

## **The Benefits of Ringing**

Ringing has much to offer, with many different challenges and rewards.

English style ringing (full circle ringing) and in particular change ringing has a place deep within our cultural heritage. As a ringer you will have the satisfaction of helping to keep this tradition alive within your community.

The art of ringing itself exercises a unique combination of physical and mental skills. Once you have mastered these skills, you will find it exhilarating to be at one with your bell and to hear that the ringing of which you are a part is of high quality.

The 'methods' used in change ringing are based on patterns and sequences. Learning and ringing them offers considerable mental stimulation. They range from the very simple to the complex, so whatever your level there is something to challenge you.

Ringing is a team activity. Being a member of a close knit band with a common endeavour brings its own satisfaction.

As a ringer, you will also be part of a world-wide community of fellow ringers. This means that in virtually any tower in the world where English style ringing is practised, you would be made welcome and invited to ring.

As you progress, you will find satisfaction increasingly from what you put back into ringing, whether helping to run your tower, teaching and helping other ringers or playing a role in the wider world of ringing.

## **Your questions answered**

### **Can anyone learn?**

Ringers come from all walks of life, old and young, men and women. Like most people, you probably have the basic co-ordination and ability needed to become a ringer, but you will have to develop them to become proficient.

### **Does age matter?**

Many ringers learnt as children (some quite young), others learn in their 50s or 60s. You need never give it up, if you are still fit.

### **How long does learning take?**

It varies a lot. Some people learn more quickly than others. Apart from aptitude, the main factors are the time and motivation you put in, and how you are taught.

Typically it takes between 5 and 15 hours of practice to ring passably with other ringers. If this is concentrated over a shorter time you will learn more effectively. Developing full mastery of bell handling takes much longer.

### **When will I be able to pull my weight?**

When you add to the quality of the ringing by taking part. Until then, the others will expect to 'carry' you (we were all new ringers once) but not for too long. Even before you are a fully fledged ringer, you may be able to do other things, eg organisation or maintenance.

### **How will I know when I am doing well?**

There is no single test, but the encouraging clues you should get include: hearing that the ringing is good while you are ringing, feeling at one with your bell, reducing the amount of force you need to control the bell accurately, ringing with a tidy, well behaved rope., and of course praise from other ringers.

## **What if I don't make the grade?**

No one wants you to fail, but if you don't acquire a minimum level of safe, competent bell control in a reasonable time, you and your instructor will face this question. Intensive coaching might help you over a 'hump', but struggling on with no progress would achieve nothing for you, while you remain a drain on the other ringers..

Don't give up just because you hit a bad patch (most of us had bad patches.) but discuss your problems with your tutor and together decide whether you should carry on.

### **Is ringing dangerous?**

It should not be unless you make it so. Many things are dangerous if you are careless, unskilled, or fail to respect the tools you use. Ringing is no exception. People have (extremely rarely) been killed by bells., but with proper care ringing is quite safe.

When under training, your instructor will be responsible for your safety, but he or she can only do so much and needs your active co-operation and support.

### **Can I enhance my instruction ?**

Initially you will be very dependent on your instructor, but as soon as possible, try to take some responsibility for your own development. There are instruction books and training material to complement your practical instruction, and other ringers to help you.

Observe other ringers' styles, and critically compare them with your own . If you ask them, ringers will watch you and give advice.

As soon as you can ring rounds tolerably, you can start to visit other towers where you will experience different bells and meet other ringers from whom to pick up new ideas.

## A Ringer's Responsibilities

When you become a ringer, you accept some implicit responsibilities. They are not onerous, and represent a modest return for the satisfaction and friendship ringing offers you.

### To your tutor

In return for the time and effort invested in your training, you should commit your own time and effort to learn, so you develop into a competent ringer. You must also share the responsibility for safety of yourself and others while ringing.

### To the Church

In return for the privilege of ringing church bells, you should play your part in ensuring the bells ring on all occasions when the church authorities and congregation expects them to be rung.

### To other ringers

You should be prepared to play an active part in the life of whatever ringing community you find yourself. Many ringers will help you in small ways during your early development. Be prepared to help others in due course.

### To the community

As a ringer you will enjoy the community's consent to performing in public. Never abuse this privilege and try to ensure that the ringing in which you take part is of the highest standard, and do all you can to help ensure that the privilege of free public performance is never withdrawn.

## Useful Information

Tower: . . . . .

Service ringing

Sunday am: . . . . .

pm: . . . . .

Other . . . . .

Practice(s) . . . . .

Tower Captain: . . . . .

Tel: . . . . .

Deputy: . . . . .

Tel: . . . . .

Secretary: . . . . .

Tel: . . . . .

Steeple Keeper: . . . . .

Tel: . . . . .

Rector: . . . . .

Tel: . . . . .

Verger: . . . . .

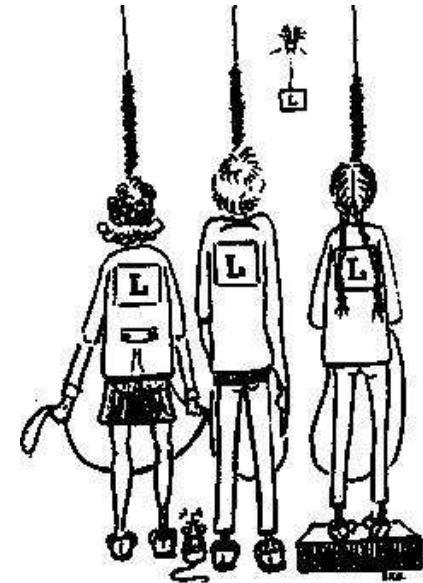
Tel: . . . . .

Branch: . . . . .

Branch practices: . . . . .

## Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bellringers

Education Committee



Cartoon by Yvonne Hall

### Becoming a Ringer

An introduction to the rewards and responsibilities of joining your local band and becoming part of the bellringing community

Name: . . . . .

Church: . . . . .