



Welcome to the winter edition of *Clangour*, edited in the spring, reporting on autumn events. Confused? I certainly am.

I accept contributions to *Clangour* at any time, so start sending! If you'd like to get articles, pictures, quarter peals etc into the next issue, the deadline is **Sunday 31st March**. That's only a few weeks away, so I expect a deluge of delights in my email inbox any moment now. The address is thewizzlylizzie@gmail.com, or if you don't get on with this new-fangled interweb, you can write to me at:

18 Upper Poole Road,
Dursley, Gloucs.
GL11 4LE

It's always good to get post. Unless it's bills. I keep telling them, Bill doesn't live here. (*Clangour cannot be held responsible for age of jokes.*)

Beginning as usual then, with the tower newses alphabetically - look to! Here she blows...

Lizzie Lindsell, Upper Cam

Dursley Tower News

Two celebratory events have occurred for which quarter peals were called for. The first being the marriage of Judith Cotterell's daughter to Joe Root (*Yes, that Joe Root - Ed*) on 1st December 2018.

The second being for the birth of Anne and Philip Pope's first grandchild, George on 2nd December. George's dad, Richard, learnt to ring at Dursley where he rang in eleven quarters and three peals.

Christmas always results in many more services which we ring for. Midnight Mass, on 24th December, at St James' is at 23:00 while the only Christmas Day service here is at 08:00. It's uncertain how many of the residents appreciate the ringers commitment by starting at 07:15!

It's many years since we have had a complaint about the bells. Since new weather proofing was installed the bells are remarkably quiet outside and some people have complained that they are too quiet. However, we have had a complaint during the past year about the bells during the 4th of the five peals rung here during 2018. We have a nominal limit of four peals per year unless an important, national event calls for an additional attempt. The 5th peal in 2018 was to mark the 100th anniversary of the end of WWI. Our practice has been to speak with any complainant to see what we can do to alleviate their problem without restricting what we do to maintain the ringing tradition. How do other towers fare in the Branch and how do they deal with any complaints?

We have had a tower AGM for many years and the next is due in January 2019. Until last year, the meeting room in the Old Spot was booked which served a very convivial venue. Since the re-arranged interior, this meeting room no longer exists and another suitable place has not been found other than the ringing room which is good but not nearly so atmospheric.

*Frank Byrne,
Outgoing Tower Captain, Dursley*

Quarter Peals and Peals rung at St James the Great, Dursley:

Quarter Peals Rung at St James the Great, Dursley:

On Sunday, 23 September 2018

1280 Spliced S Major (8)

- 1 Anne Pope
- 2 John Cornock
- 3 Elizabeth Byrne
- 4 Hilda Shipp
- 5 Andrew Ward
- 6 Frank Byrne
- 7 Philip Pope
- 8 D. Paul Smith (C)

1st 8-spliced - 4

Farewell compliment to Paul and Hilda, moving to Somerset

On Sunday, 30 September 2018, in forty-eight minutes

1260 Grandsire Triples

- 1 Helen Binstead
- 2 Anne Pope
- 3 Judith Cotterell
- 4 Elizabeth Byrne
- 5 Andrew Binstead
- 6 Philip Pope
- 7 Frank Byrne (C)
- 8 John Taylor

To celebrate the marriage of Suzannah Cotterell and Benedict Thomas, 22 September 2018.

This is the 999th recorded quarter peal on these bells including 53 rung on the simulator

On Sunday, 25 November 2018, in forty-six minutes

1250 Cambridge S Major

- 1 John Taylor
- 2 Christine Williams
- 3 Anne Pope
- 4 Ian Unsworth
- 5 Elizabeth Byrne
- 6 Philip Pope
- 7 Frank Byrne (C)
- 8 Andrew Binstead

To congratulate Kathryn Halford (nee Grant) on her being awarded OBE for her services to nursing. Kathryn learnt to ring at this tower

On Sunday, 2 December 2018, In forty-five minutes

1250 Cambridge S Major

- 1 Helen Binstead
- 2 Jane Bull
- 3 Anne Pope
- 4 Elizabeth Byrne
- 5 Andrew Binstead
- 6 Frank Byrne
- 7 Andrew Bull
- 8 Philip Pope (C)

To welcome Richard and Emily Pope's baby son, born on 1st December. First grandchild for Philip and Anne.

On Sunday, 16 December 2018, in forty-five minutes

1250 Yorkshire S Major

- 1 Jane Bull
- 2 Judith Cotterell
- 3 John Cornock
- 4 Elizabeth Byrne
- 5 Andrew Binstead
- 6 Frank Byrne
- 7 Philip Pope
- 8 Andrew Bull (C)

Rung to celebrate the wedding of Carrie Cotterell (Judith and Dave's daughter) and Joe Root on 1st December 2018.

