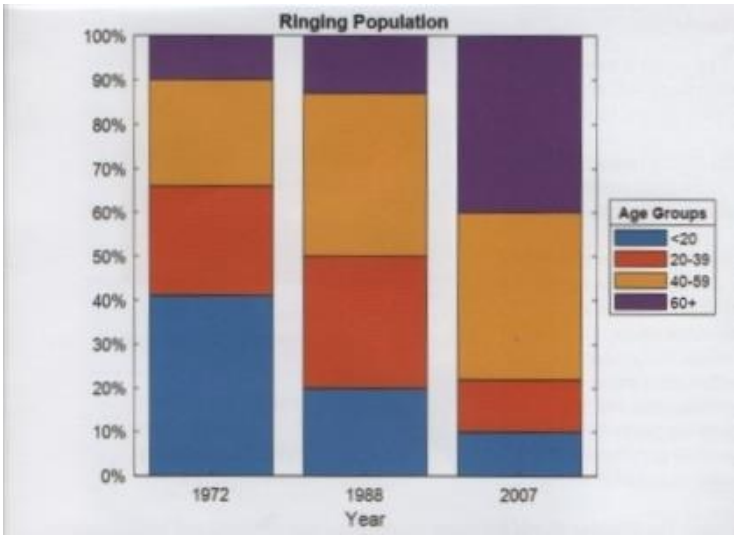
people might not want to continue a hobby where they are the youngest in their band by 20, 30 or 40 years and so it is hoped this Association will allow young ringers to connect with other people and realise other young ringers do exist!

The Association will be entirely run by its members, with the hope that the integrated mentor scheme will naturally encourage young ringers into leadership roles, ready to become YCRA committee members, then eventually tower captains and leaders in the wider ringing community. Additionally, the committee will never become outdated and stagnate as the age limit of 30 will ensure the committee positions are updated every few years.

We have set an annual subscription to the Association at £15. For this, members get access to all the events being held in the yare, as well as the mentoring scheme and a membership pack; (this includes a YCRA pin badge, pen, certificate, and booklet). The booklet explains what the YCRA is and provides information such as the events and safeguarding information. It also includes a '101 guide' for young ringers: for example, what to do if you visit an unfamiliar tower on your own. We think this is good value for money, especially when you might pay the same for an hour of football training or a music lesson and it is similar to other local guild subscriptions.

So, there's the details about us, but why is it needed in the first place? The 10th anniversary of the first Ringing World National Youth contest was held in September and it would be hard to argue against it being anything but a huge success. It has grown from a competition to a 'festival of ringing' with young people gathering to ring and more importantly socialise together. We hoped to further this at the contest in Worcester and we organised an evening event after the contest, binging young people together over what they love best – food!

Young ringing will be the future of our hobby, but at the moment we are facing a real challenge. Three surveys conducted into the state of ringing helped produce the chart *'Ringing Population'*.



State of ringing surveys carried out in 1972, 1988 and 2007. They aimed to give an idea of the 'health' of ringing, looking at age ranges and the number of ringers in the country.

This shows how the number of young ringers is declining and the older generation increasing.

Schemes such as *Ringing Remembers* and ART are doing a great job and may have slowed the tide, albeit not reversed it. Whilst the current figures would be interesting, it is best to assume we are in a worse position compared to 2007, with ringing looking potentially unsustainable. So, how do you attract young people to a hobby with few young people? We believe the YCRA, with its aim of connecting young people together can be a driver in this.

The diagram on page 14 outlines what we want you to do to help this new Association succeed.

The YCRA is by no means a replacement for the great work by youth teams around the country; we need you as well to safeguard the future of ringing and leave it strong for years to come. What the YCRA hope to do is to create a network of young ringers who help each other develop, which helps further to safeguard the future of ringing.

For more information, go to:

Website: https://ycra.org.uk

Email: contact@ycra.org.uk

Or find us on social media.



COTTAGE PIE BAKE with Dauphinoise Potatoes

Heat oven to 200°, 180° fan, gas 6

Ingredients

1kg beef shin or lean stewing steak cut into large chunks

1 tbsp oil 200g bacon lardons

100g onion

2 sticks celery chopped

1tbsp plain flour

1 beef stock cube

Glass red wine

Small tin chopped tomatoes

1 tbsp Worcestershire sauce

Sprig of thyme

150g carrots chopped or baby carrots

2 garlic cloves crushed

1k potatoes thinly sliced

25g butter

85g mature cheddar cheese grated

Method

Brown the beef in a large frying pan, with oil, and then tip it into the casserole dish. Add (to the frying pan), the onions, lardons, carrots and celery and fry gently for 10 minutes, until golden. Stir in the flour until absorbed. Add the stock cube and wine, plus water. Add Worcester sauce, bring to a slow boil, then immediately pour into the casserole dish with the beef, making sure the liquid just covers the meat and vegetables. Place in oven at 160o and cook for 1 ½ hours or until the meat is very tender. Rinse the sliced potatoes. Put in a saucepan cover with water, boil for 10mins until just tender. Drain. Strain the casserole in a colander over a large saucepan. Shred the beef into chunky pieces transfer to a baking dish together with the veg etc, and a little of the sauce. Spread the sliced potatoes over the meat and vegetables, dot with butter and sprinkle over the grated cheese. Put the saucepan containing the sauce on the heat and reduce slightly, thickening if needed.

