



Handbell Ringers of Great Britain - Registered Charity No. 298945 (England) and SC038918 (Scotland)

North East Region eNews Issue 12 – July 2017

Dear Friends

I start my Chairman's letter with the sad new that two of our members, Jeffrey Singleton and John Nixon, passed away recently. Jeff was Musical Director of Amber Bells and John a very active member of Bingley Handbell Ringers. They will both be very much missed by their handbell ringing friends and we send our love and condolences to their close family. Helen Foley has provided a reflection of the life of Jeff in this edition of e-NEws.

Since our last edition our spring rally at Grassington was held in celebration of 40 years of the North East Region, our Summer Ring and very recently the first of our HRGB 50th Birthday Rallies in Ecclesfield. All splendid events and well supported. We have articles on these events in this edition. We also have reflections on the 50th Birthday National Rally in Exeter. Thank you to all who were involved in making these events a success and to the contributors of the articles in this edition of e-NEws.

Greta Pilgrim gives insight into work the Ryburn Ringers undertake giving musical experiences to people who live on their own and those with learning difficulties. I have some experience of working with such groups and the use of handbells provides real enjoyment for those taking part. Well done Ryburn!

There are still four rallies planned this year in celebration of HRGB's 50th. Have you sent your confirmation of attendance yet? A polite reminder to do so. Remember, planning cannot proceed properly until the number of teams attending is known. ***And remember! You will be most welcome as an individual if your team cannot attend!*** Massed ringing opportunities are planned for all the rallies and bells will be provided - so come along and enjoy the ringing and company of your fellow regional members.

Your Regional Secretary, Christine, welcomes the Buttercross Ringers from Pontefract and gives details of the latest "freebie" – Rob Worrell's 'Three for the Road', a 'Golden Oldie' competition winner.

Christine also reminds us to notify her of any changes in our home address, 'phone numbers or e-mail address. We need to communicate with you, our members, so make sure the information we hold is current.

I hope you enjoy this latest edition of e-NEws and I look forward to meeting many of you at our forthcoming rallies.

With my very best wishes to you all!

John Atkinson
North East Region Chairman

Notes from the Regional Secretary



Since the last edition of eNews we have welcomed the Buttercross Ringers from Pontefract to our Region. They attended the Joint Ringing Day and we hope to see them at future events.

Copies of the 'Golden Oldie' competition winner, 'Three for the Road' by Rob Worrall, should have arrived with your team correspondent. Please will you let me know if your team hasn't received their copies? It has come to light recently that several items – membership renewal forms, membership cards and copies of Reverberations - that have been sent to North East Region members have not in fact been received.

Please will you also inform me of changes of address, 'phone number or email so that we can keep our records up-to-date.

Christine Lazenby
North East Region Secretary

First 50th Anniversary Rally – Sheffield

WOW!! What an afternoon of ringing, socialising and eating cake. Let me explain.....

Today was the first of four '50th Birthday Mini Rallies' for the North East Region, hosted by the Ecclesfield ringers in the south of the region. It was lovely to see the hall full of people all wanting to celebrate the past 50 years of HRGB.



The afternoon started off with all teams playing 'Birthday Celebration' to kick start the proceedings. We then moved onto massed ringing which was 'Home Sweet Home' (the first piece to be published for handbells) and 'Three for the Road' (a mixture of 'There's a Tavern in the Town', 'It's a Long Way to Tipperary' and 'Pack up your Troubles') which was released as the winner of the 50th birthday competition.

Teams all played pieces throughout the afternoon, showcasing the music they enjoy playing.

Ecclesfield Concert – 'Russian Parade', '12th Street Rag', 'Ashokan Farewell', 'Blue Tango' and 'Wallace and Grommit'.

Bradfield – 'Air' from the Water Music', 'Prelude from Te Deum', 'Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring' and 'Sheep May Safely Graze'.

Broomhill – 'Teddy Bears' Picnic', 'Puppet on a String', 'Fields of Gold', 'Grandfather's Clock' and 'Congratulations'.

Dronfield – 'Trumpet Tune', 'Jupiter Theme', 'Star of the County Down' and 'Pomp and Circumstance'.

