



The Central Council of Church Bell Ringers Education Committee

Network for Ringing Training (NRT) summary January 2003

Welcome to the 16th summary of NRT postings. The threads from last month were continued starting with, **Bayles' Method & Thingummy-bob.**

Richard Pargeter asks, As a point of information, which of the below should rightfully be called Bayles' Method, and does the other have a name? I was originally led to believe that the second one (copied here from Caroline Birdsell's message of 15 Dec.) was "Bayles' method, sometimes known as Thingummy-bob" However, *Jane Lambert's* message of 14 Dec (from which the first one below is copied) suggests that there are two distinct variations on the theme.

1 2 3 4 5		1 2 3 4 5	
2 1 4 3 5		2 1 4 3 5	
2 4 1 5 3	1st	2 4 1 5 3	2nd
4 2 5 1 3		4 2 5 1 3	
4 5 2 3 1		4 5 2 3 1	
5 4 3 2 1		5 4 3 2 1	
5 3 4 1 2		5 3 4 2 1	
3 5 1 4 2		3 5 2 4 1	
3 1 5 2 4		3 2 5 1 4	
1 3 2 5 4 etc		2 3 1 5 4 etc	

Not a big deal, but it would be nice to give credit where it is due.

Jane Lambert replied, the first of the two is the exercise I sent out and I took it straight from his book (a copy of which I have). He may have written the other one as well though, his book doesn't cover all the exercises he used and didn't contain all the material that was published in the Ringing World in the seventies either (and I don't have the Ringing Worlds from then to look back at!).

John Harrison wrote in reply to Jane, perhaps this is where he started. The

version you sent does not have the simplicity of the other, which is the one I have always known, nor does it do what I understood it was supposed to, ie repeat the lead. Although the 3, 4 and 5 repeat their blue lines in the second 'lead', the fact that the 3rd is then in the hunt and the Treble making seconds, gives several wrong signals. The second version, on the other hand, by delaying the treble two blows and turning round early the bell that made 2nds, gives an exact replica of the lead just rung.

Aidan Hopkins wrote, the first has been used locally for some time. *Simon Feather* always calls it "Dennis Doubles", and it is regularly used for those learning Bob Doubles at Warfield. I believe Simon originates from very roughly the same area as Dennis Bayles, and probably encountered it when learning himself. On more than one occasion we have had Stan Scott present at practice, who is one of the longest-serving members of the Branch, and he has never queried the name. AFAIR I have not encountered the second one before.

Peter Dale wrote, Bayles' method of repeating leads in Plain Bob on bells involves the treble making four blows behind, and the bell that made 2nd's place turning round just below the treble by making (n-1)th's place. I had that directly from the horse's mouth when I sat opposite Dennis at a CY dinner - more than a few years ago now.

Jane Lambert replied, I understood the point of the exercise to be to allow learners to practice hunting with a 3-4 down dodge on the 2nd and the second version doesn't do that. That

was how DB always presented it. As part of a small steps approach it makes sense because the learner can already hunt to methods and you have already given them dodging practise (if you follow his method). He tried to avoid giving people too much to cope with in one go, so the idea is that all they have to cope with is hunting with a 3-4 down dodge included to begin with. As I said in an earlier part of this discussion, the one disadvantage is that the learner passes the treble in the wrong place before the second 3-4 down. But then do you really want to worry people with where they pass the treble along with every thing else you are trying to get them to take on board at that point? From a small steps perspective I don't think it matters. I use this first exercise frequently and find it works well. Once they are doing "proper" Plain bob doubles I add in the bit about where they pass the treble as a next step.

Peter Dale wrote, ah but it does if you ring the first lead as normal, and make the repeat in the second and subsequent leads! After all, doesn't "repeating" imply that the work being repeated has already been done at least once? What you are "repeating" here is the end of the last lead in the course, not the first. As I have already observed in an earlier mail, this technique can also be used in PB on higher numbers, and a Bayles repeat can be called AFTER any dodge that a learner needs to practise over and over again.

