

SCACR Northern District: Secretary's Report (2022) – Steph Pendlebury

Whereas 2021 was still significantly impacted by COVID and associated restrictions, 2022 started to look more like a “normal” year for the Northern District. Although we didn't hold a Saturday Gathering in January, the ADM was held in-person at Cowfold in February. We were delighted to have 29 attendees, and to elect 2 new committee members: Kye Leaver and Julie Quinn. Susie Bowen, stepped down from the committee; many thanks to for her support, particularly in booking towers for Monday District practices.

It was clear from tower reports at the ADM (and also the tower captains' meeting in July) that many towers were still struggling for enough ringers for weekly practices or to ring regularly for services, although the situation seemed to have improved for several towers by the end of the year. However, we cannot be complacent – we need to work hard to retain and develop existing ringers, and to recruit and train new ringers. These issues and possible ways to address them were discussed at some length at the 2022 ADM, resulting in a new plan to make better use of the Monday evening District practices. It was agreed that all but the monthly Advanced practices would be discontinued. Instead, Monday evenings could be used by towers to hold partner or “cluster” practices, where local towers join forces.

The District committee organised two series of “focused” Monday evening practices: one for Grandsire Triples (3 sessions for 2 learners, one of whom has now successfully rung a quarter peal), and one on Plain Bob Doubles (3 sessions for 6 learners). From Easter, Monday night District Advanced Practices (Stedman Triples and Surprise/Delight Major upwards) were held on the second Monday of every month.

The committee organised 5 Saturday Gatherings in addition to the ADM, including ringing with pub lunch at Bolney and Rudgwick, ringing with coffee & cake at Slaugham and Slinfold, the AGM at East Grinstead in May, and ringing with mince pies & mulled wine at Lower Beeding in December. Attendance is now back to pre-pandemic levels, with around 20 attendees at the more popular events.

Thanks to the District committee – Julie Quinn (Cuckfield), Kye Leaver (Crawley), Rosie Gregory (Slaugham), Chris Westwood (Hartfield) and Richard Pendlebury (Horsham) – for helping to plan and organise practices and events, and also to Kye for preparing the District newsletter and booking towers for the Advanced Practices.

Our BRF rep, Simon Alford, has provided advice to a few towers over the past year (see his report).

As ever, if Northern District members have requests or suggestions about practices, training, events, or recruitment please do get in touch: sec-north@scacr.org.