



VOLUNTEERS

Bells by Louise Croombs



LEARNING THE ROPES: Louise at St George's Church.

I don't spend much time thinking about bell ringing or indeed bells, but it is quite fascinating stuff.

Campanology is one of the oldest forms of communication and certainly the most melodic.

When I read in The Tameside Reporter that St George's Church in Hyde was looking for bell ringers it struck me as the perfect thing to do as a volunteer.

A skill that was fun and useful. The only problem is that I have a very big fear of heights. I had once been up a bell tower when I was visiting the Cotswolds and the trip to watch the bell ringers wasn't too bad it was just the trip to the roof.

I remember lying down for most of the time I was meant to be admiring the view.

Despite this, I went to meet Ann on a Monday night and walked into Jen who I'd met at Operation Farm when I volunteered at the allotment. I met the other bell ringers and then we made the assent to the bell ropes.

The steps were a little steep, but thankfully all enclosed and not too many. I reached the little room with ease and sat on a handy bench. The bell ringers prepared the ropes and I watched them ring.

It seemed easy in a way but I feared it was more complicated than it looked.

The ropes went up and down, while Andrew the leader shouted out commands: "Two to three, three to five."

Were they changing the order? Were some bells playing together? It was hard to tell, but the bells were playing a different melody.

When they finished playing, Andrew commented that I must have learnt something from my trip up the bell tower in the Cotswolds because my feet were firmly on the floor. A crossed leg so close to moving ropes could have me hanging from the ceiling by the foot. I think this must have been more of a coincidence than anything else.

I asked how long it takes to learn and Andrew said it depends on the person, but some people had the technique down in six weeks and others it took much longer. I feared I might be in the longer category.

It was now my time to start learning the technique. I had some technical terms under my belt. The end of the rope was the tail and the furry bit you grab is the Sally. My first challenge was to do part of the stroke while

Andrew stood on a box to catch the 'Sally.'

I lifted my hands above my head to bring the rope down again and I was surprised that the rope wasn't heavy.

Andrew said: "You wouldn't be able to ring solidly for five hours if it was," indicating a stone commemorating the mammoth ringing session he was referring to.

After listening to more of the bell ringing with Matthew, a guest bell ringer from St Marks, calling the changes, I tried a different part of the stroke pulling on the Sally and letting go. This time I got to feel the full weight of the bell and find the tipping point of when the bell was about to fall. It was rather like the biting point on a clutch. Again the bell felt much lighter than I thought it would, a combination of a good mechanism, gravity and momentum.

The bells are upright at St George's, as you pull on the Sally the bell falls and rotates nearly 360 degrees and when you catch and pull the tail, the bell swings back to its original position.

After listening to the bells for a final time, we went and had tea and biscuits.

Andrew explained that the calls of 'three to five' were to change the order of the bells to adjust

the melody. I was very surprised to discover that three of the bell ringers were 80 or soon to be in the next couple of years.

They had started bell ringing again at St George's for the Millennium and meet at least every Sunday to ring the bells and practise every Monday evening. Brian and Ann even go on bell ringing trips and holidays to ring bells all over the country. The bell ringers will be ringing on Saturday, May 9, at 11am, as bells will sound across the country to mark VE Day, 70 years on.

There are many churches across Tameside that are in need of bell ringers and I urge you if you have the slightest desire to try it to have a go.

The bell ringers meet at 7.30pm at St George's Church, Hyde, contact Ann on 07816 457653 for further information.

● Louise is challenging herself to try something new every week to find out what people can do to help others in Tameside and why people volunteer. If you have a suggestion of a fresh challenge you can email her on louise@insidetameside.com. For more information about Louise and her challenge visit www.louisecroombs.com or on twitter @louisecroombs

HAIR DOCTOR

Our resident Hair Doctor Rosemary Hodgkinson OGLI, Senior Lecturer and salon owner of Just Hair Salon (33 Broadbottom Road, Mottram, SK14 6JB) is here to answer all of your hair problems and needs with professional tips and ideas.
Email: justhairdoctor@yahoo.com
Twitter: @JustHairDoctor

Q. Dear Hair Doctor,

I've got a one year old and she keeps pulling on my hair to the extent that she actually pulls bits out. The back of my hair now is full of broken bits so when I put my hair up they just hang down and look messy, what can I do?
Fiona, Stalybridge.

A. Dear Fiona,

That must be painful as well as annoying. There are a couple of options you could try, the first being to have it cut. You could go for a shorter bobbed style with choppy layers so you don't notice the broken hairs. If you are not that brave then massage this area, it will soon grow and while you are waiting just pin the little hairs up with grips and a bit of hairspray. Hope this helps.

Q. Dear Hair Doctor,

I'm blonde and my hair seems yellow and golden, but I'd like it more of a white blonde. What would you suggest I do without going to the hairdressers for another colour because I don't really want to put it in worse condition than it's already in?
Ellie, Hadfield.

A. Dear Ellie,

Most salons use colours of a high quality and they wouldn't damage your hair. They would add condition, but if you are talking about bleaching, then yes that would put your hair in bad condition if you continuously do it, but even the bleach products are of high quality and less damaging. If you are still adamant that you won't go to the hairdressers, then purple shampoo would work perfectly, just apply it as a normal shampoo in between each regular shampoo and it should make your hair less golden and brassy.

Tip for the week

I'd recommend every blonde to use purple shampoo in between regular shampooing. This revitalises your blonde looks and gets rid of that golden yellow brassy look. Unless you want that colour of course!

Quote our special discount code

'JUSTHAIR10'
when booking and we will give you
10% OFF
We look forward to hearing from you!

Best of brass



ON SONG: The pupils at St James' Hattersley in their brass band assembly.

Pupils from St James' Hattersley were certainly hitting the right note at their brass band assembly.

The youngsters performed a number of tunes before a packed hall, that left all those in attendance in awe of their ability.

Brass band music is a vital part of the school's curriculum.

Head teacher Jackie Walker said: "I am always proud to be the headteacher at St James' Catholic Primary, but never more so than at our brass band's assembly.

"As we all know, and now research backs us up, making music makes you smarter, so all our children are not only having fun, co-operating with each other and making a beautiful sound, but they are also building their brain power too!"

The pupils start learning the instruments in Year 3.

They start off by learning the cornet, before then progressing on to learn how to play bigger instruments.

Foot tapping folk music

The month-long Buxton Folk in May at the spa town's Opera House continues on Saturday with Altan who are sure to get audiences up on their feet with their Irish reels and jigs.

Celtic Fiddle Festival, three of the finest folk violinists in the country, perform on Sunday, with Merrymouth, led by Ocean Colour Scene songwriter Simon Fowler, entertaining on May 22. They produce a joyful mix of piano, cello, trombone, clarinet,

muted trumpet and double bass.

Buxton Folk in May closes on the 28th, with Songlines Music Award nominated fiddler Emma Sweeney performing songs from her album Pangea. She will be joined in a double bill with Alan Burke former lead singer with Irish band Afterhours.

For more information on all Opera House productions, call the box office on 01298 72190 or book online at www.buxtonoperahouse.org.uk.

Spring fair call

Hyde Chapel in Gee Cross is holding a spring fair on Saturday from 10am until 1pm. Admission is just 20p.

All kinds of goodies will be on offer with light refreshments. For further details call Pat on (0161) 368 7684.

Vintage car show

Hollingworth Festival on the Green takes place on Sunday at Wednesough Green from 11am to 4pm with a vintage car show, craft stalls, rides for children, an RSPCA dog show and more.