

# Ringing Round Leicestershire

## *Newsletter of the Leicester Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers*

July 2026 : Issue 70

### Contents

President's Message	Page 2
Firsts From Bellboard	Pages 2 - 3
New Members at Cosby	Page 3
Upcoming Events	Page 4
Helpers Needed	Page 5
Alan Jacques Award Nominations Open	Page 5
A Minor Followed by a Major Surprise	Page 5
From Learning the Ropes to New Challenges	Page 6
From the Districts	Page 6
LDG @80 Ceilidh	Page 7
Memories of Harold J Poole	Page 8
Let's Sort This Striking Out!	Pages 9 - 11

### Welcome to the July 2026 issue of the Guild Newsletter

We've entered that time of year when rising temperatures see all sorts of fans and cooling devices being brought out of storage in into the ringing room. It is also that time when the education committee are sending out requests – for helpers for the September ringing course, and also for nominations for the Alan Jacques Award. Both very worthy causes, on the one hand helping the newer members of our community, and on the other recognising those who week in and week out are the ones who are doing that helping.

We hear from John Bennett, a regular contributor to this newsletter with his reminiscences of local ringers of the past, who recently celebrated his

80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of ringing.

Good luck to our young ringers, the Foundry Foxes, off to Nottingham today for the Ringing World National Youth Striking Contest. And for those of you wanting to improve on your striking, we have the first part of an article discussing that.

*Rebecca Banner*  
[newsletter@leicesterdg.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@leicesterdg.org.uk)



# President's Message

Welcome to the July 2026 LDG Newsletter. At the time of writing, it is currently 29 degrees outside so it feels like the summer has arrived.

Many thanks to those of you who attended the LDG Ceilidh in June, it was a great night, many thanks to Annette Tudor-Brown for organising the event - I'm still eating left over sausage rolls.

We are moving ahead slowly with splitting the Syston District between its neighbour's - apologies for the delays - our General Secretary has been battling with some GDPR issues around this, which I hope are now resolved. The aim is to have the work completed before the AGM in October.

Coming up we have the major event of the Education Committee's year with the LDG 2026 Ringing Course at Copt Oak. This will take place from the 18th to 20th of September and hopefully those of you who are

interested in attending the course will have submitted your expressions of interest. The committee will now put together the structure of the course and as always they will need helpers and instructors so please help out if you can. Good luck to Jez / Mark and the team in running this.

Just a reminder that Nicky and Dave Carling have kindly taken up the challenge of running the 'LDG@80 Ringing Focus month' in October where we will try to get as many 'firsts' in things like methods, quarter peals, conducting etc which will be rolled up into an article for the Ringing World. Anyone who wants to should be able to pick a personal goal for this, get their achievement logged on bell board and entered into the article.

*Pete Brown*  
LDG President

## Firsts from Bellboard

### Quarter Peals

#### First Quarter Peal

**Jo Perry** ringing tenor cover to Plain Bob Doubles at Ab Kettleby on 30th May

#### First away from cover

**Edward Bunney** ringing treble to Plain Bob Minor at Aylestone on 29th April

**Sophie Haynes** ringing treble to Plain Bob Doubles at St Mary de Castro on 6th May

**Sarah Hale** ringing treble to Plain Bob Doubles at Packington on 18th May

#### First inside

**Kath Eastwood-Paramore** ringing Grandsire Doubles at Barrow Upon Soar on 5th April

**Alex Hopwood** ringing Plain Bob Doubles at Wanlip on 24th May

**Emma Lovegrove** ringing Plain Bob Doubles at Ab Kettleby on 30th May

#### First in Method / Variation

**Andrew Boston** and **Richard Thomas** ringing April Day Doubles at Wymeswold on 6th April

**Mike Knowles** ringing April Day Doubles at Packington on 13th April

Whole band ringing Jotunheimen S Minor at Croft on 19th April

Whole band ringing Allendale S Minor at Cosby on 19th April

**Andrew Boston** and **Luke Marsden** ringing Cambridge

S Minor at Wanlip on 26th April

**Rebecca Banner** and **Mark Banner** ringing Wearmouth and Lightfoot S Minor at the Bellfoundry on 20th May

**Jethro Woolley** ringing Lincolnshire S Major at the Bellfoundry on 27th May

**Liz Wright**, **Jane Boyd** and **Sam Orton** ringing Cambridge S Minor at Aylestone on 27th May

**Jeremy Bowman** ringing Yorkshire S Major at the Bellfoundry on 3rd June

**Chris Swain-Phipps** ringing Norwich S Minor at Oadby on 6th June

**Keira Boylan** ringing Yorkshire S Royal at St Mary de Castro on 6th June

**Judith Godfrey**, **Alex Johnson**, **Alison Godfrey**, **Martin Jones**, **Rebecca Banner** and **Mark Banner** ringing Norwich S Major at the Bellfoundry on 10th June  
Whole band ringing Quornden S Major at Church Langton on 14th June

