



The Central Council of Church Bell Ringers Education Committee

Network for Ringing Training (NRT) summary June 2003

Welcome to the 21st posting of NRT Summaries. Rodney Stevenson kicked off the month with;

Terminology

Recently I came across an example of how we experienced ringers can so easily and unwittingly make the assumption that learners will understand the same as we do by what we think is 'normal' terminology. I encountered a number of people who had read about "writing out the method on graph paper", and were copying the numbers from the diary onto graph paper. They were astounded (and relieved!) when I showed them to just draw the blue line; and they learned it better! Another case is often bellowed across the tower by 'super ringers', "listen to your bell". Not many of us can identify our bell as F# or whatever, but this is what is so often assumed with an embarrassment that prevents admission. While I'm sure we all explain relevant terminology to our own students, it might help to remember this is not necessarily the case with others' students. Sadly, glossaries of terminology don't help, as the student doesn't even realise there is a misunderstanding.

Gail Cater replied, I'm sure most of us can give examples of misunderstandings or plain lack of understanding in ringing terminology. One of my examples occurred when not long ago I judged a striking league competition. Both teams produced a creditable performance of two courses of Bob Doubles without mishap. I made my judgement and made a few comments, the main one of which was that most striking errors had occurred at the lead ends and then the ringing settled down until the next lead end when the difficulties reoccurred, and that this was understandable. I thought this might be helpful until in the pub afterwards one of the ringers sidled up to me and said, "I'm the only not too proud to ask you what the

lead end is". I felt suitably humbled in assuming that bands who had got that far would understand the terminology involved. You have to be so careful.

Martin Mansley wrote, actually "Listen to your bell" really means "I know there is something wrong but I haven't a clue how to put it right"

Mike Till replied, Martin's cynical response is only near the truth. Sometimes, when the errors are irregular, inconsistent and made by different members of the band, it's better to remind everybody that the standards are slipping, rather than singling out one of the offenders for special vilification!

John Preston added, If the conductor cannot say something that is useful to the errant ringer like "five, please ring closer at backstroke" or whatever is appropriate, then it is better to say nothing. Even learners soon twig that "listen to your bell" really means "something's going wrong but I don't know what", and it just raises the overall stress level. Perhaps it is different in a peal that is getting scrappy, but this forum is about training, not peal ringing.

Peter Dale agreed. I prefer to have a quiet word after the touch, rather than say anything at all. It seems to me a reasonable assumption that people don't strike badly on purpose. Accepting that premise, it follows that if someone's striking is poor then there are three possibilities: a) They aren't aware of the fact. b) They realise that something is wrong but aren't sure what it is. c) They know exactly what the problem is but are unable to correct it. d) Another possibility I haven't thought of, but I'm sure that somebody will. Each of these circumstances requires a different approach by the instructor, who shouldn't say anything until they know which applies. For example, using Rodney's illustration, it wouldn't be constructive to ask the 5th to

ring closer at back if (c) applied. The poor learner wouldn't know how to oblige if they were over-pulling at hand, say. Incidentally don't we find that over-pulling is often the case, particularly when the learner is instructed at the handling stage to pull the sally harder than the tail end, without being told why? How many of us, I wonder, explain the influence of the weight of the rope at each stroke? But that's another story though. (*thread continues for this below*)

John Norris replied, of course there's a place for specific advice but in my experience a general call to 'listen to the striking' almost invariably produces at least some improvement. One reason for this may well be that there is a tendency when one ringer is not striking well for others to pay less attention themselves, further weakening the striking and the supporting framework for the 'errant ringer'. The general call has a useful bracing up effect. Even when a specific fault can be recognised there is sometimes a case for the general call rather than a specific call to an individual. The general call may be enough to remind the individual that their regular fault (too slow at handstroke, say) is present and that they need to listen and attend to it. If it's a frequent defect it may be better to correct it in this way rather than single out the individual by name yet again! (And again!) As so often, it all depends...

Peter Marshall wrote, as a relative beginner I would say that it is better to let the individual know that there is a specific problem rather than disguise it in the phrase 'listen to your striking'. That is often a cop out. However it is a natural way to avoid being seen to point the finger. What must be encouraged is an atmosphere where the whole band is striving to improve and moves past the stage where individual mention is seen as criticism. If the individual cannot hear the problem with the striking - I often can't - then surely you owe it to them to give them the information so that they stand a chance of improving. If you don't tell them how can you expect them to improve? What I am not sure about is when is the best time to tell them. On the one hand the best time is during the ringing when there is some chance of making the problem better. On the other hand maybe it's better to mention it when the pressure of ringing is off. I can see that

a general call to 'listen to your bells' might have a beneficial effect but I suspect that it is transitory and that the underlying problem is unlikely to be resolved.