Stannington – 'Skye Boat Song', 'Drink to me Only', Mozart's 'Sonata', Brahms' 'Lullaby' and 'Welsh Lullaby'.

Ecclesfield U3A – 'Highland Cathedral', 'Pie Jesu', 'Petite Waltz' and 'Pokara Ana'.

Many of these tunes played had a link to the 50th Celebrations from the mention of gold to the teddy bears. Many teams also played the tunes they played at the first rally.

It was great to see some returning faces of people who were part of HRGB in the beginning stages but it was also lovely to see some new faces of people who may be attending their first regional event. So if you are reading this then welcome!!

‘Thank yous’ were made at the end to Hazel and the Ecclesfield team for organising the rally, Claire for bringing the regional sales, the photographers (Andrew and Tom), the ladies in the kitchen who provided a lovely spread of cakes and also to everyone who attended.

Here’s to the next event!!

Thomas Baker
Beverley Town Handbell Ringers

My ‘First Rally’

I was introduced to the wonderful world of handbell ringing a number of years ago but have only had the pleasure of ringing with a team in the last 18 months – Holy Trinity, Sheffield. The Annual Rally at Grassington in May was my 2nd, which meant that I was beginning to recognise faces and knew a little more of the procedure of these rallies and that added to my enjoyment of the day.

The first thing you notice about handbell ringers is their friendliness; they are always ready to help one another out – a number of ringers filled vacant places in teams other than their own.



An appeal had gone out by the Chairman for as many teams as possible to attend this, the North-East Region's 40th Anniversary Rally, so the hall was packed and the organising team are to be congratulated on managing the logistics of fitting in so many teams, ringers and their supporters; it must have been like doing a jig-saw puzzle. Fifteen teams

took part, which, as you can imagine when it came to the massed ringing, great and glorious was the sound. So we heard from the stirring sounds of the teams with the bass bells to the mellifluous sounds of the small teams. Why fitness freaks go to a gym to work out when they could take up ringing bass bells and be equally as fit I cannot understand. The choice of music by each team was interesting, from Beethoven being the favourite on the classical side to more modern, foot tapping rag-time and Gershwin. This, of course, brings out the adaptability of the ringers and the different styles of playing. And here I have to admire the skill of those who transpose the music for handbell ringing.

The wonderful world of handbell ringing is not quite so mysterious to me now as it was when I started those months ago. I don't get that sinking feeling that I am not going to master this skill anymore, so going to the Rally and hearing just what wonderful sounds bellringing can produce spurs me on. When I first started ringing I was told that even if you are already a musician you have to re-programme your mind for handbell ringing. I

have found the co-ordination required to play the bells needs a very different approach, and then we get to thumb damping and malleting – the wonders go on!

Thank you to all at the Rally for a most enjoyable day, especially the ringers of Holy Trinity, Sheffield for helping me enter this world.

Ann Clarke
Holy Trinity (Sheffield)

Handbell Promotion Resources

Members who have attended recent ringing events in the region will have noticed the new promotional display boards on show. The concept of the boards was to give information to members of the public about handbell ringing in the North East and how contact can be made to join a handbell band.



The concept design of the boards was undertaken by the committee and there are now two sets available. The sole purpose is for use by members/teams as a point of interest at recruitment events and concerts.

At a recent committee meeting it was agreed that the two sets should be located centrally in the region and not at Beverley as had previously been the case.

One set is now in the care of Rachel Schoon to whom all enquiries for loan availability should be made. Contact Rachel on r.schoon@talktalk.net

Our second set will be available shortly by contacting Solna Burnham on rnsburnham@talktalk.net

I am always looking for ways to enhance our publicity resources and would welcome ideas from members on how we can develop this aspect of our work.

In the meantime, do take the opportunity borrow the boards and promote handbell ringing and HRGB (NE Region) at your next ringing event.

John Atkinson
Chairman

Ecclesfield to Exeter

It has to be said that in the past a National rally weekend away was something Ecclesfield excelled at. Rollicking late nights in the bar with plenty of ad hoc ringing, thick heads in the morning, but somehow managing to perform as a team the next day. But in recent - OK, probably in many - years, Ecclesfield have said 'pass' when National rallies have been mentioned. 'It's too far', 'It will cost a fortune' (well we are from Yorkshire!). 'I'm busy that weekend'. Getting a minimum ten ringers plus one conductor to commit, months in advance, is like herding cats. Unfortunately the 'old guard' are getting older - and grumpier.