Heat oven to 200° (180° fan), gas 6 and bake for 30 minutes until the top has browned and the potatoes are cooked.



Serve with green vegetables.

Enjoy!

EDITORIAL

I wondered how the recruitment of the new generation of bell ringers is going across the Association. With the new members meeting coming up, it is good to see that after all we have experienced over the last two years, we have still managed to recruit new ringers. Agreed, we have had a difficult time of it with no ringing for so long and we would be forgiven for accepting that we had no new recruits. However, knowing the experience of Butterton (article in last edition of the newsletter where they recruited but did not manage to retain many of their new recruits, a situation that is not just unique to a small country-based tower), I see that it is not just about recruitment, but also about retention.

Getting that next generation to train as bell ringers is key to keeping our wonderful art going forward. I read something on Facebook last year that a particular tower had managed to get a piece about bell ringing and the need for new recruits into the local newspaper. They reported that the piece came over a little old fashioned and not very exciting – but the writer commented: "at least we got into the paper". Perhaps they were joking, but I don't think that's helpful at all. Is any publicity good publicity? I doubt it.

I looked at several web sites trying to get a definitive idea of how we describe our art. I spotted one website describing Change Ringing as an obscure art. Is that the image we want to present? Traditional, yes! Obscure, perhaps not!

Could there be an improvement in recruitment? Where do we get new recruits from these days? According to the Church of England, church congregations are declining rapidly, certainly not recruiting or retaining the young people that we would want to see in the bell towers. Recent events may have changed that. I read that millennials are far keener on religion than baby boomers and that they prayed a lot during lockdown. I get that might happen, but I'm also cynical enough to believe that it will have stopped since lockdown ended. In any event, it doesn't follow that those millennials praying during lockdown will suddenly change the size of the congregations in churches or lead to new learners in towers. I am human and understand how fickle human beings are. *'Prayers answered, let's get back on with life post-Covid.'* We can't wait for the possibility that there may be an increase in numbers of people in our

churches and then wait for the growth of numbers in towers.

So, with church congregations declining and the new and necessary rules around safeguarding being put in place, it is hard to recruit new members. Despite everything (our art being practised in a church for one – although that might be a deterrent to some), what's not to like about learning the ropes? It has many benefits. As far back as the 16th Century, when bells were hung with a full wheel allowing ringers to control their bells, ringing has been synonymous with beautiful sounds, thanks to the complex patterns created through the different methods and call changes. Bell ringing means you are part of a team, but it will also tax that grey matter of yours! Post-Covid, we are all being encouraged to think more carefully about our health and well-being, including our mental health and agility, not just of the body, but the mind. Then there's the social life. After all the mental stimulation practising methods, ringing call changes, or simply learning the ropes, bell-ringing practice used to end with a trip to the pub. (Ahh, remember those heady days?) In the 18th century, ringers did not need to get to the local for a drink or two; each tower would have a large jug containing beer, there to hydrate the ringers. What would our incumbents say if we moved a few jugs of beer into our towers, under the guise of "recruitment" I wonder?

So, we make beautiful sounds, mix with lots of immensely interesting people, (in the tower as well as the pub), keep ourselves fit and surely, we have a laugh? To me, and to many people I believe, bell ringing is an all-encompassing hobby.

As I cast my eyes back at all the reasons I have quoted for being a bell ringer, perhaps the lack of recruitment ***is*** because young people associate it with church attendance? They probably would not necessarily be interested in the whole healthy side of the art that I quoted. And if they are very young, the pub isn't for them. Perhaps it should be more like – where's the rush? Where's the excitement? Can I meet with other people my own age?

In September 2020, a member of St Marks Cheltenham Ringers talked about a Zoom talk which she'd attended and what she said resonated with me: "Fantastic Zoom talk tonight given by the professional violinist Andrew Bernadi. He had a message for ringers, and for the future of ringing: "Don't worry about your art. Just love what you do, trust in it and be passionate about it, and it will never die."