Peals Rung at St James the Great, Dursley:

On Saturday, 20 October 2018

in two hours and fifty-six minutes

5088 Wombling Free Delight Major

Composition: D. F. Morrison (No. 990 Reversed)

- 1 Heather E. Pickford
- 2 Sarah B. Ewbank
- 3 Jane D. Bull
- 4 Lucy A. Warren
- 5 Philip F. Pope
- 6 Andrew M. Bull
- 7 Darren Ricks (C)
- 8 Christopher J. Pickford

First peal in the method:

x38x1456x56x18x12x18x56.34.78 LH12 b

Specially arranged and rung to wish Jonathan (Jonny) Bull every success as he starts his BSc in Zoology at Bangor University.

The band would like to associate Jonathan Adkins with this peal, who was due to ring today, and wish him a speedy recovery.

On Sunday, 11 November 2018, in three hours and two minutes

5056 Yorkshire Surprise Major

Composition: Edmund Shuttleworth

arranged Andrew M Bull

- 1 Philip F. Pope
- 2 Jane D. Bull
- 3 John Cornock
- 4 Andrew J. Binstead
- 5 Anthony M. Bulteel
- 6 Ian P. Unsworth
- 7 Andrew M. Bull (C)
- 8 Andrew A. Ward

Rung to mark the centenary of the end of hostilities in the Great War. Also in memory of the fifty-six residents of Dursley who gave their lives for their country.

Wotton Tower News

Firsts Fortnight

The members of Wotton tower decided this year to participate in the Association's First's Fortnight, running alongside the Peal and Quarter Peal festival for most. I applaud the whole band (and visitors) in getting behind this initiative, or for humouring me at the very least in having a go. Firsts Fortnight provided both change from the usual weekly practice routine, and inspiration for the fortnight. I believe it was quite fun, and it gave everyone permission to 'give something new a go and get it wrong'. The band were all faced with opportunities to stretch themselves, some needing more persuading than others, however everyone achieved at something new. Achievements were as per below and the band continue to build on these today. Well done everyone!

Oscar Braun

16/10/2018 *Ring a lighter bell - 2*
Ring Tenor behind to doubles
30/10/2018 *Ring Treble*

Charles Turner

16/10/2018 *Ring Treble*
21/10/2018 *Ring Tenor behind to doubles,*
unaided, for Sunday Service

Francis Rea

16/10/2018 *Call 'Go' and 'Stand' for Plain Hunt*

Harry Childs

16/10/2018 *Call a touch of Bob Doubles*
unaffected
Stand by and support a learner

Adrian Davis

16/10/2018 *Call a touch of Grandsire doubles*

Armistice Ringing

As usual the Wotton band rang half-muffled prior to morning service on the 11th November. It was a real joy to have every member of the band present to ring on all eight bells, including

our newest member Oscar, who joined us for his first Sunday Service ringing as our *Ringing Remembers* recruit. This was also the first outing for our new muffles, recently received from Big Wilf, having been ordered much earlier this year.

Six of the band returned to ring just as the Memorial Service in Wotton ended, seeing the area packed with residents. We rang the front six bells open, to join in with the national *Ringing Remembers* event; it was an emotional experience knowing that we were only one of many marking the occasion nationally.

New Muffles

Big Wilf managed wonders in supplying a huge order list with muffles in time for Remembrance Day 2018. We had said we would wait, after all it had taken me a year to get around to ordering them in the first place. Secondly, we already had a set but just wanted to be prepared for an event when we may need to ring with full muffles in the next 10 years or so! But Wilf must have worked night and day, as our new muffles were with us in good time for Remembrance Day, far earlier than expected. The muffles were a joy to fit with no tape or knives involved in the process, a much cleaner and safer activity. Those with a better ear than me say they sound better too which is great all round. The beautifully embroidered storage bag that normally accompanies the muffles has just arrived this side of Christmas and is beautiful with a lovely picture of St Mary's church on the front, all ready to keep our muffles clean and ready to use.

Christmas and New Year

Christmas is always a busy time for ringers in Wotton, with three schools that have carol services in the church, and the usual church services, we try to provide the bells as a backdrop to all Christmas events. This year was a triumph as we managed to provide a local band of ringers for all the services bar one, >>

<< thanks to the visiting ringers who rang in our place on that Sunday. We finished the season with ringing on New Year's Eve, with six of our eight ringers present to ring out the old and ring in the new; something we have done for the last three years. Judging by the comments on the

local Facebook page the next morning, many residents were pleased with our ringing and what it added to the night as we welcomed in the new year.

*Nikola Gawler,
Tower Captain, Wotton*



Happy New Year to you all, from the ringers of St Mary's Wotton

All Saints, Stone, Gloucestershire

On Monday, 22 October 2018 in
thirty-eight minutes

1260 Plain Bob Minor

- 1 Jeremy Sargent
- 2 Zoe Bonnett, 13
- 3 Catherine White-Horne
- 4 Yuhan Jiang, 16
- 5 John Cornock
- 6 Alistair White-Horne, 16 (C)

*A quarter of four firsts:
of Minor for 1, in method for 2 and
4 and first of minor for an all-home
band, all of whom learnt to ring at
Stone. Another landmark for Let's
Ring! Rung as a part of the G&B
peal fortnight.*



Ringling for Remembrance

Sometimes there are reasons for ringing that everyone in the country appreciates. On 11th November 2018, bells rang out for an extra-special Armistice Day; the one hundredth.