Ecclesfield (with three of our current ringers) had been to the 1st National rally; we rang at the 25th and the 40th; and this was the 50th anniversary rally. The NE had nominated us to represent our region in the concert and our Rosemary was adamant we go. So go, we must.

Eleven ringers, one conductor, five non-ringing partners (they never came in the 'olden' days - we obviously need chaperones now!), eight large bell baskets, 12 tables, eight square metres of foam, etc. etc. Lynne (the nominal 'logistics' manager) needs to sort out how many cars we need. Then we have ringers working Friday - can't leave until later, ringers staying over in Devon - won't be coming back on Sunday, ringers who prefer to go by rail. Arrgh! Start again, we'll hire a van for the bells and equipment and everyone can sort out their own transport.

Somehow we all made it to the right place on Friday night and thankfully the bar was open. The weather was perfect and a barbeque buffet was much appreciated. We had a few drinks with some old friends, bullied our way into some ad hoc ringing, (playing twice as fast as the other ringers - apologies to Rachel who was trying her best to keep some order), and fell into bed when the bar closed.

Saturday morning and the years are beginning to show. 'Which workshop am I at?', 'Where am I going?', 'Up this hill??', Oh come on, you live in Sheffield, that's not a hill. 'What about lunch?'

Well, I managed to find two workshops, an interesting and informative 'music theory' class then a packed room playing 'boom whackers' which was great fun - except my knees hurt afterwards from whacking them a bit too enthusiastically. Emily wants to buy some boom whackers, but what we do with them in Ecclesfield is anyone's guess.

After lunch it was our turn to present a workshop. The bells had been unloaded into the enormous lecture theatre on Friday but we still had to set up in double quick time. The attendees looked a bit sparse in the huge space but we did our best to demonstrate and explain our 'Yorkshire off-table' style of ringing in a very informal way. The atmosphere relaxed and we answered lots of questions from the interested few, and eventually over-ran our time!

Then it was a mad rush, packing up bells and gear, loading it all in a trailer to take to the Great Hall, and setting it all up again for the evening concert. I'm sure our stuff never used to be so heavy? It only just fitted the trailer provided by the SW organisers and I thought we'd never get it out again with all fingers intact. (Thank you to John and Robert Willis and your team for the help.) Unfortunately time ran out and I never made it to the Maori Stick Game workshop.

We just managed a quick coffee before a few of us squashed onto a huge group photo (in the bottom right corner looking like interlopers) and then a dash to the packed dining room in the forlorn hope of getting dinner early so we would have some time to change for the concert.

And so, back to the concert hall.

Paul Scoble, the SW Chairman, resplendent in his Cornish tartan, did an excellent and amusing job as compère.

The programme incorporated ringers from across the regions and covered styles ranging from a soloist to the inevitable regional bell orchestra, and teams from the day's masterclasses demonstrating what they had learned. The 'stand out' team for me was the youth team from Bournemouth, a really talented bunch. Their programme was varied and interesting and they made use of other instruments - including a musical saw. The downside was the ringing looked a bit rushed and 'choppy'. We did suggest afterwards that they might try ringing Yorkshire off-table? I think it fell on stony ground.

As we were representing Yorkshire for our spot in the first half we thought we'd play the traditional march, waltz and tango which seemed to be well received. Not too many nerves, not too many mistakes. Yep, that went as well as we could have expected. At least it was a contrast to the other teams.

Managed a quick drink in the concert hall bar until the bar staff went home, and then staggered off to bed.

Sunday morning was the rally ringing session. At least the bells were where we had left them Saturday night but we had to turn the tables around 180° to face the stage, so no respite from the lifting! The hall was now packed, with hardly a chair's width between tables; luckily no-one shouted 'fire!' It wasn't such a hardship for half the Ecclesfield team to vacate their places so 'orphan' ringers could join in the massed ringing.

