

**Service ringing** took place at both Staindrop at 8.45am and Barnard Castle at 9.45am on most Sundays, apart Palm Sunday in Staindrop.

**Our practices** have continued on Friday afternoons and Monday evenings in Barnard Castle, and on Tuesday evenings in Cotherstone, except during Holy Week.

We have had most of our **Saturday morning practices** in Barnard Castle, thanks to help from Davina when either Caroline or Helen have not been available. Practices take place on alternate Saturdays in Barney and Staindrop now.

The hand bell ringers have a workshop planned in Montalbo School with Year 5 in mid-May.

**Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> March** saw the **Midweek Guild** meeting take place on home territory, starting at Cotherstone and moving onto Barney before lunch in The Golden Lion. Bob, Maureen and Helen joined the group. There was a visitor from Grantham and another from York, both keen to ring at Cotherstone with it's novelty factor clock-case!

On **Friday 20<sup>th</sup> March** there was a wedding at 12noon in Staindrop, with a mixed band of ringers from Kent, Gainford and Staindrop.

Unfortunately, we could not raise a band for the Southern District Striking Competition at Sedgefield on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> March.

On **Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> March** a mixed Barney and Cotherstone band rang after a 3.30pm Blessing.

In **Holy Week** we do not normally ring church bells, but on **Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> April** we held a **bell-handling workshop** at Holy Trinity church in Darlington from 2-4pm with the bells silenced. Christine brought her full-length mirror and this gave all learners the opportunity to review their ringing style! Ringers worked together to improve their technique and Michael rang at his first tower outside Barney. The highlight of the afternoon was when Staindrop learners Brian and Jeremy passed their **Level 1** Learning the Ropes (LtR) assessments! They were absolutely thrilled as they had no idea that this was likely to take place. **Congratulations to Brian and Jeremy!**

**Easter Sunday (5<sup>th</sup> April)** saw Michael ringing for his first Sunday service in Barney-**well done Michael!** The service at Staindrop took place at 4pm and eight ringers gathered to ring from 3.30-4pm. Thank you to everyone who came to ring.

On **Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> April** at Staindrop three prospective ringers arrived to have a go at ringing after Mark put a note on Facebook that was also copied into the Teesdale Mercury.

On **Monday 13<sup>th</sup> April** we had a request to ring **April Day doubles** which was executed very well-well done for taking up the challenge.

On **Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> April** Caroline, Helen P-M, Katherine and Helen travelled to **Chester le-Street** to join the MWG. Bob and Maureen were also there. The eight bells sounded lovely

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and everyone enjoyed the opportunity to ring them before having lunch in The Red Lion at Plawsworth.

On **Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> April** Ellen (from Gainford) passed her **Level 1** Learning the Ropes (LtR) assessment-**congratulations Ellen!**

Later in the day, Helen, Bob and Maureen joined almost sixty other D & N ringers at the **Association AGM** where there was ringing at **Blaydon** (6 bells) and **Newburn** (8 bells). The service at Newburn was well received as was the wonderful tea before the AGM. There was the chance to catch up with friends from across the Association.

As always thank you so much to everyone for all their hard work and support to keep our bells ringing.

Helen