There were two parts to the ringing, beginning with the usual half-muffled performances for the remembrance services held across the Branch. These varied wildly in timing. For example, St George's (Upper Cam) was at 9.30 am, while St James' (Dursley) was at 3.00 pm to coincide with the street parade. There is an extra poignancy to ringing half-muffled bells as it is only done for sombre occasions. The resonance of the backstrokes encourages the listener to reflect on people and times gone by. I felt this very strongly as I rang at Upper Cam that morning.

The following day, I visited Slimbridge churchyard and its haunting remembrance exhibition. In case you missed it, these were sculptures of soldiers buried in the graveyard who had lost their lives in either of the World Wars. They had been placed so they faced their own gravestones. It was an eerie sight to behold, the chicken-wire figures appearing like ghosts among the scenery. For me, the most



shocking was located around the side of the church: looking at his memorial on the wall, one Private Bernard Carter, who had been a ringer at Slimbridge, and for whom we had rung a Quarter Peal in November 2017. You can read about him in the Jan 2018 edition of *Clangour*, or on the Branch website. Standing alongside his shape in particular moved me to tears.

There was also a display inside the village hall, which included the diaries of a farmer from 1916. The pages open covered the death of his brother - a soldier - whom he had only visited in hospital the day before. This man lost two brothers to World War I, both men represented in wire form at their gravesides. I shivered at the sight of them as I walked back to the car. The thoughts of these men, along with my great uncle, whose existence I only learned about as a result of the centenary, will now forever be with me at this time of year.

On this exceptional Remembrance Sunday, no open ringing was permitted until after midday. Thus, we returned to St George's tower at 12.30pm, to ring Bob Doubles in touches of 100 to celebrate the centenary. This

too was very moving. I thought back to a century ago, imagining the chamber occupied by ringers long since passed, pulling different ropes but striking the same bells. At that moment we were connected across time. Whose losses did they mourn as a result of the war? How must they have felt, knowing it was finally over? That sense of elation must have been immense.

Across the towers, there had appeared to be some confusion as to what we were supposed to ring and when. The main event, as far as I could discern from the internet, was the CCCBR-planned Ringing Out for Peace, to take place countrywide at 7.05pm.

Bruno Peek, Pageantmaster and organiser of the *Battle's Over* initiative, said:

"We want this to be the most widespread ringing of church bells since the First World War. It would be a fitting and moving tribute to the 1,400 or so bell ringers that we understand lost their lives during that war. I have no doubt that dedicated campanologists in Britain and around the world will want to join in this once-in-a-lifetime tribute to everyone who served on the battlefields, the high seas and the home front. The stirring sound of church and cathedral bells will provide a fitting conclusion to a day of contemplation, commemoration and, ultimately, celebration as the United Kingdom and other nations reflect on events a century ago... I hope as many people as possible will join us... to mark the conclusion of the first world war and pay tribute to the loved ones who played their part." (Association of English Cathedrals' website.)

As many of the towers nearby appeared to have already saturated their quota of ringing for the day, I must confess I travelled outside the Branch to St Mary's, Tetbury for this most wonderful celebration. Filled with emotion and pride, I joined thousands of other ringers across the country and rang out for peace, sending the music soaring over the houses and trees along with my hopes for the world.

Later, I found out that my great uncle – 18405 Private Sidney Herbert Lindsell of the 20th Battalion, Middlesex Regiment – had died in action, probably at Flanders, on 15th October 1916, at just twenty years of age. For some reason, this was the first I'd learned of him, so I'm even more proud that I was able to honour his sacrifice. Later still, I read the reports of how our fractured country had come together for one remarkable day of remembrance, relief and gratitude, with church bells at the heart of much of the day.

To have played a part in that is an incredible thing.

Lizzie Lindsell, Upper Cam

Some of the Branch bands for the 100th Anniversary of the Armistice. Clockwise from top: Stone, North Nibley, Berkeley, Stinchcombe and Upper Cam.



Ringing for Peace *Armistice 100*



BELL RINGERS' LUNCH

Wotton under Edge Branch

The GLOUCESTER and BRISTOL DIOCESAN ASSOCIATION of CHURCH BELL RINGERS

(Organised and Sponsored by St.James the Elder Church, Bell Ringers)

‘Annual Lunch’

(RAFFLE PROFITS to go to the Wotton Branch)

10th March 2019

12.30pm for 1.00pm

at

the Horton and Little Sodbury Village Hall

Tickets £15.00

Three Course Lunch

Bar

Raffle

**to obtain tickets contact Rex Isaac tel.: 01454 311701; Richard Needs tel.: 01454 329890; YOUR TOWER
CAPTAIN or e-mail: rich.needs@gmail.com**

Chairman's Ramblings

Happy New Year to you all!