When our turn came, we were determined to make the best of our 'six minutes'. Sticking to our recent love affair with TV themes we first lulled the audience with 'Morse' and then belted out 'Ski Sunday' in Olympic record time. Not totally accurately, but it certainly woke them up!

Yes, we actually got cheers.

By lunchtime it was all over. Chuck bells, tables, etc back in the van, lunch if anyone wants it, then back up the motorway or wherever.

Was it worth it? Well, yes of course it was.

The bad bits:

It was expensive.

The makeshift bars with no draught beer.

No central point to congregate on Friday night.

Accommodation a long way from events venues.

The good bits:

Meeting up with old friends - John Partington in particular.

The weather.

The food.

Hazel and John being made 'honorary life members' of HRGB - at last.

The mini bus constantly ferrying people around the campus.

SW committee who organised it all with good humour - especially John Willis who even parcelled up and posted our lost property back after the event.

What stays with me most is how our traditional Yorkshire 'off-table' ringing is losing ground to American 'off-shoulder' style. For all HRGB's aims,



it strikes me that north and south are further apart than ever before. Perhaps it's our fault for not attending more national events. Perhaps we are too parochial. I was amazed at the number of people at the rally who commented on our ringing technique and how unknown it was to them. It was almost as if we were from another planet. One chap from SERBO came over to talk to us and actually said he liked to see 'new' ways of ringing. I had to put him straight - I have been ringing like this for more years than he's been alive! And why has it taken so long for Hazel and John to be recognised for their years of commitment to HRGB? I'm proud of the NE Region. Perhaps it's time we started shouting a bit louder.

Molly Barker
Ecclesfield Handbell Ringers.

50th Anniversary Rally – Exeter 2017



From joining the handbell world in January 2014, this was the third handbell rally that I have attended.

It all started with the drive down from Yorkshire to Exeter and where I was blessed with the weather which made the drive easier. Once I arrived at the university on the Friday afternoon I was greeted by members of HRGB dressed in golden outfits to 'stand out of the crowd'. After being welcomed at the reception desk and finding the accommodation members were left to their own devices until tea time which was a BBQ on the terrace. The evening was presented with two bell orchestras performing in the university's great hall where the highlight of the evening was the performance of 'The Muppets' including audience participation using kazoos.

The Saturday started off with a fabulous breakfast filling me up for the busy day ahead. The members of HRGB gathered in one of the university's lecture theatres for the AGM and the official start of the 50th celebrations. After being welcomed by the chairman of HRGB we started off celebrations by singing 'Happy Birthday'. During this time regional chairmen were presented with the 'Golden Teddy' which would travel around the different regions to celebrate this golden year. During the AGM it was a pleasure to witness two members of the North East region being presented with honorary life membership, John and Hazel. Following this I spent the whole day attending different workshops including handchimes, bells for worship and many more.

The Saturday evening saw many teams taking part in the evening concert showcasing the different styles of ringing from around the country.

During the day on the Sunday saw many teams taking part in the massed ringing and several rally sessions showcasing different genres and styles of music.

All in all it was a fabulous weekend and I'm sure the celebrations will continue throughout the year with several mini-rallies taking place across the regions.

Tom Baker
Beverley Town Handbell Ringers.

'Happy Birthday' from Grassington 2017



Summer Ring, Leeds, 20th June 2017

I have thought about going to this event in the past but have never fancied driving there and back myself, and no-one else in the team has been able to go before. This year, though, three of us from Dronfield were interested in attending. Fortunately my team-mate Rachel is very good at organising things using public transport, so she did all the hard work for us, finding out times and prices of trains, and liaising with Christine Lazenby who found a lovely lady from the Bingley team to pick us up at the local station. Liz ordered and bought the tickets, and I just sat back and enjoyed the whole evening!

We arrived at the church hall to find four rows of tables set up with bells and music – even notes explaining which ringers had to play an extra bell to their normal allocation (and the extra bell was also there).

Tables were set up at the back of the hall with plates of biscuits, and Christine had organised a gang of ladies who were in the kitchen ready to provide us with hot drinks after our journey there. Lovely!

We played a variety of pieces of music, all for 12 bells (plus the occasional extra), and Christine and Roger Lazenby and John Atkinson conducted the music. The music wasn't too demanding for us, and sounded good after a couple of run-throughs.