**Keira Boylan** ringing Stedman Cinques at St Margarets on 26th June

#### First of Minor

**Jonathan Seymour** ringing Plain Bob Minor at Lubenham on 7th June

#### First of Treble Bob

**Sam Baker** ringing treble to Cambridge S Minor at Aylestone on 27th May

#### First on 8

**Carl Bullingham** ringing treble to Plain Bob Triples at the Cathedral on 10th May

**Geordan Boylan** ringing tenor cover to Grandsire Triples at St Mary de Castro on 18th May

## First of Major

**Pete Brown** ringing Cambridge S Major at Kibworth Beauchamp on 7th May

## First of Eight Spliced

**Keira Boylan** at Ashby Folville on 1st May

## First on 10

**Karen Allen** ringing treble to Grandsire Caters at St Mary de Castro on 6th June

## First of Treble Bob on 10

**Karen Allen** ringing treble to Yorkshire S Royal at St Mary de Castro on 6th June

## First of Spliced Royal

**Rebecca Bullingham** and **Dexter Deakes** ringing 2 spliced at St Mary de Castro on 7th June

## First inside on 12

**Keira Boylan** ringing Yorkshire S Maximus at the Cathedral on 18th April

## First of Maximus

**Joseph Blake** ringing Cambridge S Maximus at the Cathedral on 23rd May

## First of Maximus as Conductor

**Dexter Deakes** ringing Cambridge S Maximus at the Cathedral on 23rd May

## Peals

### First of Surprise inside

**Jeremy Bowman** ringing Cambridge S Major At Oaks in Charnwood on 14th April

### First in Method

**Jeremy Bowman** ringing Lincolnshire S Major at Barrow Upon Soar on 8th May

## Handbell Quarter Peals

### First in Method

**Tim Peverett** and **Alison Godfrey** ringing Demi-Bristol Alliance Minimus on 8th April

**Tim Peverett** and **Alison Godfrey** ringing Zelston Treble Bob Minimus on 8th April

Whole band ringing St Nicholas College Bob Minor on 15th April

**Alison Godfrey** ringing Buxton Bob Minor on 15th April  
Whole band ringing York S Minor on 22nd June

### First blows of Surprise Royal in hand

**Alison Godfrey, Alistair A F Smith, Robert Watson, Judith Godfrey** ringing Yorkshire S Royal on 20th April

### First of Surprise Royal in hand as conductor

**Tim Peverett** ringing Yorkshire S Royal on 20th April

### First as conductor with two working bells

**Judith Godfrey** ringing Plain bob Minor on 22nd April

### First of Major as conductor in hand

**Judith Godfrey** ringing Plain bob Major on 13th May

### Methods named

St Andrew Bob Major on 12th April

Offen Slow Bob Major on 4th May

Lola's Treat Alliance Major, and Leconfield Alliance Major on 29th June

## General Ringing

### First Wedding ringing

**Vivienne Scott, Louise Cross, Summer Stilling and Sophie M Haynes** at Cosby on 27th June

## New Members at Cosby

The band at Cosby is going from strength to strength. Three members of the band were recently admitted as members of the Guild. L to R are Vivienne Scott, John Scott and Sophie Haynes proudly holding their certificates in front of Saint Michael and all angels Cosby, their home tower.

Keep up to date with this thriving new band via their facebook page, in particular J's Fun Fact Friday!  
<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61578516965583>





# Quarterly Social

## Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> July 2026

15:30 to 16:30 Ringing at Syston

17:00 to 18:00 Ringing at Queniborough

18:30 meal at pub in Queniborough

*Numbers by 12<sup>th</sup> July please.*

To book email: Peter Brown

melton@leicester dg.org.uk

# Helpers Needed for the Leicester Guild Ringing Course 18th–20th September

We're looking for volunteers to help support our ringing course taking place 18th–20th September at churches around the Copt Oak area.