Having reviewed the Branch's 2018 achievements on Bellboard this past weekend I think congratulations are in order: One hundred and thirty-six quarter peals and four peals!! I didn't have the facility to interrogate the data this time but, I suspect someone has done it and in time will enlighten us all. However, it is plain that there have been a great many 'firsts', of many kinds. I suspect that the list of events isn't complete as not everyone links their performances to the Branch page as a matter of course.

Particular congratulations must go to the Stone ringers for the magnificent progress made by all their young ringers during the year. We must not forget that some of the not-so-young ringers around the Branch have also made significant progress!

The reaction of the general public to our activities has been positive too and we should seek to build on this in the coming year. The ringing to remember those Branch members lost in WW1 has built links with families, not just in our area but, around the country. It has also

created some links with groups not usually associated with our activities: Chipping Sodbury Football Club, Slimbridge Village History Society to name just two. Gazette newspapers have shown an interest too but, still manage to edit material to render it either incomprehensible or just wrong.

No doubt seeing out the old/welcoming in the new was part of recent ringing exploits. I spotted this morning that someone had gone into print to thank and congratulate the Wotton-under-Edge ringers for their efforts ringing in 2019 - well done!

I am pleased to say that we may have a new secretary soon. Someone has expressed a willingness to take over from Anita - hopefully, more news of that shortly.

The Branch Committee will be meeting to discuss plans for the coming months, including Association competitions, Branch outing, Slimbridge Ringing Festival etc etc. Do you have any suggestions or requests? If so please let one of the Officers know.

Best wishes for a successful 2019.

Ian Unsworth, Branch Chairman

The Hawkesbury Project

I heard at the start of 2018, that St. Mary's church, Hawkesbury have finally decided to hang a peal of eight in the tower, and the project should start early 2019.

The tower currently hangs a singular medieval bell in a three-bell frame. The bell was cast in the 14th century, and is 9 cwt in A. In 1976, Whitechapel rehung the bell with an iroko headstock, with an iron hammer for chiming, so it could no longer be rung full-circle.

The church has been able to find a benefactor who will be contributing to raise the money for the new peal of eight.

The bells will be cast in Italy, as it is cheaper (apparently). They will then be brought over to the UK, to Matthew Higby & Co, who will be tuning them to a Gillett & Johnston profile. Matthew Higby will then be hanging the bells in the tower, below the medieval bell, as it is not allowed to be removed.

The ring of eight will weigh around 12 cwt, and most likely be tuned to F#.

The church is still in discussion about installing a platform to create a ringing chamber. Hopefully they will agree to put one in.

***James Joynson,
Tower Captain, Stinchcombe***



Exciting times for *Let's Ring!*

By Catherine White-Horne, Stone.

**Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome our very own method:
*Let's Ring! Delight Minor.***

For the last few months we have been on a special mission. Inspired by Andrew Ward, we took on the challenge to adopt an unclaimed delight minor method which we could call our own.

The *Let's Ring!* crew set to learning the blue line with the goal of ringing an extent during the Christmas school holidays. With the help of our experienced supporters we got to grips with our brand-new method, amidst much talk of its delicate rear-end (tricky backwork).

On Thursday 3rd January we achieved our objective. Check it out (and 'Like' it) on BellBoard (*Or see below - Ed*)

The touch was composed, rung and conducted entirely by *Let's Ring!*

Here's the band from left to right:
Ben White-Horne, age 18, composer;
Zoe Bonnett, age 14;
Alistair White-Horne, age 16, conductor;

Catherine White-Horne, treble;
Ed Miller, age 18 and
Yuhan Jiang, age 16.

The average age of the inside ringers is 16 years and the average 'ringing age' of the whole band is 2½ years.

Many thanks to Andrew Ward, John Cornock, Alison Holliday, Robin Shipp, Jeremy Sargent and everybody who has helped us in this venture.

“Go! *Let's Ring!*”



Let's Ring!



All Saints, Stone, Gloucestershire

On Thursday, 3 January in twenty-six minutes

720 *Let's Ring! Delight Minor*

Composition: MOO, MOO, MOO

Composed by Ben White-Horne

- 1 Catherine White-Horne
- 2 Zoe Bonnett, 14
- 3 Yuhan Jiang, 16
- 4 Edward O Miller
- 5 Ben White-Horne
- 6 Alistair White-Horne, 16 (C)

Umpire: Andrew A Ward

The first true and full extent of 720 changes in method TDMM2338
[56x56.14x56x16x12x16,12]
hereby named '*Let's Ring! Delight Minor*'.

