



The Central Council of Church Bell Ringers Education Committee

Network for Ringing Training (NRT) summary Dec 2005 to Feb 2006

District Training Plan

Nick Smith asked for advice on activities to be included in a District (or Branch) Training Plan.

John Harrison suggested there were two approaches - you can pick a topic, pick a date, plan an event, advertise it and hope enough (and not too many) people sign up.

The alternative, which his branch had found very successful, was to - Circulate a list of topics to all members, asking them to say which they are interested in, and to give you a phone number. Collate them and you can see the demand for each topic. Allocate a tutor for each topic with enough people interested, and give him/her the list of names and phone numbers. He/she fixes a mutually convenient date and place with the participants. If helpers are required, (s)he fixes them too. Some topics attract enough interest for more than one course, so you keep going until you run out of people.

Most other participants were in broad agreement with John.

Alistair Donaldson suggested they -Set a regular monthly date for a rough ability level, and then offer a range of topics targeted at that group. I have in mind 'Beginners' : Handling up to PB and Grandsire Doubles, 'Intermediate' : Little Bob Minor up to Surprise Minor; 'Advanced' : Stedman, Major and onwards. Sometimes it helps all participants to 'book' a diary date some time ahead.

Some time later Nick Smith replied thanking respondents. They had designed a questionnaire which can be found at <http://www.cambridgeringing.info/>

Pudsey Pattern

Raymond Kefford asked for help with understanding a pattern in Pudsey Surprise Major.

Usually I can start to make sense of a method when I see the pattern in the movement of the ropes. He had tried to relate it to Yorkshire but could see a closer resemblance to Cambridge.

Simon Linford replied - You are right in suspecting the link with Cambridge. The link is that Pudsey on all numbers is Cambridge below the treble, and Cambridge on two less bells above the bell that is 3rds place bell (i.e. the bell that is treble bob hunting two blows higher than the treble). So on 8 it is Cambridge Minor above 3rds place bell (imagining that 3rds place bell is the treble). It isn't necessarily straightforward ringing it that way if you can't pick out the bell that is 3rds place bell, but it should help you see the structure.

Any suggestions (for ideas about an after school Bell Club)

Peter Dale said he had been asked to start a Bell Club at a Primary School. They had tried carols on handbells but then the Christmas holidays had intervened and he was looking for ideas to keep the children's interest.

Peter Sotheran suggested tunes on handbells using alpha notation and gave some tunes they could try.

As regards change-ringing, there are such activities as 'lapping' the bells on the carpet or having the ringers, with one bell each, physically swapping places in a line or circle at each successive row or change.

Catherine Lewis asked Do you want to keep as much to do with real ringing as we know it in your curriculum? Or just amuse them with a loose ringing connection?

She wondered about a short course for a limited number of children and thought topics could include a visit to a local tower, a demonstration of ringing, call changes on handbells, explaining muffles and muffled ringing and squared paper exercise such as writing out plain hunt.

Dry Ropes

Martin Mansley described a problem with dry ropes. It is cold, dry and frosty and we all had difficulty gripping the ropes. They felt dry and slippery both on the sally and the tailend - the less experienced ringers and learners had the worst difficulty and it affected their concentration and ability to strike accurately.

John Harrison had suffered from the same problem and offered some suggestions-

- 1 - Replace the tailends with thicker and/or rougher rope.
- 2 - Do something to the tailends that makes the surface rougher.
- 3 - Encourage everyone not to over pull, since the less you pull, the less tightly you need to grip the rope.
- 4 - Wear long sleeves or chopped off socks around the wrists. If the hands are warmer, they are more likely to generate a little moisture to stop the skin going shiny.

Laura Dickerson from Boston, Mass suggeste d- applying something to one's hands when this happens. We use a commercially available hand lotion called Corn Huskers Lotion that makes our hands a little sticky (for a while) but doesn't seem to discolour the ropes or make *them* sticky. *The main ingredient was glycerine and she knew that some people use it plain but they had found the lotion very effective.*

Several people mentioned (with distaste!) the old habit of spitting on ropes. Michael Barnicott felt that breathing heavily on the palms was more socially acceptable.