Ian Broster wrote, No! If you perpetually say "5, close the backstrokes", it temporarily improves the ringing, but the 5 never learns to use their ears. They must be encouraged to strive for good striking by listening for themselves. To this end "Listen to your bell" is very useful! For some ringers, where there is a consistent error, something intermediate like "5, listen to the backstrokes" helps the ringer to 'tune into' the error.

Joan Kemp wrote, I agree with John Preston - 'listen to your striking' (should) mean that everyone pays even more careful attention to how they are ringing. I was privileged to ring in a delightful QP of Grandsire Doubles at Dunkeld on Saturday - my 50th QP & one of the most enjoyable I've rung in - & a couple of times when the ringing became slightly less rhythmical, John called 'Listen to your striking' - & the slight adjustments everyone made restored the rhythm very satisfactorily. There is a difference between 'knowing' that the ringer of the 4 has problems & needs the odd gentle reminder to 'ring closer at handstroke' or whatever, & a feeling that the ringing as a whole is getting a little sloppy & everyone needs to concentrate just a bit more on putting their bell in exactly the right place.

John Harrison wrote, whenever this topic is discussed, there is an assumption that the error is consistent, repeated and easily identified. Often that is not so. If someone is striking erratically, with errors coming and going, you can't give specific instruction for what to do at which stroke, because by the time you gave them, they would probably not apply any more. There are two possible causes of erratic ringing (assuming adequate ability to control the bell). The commonest in my experience is sloppy ringing without bothering to listen, so 'listen to it' is highly appropriate. The other is ringing with an over reactive style, in which case it would be more helpful to advise ringing steadily, relaxing, or some such. When several ringers are ringing slightly erratically in changes, not only is there no point in correcting a specific fault, but with errors coming and going in different places, it can be quite hard to work out exactly who is and who is not

contributing. In this case too, a general exhortation is appropriate. Whether it is 'listen to it', 'concentrate please', 'let's settle down', 'we can do better than this', or some other depends on the situation and the personalities.

Mike Till wrote, John Preston's comments reveal, perhaps, more about some prejudice against peal ringing than encouraging a thread that might lead to better training of conductors! I have already commented on irregular, multi-centred errors and the inappropriateness of singling out one individual to be the scapegoat for all the others. This can be particularly acute when ringing on higher numbers. What could raise stress levels more? I see that John Harrison has made a more lengthy analysis of the same topic and come to a similar conclusion. There is nothing wrong with helping somebody who always misses their 3-4 down dodge, or always crashes the backstroke leads in, either during the ringing, or if more appropriate in a calm review of the ringing after the touch. Of course, most of us would love to be able to talk quickly enough and clearly enough to correct every error or slight variation in the rhythm, but if you are stretching your band on a practice night, several people may just be concentrating more on a new or unfamiliar method than on the striking. Unless the practice is going to be dominated by the conductor bellowing across the tower at the errant band, some give-and-take will occur and a general reminder that good striking actually makes ringing the method easier often yields reasonable results. As I stated above, consistent errors can be dealt with in a considerate way, either during or after the touch. Another slant to this thread is, going back to the original comment, an inexperienced ringer had been unsure of which was his bell when the conductor asked the band to "listen to it". There is nothing wrong with that, but the exhortation by the conductor did make him think about what was required and hopefully it may encourage him to develop the skill of listening. Not knowing the actual circumstances, one can only speculate, but could the conductor have been indulging in a little training opportunity of his own?

