



The Central Council of Church Bell Ringers Education Committee

Network for Ringing Training (NRT) summary Summer 2004

Welcome to the 'summer' summary of postings to the NRT. To get back up to speed this will be an abridged listing of topics discussed through the summer period. We kick off with poetry; *Andrew Harper* asks if anyone has heard of the quote that goes something along the lines of "church bells, that great English instrument." The reply came back: the opening sentence of the Author's preface to *The History and Art of Change Ringing* by Ernest Morris reads as follows: "Handel has been credited with the statement that the bell is the English national instrument....." In *A multiplicity of Bells An Anthology* compiled by Margaret Pink (a ringer at St Peter's Bexhill-on-Sea) the first extract is from *Akenfield* by Ronald Blythe. It states: "Handel called the bell the English national instrument....."

Explaining Yorkshire, *Heather Peachey* asks, some years ago someone explained the structure of Yorkshire to me in a way that was dependent upon viewing the 'Cambridge front work' as a set of Yorkshire places plus a lead/dodge and which made the progression from 8 to 10 & 12 much more obvious to a learner. Whilst I have my own way of seeing/ringing the method I wish I could recall how this explanation went, as the first of our new generation of learners has just begun to learn YS8. Can anyone help remind me? The answers came back in various forms but all roughly saying - 'dodge one; miss one; places' (or 'miss one; dodge one; places') with the caveat that if you're dodging at the back when you get to 'dodge one' it's always 'dodge two' - not much difference, I know, but it saves struggling to remember whether it's dodge one or dodge two. The Cambridge equivalent is dodge two; miss two; dodge two; places - whichever way you are going! The other rule is that you don't dodge with your course or after bell except on the front and at the back - so if you meet your course bell in, say, 3-4, plain hunt. This is because your course bell will be making 3-4 places, which you have to pass through.

Crambo *Heather Peachey* asked, in J Armiger Trollope's *Stedman* (1938) in the chapter on History, there is reference to Stedman having come up with 2 other Doubles methods prior to Stedman Doubles. One is Orpheus, which is well known, the other is Crambo. Can

anyone shed any light? Crambo can be found on page 117 of *Campanalogia*. Crambo was a popular rhyming game in Stuart times!
Ringing activity related to schools. *John Harrison* wrote, The CC Education Committee is considering ways in which the recruitment, training and retention of young ringers might be enhanced. One way in which this might be done is through some sort of ringing activity related to a school. We anticipate drawing together experiences from where this has been tried, whether successfully or otherwise, and drawing on the lessons of what works, what doesn't, what to avoid, and so on, in order to produce some sort of widely available guidance that could be used by people who otherwise might not think of doing so, but who with the benefit of other people's experience might be willing to try. We know of a few examples, but it would be helpful to know of as many cases as possible where something like this has been tried. If you have such experience, or you can direct me to someone who has, then please let me know. If you have a lengthy reply, then you can send it direct to edchair@cccbr.org.uk. Answers that came back ranged from after school clubs, presentations and a 'quick pull' during the school day to get the interest, joining together of the practices from a number of towers to get the children ringing before dispersing them around local towers, running a session after SATS and before the holidays during the school day, inviting uniformed organisations up the tower for a meeting, running summer schools, plenty of advertising, running a Duke of Edinburgh Award skills session. It was also pointed out that children are tired straight after school and that other clubs/functions must be taken into consideration when organising an event. This led on to:
Young people's practice *Ernie Runciman* asked for suggestions to make a young people's practice a bit more 'fun' and educational. Answers came back were for handbell sessions, kaleidoscope ringing, fish/chip supper, plain hunting with bodies in groups (can be turned into a race or competition), plenty of chocolates!
Teaching control at the balance *Doug Nichols* asked for help with a 'mature' learner having difficulty setting the bell. She cannot ease the bell back being unable to feel the balance

point. She fails to sometimes realise that the bell has bounced back and *Doug* cannot leave her to ring by herself. Ideas to help were getting her to bring the bell from set to the balance and back again, making sure arms are relaxed and maybe moving to a slightly heavier bell, getting her to ring progressively slower to virtually standing at each stroke, finding out just how little pull is required to get a bell to set without applying 'the brakes', setting 10 times continuously hand, back then alternate strokes. Ensuring learners get to learn control of the bell from as early as possible is also very beneficial as is ensuring the learner has the right length of rope.

