



OXFORD DIOCESAN GUILD OF CHURCH BELL RINGERS

Educational Leaflet

No. 5

HOW TO RUN A ONE DAY RINGING COURSE

and

**HOW TO ARRANGE A ONE-DAY BELL MAINTENANCE
COURSE**

Version 1

HOW TO RUN A ONE DAY RINGING COURSE

For a number of years the Oxford Diocesan Guild's Education Committee has organised many one-day ringing courses.

They have found these to be an extremely useful way of improving the standard of ringing at the grass roots level, and it has been said on a number of occasions that courses of this type are the most effective means of teaching devised so far.

A particularly important factor is the flexibility of the scheme, for a course may be tailored to suit almost any situation.

As in any training, however, it is vital to have a defined aim, and a firm course objective should be stated from the outset.

Similarly, a defined level of competence **MUST** have been achieved before the start of the course by every participant: this will save wasting time and avoid embarrassment by all concerned.

The first thing to decide is the course objective. Here are some examples of suggested classifications:

1. Basic Bell Handling

Aim: to improve bell handling and to ensure that the members can handle a bell properly and safely in rounds without assistance.
Qualification: Some experience in handling a bell in own tower.

2. Plain Hunting

Aim: to plain hunt on five or six bells.
Qualification: Ability to handle a bell competently in rounds, and be able to raise and lower a bell without assistance.

3. Plain Bob Doubles and Minor

- Aim: To understand how the method is built up, and to ring Plain Bob.
- Qualification: Ability to plain hunt on five or six bells. Course members should have studied the basic principles in the appropriate Guild leaflet.

4. Stedman Doubles

- Aim: To ring Stedman Doubles.
- Qualification: Ability to ring either Plain Bob or Grandsire Doubles. Those attending this course should know the correct terminology and have learnt the slow work. (The tutor will supply these details to the course members beforehand).

5. Basic Conducting

- Aim: To call touches in a method or methods. These would be specified for the course.
- Qualification: Competence to ring the method concerned. Some knowledge of how the method is constructed is necessary. (The tutor will supply these details to the course members before-hand).

6. Surprise Methods

- Aim: To learn to ring a surprise method.
- Qualification: Ability to ring Plain Bob and Treble Bob on the same number of bells.

7. Belfry Maintenance (see appendix)

It is obvious that these classifications may be varied in any number of ways.

For instance, Grandsire may be substituted for Plain Bob Doubles, Stedman Triples for Doubles, Kent Treble Bob for a surprise method and so on.

It is important to remember that the aim should be only one stage removed from the qualification; Stedman Triples would not be your immediate aim if you could only plain hunt.

Having decided the aim of the course the next step is to obtain the services of a tutor and find a convenient date.

The Guild Education Committee can supply a tutor for any ringing course: apply to the Master or General Secretary.

A typical programme for a one day ringing course would be:

10.30	Assemble for coffee
10.45 - 11.45	Lecture, with opportunity for questions, so that a basic knowledge of the aim is gained.
12.00 - 1.00	Practical session in the tower.
1.00 - 2.00	Return to hall for lunch.
2.00 - 2.30	Further talk (if required) explaining any difficulties found at the practical session.
2.45 - 4.45	Practical session.
5.00- 5.45	Tea
6.00 - 7.30	Final practical session.

With the date fixed and the tutor engaged the next problem is to obtain the towers for the practical sessions.

It can be seen from the programme that four and a half hours ringing is envisaged, so several towers will be required.

It is obvious that they all need to be convenient to the room where the talks will take place; they should also be towers where the bells are easy to ring, thus allowing the course members to concentrate on their method ringing.

It is now possible to select the course members. Bearing in mind the aim and qualification, choose five or six.

There is a great temptation at this stage to gather a crowd together, but it has been found that if more than six attend, then some will probably not achieve the course aims and will go away dissatisfied. (More can be accommodated by running two courses in parallel as explained later on).

The success of the course will depend on the helpers.

You will need to recruit ringers who are willing to stand the boredom of ringing the same plain course over and over again.

It is important to get the same number of helpers for each practical session as there are bells, i.e. if your aim is Grandsire Doubles you will require five helpers, if it is Bob Major then eight will be required.

This will allow one helper to have a well deserved rest during each touch, the tutor standing behind the learner.

With three practical sessions during the day you may need to obtain three times the number of helpers: it depends on their stamina!

Your work is nearly finished, for there are only a few odds and ends left to organise.

Make sure that a blackboard and chalk, or large sheets of paper and felt pens are available, together with scrap paper for the students.

Charge each student a fee that will cover the cost of hall, tutors expenses, postages and other incidentals.

A fee of about £ 1.00 is reasonable: the benefits that will accrue to the individual are worth more than this.

Arrange for a bell to be tied if handling exercises are wanted: one good way to antagonise the locals is to have one bell clanging away continually.

Finally, there is the catering:

Morning coffee; perhaps hot soup at lunch time to accompany the picnic lunch you will ask everyone to bring; a tea at which everyone can get together, helpers, students, tutor and organisers.

If sufficient towers and helpers can be arranged two courses run in parallel are worthwhile.

They may have the same aims, or be totally different.

A short general interest lecture might be substituted for the talk after lunch to both groups; e.g. bell maintenance, rope splicing, duties of a ringer, why have ringing guilds ?, ringing history, etc.

Lastly, try to ensure that everyone has an interesting and enjoyable time. The tutor should keep everyone interested in the tower – those not ringing should be standing behind the helpers - but it is your job as organiser to see to the social side of the course.

A learner who has had an interesting and profitable course will make a happy ringer and is more likely to continue with his or her ringing.

Summary

1. Decide aim
2. Arrange date
3. Obtain tutor
4. Select tower and meeting room
5. Choose course members
6. Find helpers
7. Arrange for catering
8. Decide fee
9. Tied bells?
10. Incidentals: blackboard, scrap paper, handbells, etc.

APPENDIX

HOW TO ARRANGE A ONE-DAY BELL MAINTENANCE COURSE

1. The aim of the course is to teach basic maintenance procedures to tower-keepers and demonstrate them with visits to towers.

The Guild Education Committee can provide a tutor.

2. A typical timetable could be:

10.00	Meet for coffee
10.15	Talk on Belfry Maintenance (Based on Pamphlet No.4)
11.30	Visit to first tower
12.30	Lunch
1.30	Visit to second tower
2.45	Visit to third tower
4.00	Discussion of course and individual problems.
	Tea
5.00	Course disperses

3. Three TOWERS as close as possible should be chosen for the three visits.

The three should also be as different as possible enabling the tutor to demonstrate as many types of frames and fittings as possible (e.g. one with modern steel frame, a ring re-hung in an old frame, one old installation in original state).

The tutor may be able to help in the choice of towers and may if necessary carry out a reconnaissance.

There will not be time to carry out any maintenance where it is known to be needed.

The selection of towers may decide the location of the course and not vice-versa.

There is not usually time to ring at each tower but students may like to have a quick ring on the bells which are new to them so obtain permission in case.

4. The organiser will also need to take care of the administrative matters of arranging the hall with facilities for lecturing and catering and fixing a fee (usually around £1.00) to cover expenses.
5. Students do not need qualifications to attend this course except a desire to learn more about keeping bells in ringing order.

Numbers are virtually unlimited for the theory sessions but if 20 or more attend it is better to arrange for the group to be divided to avoid congestion.

If this is the case a second tutor will be needed. Students need to bring old clothes or overalls, a torch, pencil and paper and lunch (or the means to purchase it).

--0--0--0--0--0--0--0--0--

June '86