There will be 5 groups, with each group attending 4 sessions over the course of the weekend. We'd love to have experienced ringers available to support the sessions, encourage the learners, and help make the weekend run smoothly.

Whether you can help with one session or several, every bit of support is greatly appreciated.



Please let us know your availability by completing this short form:

[https://form.jotform.com/education\\_education853/helpers-form-2026](https://form.jotform.com/education_education853/helpers-form-2026)

Thank you for supporting the Guild and helping us provide a fantastic learning experience for our course participants.

## Alan Jacques Award Nominations

Call for Nominations – The Alan Jacques Award 2026

Do you know someone whose positivity, encouragement, leadership, support, or quiet dedication has made a real difference within your tower?

The Alan Jacques Award is presented annually to recognise an individual whose presence has had a positive impact on their tower and the wider band.

Nominations are now open!

Deadline: 20th July 2026

Each tower is invited to nominate someone who embodies these values. The winner will be selected by the LDG E&R Committee and announced at the Guild AGM, where the award will be presented.

Questions? Contact:  
[education@leicesterdg.org.uk](mailto:education@leicesterdg.org.uk)

Submit your nomination here:  
[https://form.jotform.com/education\\_education853/alan-jacques-award-2026](https://form.jotform.com/education_education853/alan-jacques-award-2026)



Please help us celebrate those who make ringing such a welcoming and supportive community.

## A Minor followed by a Major Surprise

The Minor Surprise was a quarter peal of Netherseal Surprise Minor rung at Gedney on Friday, April 24 by Valerie Wild, Joanne Pearson, Robert Simpson, Luke Tobin, Anthony Walker and Barry Jones who conducted the 1296 changes of this method. Rita and I sat in the church and listened to 47 minutes of excellently struck ringing before entertaining the band to lemon drizzle cake plus a few glasses of wine. It was 80 years since I learned to ring at All Saints Church, Leicester and the quarter was rung as a compliment to me. My thanks to the band. It was a pleasure to listen to your ringing.

The major surprise occurred at our usual Gedney Tuesday evening practice, April 28. Arriving at the church I heard some of our bells already ringing. "What on earth is going on", I muttered as entering the south door I was welcomed by Laurence, members of our band; Gedney PCC., plus two tables loaded with sausage rolls, sausages, canapes, cakes. What a feast and what a marvellous surprise. Good heavens, visiting ringers, my son Stephen with his wife Julie, and Eric Roberts from Thornton, Leicestershire, who in 1957 as a 12 year old school boy I taught to ring at Cosby. Also invited was BBC Look North Reporter, Gemma Dawson accompanied by her cameraman. After interviewing me I persuaded Gemma to try her hand which guided by Terry and me she readily accepted. "If only Rita was here" I said, as Gemma rang backstroke on No 2 Bell. "She is", answered Angela looking down into the church. Sure enough my wife had been secretly brought to the church by Laurence and came up into the ringing room where an emotional hug and kiss made my day! Following a course of Cambridge Surprise Minor we lowered the bells and with our glasses charged William spoke a few words mentioning my persistence in persuading Gedney PCC to spend some £20,000 remedial work on our bells. "They were installed some 100 years ago" he said, "and hopefully they now should be in good order for the next 100 or so, not," he added with a smile, "that we would be around to see."

I was presented with an inscribed glass paper weight carrying the inscription "Presented to John Bennett, 80 years Bell Ringing, 1946 to 2026", a "Bell Ringing" drinking mug, a bottle of wine from friends Debra and Peter, a £50 voucher for wine from Majestic and a Ringers Note Book. Rita was presented with a lovely bouquet of flowers as a tribute to her sustained efforts in baking cakes which over several years have been enjoyed after just about every Gedney practice. My thanks to Laurence, Christine, Janice and all who contributed to what for me, was indeed a Major Surprise, totally unexpected and a most enjoyable evening.

*John Bennett*

# From Learning the Ropes to New Challenges

Back in 2023, I joined a cohort of learners embarking on the challenging journey of learning to handle a bell, with the aim of becoming a useful church bellringer. My home tower at Holy Trinity, Barrow upon Soar, had just begun using the ART (Association of Ringing Teachers) Learning the Ropes scheme, making us the first group to progress through the new programme. As many readers will know, the scheme is divided into five stages, each introducing new skills, from safe bell handling through to the completion of six quarter peals.