Heather Peachey wrote, The biggest problem is often not so much what is said, but the way it's said and the 'atmosphere'

that can result. The conductor who constantly whinges and whines at the band is doing no good at all. The usual result is that the band simply comes to expect that he/she will moan, probably about nothing specific, and they learn to ignore it, but do not enjoy the ringing. There comes a perception that one's best will never be good enough for the conductor, so there's no point in trying. The conductor has to appreciate that in general, people don't ring badly on purpose and they of course have better and worse days. However there are times when ringers become a bit lazy, without intending to, and the ringing gets sloppy. The main advice I'd give to conductors is to be as helpful & encouraging as you can and very importantly don't forget to praise good/improved ringing. Encourage the band to want to improve. Discuss what the goals are, get the band onside & beware making it band -vs- conductor! Maybe as an exercise invite different members of the band, no matter how inexperienced to constructively criticise the ringing - perhaps make some deliberate mistakes yourself to invite criticism on yourself! If you feel ringing their own bell and/or speaking out loud would be too much for someone, get them to stand with you and discuss what you should say to whom. A culture of wanting to ring well in a supportive and enjoyable atmosphere should be the goal.

Ron Wright added, in my Branch I've noticed that when we ring Kent, the striking can be distinctly "iffy", but when we ring Oxford the striking is better. The band is concentrating more on the unfamiliar method but the striking improves when we might expect it to deteriorate. Perhaps anomalies such as this, is why training people is so fascinating. You can never be certain what another person is thinking, or which method of training is most suitable, or even what the most helpful comment is. *Roy Cox* replies, over the years it has often been commented on that it is easier to strike one's bell properly to Oxford than to Kent Treble Bob. The common consensus is that making wrong way places as one does in Kent (& Reverse Canterbury) especially on the way down from the back, needs more care & attention lest one drops the handstoke too close to the bell in 3rds place, whereas right way places seem to cause less

difficulty. Perhaps because one is making the place on the same bell in Kent we become complacent about placing our bell correctly, but I would suggest that the second pull in the place is but a rounds interval, no more no less.

Weight of Backstroke.

Mike Clayton wrote picking up on Peter's point about the difference between the weight of handstroke and backstroke pulls - I use a technique shown to me by Bob Bennett to demonstrate this. Set a middle weight bell at handstroke, hold the tail end in one hand, ease the bell gently over the balance with the other and let it swing without any pull on the sally. It will drop like a stone at backstroke. Explain to the student that the bell is working against the weight of the rope, and on smaller bells is the reason for *slightly* more pull on the sally. Now set the bell at backstroke and do the same. Be ready for the bell to bump the stay or at least set itself. Explain to the student that the bell is now working with the weight of the rope, and on smaller bells is the reason for *slightly* less pull on the backstroke. This last paragraph needs a codicil, and that is at backstroke it is more likely that the length of pull compared to a handstroke tends to be greater. This will, of course, have a bearing on the weight of pull at backstroke.

Peter Humphrey wrote, (replying to Peter Dale in previous thread) an allied problem is the learner who's struggling with a bell that's falling, being told to give it a good heave at backstroke. Presumably the reasoning is that there always is a backstroke, whereas the handstroke steadily disappears as the bell falls; also that no time and attention have to be devoted to grabbing hold of that wayward sally. I wish my teachers had explained the weight of the rope at each stroke. I spent far too many years not knowing about this, and consequently over pulling and getting next-to-nowhere.

Reasons for Good Style.

Alison Barnett wrote, can anyone give me some help on persuading a band of self taught ringers that there are valid reasons for trying to correct handling faults. Without being too 'invasive'. i.e, the softly softly approach please.

Fred Bone replies, Take them on an outing to Wheathampstead? A tale I tell learners

(feel free to quote me): When I'd been learning for about six weeks I was taken on my first outing. I was just about at the rounds-unattended stage. At one of the towers (I forget which), you rang round the font. At my first backstroke, the sally came down the other side of the font. They took the rope off me and wouldn't let me ring there any more. The best justification for clean handling is that it makes bell control much easier. The problems show up much more under difficult circumstances: stretchy new ropes, long draughts, etc.

Giles Blundell replied, 3 reasons leap to mind almost instantly. Whether they can be made relevant to this particular band is another matter. - Safety. Depending on how bizarre the handling is, it may be putting the ringers and other people in the tower at risk. Is there any risk of anyone being lassoed? If so, then this should be corrected. A handling fault such as that will probably be visible to other people in the tower, so it should be fairly straight forward to convince people of the need to change. If they won't believe the rest of the band, then a video camera might help to show them what they are doing. - Health. I have always believed that ringing 'correctly' with straight arms at each end of the pull is the least strenuous for the muscles being used - and so the least likely to cause muscle strain or back strain. Does this tower have a regular tenor ringer? If so, then any time they whinge about how hard they have to work and how their muscles ache might constitute a teaching opportunity. - Efficiency. This is more or less the previous point re jugged a bit. A correct style is an efficient style, so it should take the least possible amount of effort. You can sell this to the band as making it much easier to ring peals and quarters. But what if the band believes that quarters are way beyond their ability? Maybe there is an answer in getting a visiting band to come and ring a quarter while some of the locals are around. If (in particular) some of the visitors can be ringers who are not vastly more experienced than the self taught ringers, then it may be possible to point out how easy the visitors found things because of their excellent style - and so how easy it would be for the self taught ringers to emulate them with only a little bit of effort. I'm interested by your 'self taught' description. If this is a band that has