Methods that can be rung by simple rules

Heather Peachey has a learner who rings only by the blue line and wants any suggestions for methods where you can ring by other 'rules' ie where you pass the treble like DNCB. Ideas that came in were for; Slough Big Bob, Dixons Bob, Double Bob, Primrose, Beverley, Surfleet, Boat Race (Morning Exercise Delight!), Middlesex Triples, Woodbine. If you know the lead ends you still should be OK ringing by the blue line.

Kaleidoscope ringing *Peter Wenham* reported that he has used the first 2 exercises from the KR book with good results. The punters seem to have a better appreciation of moving between places and there has been an overall improvement in striking. Equally important, perhaps, they like the exercises. *Laura Dickerson* replied those learners working on PB might benefit from pieces of work that combine dodges and places. It is easier to strike a dodge that is adjacent to a place than one in the midst of hunting and far less strenuous than a string of dodges together. She would arrange the order to do what 'Lucas' called advanced works before the string of dodging. Something similar to Cambridge places, with a steady person on the 3 and the learner on 4, these two do Cambridge places whilst everyone else rings rounds. Then you can expand to a series of dodges or PB or Treble Bob. Requests came in about the mention of the KR book. This is a Central Council publication, only just published this spring. The England ordering info is from Mrs B Wheeler, 2 Orchard Close Morpeth NE61 1XE 1.50 GBP

Dumb bell *Margaret Perrott* asked for advice on how to build a dumb bell? Answers came back to look at the Docklands Ringing Centre website: the url is <http://www.bellringing.co.uk> or to go to the Longwood Ringing Centre who have just built one. The question was raised that when they look so big and complicated why not just use a clapper stay. Some towers use this method but others pointed out the difficulty sometimes of access plus that the dumb bell could be used to teach whilst normal ringing was going on. It can also be attached to a simulator for even more in depth

NRT summary Summer 2004

practice whilst not interfering with normal ringing.

Aids for Relaxing *Andrew Harper* writes, does anyone have any ideas/tips that I could use to help one of my ringers who is very tense whilst ringing. His inability to relax more leads to poor handling (in particular he has an asymmetric pull as he doesn't pull the handstroke enough), over pulling (a common problem I know) but most importantly, a lack of sufficient 'brain bandwidth' to allow him to think of what he should be doing next, especially at bobs and singles. This latter impact means he takes a long time to learn methods and that in turn knocks his confidence on the end of a rope. Answers came back, demonstrating ringing the bell using your finger tips, showing that with the right pull missing the sally will not break the stay, ringing to below the balance point, making sure he's breathing properly and isn't hunching his shoulders, practising relaxing whilst not ringing and as much rope time as possible all seem to help.

Teaching control at the balance *Andrew Chin* asked whether seeing the bell at balance would help with feeling the bell at balance and wondered whether it was worth setting up a camera and TV to show a ringer setting the bell hand and back then getting the learner to try to copy what he saw. The replies came back that although it wasn't proved to help with feel it is a useful exercise and towers were setting up permanent video links to their bells reasonably cheaply. Other factors that would help would be to make sure the backstroke length is exactly right, since too long or too short affects how it feels.

Striking workshop A request was made for ideas how to run a striking workshop, replies were; Listening to pre recorded ringing, counting and timing (clapping to the striking of a bell).

Ring up and down *Jennie Paul* asked a similar question for an up and down workshop. The replies came back, plenty of helpers, one to one tuition, in the first instance only ring one third of the way up or down to get the coils right, less exhausting than ringing completely both ways. When ringing in peal keep to only 4 or 5 bells to start with. When teaching leading down, listen to the tenor.

Methods treble hunting to 4ths place *Caroline Stevens* asked, Rather than jumping from R&C to plain hunt on 5 or 6 we are trying it in stages. With our learner on the treble, hunting to 2nds place we rang Bastow Doubles. Then we progressed to Ashford Little Court (treble hunts to 3rds place); all is going well so far and he is ready for the next stage. Does anyone know of a Doubles method where the treble hunts to 4ths place? We would rather not ring Bob Minimus as looking around at all five bells we feel is more helpful and he is coping with this so far and we would rather not ring Little Bob Minor at this stage, as the tenor

behind is quite useful too. Answers came back: Little Bob Doubles, Grandsire singles or working bells: plain hunt, except if treble takes you from lead make 4 blows behind. Round in 4 leads for 32 changes. Can be extended to 8 leads by using either a PB bob or an Old single (2nds and 3rds places made) as a single (call one at any lead end, repeat the block of 4 leads).

This is a brief round up of the summer postings. If you would like any greater detail, please contact me at the address below.

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