I completed the fifth and final stage in May 2025. Those who finish the scheme are invited to attend a day of tailored ringing designed to stretch and develop their skills further, so at the end of April this year I travelled to Birmingham to take part in the ART Learning the Ropes Masterclass.

I was placed in a group led by Simon Linford, a highly respected figure in the ringing world. Each participant was paired with an experienced mentor who provided continual guidance and encouragement throughout the day, helping us tackle increasingly demanding ringing on higher numbers of bells and more complex methods. Over the course of five hours of ringing, my group visited St Paul's in Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter, Birmingham Cathedral, and St Martin's in the Bullring.

The challenges came thick and fast: Cambridge Royal, my first touches of spliced Surprise Major (Cambridge, Yorkshire, Superlative and Bristol), Littleport Little Maximus, Stedman Caters, and much more. I rounded off the day covering the mighty 39 cwt tenor — bell 16 — at St Martin's. At just under two tons, it is the heaviest full-circle bell I have rung to date.

The evening provided an opportunity to relax over dinner and meet fellow ringers from across the country, all at a similar stage in their ringing journey. One thing that struck me was just how fortunate we are in Leicestershire to have such a strong community of experienced ringers willing to support those developing skills in what Simon Linford affectionately refers to as the "red zone" of ringing. For many ringers elsewhere, opportunities to ring spliced Surprise Major or to gain experience on ten and twelve bells involve long journeys to infrequent and busy practices, often for the chance to ring just a single course of a method. I came away feeling especially grateful that I could return home and continue building on what I had learned at local practices.

An encouraging discovery during the evening was that the ART scheme seems to inspire not only new ringers, but new teachers as well. Like me, many of those attending had gone on to become ART-accredited bellringing teachers, helping to nurture the next generation of ringers and pass on a pastime that is such an important part of our cultural and church heritage.

The masterclass capped an already memorable week. Just a few days earlier, I had rung inside for the first time in a peal of Cambridge Surprise Major — my third

peal. I have since added a fourth, ringing Lincolnshire Surprise Major at Holy Trinity at the beginning of May. The April peal, however, was much more than another personal milestone. It was the first peal on the newly refurbished bells and new ropes at Oaks in Charnwood, and it was rung in memory of Richard Brown, the tower's former captain. I had the privilege of knowing Richard during my early days as a ringer. He was an exceptionally accomplished bellringer, but even more importantly, someone with a genuine passion for encouraging and developing others — a quality for which he will undoubtedly be most remembered.

Richard's ashes were interred in the churchyard earlier that same day, so there was a real sense of occasion and, inevitably, some pressure to score the peal successfully. Thankfully, it proved to be a solid performance, expertly conducted by Sally Brown, and was completed in a brisk two hours and forty minutes. It was a privilege to have been invited to take part, and I'm pleased to have rung as well as I did. Much of the progress I have made over the past three years is thanks to Sally's outstanding teaching and her constant encouragement to keep learning, improving, and embracing new challenges.

*Jez Bowman*

## From The Districts

### Melton District

Melton District has had 3 meetings this quarter, the first was slightly out of District at Hickling where we had a good turn out and enjoyed ringing the 8 bells there. Our May meeting at Saltby (which normally attracts an excellent turn-out) was so poorly attended it was abandoned and the Somerby meeting was only a bit better with 7 (briefly 8) of us turning up although we had some nice ringing especially from David Wicks who had an excellent couple of courses of St Simons which he has been learning for the past few months.

I hope that attendance increases again soon and our regulars and new members come along. The monthly meetings do take some organising and are there for the benefit of all our members so there is always a good range of ringing to support development.

In early June within our South Croxton/Burrough Benefices, we were asked to run another end of term School Activity session, this time at Great Dalby with the year 11's. We had 18 children visit the church to learn about the bells and the history of bellringing. They all had a go at chiming the lighter bells, sketched a picture of our model bell and then ring basic tunes on a set of 'easy to ring' handbells (courtesy of 'Amazon'). The teachers reported back that the kids had had a great time and the hope is that this increases awareness and interest in the church and the bells in our local communities.

The next LDG Melton District meetings are Ashby Folville - 18th July, Twyford - 15th August and Long Clawson - 19th September. All meetings start at 7pm and everyone is welcome.

