

Handbell Day, May 2025

Along with my wife Pat, I've been learning to ring handbells for a few years. When the email announcing a planned 'Handbell Day' dropped into our inboxes, it didn't take long for us to decide that we wanted to attend. We filled in the registration form and in due course received details of the day's activities.

The event, organised by the Education Committee, took place in Market Weighton. This is about an hour and a half's drive from our home in Barton, so we travelled the day before, enjoying the lovely Wolds countryside and spending a comfortable night in a very welcoming hotel. In spite of this relaxing introduction to the weekend, we were both feeling a little nervous as we arrived at the venue, unsure what to expect.

We needn't have worried. There was a clear timetable of workshops and practice sessions, with ample break times built in. There were just over twenty attendees, and we saw that we would be ringing with different groups in the course of the day. As we arrived knowing no one else, we were glad to have the opportunity to meet and ring with a goodly number of people.

We were also glad that we had followed the excellent advice of our teachers, Jennie and David Town, and mentioned on our registration forms only those methods that we were confident to ring. While there were some learners present, there were also many people who were much more experienced handbell ringers than us. However, as the venue was a primary school, there were plenty of rooms for groups to use, so that everyone had the opportunity to ring at an appropriate level. I have to say, though, that some of the children's chairs were a little low for my 6'1" frame!

One thing that we both appreciated was the fact that each session involved lots of practice, and any discussion of theory or technique arose out of what happened during the ringing. This meant that the help we received was very focused, and we both picked up some useful tips. To my own surprise, I finished a workshop on treble bob by ringing the tenors to three leads of Kent Minor (more or less, at least!) – a first for me.

Overall, the day was very enjoyable, and we are very grateful to Elaine Scott of the Education Committee for organising it, as well as to all the other people who helped to run the workshops and who were so generous with their time and skills. We are also enormously grateful to David and Jennie for their great expertise and boundless patience – we are so lucky to have them guiding us!