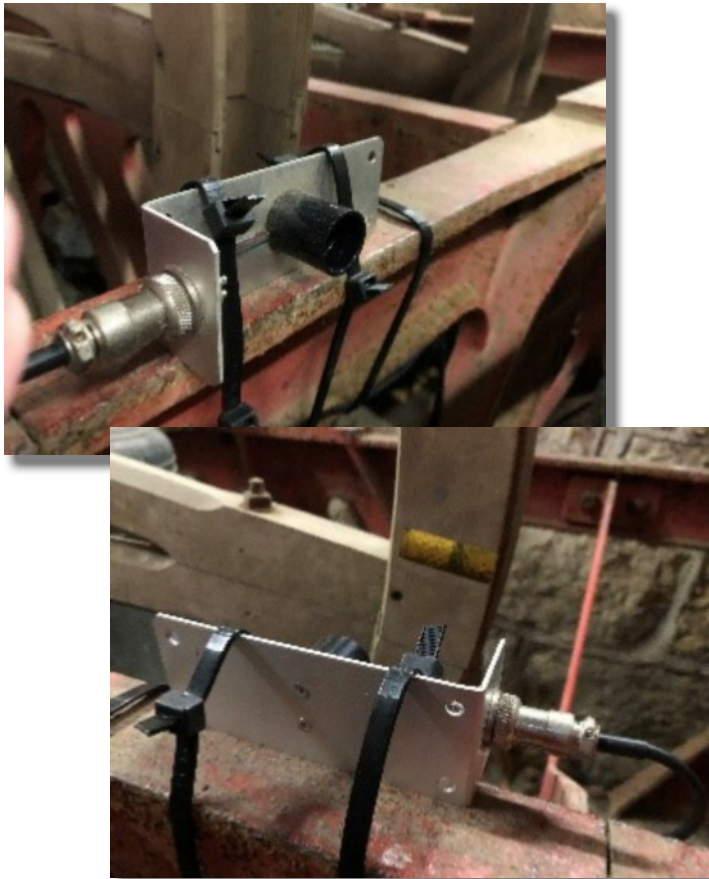
No extra points for working out the firsts: in method for 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 and as conductor for 6.

Go "Let's Ring!"

Newly-Installed Simulator St Cyr, Stinchcombe

On the first weekend of January 2019 at Stinchcombe, we installed a simulator kit on to the bells. The purpose of this is so we will be able to organise training sessions for new learners to get to grips with handling a bell and to ring quarter peals and peals.

The simulator works by having a laser sensor tied onto the bell frame, facing the rim of the wheel. You then attach a reflective pad onto the wheel, so it reflects the laser back to itself when bell is in motion.



The laser sensor attached to the bell frame

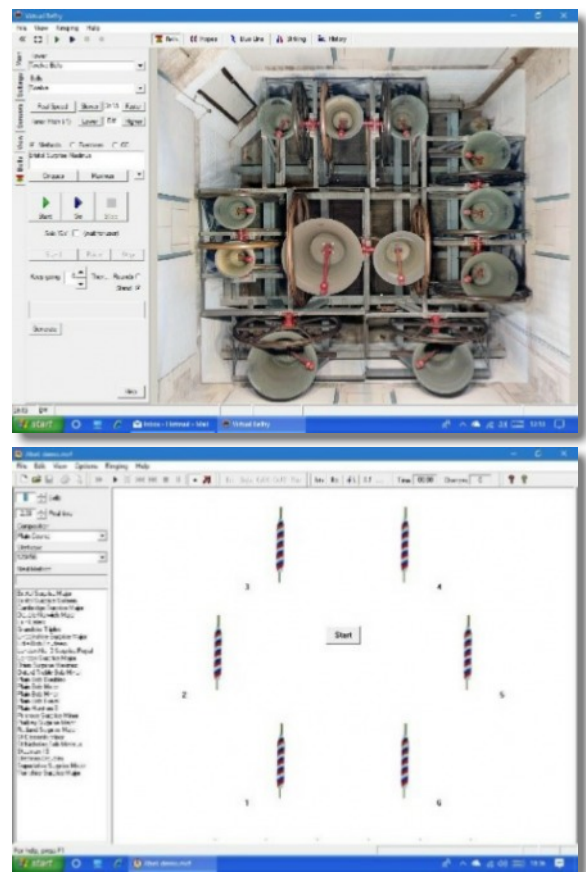
The cable is connected to the splitter box which converts all six sensors to one serial port. This is plugged in to the back of the PC in the ringing chamber.

The bells are tied using either rope or, in our case, wood, to hold the clapper in the centre so it doesn't ring.



The 3rd, tied so the clapper stays in place

The PC uses either AbelSim, Beltower, or Virtual Belfry - software that has bell sounds. When a sensor is reflected back to itself, the software will make the correct bell go off. You are able to record your own bell sounds and use them on the software instead of the demo sounds it comes with.



Screenshots of Virtual Belfry (top) and AbelSim software

We are hoping that this will entice people to come and try bell ringing.

James Joynson
Tower Captain, Stinchcombe

Good Striking

The article below is copied and pasted from the Oxford University website and is worth a read as it's the next stage in the evolution of a lot of our Wotton Branch members.

The tower captain at Amersham who wrote it is likely to be Alan Ainsworth who is a well known top class ringer.

John Cornock, Stone

This essay on striking is the third incarnation of a document written for members of the band of St. Mary's, Amersham (which is in the Oxford Diocesan Guild). It is only here because the original creator of these pages was a member of this band and the son of the main author (tower captain at Amersham). Even so, it's pretty useful.