*Pete Brown*  
*Melton District Secretary*

## LDG@80 Ceilidh.

June 6th saw 59 of us turning up at the St Peter's Centre Oadby for the LDG@80 Ceilidh social and what a fun evening it was. After a quick welcome and introduction from the President, Peter Brown, no encouragement was needed to get people up for the first dance, everyone just piled in for the "Gay Gordons". Our callers, Gordon & Jen from "Ceilidh Noches" were very impressed at how well everyone took to the dancing and followed the instructions. It was suggested that as bellringers we were used to someone 'conducting' and just did as we were told.



After four dances, the half-time break was an opportunity to re-fuel on cobs, pork pie, sausage rolls and other snacks and catch up with friends. The raffle, run by Sally Brown, had plenty of great prizes donated including a 'Tour of Taylors' kindly donated by the Loughborough Bell Foundry.

On to the second segment of dancing and the food had obviously done its job as there was no let up in enthusiasm, we had a full floor for all the dances again. The evening eventually ended with a rousing chorus of "auld lang syne" which although we usually associate with New Year/Hogmanay, it is also a traditional 'farewell' song to mark the end of events.

As we wandered off into the warm early summer evening, (via the merchandise table that Sally had kindly brought with her), the BRF was £153 better off from the proceeds of the raffle and the general fund increased by £134 as the surplus on the evening!

Huge thanks to all of you who supported this event and made it such a success.

Many thanks also to Andrew Young who helped secure the venue at 'mates rates' and organised the handy parking, and to Peter Brown for helping me set up the hall and make all the cobs!

Gordon & Jen said they had a great evening and would be happy to do again so watch this space.....

*Annette Tudor-Brown*



# Memories of Harold J Poole

I was inspired to write these few words after reading Gary Mason's article about the peal of Bristol Maximus rung at the Cathedral on Monday, May 22nd 1950. From the month of May 1946, until Harold's unfortunate passing in 1955 I saw quite a lot of him participating in 63 peals, mostly conducted by him. He was a remarkable character, tall and imposing with an authoritative manner of expressing himself, a good orator and public speaker who could get things done. This he did and during those years inspired and led the Leicester Cathedral band, at the time without doubt the leading maximus band in the country. Heavens how time has flown as it is now 70 years since his passing. I can think only of Winifred Warwick and myself, still alive who knew and had the pleasure of ringing with him.



Of the peals I rang with him one or two remain in memory eg 5040 Yorkshire Royal rung at St Pauls Bedford on Monday September 29th 1952 by a Leicester band. Some well remembered names took part, Jill Staniforth, Alf Ballard, Mrs H J Poole, Harry Poyner, Harry Wayne, Alan Jacques, myself, John Smith, Peter Staniforth and HJP conducting from the tenor. Unfortunately it was not a really good peal, no mistakes but we never settled down to first class striking. The other occasion was one of Bristol at Claybrooke rung on Friday, May 23rd 1952. My pal in those years, Terry Thornber, rang No 7 with myself on No 3 and HJP conducting from No 2. It was the only occasion I ever noticed HJP make a mistake, a slight trip which he immediately corrected, his facial expression remaining impassive. I dare not look at Terry, nor him at me because we "both knew that he knew that we knew" . We would have been in trouble had we made a mistake. We had such a laugh afterwards.

The rendezvous before peals was often Leicester City Police Headquarters, then at the southern end of Charles Street. We were instructed by Harold "Be at Headquarters 6 o'clock- don't be late". He would

emerge from a side door, into his car and off we went for the peal. He was certainly a stickler for good striking and oh dear, if any one ruined a roll up? Terry recalled such an occasion ringing Maximus at the Cathedral when some poor unfortunate badly timed his bell during a roll up, provoking an irritated growl from HJP, " now listen carefully, there are no dotted notes in bell ringing, the stuff's not worth ringing without good roll ups".

He had an excellent musical ear. I recall a few of us being invited to a social function at "Headquarters" where we saw HJP plus a group of policemen bobbing up and down on the stage while singing that Gilbertian number, "A policeman's lot is not a happy one" Also at Blakeshays Farm in May 1952, an enjoyable evening with a group of friends where accompanying himself on the piano he sang a ditty in which there was a verse about each one of us. He was good on the dance floor and I recall our going to and enjoying country dances at various Leicestershire villages though how he found time for activities other than ringing, heaven knows? His peals, 143 of them in 1949 must have occupied most of his free time.