A lovely buffet meal was provided after an hour's ringing, and I was particularly impressed that there was gluten free food for me, and lots of choice for the vegetarians amongst us. Everyone mingled and chatted over the meal, and then ringing resumed.

The Dronfielders had to leave at 9:45 in order to catch the local train back into Leeds (with another willing helper taking us back to the station), and then the last train back to Sheffield, arriving at 12:01. Our taxi (my husband) was waiting for us and dropped off my two team-mates, so it was a very late night for all of us, but such an enjoyable one.

I know how much time and effort go into organising something like this, and it was certainly well worth the effort! Thanks, Christine and Roger, and John, and all your helpers, for a thoroughly enjoyable evening of summer ringing.

Helen Foley
Dronfield Handbell Ringers

Another successful event was held in Leeds on a summer evening in June. Ringers from all parts of the Region took part in an informal evening of ringing and socialising. In all, 11 teams were represented, a complete cross-section of ringers from the Region – from Dronfield's four-in-hand ringers to Clifton, Beverley and Ecclesfield's long-set Yorkshire style ringers, plus lots in between. There were ringers who had been ringing for over 40 years and others who had only been ringing for a few weeks – and we had a very special visitor in the form of our Golden Jubilee Bear!



There were Whitechapel and Malmark bells, kindly lent by participating teams, plus Belleplates and the Region's handchimes. For one of the tunes ringers were asked to swap to another set of instruments, so chime and Belleplate ringers rang bells, ringers on the Whitechapel sets rang Malmark bells and vice-versa. It may have taken some ringers slightly out of their comfort zone, but everyone participated with good humour.

We used '12 bell music' this year, a change from what has been done previously. Some of the pieces were from the 'Music Hall Favourites' book, published by HRGB plus the 12-bell arrangements of two of the Golden Jubilee competition winners (we shortened these to the first two dances in the 'Dance

Suite' and just had 'Two for the Road') and an arrangement by Margaret Cunnington of the Northallerton Ringers called 'Birthday Celebration', which is going to be distributed to members of the Region.

In addition to the modern conventional music which we are all familiar with, another challenge was waiting for the ringers – a piece written in William Gordon style. It was a fairly simple arrangement of 'Home Sweet Home', originally arranged for four ringers with 15 bells which I had adapted for six ringers, thus keeping the pairings of bells that had been used for the rest of the evening. Each ringer has only the notes that they ring written on the music, so putting it together is a bit like a musical jigsaw puzzle – you can't get an idea of the tune by just looking at the individual parts – you have to put them altogether to get the full picture. Roger, who was conducting this piece, was not entirely happy to be handed six individual parts as the conductor's copy, but it went very well and sounded great. Only a few ringers present had ever rung off this style of music which was so familiar to many of us in the early days of HRGB and would have been familiar to ringers at the beginning of last century. Looking at the originals, tiny writing on small pieces of card, all I can say is they must have had better eyesight than most ringers nowadays!

Thanks are due to the Treble Eight Ringers for the catering, John Atkinson and Roger Lazenby for conducting, Beverley, Bingley, Chevin and Otley Ringers for the loan of bells and to all the ringers who came along and made the evening a success.

Christine Lazenby
Treble Eight Handbell Ringers

'Birthday Celebration' - arr Margaret Cunnington

We were delighted when Margaret Cunnington offered us the opportunity to perform her arrangement of 'Birthday Celebration' at our birthday rallies. The piece was played at the Ecclesfield 50th birthday rally and was a great success. It is proposed that this piece will form part of the massed ringing programme at the other rallies this year and a pdf of the arrangement will be sent to team correspondents very soon. Start rehearsing! And thanks once again to Margaret for her generosity.

John Atkinson
Chariman

Jeffrey Scott Singleton, 1939 – 2017



Jeffrey was born in Sheffield and spent his early life in Dore and Totley. He went to High Storrs Grammar School for Boys, and when he left there at the age of 17 went to work in Town and Country Planning in Barnsley before being called up for National Service. After two years playing with the Queens Dragoons Guards Band he signed up for a further five years in the Army, much of this time being spent in Germany. He played principal oboe, clarinet and saxophone when on concert duty; saxophone in a jazz group; and when on parade played drums on a drum horse!