The CCCBR's strategic priorities paper points out: "We can no longer rely on the church to supply us with recruits, particularly youngsters, and we have to work harder to attract and retain them." Strategic Priorities 2020 and beyond – CCCBR The CCCBR continues to make strides with this thorny subject and one of the reasons I was delighted to be able to share the news about the YCRA, which I first spotted in RW – see the article later in this edition.

We need to find ways to recruit the next generation, and we need new and innovative ways of presenting ourselves – not boring, not obscure. And after getting that initial interest, retention is key. A step in the right direction is perhaps to get

our young people involved with the YCRA and for our younger ringers to be active in promoting the art, to help the Association tackle the very tricky problem of recruitment and retention. Perhaps then we can turn the numbers around? How do we ensure the future of our art, and keep those magnificent sounds continuing down the ages?

Helen Thurstan

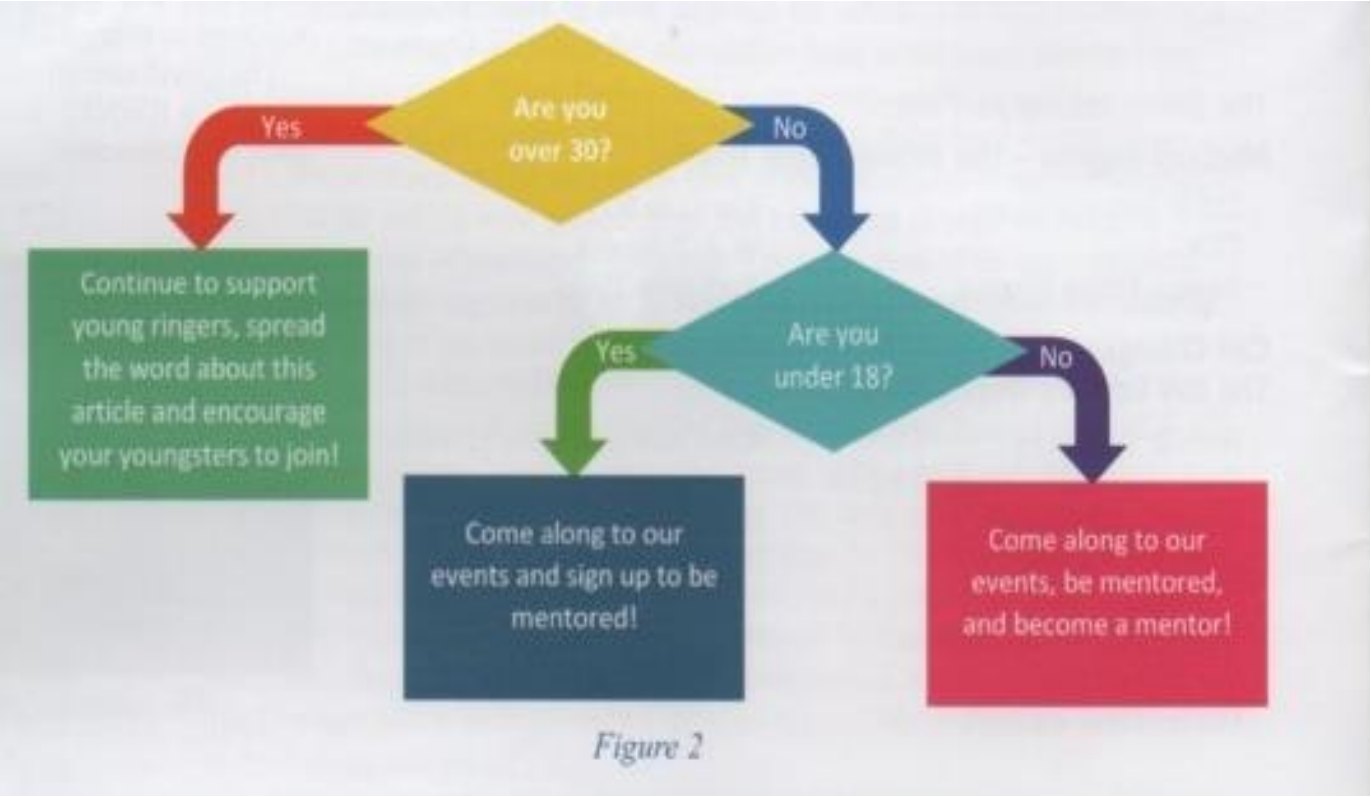
Let's have a conversation about recruitment and retention! I will happily print any follow ups to this Editorial from you, any comments, ideas, initiatives you have completed successfully in your tower. It would be great to hear from you, especially if you are under 30!

All comments to:

newsletter@nsacr.org.uk

FURTHER INFORMATION

All information can be found on our website. It is recommended that you check the website regularly in case of any changes to the programme and updates on the Pandemic and returning to ringing. **https://www.nsacr.org.uk/**



YCRA - how to get involved