On another occasion he invited Terry and I to observe him prosecuting at a Leicester Court, in those days held in the Town Hall. He installed us, not in the public gallery but in the well of the court where we saw him in action. Quite an experience.

He had an amusing fictitious "bless yer" list comprising those young girls who raised no objections to their boy friends going peal ringing as opposed to a date with them, but on a more serious note he was concerned about their safety. For example the late Kath Brown told me how, after a winter evenings practice at the Cathedral, he detailed Tony Jesson to escort her to the Midland Station to catch her train to Ullesthorpe.

As mentioned earlier in this article, he was a man of authority, probably instilled into him during his years with the police, a structured and disciplined existence which I believe suited his personality. This was sometimes noticeable by the manner in which he addressed people, tolerated by most of the older generation though I recall one of the Cathedral band (an excellent ringer himself) telling me he didn't particularly like HJP. Incidentally we youngsters never addressed him by his Christian name-oh no! Alan Jacques recounted how HJP had lectured him after Alan had used HJP's Christian name "Harold" either spoken or in written correspondence (cannot recall exact details of this episode). I had one "run in" with him and that was when I, as a mere 17 year old dared to criticise (rightly in my opinion) the slap happy manner in which, after practice they fell their bells in peal. However that is another story. Meanwhile I will conclude this one by repeating a few of his words heard by me on several occasions "It's a rum game this bell ringing, young John Bennett" . They were happy days.

*John Bennett*

# Let's Sort This Striking Out!

Part 1 in a series of articles

You are at a practice night, a touch is being rung and the conductor says this:

“Let's sort this striking out!”

We've all been there. Maybe you're sitting out and can see the reactions of the ringers. Maybe a very talented ringer who enters prestigious striking competitions nods in agreement. Some of the experienced ringers may look chagrined as if caught out by the schoolteacher for not trying hard enough. Does anyone look panicked, worried, confused?

If you were ringing, what would your reaction be?

Maybe you hadn't even noticed that the ringing sounded uneven. Or maybe you could tell the striking was bad, but can't work out if it was your fault, and don't know how to fix it.

The conductor shouts “listen to it” and you're saying to yourself: I am listening, but I don't know what I'm listening for!

We should all be interested in making our striking the best it can be. We are, after all, playing a co-operative musical instrument. We tend to get caught up in bell numbers and blue lines, who to follow, and what my next piece of work is, it's easy to forget about the sound we are generating. This also tends to be forgotten about when teaching new ringers, but listening, rhythm and striking is a skill that needs to be learnt just as much as handling a bell or ropesight.

## Three skills

There are three skills that work together to produce good striking: listening, rhythm, and anticipation.

**Listening** is how we measure the output of what we are doing. We use it to tell if our input (what each ringer in the band are doing) has met the target we were aiming for (each bell striking evenly). It is not just a yes or no answer. It gives us granular information that we can use to correct our input in order to aim for a better result next time.

**Rhythm** is more tied up with what we are actually doing. The swinging bell has a rhythm of its own, and we are manipulating that to place the bell within the change, where we choose. The difference between a band where each ringer is working to the same rhythm, versus one where the members are ringing to their own rhythm is what makes the difference between good and poor striking.

To keep in time with the rhythm of the whole band, your aim should be to place your bell in the correct place in time within the metre of the rhythm, regardless of what any other external clues might indicate, or if anyone else has made a mistake. Take this example:

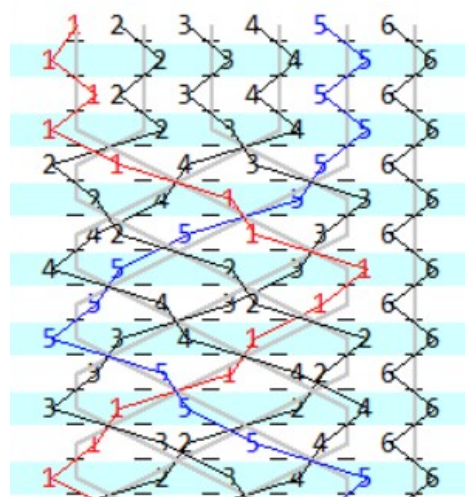


Diagram 1

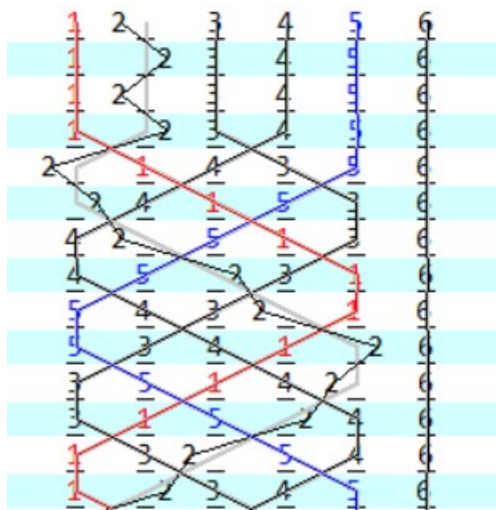


Diagram 2

In both diagrams bell number 2 is doing exactly the same thing. In the first diagram the other bells are ignoring even rhythm and are fitting in around bell 2, waiting for them when they are late, and ringing quicker when they are quick. And it's not just the bell that is immediately after bell 2. All the bells behind are having to hold up and cut in as they try to keep an even distance from the bell in front of them.

In the second diagram the other bells are all keeping to the strict rhythm, placing their bell in time with the overall rhythm. You can guess from the diagram which of the two pieces of ringing should sound better.

Have you ever heard someone learning to play a musical instrument? That part of learning a new piece where they are still working out which notes to play and they are hesitating at every bar. The notes might have been played in the right order, but without the correct rhythm, it's difficult to tell what the tune is.

**Anticipation** is what we use to tie these two skills of listening and rhythm together. We listen to the ringing; the whole metre of each row and the position of our bell in it. Most importantly for anticipation is being able to rely on the rhythm being consistent from row to row. Playing along with the musical instrument learner mentioned in the previous paragraph is much easier when they have learnt the correct rhythm of the notes because you can anticipate when they are going to play each note. In ringing, we know which place our bell needs to be in in the next row, and with a consistent rhythm we can anticipate when we need to pull our rope.

This means we are not relying on seeing which bell to follow, or having a fraction of a second time delay while we process what we are seeing. We don't need to remember that you need to leave a bigger gap over the heavy bells, or that you need to be wide following x bell because it is oddstruck. We can stay in the correct place even when the learner has got lost and isn't quite where they need to be. All because we are anticipating what we need to do, based on what went before.

## How to learn good striking

### Listening

In this article we shall start by thinking about the skill of listening to bellringing. In the following exercises I have aimed to set them out so that a raw beginner can work through them and improve their skills as they go. If you find one easy, just move on to the next one.

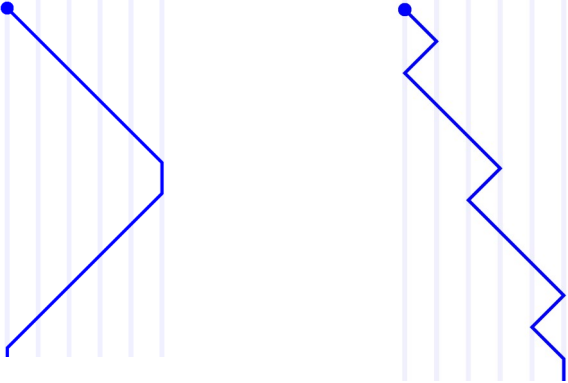
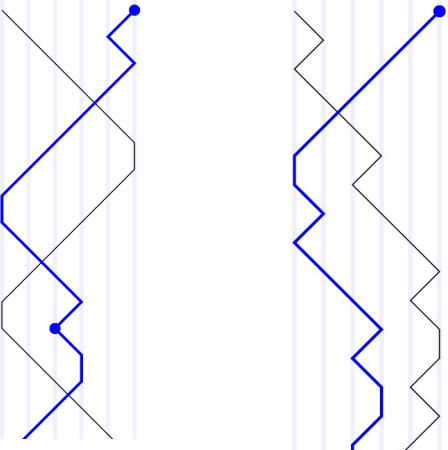
#### Step 1 – Listen to good ringing.

Before you can listen to badly struck ringing and work out what needs doing to fix it, you need to have some basic listening-to-ringing skills. These include being able to hear the whole row of ringing and know where the start and end of the change is even if the bells are ringing methods. The following exercises can help you develop these skills, as well as tune your ear into actively listening to ringing generally.

The sound clips for these exercises can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLd2kTzDoJnqo> or scan this QR code.