John Harrison wrote, as it was explained to me, it allows you to repeat the same lead over and over until you get it right, which fits the small steps approach. I understood that by mixing Bayles leads with ordinary leads, you could in the same touch, ring the first lead work several times, then progress to the second lead work, and so on. I have never done this, and thinking about it, it is clear that each time you move on, you require a different bell to do the non-standard 4ths place while the Treble is on the back, thus

restricting where you can put your learner. (The 4th can get furthest) If you think about it, the two versions are complementary, since one works for 3rds,4ths and 5ths place bell, while the other works for 2nds place bell, so Dennis probably did use both.

Christine Richardson wrote, I too have a copy of Dennis Bayles' book. It is still used at Chester-le-Street (Dennis's tower in the north-east) where learners make very quick progress in method ringing. To enable a learner to stick to a particular bell (e.g. 2nd) the method can simply be rewritten with the, for instance, 2nd doing whichever piece of work needs to be practised next, and the other bells drawn around it. It works for any working bell, providing you have enough experienced ringers to ring around the learner and not go astray too often! The novelty soon wears off for those helping and they tend to revert to Bob Doubles "proper" after a couple of times round. This can actually give a learner a bit of confidence to see that they are not the only ones who can make mistakes in something fairly basic! I've used it at Sunderland Roker to great effect.

Picking out your bell (from last month)

John Harrison writes in reply to Peter Humphrey, The question of confidence is very relevant, and helps to ensure that what residual skills are present do not get exploited because of a perception that 'I can't do it'. I think where we differ is in the need (or not) to be able to identify the different sound of one's own bell as a precursor to effective listening (and hence striking). On most bells, in changes, I can't pick out one note from the others, but I know perfectly well which dong is mine (or the bell behind which I am standing) and whether it is in the right place. The essential skill is rhythmic perception, coupled with the ability to track one's own dong through the sequence. I reckon most of us could do that as well (or no worse) even if all the bells made identical sounds.

Peter Humphrey replied, we do agree on the importance of training our pupils' hearing. It's their initial ability that seems to be our difference. What you're describing here is in the here and now, not when you first started, which is what I was talking about. I still have yet to encounter a raw beginner who can hear more than the treble, at most.

John Harrison wrote, my raw beginners ring with a simulator before I inflict real ringers on them. I start them ringing the Tenor to rounds. The fact that they can do it is fair proof that they can hear whether the Tenor is or is not in the right place. Whether or not they can differentiate the sound that it makes from the sound that the others make, I do not know. Why do I put them on the Tenor first? Because I have found empirically that people seem to find it easier, i.e. they are more likely to settle down and do it adequately.

Mike Till added, I agree with John's approach. In addition to the tenor being one of the easily-picked-out bells, I think it's much harder to start out ringing the treble on a simulator - the first few rounds are difficult to judge from a timing point of view. The tenor has a whole cycle of the other bells before it has to strike...! It also receives the rhythm from all the others (well, for the purists, most of them) before having to make those important decisions of when to pull to make it strike in the right place. Even if you hear the bell sounds as un-tuneful clunks, this should give you some clues as to what is best!

Peter Humphrey replied, we're now leaving the point at discussion, which was whether an inexperienced ringer can distinguish one bell from another by its sound. I cannot comment on the use of simulators, since I've never seen one. (I admit to just a trace of luddite suspicion of them in general, though I hope I wouldn't let that deter me if I were offered a chance to try one.) I won't start an argument about what constitutes proof, but I concede

that the tenor is the most easily identified bell after the treble. After that I think they're all much of a muchness. *Peter Wenham* replied, this seems to be the attitude of many experienced ringers. To my mind the simulator is the biggest advance in teaching ringing since Blue Lines were invented - for many reasons which I have listed before. How do we know how pupils interpret what we tell them - or their actual perception of ringing? Oh for the ability to follow our pupils' thought processes!

Catherine Lewis wrote, a while back I took part in some change ringing on silenced bells without simulator. I was surprised to find my brain playing the sound of the changes to me! I don't suppose it was accurate (I'm far from musical), but it was clear that I was subconsciously attributing a range of descending notes to the bells and producing an appropriate "tune". So I suspect that, with experience, we do use the different notes of the bells as an additional clue - and probably quite an important clue at that. Up to that point I'd assumed I picked out my bell entirely by counting the rhythm as John suggests.