Joan Kemp in Glasgow - We have found a useful solution to be rock-climbing powder (??French chalk?) - available from most climbing shops such as Tiso's. You just rub a bit of the chalk ball onto your hands to improve the grip. It is reasonably effective, cheap, and doesn't damage bell ropes and is now a permanent part of our tower kit.

Some correspondents discussed the opposite problem of wet ropes and described a 'light bulb under a drainpipe' where the tailends are gathered into a pipe with a low wattage lighting device (several were described) to keep them dry in wet weather.

Working towards Badges

Jason Carter- I am teaching two girls who are in the Girls' Brigade. I asked them whether there is a badge that they can work towards. They have told me there is but were vague about any particular criteria. Any experience anyone please?

Heather Peachey wrote that the Girls' Brigade encourages members to work towards the D of E award. More details on CC website <http://www.cccbr.org.uk/edc/young.php>

The Girls' Brigade also feature the 'Queens Award' for girls aged 15-21; try <http://www.girlsbrigade.org.uk/> (Ed. This is an updated link as the one given at the time did not seem to work)

Others suggested the Pam Copson Bell Club.

Disabled Recruit

Catherine Lewis - A local inexperienced tower captain has asked for help when she next has a learner, because she has never taught a beginner before. The only volunteer she has had has no legs. Apparently she has artificial ones and has climbed mountains.

She asked for others' experiences.

Ian Broster felt provided that the person can stand unaided for about 5 mins, and that there is suitable access to the tower then there are no major problems.

Fred Bone agreed - I would suggest inviting her to observe a practice (either at the tower in question or elsewhere) and then letting her make up her own mind whether she's physically up to it.

Following this thread Fred Bone asked about

Another Disability Problem

I have a learner who has grip problems. She had polio as a child, and as a result both her thumbs are very weak and at an abnormal angle (first joint cocked towards the back of the hand). Consequently she finds it very difficult to retain the tailend in the conventional 'crook of the thumb' position. The tail tends to slip, which she counteracts by gripping with the two smallest fingers. This of course translates to a 'wrong' sally grip. Nonetheless we've got as far as quite respectable rounds, but I'm worried that once we start trying to change places there may be insufficient grip for clean speed changes.... any suggestions?

Frank Seabright suggested special cotton gloves, which have a thin rough rubber like surface on the palm side which are used for safety reasons where grip is essential. This may give an extra grip with the fingers and thus make things easier. Worth a try! Usually obtainable from work safety clothes shops

Tim - Have you tried using an elastic band to strap the tail to the inside of the wrist? It should hold the tail in the correct place but allow it to pull out if needed. Not ideal as it makes it difficult to adjust the tail in hand but might be a good starting point.

One of the correspondents about disabled ringing had describe teaching a blind recruit and said some stages of learning had to be modified to suit him - e.g. we skipped the sally only stage and went straight onto both strokes as he found it difficult to work out when the sally was coming down - as soon as he started ringing both strokes he was aware exactly when the sally would arrive.

This led to the thread

Sally Only

John Harrison

The use of sally-only practice is questionable anyway. Doing single pull-off is helpful for making sure of the release, but standing there doing purely visual repeated sally catching does not in my view contribute usefully towards two-stroke ringing, and in fact delays it . . . getting the the handstroke right is about timing, and the sooner the learner can experience a two-stroke rhythm in the hand movement the better. Building the handstroke out of the backstroke (as described in Richard Pargeter's book, *One Way to Teach Bell Handling*, CC Publication) is better than teaching it in isolation.

Philip Dunn agreed but - the next stage of pulling the sally and then taking hold of the tailend with both hands is a move which some learners find difficult to master, and which is often overlooked by tutors!

John Harrison again - Agreed entirely. I teach that on a dead rope, as well as concentrating on getting it right on a live bell. (See *The Tower Handbook* p167 for detailed description.)