invented itself without outside intervention, then they have done a remarkable and excellent thing. I suspect though that they will be a bit chary of the existing ringing hierarchy, and unlikely to turn up at branch meetings. But if they are self taught, they undoubtedly have lessons to teach the rest of us. Is it worth seeing if they could take a leading role in a seminar for other local ringers on the lessons they have learnt about how to teach (and learn) ringing? It would allow them to come in as valued experts, rather than as new learners who would feel that they were liable to be patronised by neighbouring long standing ringers.

Cyril Crouch wrote, if you are anywhere near to Shiplake, come to our ringing centre. We have a fixed camera covering 4 of the lighter bells linked to both a screen in the tower and a video recorder. Let them see themselves on the screen in the tower alongside good handlers, or take away a video tape so that they can look at their technique on their TV at home.

Paul Martin wrote, I agree with the reasons already cited for encouraging good style, i.e. safety, health and efficiency. If however you have problems convincing the ringers of the desirability of better style try comparing it to other activities. Golfers try to improve their swing to drive further and more accurately. Tennis players work on their serve. Footballers practise their tackling, passing and shooting (or possibly goalkeeping). Try and find out if any of the ringers have other interests and see if you can draw any analogies. Explain that with better handling, ringing will become easier (physically that is) and therefore more enjoyable. Be prepared for an uphill struggle however. It is always harder to "un-learn" bad habits than to acquire good ones in the first place. I also agree that a video camera is a useful tool. A few years back I was trying to cure someone of a very awkward style and he just couldn't understand what I was getting at, so I lugged a big old fashioned camcorder and portable TV up to the ringing chamber one week and filmed him for a few minutes. When I played it back his first comment was "Good grief. I look awful don't I." Once he could see what he was doing wrong he made much better progress at correcting things. I was a bit dubious beforehand that it might be intimidating but after the first

playback everyone wanted a go to see what they looked like too!

John Harrison added, you could introduce them to some of The Learning Curve articles, which might be more palatable than other forms of input for example: (The first three all have very expressive cartoons) 'Doing it with style' Jan 01 / Chap 19 of the book 'Good striking and rhythmic ringing' Jul 99 / chap 2 'Thinking about bell handling' Dec 99 / chap 7 'Fighting the bell' November 01 / chap 29 'Short & long of it' January 03. You could suggest they acquire a copy of The Tower Handbook, which has plenty of lightweight good advice between the cartoons and other browsable information.

Richard Pargeter wrote, there's a good reason for one piece of good style - getting the hand onto the tail end immediately after the handstroke pull. If you don't, you lose the opportunity to take rope in while the rope is slack, and you're not trying to feel or control the bell movement. If you can't take rope in slickly, then your hands gradually slip down it (particularly in cold dry conditions) and it gets more difficult to control the bell. (Whether it's worth pointing out the potential for improved control at different speeds depends on the person - provided there's one good reason that could possibly wait.) I imagine you could demonstrate (or rather get them to demonstrate to themselves) the difference in control between long & short rope easily enough to make the reason 'real', and work on teaching how to take rope in, rather than criticising style - just happen to correct it in teaching the taking-in!

Striking Competitions

Caroline Stevens wrote, Sorry to rake up an old subject, but I wanted to show it is worth the effort of entering!! In 2001 I encouraged my tower to enter a team in the district striking competition. They were extremely reluctant, but the fact it was being held in our tower helped. We came 3rd out of 5 teams. I also persuaded them to enter the association comp later that year. We came 8th out of 8 teams! In 2002 we couldn't raise a band for the district comp, but entered once again in the assoc. comp. We came 5th out of 5 teams. Last Saturday was our district comp. Due to 3 "Jubilee learners" (all who have been handling a bell for less than 12 months) we were able to enter two teams,