John Harrison replied, uncanny isn't it? We had to do that when filming for *Midsomer Murders*. It's not surprising, since we always hear them. The same thing happens when we are competing with the (very powerful) organ immediately after a wedding. I can't hear the bells, but my brain fills in the sound of them. Obviously I am an optimist at heart, because when the organ stops, I realise that the striking is worse than what my brain was synthesising. I wonder in what senses it was appropriate. The rhythm would be correct and you would be focusing on your blow in the correct place. If my suspicion is correct, the other sounds would merely be filled in using whatever sounds came to mind. It would be interesting in such a situation to turn up the real sound after a while and see how it related to what was in your head. I once had to do

something similar at a choral society party. We all had to 'conduct' a piece of music, and keep on doing so while the sound was turned down. After a short while it was then turned up to see how far out of time our beating arms were!

Carpal Tunnel & other Ailments.

Heather Peachey wrote, I know this is not strictly a "teaching/learning" issue, but I feel it's a topic that may come up in discussions between tutors and adult learners. Does anyone know of conditions such as carpal tunnel syndrome being linked to ringing? Perhaps one of our ringing medics might be persuaded to comment, maybe in the RW too.

Peter Harrison replied, I'm no medic, but last year when I was ringing in a QP week I felt like I was suffering from carpal tunnel syndrome in my wrists after the first day. I have put it down to ringing 9 quarters in a day at a fast pace plus a lot of ringing up and down at each tower we went to. The next day it was a little cold and my wrists were quite sore. After the 4th quarter attempt I had warmed up and my wrists seemed fine. I had no long lasting effect from this and in fact by the 4th day I seemed to be fine. I didn't do anything irregular to get this (apart from so much ringing) - and I haven't suffered from it since. Is it possible to ring too much? Maybe the excessive amount of pulling on a rope, and ringing so quickly (and hence pulling harder than usual on a rope to push the bells in) could be a cause of carpal tunnel? I'm sure someone with a medical background could give some useful information.

Raymond Kefford wrote, I have had operations for carpal tunnel syndrome on both wrists. The condition worsened over the years and made ringing increasingly difficult. Eventually I gave up, mainly because of the attitude of the other ringers. Following the operations my hands improved

sufficiently to ring again though I clearly do not have as much grip on the rope as other people, particularly in cold weather. Generally this doesn't matter as long as the bell is not too heavy and the ring speed doesn't keep changing. I've no reason to think that ringing caused the problem but it can certainly make it uncomfortable. I've always thought of it as being related to arthritis.

Peter Trotman wrote, I too am no medic, but also can offer anecdotal evidence: I was diagnosed with carpal tunnel syndrome about 20 years ago. I chose not to have surgery at the time as it only bothered me at night and the symptoms (which at least for me, were tingling and numbness, which kept waking me up) were easily avoided by wearing wrist splints. Ten years ago I had retired from my desk job and started to work as a bell hanger. Heaving on large spanners and chain hoists seemed to aggravate the condition, I believe by causing inflammation of the tendons passing through the carpal tunnels, which in turn pinched the nerves to the hands. After a couple of years I began to have problems also when ringing: my left hand would tingle and go numb after a few minutes' ringing. This made it a more serious issue! So five years ago I had a very successful release operation on my left wrist. I also gave up full-time bell hanging and haven't had a problem since, even without wearing splints. Unlike Raymond I have not noticed any deterioration of my grip as a result of the surgery. *Alan Bentley* added, Peter Trotman's description of the condition is similar to my understanding. At the base of the palm is a tight canal or "tunnel" through which tendons and nerves must pass on their way from the forearm to the hand and fingers. The nerve that passes through this narrow tunnel to reach the hand is called the Median Nerve. This narrow passage between the forearm and hand is what we call "The Carpal Tunnel". The Carpal Tunnel is normally quite snug

and there is just barely enough room in it for the tendons and nerves that have to pass through it. If anything takes up extra room in the canal, things become too tight and the nerve in the canal becomes constricted or "pinched". This pinching of the nerve causes numbness and tingling in the area of the hand that the nerve travels to. The condition that results when the Median Nerve is being pinched in the Carpal Tunnel is commonly referred to as Carpal Tunnel Syndrome or "CTS". The most common cause of Carpal Tunnel Syndrome is inflammation of the tendons in the tunnel which can normally be attributed to repetitive use of the hand and/or wrist.