When he left the Army Jeffrey went to Bretton Hall where he trained to become a secondary Music teacher. He met his wife Anne here, and very quickly signed her up for musical activities – mainly accompanying him when he played the oboe! Jeffrey taught Music for two years in Derbyshire before retraining in Nottingham to become a primary school teacher. He ended his working life as a Headteacher in Nottinghamshire.

He was a very keen musician and early on began to tutor 'lower wind' in the Derbyshire Youth Wind Band. He travelled extensively with the Wind Band, and participated in exchanges with Wind Bands in Israel and France. In the late 90s, Jeffrey took over Amber Bells from Angela Truelove, whom he had first met at Infants School. The team rehearsed in Ashover, a small town in Derbyshire between Chesterfield and Matlock. The original group, consisting mainly of young people from the area, grew in numbers and strength, and added adults, including parents and grandparents of some of the youngsters. With Jeffrey at their helm Amber Bells went on to achieve an excellent reputation in North East Derbyshire. The team played in the concert at York at the NER Rally in 1996.

Jeffrey conducted Amber Bells in many performances in Ashover Parish Church, but also at Chatsworth and in Derby Cathedral. The team also attended the National Rally in Liverpool in 1999.

In April this year Jeffrey was diagnosed with terminal cancer. He organised a concert in Ashover Parish Church on 25th June to celebrate over 20 years of working with Amber Bells. Very sadly Jeffrey's condition deteriorated unexpectedly quickly, and although he was adamant that he would be at the concert, in a wheelchair, he died peacefully the morning before the concert, on 24th June. His wife Anne, one of the ringers, insisted that the concert should go ahead, and the team very bravely performed without Jeffrey, and did him proud.

A Service to celebrate Jeffrey's life took place at Ashover Parish Church on Saturday 8th July and was attended by a huge number of family members, friends and musicians from the many paths of his life. Two of the congregation were musicians from Israel – organisers of the Wind Band that took part in the exchange - and five friends, including Jeffrey's godson Fabien, came over from France, one of them, an ordained minister,

leading much of the service. Information for those attending included Anne's request for bright colours, smiley faces, good singing and no tears, and although there were few dry eyes in the church, it was a wonderfully colourful farewell to a man who has given so much of his life to music, and particularly to Handbells. A collection after the service raised £160, which, together with the retiring collection of £160 following the concert, was sent to Ashgate Hospice in Chesterfield where Jeffrey spent much of the last six weeks of his life.

Jeffrey will be greatly missed by all who knew him.

Helen Foley
Dronfield Handbell Ringers and Amber Bells

Regional Team "Groups"

When planning the 50th anniversary "mini rallies" teams in the region were allocated to one of four areas; **Group 1 (North), Group 2 (East), Group 3 (Central/West) and Group 4 (Sheffield/South)**. The plan was to use these groups specifically as a "one off". Having attended the first of the rallies, in Ecclesfield, it does seem to me that we could adopt these four areas permanently as a means of giving identity to a smaller group of teams in the region.

There may be benefits in organising smaller mini rallies or workshops for the groups whilst not losing sight of the need for larger gatherings, particularly at our spring and autumn rallies.

It may, of course, be that some teams do not "sit" comfortably within the groups at present (travelling distance being a consideration) and that being allocated to another nearby group would be advantageous.

I intend to circulate teams further on this matter through our e-mail listing but, in the meantime, you might wish to discuss within your team whether you feel a move would be of benefit.

As they say – 'stay tuned for more information'

John Atkinson
Chairman

Ryburn Ringers

As well as giving concerts we play for quite a lot of groups for people who are disadvantaged in some way.

I was originally contacted by someone from the local council to play for a group, mainly ladies, who live on their own and are lonely. Since then the number of groups we play for has kept growing by word of mouth: - groups for people with learning difficulties, the local society for the blind, dementia groups, as well as local 'get together' groups, many connected to local churches.

