

Service ringing took place at both Staindrop at 8:45am and Barnard Castle at 9:45am on most Sundays.

Our practices have continued on Friday afternoons and Monday evenings in Barnard Castle, and on Tuesday evenings in Cotherstone wherever possible. It has been good to welcome Colin back after his hand surgery, and Mike after his pacemaker being fitted.

We have also had most of our **Saturday morning practices** in Barnard Castle, thanks to help from Davina when either Caroline or Helen have not been available.

Regular practices will hopefully resume in Staindrop in the warmer months. Mark is in the early stages of looking into purchasing a simulator which would enable silent practices to take place.

Our most recent recruits are all doing extremely well: **Michael** has put 2 strokes together and is doing well raising and lowering bells. **Jackie** joined the Barney service ringing band on Christmas Day for the first time and did extremely well. **Brian and Jeremy** (from Staindrop) have started ringing in rounds. Unfortunately, **Patsy** has had to take a month break from ringing to allow a non-ringing shoulder injury to heal.

Wednesday 19th November saw Caroline drive Helen P-M, Helen, Katherine and Beri on a very snowy route to the **Midweek Guild meeting** in Benfieldside and Lanchester. Lunch was in the Kings Head, Lanchester.

On **Friday 28th November** we rang the bells before the switching on of the town **Christmas lights**.

On **Sunday 30th November** we rang before the 4pm **Christingle service**.

On **Wednesday 3rd December** the ringers' tree was decorated by a team of ringers before the opening of the Christmas Tree Festival. The tree looked amazing, well done everyone!



During the **Christmas Tree festival on Saturday 6th December**, the hand bell ringers rang Christmas Carols and Plain Hunt on 8 from 4-5pm. Caroline, Helen P-M, Emma, Fiona and Helen took it in turns, and Pat watched from the pews!

Our tree was de-robed on Monday 8th December and Jackie was the happy recipient of the tree.

On **Wednesday 10th December** Helen, Caroline and Helen P-M joined in with the **Midweek Guild Christmas meeting** with ringing at Heighington followed by lunch and quiz in The Bay Horse.

On **Saturday 13th December** the hand bell ringers took part in the 2pm **Durham Women's Institute Carol Service**. Unfortunately, Caroline, Emma and Katherine were not available on the day but thanks go to Bob and Maureen for stepping in to help us out!

On **Sunday 14th December** we rang a quarter peal before the 3pm Carol Concert in church;

1260 Plain Bob Doubles

1-Lucas Palmer-Frost
2-Helen Piercy-Mycock
3-Davina Tomlinson
4-Caroline Piercy
5-Helen L Scott (C)
6-Simon Froom

Rung before the Christmas Carol concert in church.

To welcome Freddie Dye, Simon and Libby's grandson, born 25.11.25. Congratulations to Helen P-M on being awarded her Masters degree with distinction from the University of York.

On **Tuesday 16th December** the **Cotherstone ringers' Christmas meal** took place in the Fox and Hounds. Cracker pulling, present opening and a quiz (thanks to David) kept us amused before our lovely food arrived. Many thanks to Davina and David for arranging everything, it was such fun.

On **Saturday 20th December** the hand bell ringers were out in force again as they rang during the **candlelit Carols in Whorlton** from 4pm. Fiona, Caroline, Emma and Helen were warmly welcomed into this beautiful setting.

On **Sunday 21st December** we rang before the 7pm **Carol service in Barney**, and on **Christmas Eve** we rang before the 4pm **Crib service**. Many thanks to everyone for turning out again!

Christmas Day dawned and we were able to ring for the **10am service in Staindrop** (Mark, Lucas, Susanna, Katherine, Fiona, Simon and Helen) and the **10.30am service in Barney** (Caroline, Helen P-M, John, Avril, Melissa, Jackie and Ana) thanks to all for making this possible! Special congratulations and thanks to Jackie for her first service ringing-she did not appear nervous, but it can be a very daunting experience when you are a novice ringer. It was also great that Ana was able to ring in Barney briefly before some of the Staindrop band arrived to boost numbers.



On New Year's Eve Caroline and Stan very kindly opened up their home to hold the annual ringers' party from 9pm. Everyone who came along enjoyed plentiful, delicious food, and it was good to spend time chatting in the warmth before making our way to the tower to ring from 11.50pm. The tenor bell tolled 12 times at the strike of midnight and then the other bells joined in to welcome the New Year. Many thanks to Caroline and family for your hospitality and well done to Jackie in particular for ringing at this unusual hour! Thanks also to Peter for joining us in the tower.



The New Year's Eve band.

After service ringing on **Sunday 4th January**, Simon, Caroline, Helen and Pat stayed behind to work on the clapper of the 5th bell which had not been striking properly for several months. With a little help from WD40 the clapper was removed, taken apart, cleaned and replaced. After a trial ring it was obvious that it was so much better without all the grease and gunk! The 6th clapper was also inspected but one issue seemed to be that a fibrous washer was no longer present between the clapper and the bell, so the clapper could not be tightened. We need to source a leather washer!



Later in the day, 32 ringers and partners met at Capri for our now annual '**Christmas' meal**'. It was fantastic to see everyone, especially those that had travelled long distances to be there, despite the threat of snow! Our pre-ordered food was served promptly, and I am sure those present would agree that it was as delicious as ever. All we forgot to do was take a photo! Special thanks to Roger and Rosalind who mopped up the bill....

Friday 9th January saw Katherine successfully ring her first quarter peal on a very cold afternoon:

1260 Plain Bob Doubles

1-Helen Piercy-Mycock

2-Robert Sinclair (C)

3-Helen L Scott

4-Caroline Piercy

5-John Welch

6-Katherine Rhoda

First quarter at first attempt:6

Congratulations to Helen P-M who graduated from the University of York yesterday.

Sending best wishes to Davina's mum for a speedy recovery from her fall today.



Saturday 10th January started early with Caroline having her Level 1 Bell Handling assessment with Michael as her student. Anthea, the assessor, was well wrapped up to observe the early teaching session. Caroline passed the assessment as we all knew she would-congratulations Caroline!

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

Helen