Unbeknown I suffered the symptoms for a number of years (tingling sensations in the fingers of my right hand) before seeing my GP and having it diagnosed. Although success cannot be guaranteed, the GP advised an operation to relieve the stress as it is more likely to be of benefit than other forms of treatment (e.g. cortisone injections, splints). I was referred to a Consultant who during the first interview made the following observations: The condition normally affects females, usually mothers. It normally afflicts both wrists. He had treated a number of bell ringers in the past (which may not have been a statistically significant statement). If left untreated the muscles connected to the offending tendons and nerves may be permanently damaged. I opted for the operation. The Consultant referred me to a medical physicist for an objective determination of the condition (OK since I wasn't paying). The speed of induced electronic pulses through my nerves was measured from my forearm to each fingertip. The results indicated an apparent reduction of 50% in pulse speed and given the time span when I first noticed the pins and needles it would have been another year before permanent muscular damage would ensue. From memory I believe normal pulse speed is about 60 feet per

NRT summary No 16 January 2003

second, but don't quote me. The operation to relieve the tension requires the membrane covering the nerves and tendons to be cut. The subsequent scar tissue slightly extends the length of the membrane thereby relieving the pressure over the tunnel. Convalescence can take up to 6 weeks without any strain whatsoever being put on the offending wrist. I was fortunate insofar as I only needed one wrist to be operated on. Also I was able to benefit from my company's health scheme and to have the operation done outside the National Health and could have the operation done at a time to suit both myself and my company. Under the NHS, apparently, if both wrists are affected they will more often than not operate on both at the same time thereby rendering the patient virtually helpless for however long the membrane takes to completely heal. I had the operation some 11 months ago and after 6 months was back to normal ringing with all symptoms completely disappeared. The important message is that if the symptoms occur then medical advice must be sought immediately.

Literature on Ringing Centres

Lynda Coles wrote, I know that there is soon to be a series of articles in *The Ringing World* about Ringing Centre activities. Am I right in thinking there are already one or two booklets available about existing ones? The Guildford R C is now up and running, and wants to encourage use. We are really looking for advice on what does/doesn't work elsewhere in terms of courses, etc. After a training committee meeting we have decided to attempt Guild-wide courses as follows. One on the first Friday of each month, except obvious non-starters like August. 8 this year divides nicely into 2 each for the 4 Districts to organise. We've decided that the first 4 will be on Plain Hunt and Call Changes; Plain Bob; Grandsire; and Stedman. After that

page 5

we will gauge response and see where to go from there. When it is the turn of our District, one person will organise who is to lead it, and find sufficient volunteers to form a strong band. I envisage notices going out monthly, giving about 4 weeks notice of the next one, plus details of the one after that. Names of trainees from across the Guild will be required by the Sunday before the practice, limited to probably 6 initially. I shall be putting in a strong plea, as always, for name labels to be worn by all present. Also that any towers which are 'on the fringes' in terms of activity should be the first to be approached for expert support. Guildford Cathedral has an annual Youth Service on Easter Monday, we are going to attempt to get a five minute slot within the service to advertise the attraction of ringing, perhaps with hand bells, also try to organise ringing for it. Our tower won the annual 'most improved' cup at the AGM which gave me the excuse to send two paragraphs to the local press, resulting in articles with photos in 3 local papers.

Catherine Lewis replied, one suggestion. Make your students book places and have a sensible number, pref 4 and not more than 5, with each batch of 6 "experts". Otherwise you'll get far too many students on the first occasion, so everyone waits for ever for a proper go or you put too many learners in at once, so no one comes next time. I over simplify, but hope you get the idea. I'd advise careful organisation and posting bits of paper in the previous week to everyone you're expecting to be there giving personnel, time and place. This means more work, but it's worth it - it gets easier as you build up a computer database of people's addresses.

This is a brief summary of January's postings. If you would like any greater details on any of the points raised, please contact me.

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