Introduction

To strike well is essential to good ringing. In order to strike well you must:

- 🔔 Listen to every change;
- 🔔 Hear your own bell in every change;
- 🔔 Be prepared to modify your striking according to what you hear.

Good striking can only occur when every member of the band does this for every change.

Good striking is not easy

Unfortunately this is so. Good strikers have to work hard at striking well, and the more ringing they do, the more effort they put into it. Sometimes in periods of longer ringing, in a peal for instance, when every single member of a band is striking well, the rhythm itself may take over, and it may then feel effortless to be carried along with the flow. Ringers can become euphoric about such episodes. But most of the time, to strike well involves hard work.

So, why bother?

Most people will acknowledge the importance of the sound of the bells for Sunday services and for weddings, but on practice night with the shutters closed, when you're struggling with bell-handling, ropesight and at the same time trying to remember a new method, it seems reasonable not to bother to

listen as well. It is just irritating to be told that you'll understand its importance when you have more experience. There are reasons of self-interest, however, why it is better to combine the skills of looking and listening from the beginning.

If you strike out of place, you can finish out of place. As an example, a common ringing error in learners is to be slow at hunting down from the back. If you fail to hear that you are leaving gaps, you won't be anywhere near the front when in due course you need to lead. This is likely to confuse you and everyone else.

Ropesight anyway only works when most of those ringing are striking close to the correct position: if two bells clash, how can anyone know where either is supposed to be? This is why a learner needs a strong band around him or her, ie one where all strike accurately and without mistakes. It may seem unfair that on practice night those who need most practice get fewest attempts, while those who can ring well may ring every time, but this is actually the most efficient way for learners to make progress. So if your striking is wildly erratic you will be a liability, who makes things difficult (or impossible) for other learners. If you want to be asked to ring more often, improve your striking!

You won't always be able to hear your bell when struggling with a new method, but every effort you make to hear and place your bell accurately in any ringing, however simple the method, will help in establishing steady, rhythmic habits of striking. This alone will keep you in roughly the correct place in more difficult ringing.

Finally, you may not want to listen to the sound of the bells, but you can't ring alone, and other ringers do listen. At the very least, if you strike badly, they will assume you are still struggling with the method, so they will not invite you to ring anything new and more interesting.

How to strike well

There are three parts to good striking:

- 🔔 Hearing each change clearly.
- 🔔 Noting the position of your own bell in each change.
- 🔔 Modifying your striking accordingly. >>

<< *How can you hear each change?*

There should be a gap at backstroke which marks the end of the backstroke change. Always listen for this and note it.

When ringing on odd numbers, eg. Grandsire Doubles or Grandsire Triples, the tenor always rings last and therefore marks the end of each change.

If the ringing becomes confused, or you yourself become confused, you may need to look at the ropes to note the end of the change, which occurs when all the ropes have come down at one stroke.

You must always know when each change begins. Make a habit of listening to the eights in major or triples or tens in royal or caters, and counting the 8-beat or 10-beat to yourself.

How can you hear your own bell?

There are several things which help you hear your own bell:

🔔 Your pull: the bell always strikes at a certain interval after the pull.

🔔 Your bell's note: some ringers hear their bell by listening for the musical interval between their bell and the one they are following. If you have perfect pitch you can always identify the sound of your bell among the other bells, but this ability is unusual. Everyone, however, should be able at least to recognise the highest note (treble) and the lowest note (tenor).

🔔 Your bell's position in the change: in the middle of a row this is not easy, but you should always be able to hear your own bell when leading or when lying at the back. It should also be fairly easy at lead-plus-one and at the back-minus-one. And of course in rounds and call changes you should have enough time to count out which is your bell.

🔔 Combinations of the above: are you immediately before or after the treble or the tenor? Is your bell going to be a high-pitched note amongst several low notes? If you are working near the front with littler bells, your bell will be the one that is low-pitched, and so on.

Always try to listen for your own bell, however hard it may seem. Sometimes it helps to focus your

attention mainly on the part of the change where you know you should be, either the front half or the back half.

Listen to the striking when you are sitting out. This is splendid practice. Try to decide who is the cause of any gaps or clipping. Or pick out one individual and see if you can hear his or her bell in every change. Notice what happens if someone is very slow at leading. Is anyone striking well at handstroke but badly at backstroke? What happens if someone leaves a gap - does everyone slow down, or is there a clash?

Criticising the striking of other ringers is a satisfying pastime. You will find that almost all ringers think themselves the only ones to strike well. This is because you only strike well as long as you are aware of the striking. The moment you stop, your striking deteriorates, but of course you don't notice because you're not concentrating on it. So the learner observer may happily despise the smuggest of us as we hand out gratuitous advice like this about good striking!

Whichever way you use to hear your bell, it does not come easily, and it needs practice, so keep trying.

🔔 Listen to every change

🔔 Listen to backstroke as well as handstroke.