one into the call change comp and one into the method comp. We came home with both trophies! Method 1st out of 4 teams Call change 1st out of 5 teams. I find Striking comps very variable. We were lucky, next year on a different day, different bells, different weather etc etc we may revert to 8th place again! Who knows? We will when we try again next year. We enter with the attitude we are going to enjoy ourselves, socialise with other ringers, and come home smiling wherever we are placed, although I think our smiles were a little bit bigger this year! We have had a few tower training days, the CC listening course (twice) and a raising and lowering in peal morning. Our tower captain is always talking about striking, often says "listen to it" rather than picking on individuals, also tells us occasionally to take a deep breath. (I find this very helpful!) We also have a very supportive Vicar and congregation, our achievements were mentioned during the service on Sunday and a round of applause followed. (We are not a happy clappy church, and applause is seldom heard during a service). We have regular social events. Sorry if this reads like rambling, but I think it's all important to good ringing. If you are enjoying yourselves surrounded by friends, then the ringing will generally improve.

Taking the First Coil

Peter Humphrey wrote, I'm not sure whether I've said this before - apologies if so. A beginning ringer lowering in peal often gets into a mess suddenly when they take in their first coil: their upper hand shoots several inches up the rope and the bell is jerked downwards. The cause is usually their doing it too soon. Afterwards, I take them to one side quietly and demonstrate just how much rope is needed for the smallest feasible coil. I do so by showing them a small coil, holding the end in my left hand and the coil next to it in my right, hands touching. I then separate my hands and show them the good foot of rope between my hands, so they can see that that's the length of rope they must have flapping in their eyes (or between their legs) before taking that first coil. A secondary benefit is a consequent improvement in style while ringing with a long rope.

Ian Broster replied, it is the lower hand that should move down, not the upper hand

moving up. The upper hand should stay stationary on the rope during taking the coil. This is a common mistake of learners. Keeping the upper hand stationary on the rope means that during the whole process, there is no change in the 'length' of the rope above the hands. Also, taking a coil can take as many blows as it needs to (provided that the backstroke is pulled straight enough to keep the handstroke under control without touching the sally).

Peter Humphrey replied, quite so, but when they try to take the first coil too early, they cannot possibly keep the upper hand in the same place; that's why I think the too-early-ness is a more basic cause of the problem you describe.

John Harrison wrote, the trouble is that the correct way to make a coil when lowering a bell is the opposite of the normal way to make coils with almost anything else (hose pipe, washing line, extension lead, ...) as was noted in *The Learning Curve* last August. There is therefore a strong learned habit, which tends to emerge when under stress. I've often seen someone build up a fair length of spare tail and then take in a big chunk of rope above the hands, leaving the spare tail still flapping.

Doug Nichols wrote, through all the various arguments on this thread, one point seems to have been generally agreed upon: that moving the upper hand up the rope when making a coil is a bad idea. I disagree. I do this all the time and it never causes me trouble. My left hand moves down, certainly, but my right hand moves up as well. Why do I do it? Because then I can make my coil sooner rather than later and get rid of that flapping tail-end at the earliest opportunity. You can do this by making a small loop, of course, and some people do, but I find small loops are harder to make than big ones. Why do I not suffer the consequences? Because I allow the bell to reclaim some of the rope at the next stroke. (This happens all the time when raising a bell - a cm or two each swing - so it isn't an unnatural feeling.) Provided the first coil isn't started until the bell is below the balance, there no danger of hitting the stay and the loop ends up *precisely* the right length. So, I would argue that the trouble is not caused by starting the coil too soon, but by being too rigid with the grip afterwards.

Ian Broster wrote, when teaching ringing up (which I tend to do before ringing down), I always make the learner take the coils in the same way as ringing down--I tell them to do it this (seemingly crazy!) way because it's good practice for when we learn to ring down.

Andrew Chin wrote, as well as timing the making of the coil, I think there may be a problem with the length of time needed to make a coil. If you divide the bell cycle into 4 strokes: a) handstroke pull b) backstroke rise c) backstroke pull d) handstroke rise I normally take start a coil after c) and complete it no later than d). Some of the ringers I've been helping with lowering, take from after c) to just after a) to make a coil, and even then the coil is more like a bunch. At the moment they do OK when lowering relatively large bells, but when lowering lighter bells, their arm movement seems to lag behind the quick swinging bell. BUT, when raising the lighter bells they seem to do OK?!