With most of these groups the audience have a go at playing the bells. We have written out the tunes of well known pieces, - such as 'Daisy, Daisy', 'Polly put the kettle on' and some simple Christmas Carols - by their letter names and, with some help, they can play their bell at the right time. Most of these groups ask us to go back two or three times a year as they get such pleasure from playing.

Greta Pilgrim
Ryburn Handbell Ringers

Amber Bells Concert, Sunday 25th June, 2017

Amber Bells was founded in the 1990s, when a group of children from Ashover, a small Derbyshire town near Chesterfield, heard a visiting American team ringing and wanted to learn to play themselves. They began ringing in Amber House, where Angela Truelove led them for several years. When the children would no longer fit into Angela's front room, they moved to the Bassett Rooms, opposite Ashover Church, and Jeffrey Singleton took on the role of conductor. Over the last 20 years the team has grown in numbers and strength and now has three generations of ringers with Jeffrey as their leader and his wife Anne one of the ringers.

A few weeks ago Jeffrey discovered that he was seriously ill, and decided to organise a concert – which would most probably be his last – to celebrate his years with Amber Bells. I have regularly stood in for absent ringers, for both rehearsals and concerts, and Jeffrey asked me if I would ring in the concert. I agreed. He also asked if I would conduct one or two pieces if he wasn't feeling up to it on the day. Again I agreed. But very sadly Jeffrey's health deteriorated rapidly, and I ended up taking all the rehearsals in the run-up to the concert – all the ones, that is, when I was not away, which ended up being only three! Anne led the others, Jeffrey being in hospital by this time.

On the Friday before the concert I went to see Jeffrey. He had only been out of hospital a couple of days and was obviously very poorly. However, he still had that sparkle in his eyes, and he spent a good hour instructing me on tempi and various refinements in the 12 pieces that the team were going to play. He was determined to be at the concert, in a wheelchair, at least for the beginning, and a doctor friend was going to take him home when he had had enough. But sadly, 18 hours later, Jeffrey died peacefully in his sleep, so he never made it in the end.

However, Anne was adamant that the concert would go ahead, and the team were amazing. In spite of the circumstances, they played a full concert, and performed really well. Jeffrey would have been so proud of them. Well done Amber Bells! Music ranged from the team's very first piece to be played in public over 20 years ago – a German Folksong – to modern pieces including 'Phantom of the Opera' and 'Memory' (from 'Cats'), with a number of American pieces interspersed. Some of them were very difficult! An excellent local choir, The New Chamber Choir, sang a selection of songs from different periods, and Amber Bells accompanied them in Karen Lafferty's 'Seek Ye First', a choral version of Pachelbel's 'Canon'. The choirmaster, Paul Hudson, is also a fantastic organist, and the team played Michael Helman's 'Prelude and Passacaglia' with Paul playing the organ. The church was almost full, and there was a retiring collection in aid of Ashgate Hospice in Chesterfield where Jeffrey had spent much of the previous six weeks.

The team has now 'broken up' for the summer, but will start rehearsing again in the autumn. I promised Jeffrey that I would continue to conduct after he'd gone, so a new challenge awaits me later this year. I hope I won't let him down. No pressure then!

Helen Foley

Dronfield Handbell Ringers and Amber Bells!

All items for the next issue of eNEws should be sent to - aford11@aford11.karoo.co.uk.

by 31 Oct 2017

Don't forget, if you are sending pictures out of a newspaper or magazine, you will need to know the name and address of the newspaper or magazine as well as the date of publication.

The views and opinions in letters, reports and articles in this eNEws are those of the writers and are not necessarily shared by the HRGB Executive Committee, North East Region Committee or the Editor.

Forthcoming Events

2017

Saturday 2 September – 50th Regional Birthday Party Rally – Wylam Methodist Church, Wylam - Further details contact christine.lazenby@hrgb.org.uk

Saturday 7 October - Autumn Rally and 50th Anniversary Celebrations -
Further details contact christine.lazenby@hrgb.org.uk

Saturday 28 October – 50th Regional Birthday Party Rally – St Paul's Methodist Church, Sowerby Bridge - Further details contact christine.lazenby@hrgb.org.uk

Saturday 4 November – 50th Regional Birthday Party Rally – Ganton Village Hall, Ganton
Further details contact christine.lazenby@hrgb.org.uk