🔔 Listen to rounds.

What do you do if you can't hear your own bell part of the time?

You just hope for the best: keep on ringing, keep on listening. There are a few things you can try however, because if you can't hear your own bell it may be that you are clashing with another bell.

1. If you can't hear your bell when ringing around the heavy bells, try leaving a bigger gap as you ring over them. On some rings of bells the heavier bells have much larger wheels, so that the the little bells have to pull off a long time after the back bells in order to strike properly, and it may be that your bell is clashing with the back bells and that its sound is being engulfed by the sound of the tenor.

2. If you can hear your bell at one stroke, say handstroke, but not at the other stroke, there are two possible causes. This may be because >>

G&B DA
Wotton-under-Edge Branch

Tuesday 19th March 2019

Dursley

Ringling from 7:30pm to 9:00pm

Advanced Surprise Major

This is a new monthly advanced Surprise Major practice that will take place on the 3rd Tuesday of each month using the simulator.

This Month's Methods:

7.30pm – 8.15pm Any of Standard Eight

8.15pm – 9.00pm Glasgow, Belfast & Cornwall

Next Practice: 16th April 2019

**For further information:
Phil_Joynson@Hotmail.co.uk
Branch Ringing Master**

<http://wottonbranch.weebly.com/>

<< the backstroke sound is faint, but you should have been able to hear this in rounds at the beginning. Alternatively the bell may be oddstruck, so that, instead of being pulled smoothly and evenly, the bell requires to be pulled in sooner at one stroke and held up at the opposite stroke. This can be tested out when you are leading and your bell can be clearly heard. Carry on ringing smoothly and observe how your bell strikes at the lead. If you find your bell seems to be leaving a gap at, say, the backstroke lead, then your bell is probably oddstruck and will need to be pulled in at every backstroke.

How can you modify your striking according to what you hear?

Strangely enough you don't need to do very much. If you can hold a regular tap tap tapping in your mind, and if you can hear exactly how your bell fails to accord with that ideal tapping, then your brain can eventually make the subtle adjustments necessary.

Catching a ball is another ferociously complex skill. Your brain has to estimate velocity, force and angle to compute where a ball will arrive, as well as move you into position to catch it. But every time you try to catch a ball, you can't fail to be aware of the result: you catch the ball or you miss it. In ringing, your brain can equally make the calculations, but only if you are aware of the result: whether you hit the spot, strike too soon, too late, clip, clash, leave a gap, whatever.

Good striking is more precise than just striking your bell in a gap, avoiding the bells before and after yours. In your mind should be a regular tap:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 - 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 etc (on 8 bells)
 ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ _ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^

and your aim should be to place your bell precisely on one of those beats. You should monitor every change to ensure that your bell hits the correct spot. In rounds or call changes you can experiment if your bell is not spot on the beat: pull a bit harder at handstroke, or at backstroke; try pulling less hard; try pulling off closer to the rope in front of you, or leaving a bigger gap; keep modifying your handling to see how the sound is affected. Your brain needs all the data it can get in order to make the complex calculations.

How do you know what speed the beat should be?

If you always rang with immaculate strikers, there would be no doubt what speed and rhythm to aim for. However, much practice ringing is less than perfect. If there is irregularity in the ringing, the usual instruction is to take the speed from the tenor. If the tenor is floundering, listen for the rhythm of the majority of the band.

In ringing, everyone listens to and responds to the ringing of the rest of the band. In some towers it is usual always to leave a wide gap at the handstroke lead; in other areas they ring with close handstroke leads. Ringing may speed up in one course, slow down the next. Who decides?

In fact, the ringing is always a compromise between the inclinations of all the band, with the tenors having a weighted effect. A good ringer will adjust to the majority.

How should you adjust to bad striking?

In very irregular ringing it may be possible to hang onto a majority beat in your mind, but you find that keeping to the beat would involve clashing with other bells. What should you do?

This is not easy and there are two schools of thought. One school of thought says you should keep to the beat regardless of aberrant bells, indeed especially when there are floundering bells. This should maintain and reinforce the regular beat, making it clearer for struggling ringers to aim for. The other school of thought says that this encourages overconfidence and lazy striking habits. Moreover it makes for an almighty noise, and for the sake of innocent members of the public you should hold up your bell to avoid clashing with any other bell.

The question is always debatable. Perhaps for Sunday service ringing the avoidance of clashes is more important, whereas in a quarter peal or peal it is more important to establish a beat. In any event, anyone ringing a bell which is very heavy for them will be unable to make adjustments, and thus the tenors are more likely to keep to the beat. >>

<< *Common errors of striking*

Worst of all are trips in ringing the method. After every trip it takes several changes for the striking to settle down and for the rhythm to be regained.

Almost as bad is incorrect leading. There should be a gap at handstroke, no gap at backstroke. The size of the handstroke gap, whatever it is, should be the same for all the band, and will vary from tower to tower and from time to time. A common fault, particularly on higher numbers, is to leave too wide a gap.

