

## The techniques of ringing - simplified

The bells are rung in order of size. To start with the lightest smallest bell known as a treble goes first, followed by each one until the largest heaviest tenor bell ends the sequence of five (at present) in our tower. When this is repeated the bells are being rung in 'rounds'.

To vary the ringing two adjacent bells change position by one speeding up and the other slowing down; this is repeated through all the bells as 'change-ringing'. Ways of doing this have developed through the years so that the sound is not repeated, these 'methods' are given names and are learnt and memorised by ringers; they don't have written 'music scores'.

Three bells can change six times without repetition, four bells 24 times. Our five bells can change 120 times. When the bells return to the tower there will be six which can be changed 720 times.

A lot more interesting to listen to and a lot more difficult to learn and do. This is why teams of bellringers are very interested in our project and we hope they will come and ring as visitors. Listen out for the bells to be used more frequently.

As well as being a way to let people know there is something happening at church, or on a special occasion, bellringing is a sociable, educational and fun way to keep fit. Not only will teams visit other churches, but there are competitions, and societies to join, newsletters to read and many techniques to learn.

## Attempting a Quarter Peal

Peals are rung for many reasons: special events, birthdays, weddings, in remembrance of someone, or for the last time before restoration, as on October 24th 2017 on our bells.

It is special occasion which gives each ringer the chance to show their knowledge of a particular method, proving their ability and enjoying a sense of achievement.

A full peal requires a minimum of 5040 changes. This can take about three hours to ring.

A quarter peal requires a minimum of 1260 changes and can take about 45 minutes. As you can only have 120 changes on 5 bells you have to ring 10 extents of 120 and a shorter one of 60 changes.

In both cases no two changes (rows) can be the same within the same extent or the peal is called 'false'.

The bell highest in pitch is known as the treble and the lowest the tenor. The bells are referred to by number, with the treble being number 1 and the tenor being number 5 (in our tower).

The most simple way of using the bells is to ring in 'rounds,' which means ringing the bells in sequence from treble to tenor -

1 2 3 4 5  
1 2 3 4 5

This sounds like a descending scale.

The order of ringing the five bells can 'change' to a different permutation, depending on the method being rung.

The ringers are guided through each set of changes by following a specific pattern (or order), called a method which is a form of 'change ringing' - the practice of ringing a series of mathematical permutations on tuned bells - rather than a melody.

For example, for a 'Plain Hunt' the first four bells all swap place with a neighbour and the fifth bell, the tenor, stays last. This is probably the origin for the phrase 'ringing the changes'.

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1 2 3 4 5
2 1 4 3 5
2 4 1 3 5
4 2 3 1 5
4 3 2 1 5
3 4 1 2 5
3 1 4 2 5
1 3 2 4 5
1 2 3 4 5
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This is the whole extent and finishes in rounds again.

There are hundreds of different methods for different numbers of bells. Each one has a different mathematical pattern and a different name, some of them being linked to the person who devised the method eg Stedman Triples, or named after places eg Yorkshire or Rutland. Doubles methods are rung on 5 bells with the tenor covering and the full extent of this would give 120 changes. When we have

six bells, we will be able to ring 'Cambridge minor', the extent of which gives 720 changes.

Whether ringing a peal, half peal or a quarter peal, the ringers must start the session in rounds. The conductor will then call out the method to be rung. A 'plain course' of a method only takes a few minutes to ring so for a quarter peal, it has to be extended with 'calls' – commands that momentarily change the sequence. After each call, the rules of the method continue, but the ringing is now on a different track. The 'composition' is the sequence of points at which the calls are made. This is where the conductor comes in, because (s)he has to remember to call them all at the right points.

If too many errors are made in timing the changes the Peal is lost and said to be 'fired out'.

Ringling is great fun. If you are interested in learning how to do it, please contact the Bell Captain, Mary Parnham. ( [maryp2707@hotmail.com](mailto:maryp2707@hotmail.com) ) Our Benefice has a keen band of ringers who will welcome you, as long as you are over 12 years old.