Catherine Lewis wrote, I think Doug has a good point here - I suspect he describes what a lot (most?) of us do. I've always told people not on any account to move the right hand up, because, as discussed previously, the normal consequences of this are well known. I suspect that the reason why we don't generally teach people Doug's way is that, for a raw beginner, it all sounds a bit complicated. Maybe that's a wrong decision. This is related to a point, which recently occurred to me, about letting out the rope while ringing up. This should always be done at the top of the backstroke allowing the bell to take precisely what it needs (at least never more than it has the momentum to take). Up to now I have always, at least implicitly, suggested people let the rope out when their hands are at the lowest point. Don't think that's right either! I do however tell them to let it go through their hands to lengthen it, when they get to adjusting the rope length during normal ringing - that's OK..

John Walton wrote, time and timing is certainly an issue. I find learners feel everything is happening very quickly when lowering, especially on small bells. This manifests itself in hurried coil taking - another poor technique which produces a bundle of rope - but also a reluctance to slide the left hand down far enough (due to a perceived lack of time). The result is a

small coil with a tail out of the bottom. I too take my coils as part of the backstroke pull, but this only came with experience. I'm sure I took them later and more slowly when I started, leaving less time to prepare for the handstroke catch - and I see this in my learners too. Whilst not ideal (and adding to the feeling of being rushed), I think it is preferable to a badly taken coil which then causes problems throughout the remainder of the lower.

Phil Dunn making the first coil is often a major hurdle, and if that's not performed well, the rest of the lower is likely to be a disaster. I tend to get the "learner" to lower the bell till there's enough rope for a coil, make the first coil, then ring the bell up till they get rid of the coil, and repeat time and time again, until they can make the first coil with ease and confidence.

Chris Maslan wrote, just a minor point on this which may help someone. I wear glasses and the fear of a long tail getting behind the glasses caused me to take the coil too soon. Having realised this, I now remove my glasses for ringing down which overcomes that problem.

Ian Broster wrote, a strange thing happened last night, when ringing down. I was just about to take the first coil when I noticed that in my hand was: a perfect coil... .What happened was that the momentum/whip of the tail had caused the tail to loop itself round into a coil; as it touched my hand my fingers automatically grasped it, leaving a perfect coil. It was certainly the easiest first coil I've ever taken! Perhaps there's some merit in this: we could practise flipping the tail into a coil without moving either hand down/up the rope at all! ;-) (Not serious, but I might see if I can do it again!)

John Preston replied, not a new trick, and you'll certainly do it again if you try! It happens when you tolerate a long length of free end before you take the first coil. Your hands come down faster on the back stroke than the end of the rope does, so the end flips over and forms the first coil. It's a nice party trick, but I wouldn't recommend teaching it to a learner. If nothing else, it doesn't work for the second coil! Chris mentioned the problem of wearing glasses. I can't even see as far as the rope if I take mine off, so I've had to master all elements without knocking my glasses off. I'm convinced the secret of tidy ringing is in getting an absolutely

straight pull down, especially on the back stroke. One trick to help a learner feel what a straight pull feels like (and it does feel distinctly un-natural initially), is to stand him/her close in front of a (straight) wall, then run the hands down from full stretch up to full stretch down while staying in contact with the wall.

Jenny Cornwell wrote, one other point. One should be catching the sally with one hand only and should have a feel for the rhythm of the ringing before making the first coil. I have been making our learner do this before she makes the first coil. She was getting in a tangle with making the first coil when at the same time changing to ringing with one hand on the sally.

Phil Gay wrote, when teaching learners to lower (which I do at a fairly early stage, i.e. as soon as they can handle a bell with minimum hands-on intervention from me) I find it is useful for the first few times to look after the sally myself, leaving the learner to become confident in making and handling coils without having to worry about catching the sally. Once they can do this, then catching the sally as well is not so intimidating. I do the same with raising. A further advantage of doing it this way is that the teacher can provide extra pulling without having to intervene at backstroke, at least in the top half of the process. Learners often run out of steam about half way up in the raise, and a couple of good pulls on the sally can get them going again. A common problem in the lower is letting the bell come down too fast, which again can be prevented by judicious pulling on the sally.

Martin Mansley wrote, just as a post script to this discussion. Is the difficulty of putting on the first coil the reason that call change ringers in Devon almost invariably ring with a coil on and the tail ends are kept long to accommodate this?

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

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