Striking correctly at one stroke, handstroke say, but failing to listen to and correctly position the backstroke is another common fault. Both changes should be listened to carefully.

People who learn on five or six bells often tend to pull their backstrokes in too much when they start to ring on higher numbers.

Those who are uncertain about their ringing often prefer to ring slowly because it gives them more time to think, and are inclined to stick to a slow speed when all the rest of the band are ringing fast.

Some positions in the change seem to be particularly vulnerable to bad striking:

- 🔔 The lead has already been mentioned.
- 🔔 Often, in rounds on eight, the 7th is rung too close, thus: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
- 🔔 After leading hand and back, the first blow in 2nds place is often struck wide, perhaps because the previous backstroke has been pulled in too strongly. To lead is actually to make a place in 1sts, it is not a continuation of hunting down.
- 🔔 It is also common to hang up at the back, especially at backstroke. Again, lying at the back (on eight) means making a place in 8ths, and is not a continuation of hunting up. These last two examples show the advantage of listening to your bell from the beginning, in order to avoid trailing behind and losing your place. Trailing behind, and therefore having to heave your bell in to lead, makes for unrhythmic and jerky striking habits.

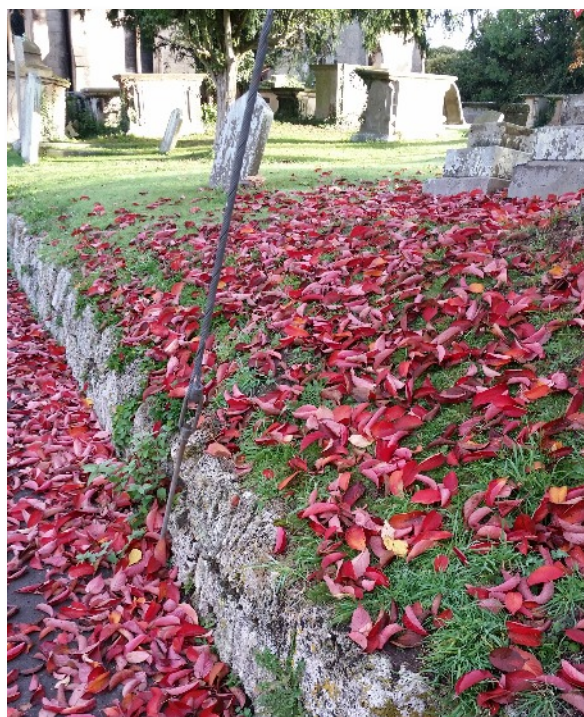
Striking well on higher numbers

Striking well on twelve bells is extremely difficult and until the last thirty years was very rare indeed. There are so many bells to be out of place, so many almost indistinguishable middle bells to confuse and so much difference between treble and tenor, that it is remarkable there is any good striking on twelve.

The little bells have to be held on the balance and then placed, so the physical rhythm of pulling the bell gives no help. The heavy bells have to pull off sometimes before the little bells, so can't wait to respond to them. This all means that the ringers have to let themselves be driven by internal rhythms matched to the rhythms they are hearing, and these internal rhythms need to have been developed on six, eight, and ten bells by smooth, regular, rhythmic ringing, with every stroke kept to the beat by careful listening. It is not surprising that winning teams in the National 12-Bell Striking Competition have usually participated in thousands of peals between them.

To improve, each ringer must listen and be self-critical. A willingness to recognise and to discuss these issues will play an important part in each ringer's understanding of how improvements can be made.

April 1996



"The Fallen", St George's church, Upper Cam

Thanks to everyone who contributed, especially to Birthday Boy John Cornock for that fascinating article about striking. Food for thought, indeed! You can read more about John's celebration in the next edition of Clangour, as well as an update on the Branch Secretary position, and anything that you have sent to me by **Sunday 31st March.**

On Saturday 23rd March, I will be among those representing our pastime at the **Societies, Groups & Clubs Fair, Kingshill House, Dursley**, from 11am - 3pm. The Branch will have a stand, extolling the joys of ringing and hoping to sign up a few new recruits. If you'd like to be part of this, please get in touch with either me or Publicity Officer Terry Chivers.

Before that, I have the honour of running the raffle at the upcoming **Spring Lunch on 10th March**, so if you have anything that might make a suitable prize, feel free to donate it! All money raised goes to the Branch.

Maybe I'll see you there, or at any of these upcoming events:

Saturday 2nd March
Ringing at North Nibley
4.00 - 6.00 pm

Sunday 10th March
Ringers' Spring Lunch
Horton Village Hall
Details on p.5

Tuesday 19th March
Surprise Major Practice (Simulator)
St James', Dursley
7.30 - 9.00 pm

Erratum

Please note that the Association AGM is on Saturday 6th April, not Saturday 13th April (as reported) and therefore ringing at Wickwar on Saturday 6th is CANCELLED.

Please do your best to attend and support the Branch, even if you can't stay for an entire session.

This is all, for now...

Lizzie Lindsell, Clangour Editor