

## Rounds and Rhythm

### Ringling Rounds

When you start to ring rounds you need to:

- Control your bell.
- Watch the rope of the bell you are following; if you are ringing the third you will be “following the second”.
- Count your place as your bell strikes; if you are ringing the third count “One, two, THREE, four, five six - - -”.
- Listening for your own bell.

Taking these in turn:

#### **Controlling your bell.**

Once you start thinking about other things there is a natural tendency to over-pull, to keep the bell in its place by force. Try to avoid this; it is tiring and makes it difficult to place your bell correctly. Try to keep relaxed, especially the arms, ring the bell with an easy swing, **to a rhythm**. Remember that each time you pull too hard you also waste energy stopping the bell at the end of each swing.

#### **Watching the bell you are following:**

Your basic guide of when to pull is by watching the rope of the bell “in front” of you; start moving your hands when his/her hands have just started to move. At first you might find it difficult to watch another rope and catch your own sally. As you become used to watching other bells you will find that you can catch the sally by rhythm; this comes with practice. At this stage try to keep watching the rope you are following as much as possible.

#### **Counting your place.**

If you are ringing the third to rounds you should be “in thirds place”, you are the third bell to sound. So by counting One, two, THREE - - etc. you are “counting your place”. You will have noticed that the bell doesn’t sound as soon as you pull, but almost at the end of its swing, as your hands are moving up past your face, so this is when you should be counting “THREE”.

#### **Listening for your bell:**

Counting helps you to hear your own bell; now you should time your pull so that your bell sounds “central” between the bells sounding before you and after you. Try to avoid gaps or clashes. This, like many other things in ringing, comes with practice. However, one of the great pleasures of ringing is when all the bells are “well struck”, that is, sounding with an even rhythm. You will recognise good striking when you hear it - it just sounds right and, if you are ringing yourself, you will feel the rhythm that goes with good striking.

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### Striking and other things

When you can ring rounds without help it is up to you always to do your best. Good striking was mentioned in the last session but, no matter how good any individual ringer is, **everyone** in the band has to strike well if the ringing is to sound right.

There are always things to work at to improve your ringing; at this stage striking is perhaps the most important, followed by your style of ringing.

#### Listen for good striking:

Hopefully you have been learning on a bell which is easy to ring, but not all bells are easy. Always listen for your own bell because sooner or later you will be ringing a bell which is “odd-struck”, that is, it strikes sooner on one stroke than on the other.

Therefore, to get the striking sounding right, we have to “hold up” on one stroke and “pull in” or “check” the bell on the other stroke.

(“Holding up” means holding the bell balanced a fraction longer - it does **not** mean letting it go further over the balance! “Checking” means stopping the bell a little sooner so as to swing it back sooner. When you check a bell you also have to pull a little harder if you want to balance it again on the next stroke.)

When you ring an odd-struck bell it may not “look” right, but always remember that:

#### **WHAT YOU HEAR IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN WHAT YOU SEE!**

So always listen and adjust your ringing to get your bell sounding in the right place; a lot of people outside can also hear you.

#### Develop your “Style”.

While not perhaps essential, a good style in ringing makes for less effort. Ringing with arms at a comfortable full stretch has already been recommended; this gives you the greatest distance upward in which to control the bell, also the greatest distance through which you can pull next time. Both of these items are important when ringing a bell that doesn’t “go” easily.

Catch and release the sally smoothly and keep relaxed. Keep your hands close together as you change your grip from handstroke to backstroke and vice versa. Watch other ringers, you will see a variety of styles - and it might not be wise to comment further!

Keep working at your bell control and your striking; good rounds are the foundation on which change ringing is built. The better you can ring rounds the easier it is to progress. The next step is to ring the treble, the “leading bell”.