

THE ANCIENT ART OF HANDBELLS

Written by Isma

Handbells is an ancient musical art which dates back all the way to the fifth century. You do not have to be able to read music in order to take part and tunes can be recognised with practice. I would encourage fellow students to partake in this unique musical activity because it develops teamwork, confidence, rhythm, timing and flow. All year groups can participate where opportunities are given to attend and perform in concerts throughout the year.

The concerts below outline and give you an insight into what handbells is all about.

Handbells in concert at St Pauls Church Bedford

The East Anglian Regional Team came to Bedford for the first time to deliver a heart-warming performance at St Paul's Church. This took place on Saturday 4th May where people of young and old were thrilled by the amazing talent of the 35 musicians. The pieces were conducted by Aidan Fozard who has been conducting the group for two years. There was an array of small and large bells with some of the large bells weighing a whopping five kilograms! The different pieces varied from 'Scarborough Fair', 'Search with all your heart', 'Stairway to Heaven' and 'How far I'll go.' It was definitely a delight to listen to and lifted the mood to a happy one. To those who enjoy handbells, I would definitely recommend this as it is a great experience to explore the wonders of music.

GA's annual summer concert at Bedford University

The annual summer concert was held at Bedford University's theatre in the evening, where pupils who take part in musical activities at GA, had the opportunity to perform in front of an audience. The pieces ranged from: handbells, solo singing, composing, ukulele, piano, choir, string instruments and the drums. All the pieces that were presented highlighted the musical talents that GA musicians have to offer. Handbells performed *Lord of the Dance*. *Night* was also performed which was created and written by the talented and creative, Raahimah Saeed who has been attending handbells for five years. The atmosphere was jubilant and executing the pieces/music was intense for the ringers, who through practice were able to overcome nerves and deliver a beautiful performance to the audience.

Interview with Mrs Cheeseman:

Mrs Cheeseman is the Handbells teacher at Goldington Academy. She is a hardworking, dedicated music teacher who has been working at the school for numerous years. Below is her interview which details *what handbells is all about*.

Q: How long has handbells been running at Goldington Academy?

A: Handbells has been running at Goldington Academy for 28 years.

Q: Do you feel that handbells is a forgotten art?

A: I do feel that handbells is a forgotten art. However, it is being revived with more schools and National Regional Handbell Ringing teams.

Q: What does handbells involve?

A: Handbells requires enthusiasm, commitment and of course having lots of fun. You start off with playing easier music pieces. Then you go onto learn new techniques and songs that are more complex.

Q: Would you recommend handbells to pupils and if so why?

A: Yes, I would definitely recommend handbells to pupils as it encourages being able to play and work as part of a team, it improves listening skills as well as increasing your confidence.

Q: What are the benefits for students and how can they get involved?

A: The benefits for students include: you make new friends, share a new hobby and it is a fun activity to start the morning with as sessions run before school starts.

If students want to get involved they can contact Mrs Lodder the Head of Creative Arts or myself on a Thursday morning from 8:30 – 9:00 am in the music room.

If you would like to find out more about handbells outside of school or would like to pursue handbells on a regional level head to this website for more information:

<https://www.hrgb.org.uk/>