

THE HULL HANDBELLS PROJECT

Promoting double-handed change ringing throughout the East Yorkshire region.

Newsletter Number 90, April 1st, 2024.

A full list of Project performances for 2024 is on Bellboard at:

<https://bb.ringingworld.co.uk/event.php?id=18198>

Beverley and District Ringing Society

Market Weighton

26 Sancton Road

Friday, 8th March, 2024 (15 in C)

1260 Plain Bob Royal:

1–2 Karen A Lane

3–4 James R Startin

5–6 Peter Church (C)

7-8 Neil Turner

9-0 James E Blackburn

Kingston upon Hull

33 Westbourne Avenue

Tuesday, 26th March, 2024 (15 in C)

1264 Plain Bob Royal:

1–2 Peter Church

3- 4 Heather LE Peachey

5–6 Christopher LD Munday (C)

7-8 Neil Turner

9-0 Barry F Peachey

Out and about

West of Weighton group got the month off to a flying start with Plain Bob Major, Kent Treble Bob Major, St Clement's College Bob Major, Duffield Major, Norwich Surprise Minor and Oxford Treble Bob Major.

Oxford TB Major is an interesting challenge. Such a small structural simplification when compared with Kent causes trial and tribulation for the handbell ringer.

WoW continued to lead the way on Sunday 3rd March with a practice session that included much Oxford Treble Bob Minor plus an excursion into Writtle TB Minor, Plain Bob Major, Little Bob Major and Gainsborough Little Bob Major.

Norwich Surprise Minor was a challenge too far, next time . . .

Our first Tuesday meeting of the month had a valiant attempt to ring Bourne, and a lot of

good progress on Norwich, as well as St Clement's Minor (first for Barry Peachey) and St Clement's Major.

On the following Tuesday with just 5 ringers we had a very productive session, with Chris Church pushing on with Plain Bob Major, and the band ringing a good touch of Little Bob Major. Barry Peachey fell under the magic spell of Duffield and rang his first course on 7-8, but noting that all the pairs do the same work in the plain course. Kent TB Major was a challenge too far, but persistence enabled us to achieve a course of Bourne Surprise Minor.

Our handbells day on 23rd March was very enjoyable, even if we didn't bring any quarter peals to fruition. Our first attempt was scuppered by a broken clapper peg, c'est la vie. My "methods rung" notes show:

- Double Norwich CB Major
- Duffield, Touch NT, HLEP, PC, CLDM, course: ND, WL
- Little Bob Major, PB Major, PB Royal, Plain Hunting on 12
- Kent TB Major, Royal
- Bourne S Minor, Norwich S Minor, Cambridge S Minor (WL first course in hand)
- And some of Barry Peachey's Dog Little Surprise Major.

So, well done to all those exploring new methods.

Friday 29th March (Good Friday) saw 6 ringers meeting on the internet via discord.com and Handbell Stadium. We configured into various groupings using the available technology. My notes include Plain Bob, Little Bob. St Clement's, Oxford TB, Cambridge S., Norwich S., Sandal TB and Writtle TB. All Minor, and all in the space of 1 hour.

The Learning Curve

The blue line(s) for, handbell ringers – a blessing or a curse?

Tower bell ringers talk about ringing by the blue line, but rarely do they mean what they say. What actually happens is that the string of interesting artefacts (like dodges or points

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or whole turns, etc) are usually augmented by a knowledge of the passing of the treble, and often a set of verbal method rules. It's very rare for a ringer to use only the blue line and nothing else. Even W Snowden who invented blue lines picked out the treble in red.

That's all good. The more you know and can use, the more interesting and enjoyable is the ringing, and the greater is the chance of correcting one's own trips and mistakes.

The spirit of the above applies directly to handbell ringing, but the devil is in the extra details.

Double blue lines generate an awful lot to remember, and you have to bring it out of memory at handbell speeds (sometimes nearly twice as fast as towerbells).

Handbell ringing is mentally hard, that's part of the challenge.

So how do you start learning methods for handbells?

Step 1. Tear up the towerbell rule book, take a deep breath, make some coffee, swallow your pride and go back to square 1. Start afresh, treat it as a completely new challenge not an extension of what is already known apart from the abstract theoretical basis.

Step 2. Look at the range of memory techniques and execution skills needed for double handed ringing. Understand how lines, artefacts, place bells, grids, coursing orders, pieces of place notation, rules, all fit together. Don't try to become an expert at using this stuff, just learn enough to get an appreciation of the relevance.

Step 3. Look at Plain Bob Minor or Major and how the memory techniques and execution skills play out. Ask yourself:

- Which artefacts do we use and which do we skip?
- What are the sequences of place bells? Can I use that knowledge?
- Is the grid interesting or irrelevant?

- How does coursing order express itself in Plain Bob? (NB. The answer could be a whole treatise, so just try to see what jumps off the page).
- How many place notation elements am I currently able to ring? Conversely, which ones have I yet to have a go at?
- Can I recite the rule for Plain Bob?

Step 4. Do step 3 for another method like Double Bob, or S Clement's

Step 5. Go back to Plain Bob, choose a subset of the memory skills and execution skills. Review thoroughly, learn, and practise.

Step 6. Make some more coffee and review what worked and what didn't.

The above 6 steps will take you into the thought processes for a handbell ringer learning a new method. Remember, just learn a little bit (for every practice session), and try to apply it. Such incremental movement will take you a long way forward.

Also, the above is aimed at entry level ringing for a given method. Getting up to performance standard requires even more work.

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So, what's so great about handbell change ringing?

For me it's the constant challenge. I am a "novelty junkie", I like to do new things, harder things. There are lots of methods I would love to be able to ring.

I hope and pray the Good Lord will grant me a few more years so at least I can do justice to Pitman's 4 spliced in hand. If not, then there needs to be a heavenly set of handbells just inside the pearly gates.

Peter Church

1st April 2024.