

Points from Master's Discussion Item, Guild Committee, 12th March 2016

Good striking and bell handling.

As a branch, what do you do to identify and tackle handling issues among your members?

What branch activities if any do you have to improve striking?

Banbury

Most towers deal with this in their own tower.

Branch workshops have been held at Bodicote and Adderbury.

Annual branch striking competition.

Bicester

General points: Good handling should be taught from the beginning so that bad habits do not develop.

Bad habits are very hard to correct.

Need to be able to listen for good striking.

Some people are happy as they are and might be offended if someone suggested that they needed to improve. They might even stop them ringing.

What we do already:

Striking competition.

Branch practices – encourage people to ring at other towers to get used to handling other bells.

Various exercises eg ringing while facing the wall, to get people to listen.

3 bell methods to make it easier to count places and hear your own bell.

What we will do in future:

Video.

Ringling teachers – may be passing on (or not correcting) bad habits – need more training for teachers.

Could the teachers be assessed / ART scheme more widely publicised.

Central Bucks

No feedback given.

Chiltern

Chipping Norton

Some tower captains try to encourage good striking and bell-handling but a lot depends on where ringers learnt to handle a bell in the first instance.

The Branch does not hold striking competitions (lack of numbers in most towers).

Our Ringing Master has offered to hold a 'Better Handling course' but there has been no uptake as yet.

EBSB

In EBSB we run an annual handling course, for which people sign up voluntarily. This is usually well attended and has received positive feedback from both attendees and Tower Captains.

This year, one of our towers (Amersham) has run an ART course for ringers, both in the Branch or outside.

We run regular "Novices" courses for less experienced ringers, primarily for basic method ringing, but which also address handling and striking issues as appropriate.

We have, and take part in, striking competitions. The Branch six-bell is a single competition, generally regarded as for slightly more experienced bands, run under Guild rules and with the winner going on to represent the Branch in the Guild Six-bell competition. We also have the Lorna Newton competition; this is a knock-out competition with all the towers in the Branch (apart from the winner of the Branch six-bell)

being entered in the initial draw. Towers that do not wish to participate are then free to give their opponent a bye. Each contest takes place in a mutually agreed tower and there is often a social element. We also enter Guild ten-bell and eight-bell competitions.

Newbury

North Bucks

- 1) Annual Branch Striking Competition
- 2) Annual Chairman's Cup Competition for new ringers
- 3) Interbranch striking competition against Towcester Branch
- 4) We have for the past two years held a quarter peal week in November where we encourage "firsts" to be achieved e.g. first QP, first type of method, first ringing an inside bell, first ringing the tenor etc.,
- 5) In 2015 we held a developing good listening skills workshop.

Old North Berks

ONB Branch does not hold specific activities to improve striking or tackle handling issues. At all our branch practices and ringing events, whenever necessary experienced ringers will comment on handling and striking and give constructive help.

Oxford City

No feedback given.

Reading

How can we identify and help those that need help ?

So often there are so few ringers that no one is available (or a suitable person) to stand behind and advise the ringer on striking or bell handling faults. You also have to be careful not to upset the person in case they give up and leave leaving the tower without enough ringers. We regularly go to a practice and if we are not there or another ringer is unavailable the practice is cancelled.

We should try and encourage the ringers that need help to attend a specific or branch practice for bell handling /striking. This is difficult with the busy lives and work commitments people have.

So often with learners the brain knows the blue line, but they ring at a constant speed irrespective of if they are hunting up or down. Although a simulator can help with this, it is much better to ring with a band as this helps with rope site and coping with odd struck bells and peculiarities with individual bells.

As a branch we include young ringers in the striking completion and have a novices cup.

At the last young ringers day we had eighteen ringers from four different branches of the Guild.

As a Guild do we have enough suitable trainers that have the time and are prepared to travel to help individual towers.

Sonning Deanery

Teaching properly in towers (for example, ITTS/ART teaching) is the best way to avoid the problems (but the question was about Branch activities and most 'members' are not 'learners'). As a Branch we do virtually nothing to correct members' handling problems.

Our new bimonthly, basic training courses help a little with this, but the number involved is necessarily small.

Experienced members (notably Ringing Master) give individual advice when it seems appropriate.

Over the years we have offered both listening courses and 'see yourself on video' courses, but few have been run in recent years.

Striking competitions (the branch has 2 a year) do not directly teach better striking, but they can however provide a stimulus to those who would like to improve and to listen more critically

South Oxon

As a branch, what do you do to identify and tackle handling issues among your members?

We have nothing specific but we do run branch wide practice for Grandsire and Bob Doubles on the first Tuesday of the month. We work on handling in this session.

What branch activities if any do you have to improve striking?

Again we have nothing specific for improving striking.

We discussed running a handling/striking clinic – where Tower Captains might recommend people attend (such as for Radley Course).

A very good recommendation from one tower is that 2 people are present for teaching sessions. The point is that one teacher is near the learner – and one is further back to observe overall form and help with issues that might be developing.

Vale of White Horse

The Vale holds regular monthly traditional Branch Practices at branch towers where we have a mix of abilities, striking and technical method standards. The branch officers & teachers can see what people are doing besides occasional visits to local tower practices.

In addition, we hold frequent targeted sessions which are more aimed at the topic of the Master's question:-

- 1st Friday at Longcot covering a topic voted by members with sometimes includes our rhythm, place counting & listening workshop
- other Friday evenings at Longcot is an area practice where people get to ring whatever they want from advanced methods to extensive bell handling work on single bells. This includes new learners and also folks from round about who have, for whatever reason, got handling problems and want to improve. The practice is well populated with competent teachers. The sound control shutters are closed so it is a relaxed practice with a sensitive approach to striking. There are selected good touches so the learners can hear what "good" sounds like. We always finish with a good lower.
- 1st Sunday evening is a ten bell ring for evensong at Shrivenham to which all are invited and good striking is gently encouraged
- 2nd Sunday evening at Longcot is Advanced Minor practice where good striking is strongly encouraged
- 3rd Sunday evening is a Surprise Major ring for evensong at Faringdon where again, good striking is strongly encouraged
- Regular quarter peals at Shrivenham and Longcot to consolidate method skills and offer sustained good striking for a variety of Branch members.

We hold a Striking Competition where out of ten towers in the branch with members, 8 or 9 teams enter. There is a 'Most improved Trophy' to also provide encouragement.

Witney and Woodstock