Starting with rounds. The bells are ringing in descending order, so this makes it as easy as possible to listen for each bell. <b>Q: How many bells are ringing?</b> Count each bell as it rings. <i>(Being able to hear each bell's individual 'ding' comes in useful later when you need to listen to the rhythm of the whole row to work out whether the striking is good or needs improvement.)</i>	Clips 1 - 6
And just for fun, here is an approximation of what the bells at the Foundry sound like. Compare it with the 12-bell clip in the group above. Is it more difficult to count how many bells are ringing?	Clip 7
Find the handstroke gap. In change ringing it is usual for there to be a slight gap before the handstroke row starts. So all the bells ring the handstroke, and then all ring the backstroke, but before the next handstroke there is a brief pause, no longer than one bell duration. In these clips the bells are not ringing rounds, which makes it more difficult to count them. But if you listen for the handstroke gap and then start counting, each bell will ring twice before the next handstroke gap. eg. 1 2 3 4 5 6 1 2 3 4 5 6 gap. <b>Q: How many bells are ringing?</b> If you are finding this tricky, use the clips from the previous exercise where the bells are ringing rounds and listen for the handstroke gap, then try these clips again.	Clips 8 - 10
Some more difficult clips now, the bells are ringing a method.	Clips 11 - 13
<b>Q: How many bells?</b> These clips don't start at the beginning of a row, so you definitely need to be able to find the handstroke gap to solve this one!	Clips 14 - 17
Relative pitch. You do not need perfect pitch to be able to actively listen to ringing. Most people have relative pitch – being able to tell that one note is higher or lower than another note. This exercise helps you start picking out different bells by their pitch. Use your skill in picking out the handstroke gap to mark the start of the change, and see if you can hear the following: <b>Q: Can you find the treble?</b> Count the bells to see which position it is in.	Clips 8 - 10
<b>Q: Is the tenor covering/ringing behind, or ringing in with the other bells?</b>	Clips 18 - 21
<b>Q: Can you work out the order of the other bells by their notes?</b> Tip: just pick one bell at a time, like you did when you were finding the position of the treble, and try to find which position it is in.	Clips 8 - 10

<p><b>Advanced Q: Is the treble plain hunting, or treble bobbing?</b>          These diagrams show the path the treble takes when plain hunting, and when treble bobbing.  <i>(Being able to pick out bells by their relative note will come in useful later when you need to work out how to fix bad striking.)</i></p>	Clips 22 - 23
	
<p><b>Q: Which bell is leading?</b> Pick a bell that you can comfortably pick out (try the tenor or treble), try to listen for when it is the first bell in the row.</p>	Clips 11 - 13
<p><b>Advanced Q:</b> In these clips the method being rung means the bell leading doesn't always ring both the handstroke and backstroke in lead. Can you tell?          In the first two clips, the treble is plain hunting, so try to listen to one of the other bells to see if you can tell if it is leading right, ie at both handstroke and backstroke, or if it is doing something else. For this question you don't need to work out exactly what it is doing.  <i>(A common striking error is a mistake in when the first bell leads, sometimes too quick or too slow. These exercises help you concentrate on listening for the leading bell. It is also a starting place for working out what a bell is doing by listening to it. I find this easiest to hear when the bell is leading or working on the front.)</i></p>	Clips 24 - 27
<p>The following exercises are more advanced. The skills they teach are more useful if you are going to be trying to help the rest of the band strike better, so you may not think they are relevant to you, but by working at them you will be giving your listening skills a good workout!</p>	
<p><b>Q: Can you follow a bell as it plain hunts?</b> Try with the tenor or treble first. Then try an inside bell.</p>	Clips 12 - 13
<p><b>Q: Follow the tenor bell, can you tell what it is doing?</b> Count its places, you may find it easiest to write it down as you are listening.</p>	Clip 25
<p><b>Q:</b> Here are three clips. In each one the tenor is doing some work in one of the following positions – in 1:2, in 3:4, or in 5:6. Can you tell which one it is?</p>	Clips 28 - 30
<p><b>Q:</b> Try to follow the tenor, which of these blue lines is it ringing? There are two clips, one for each of the following methods. Can you tell by listening to the tenor, which one is which?</p>	Clips 31 - 32
	

## Next Time

In the next part of this article, we shall be looking at rhythm in ringing, and some exercises to practice it.

Rebecca Banner