

# Tower Talk

The newsletter for ringers using



Learning™  
the Ropes

Association of Ringing Teachers / Learning the Ropes – [www.learningtheropes.org](http://www.learningtheropes.org)

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**John Cater with ringing friends in Australia in 2016**

The theme this time is ‘Ringing Around the World’. Have you ever been on holiday and heard bells ringing and felt the urge to join in? I think most of us feel that way, whether we have been ringing for years or just a few months! Those of us lucky enough to live in the UK can do this easily, but to do it in other countries takes a bit of planning. In this edition we hear from a few ringers who have combined travel and ringing.

ART teacher (and traveller) John Cater from Church Gresley, Derbyshire, writes:

*On a visit to the Wellington (New Zealand) Ringing Festival last October, I was interviewed by a local TV station, and I told them, “Once you can ring, you’re welcome to go and ring pretty much anywhere in the world”. And this is the nature of the worldwide bell ringing community, where we’re all welcome to join ringing at (almost all) other towers. (A phone call or email beforehand is a good idea, though).*

*So, if you find yourself away from home, in an area with change-ringing bells, why not contact that tower and join their practice or other ringing? You’ll likely be made very welcome, and may well be the one ringer they are short of that evening.*

# Level Four and Counting!

14 year old Hannah Brighty was the 150<sup>th</sup> ringer to achieve LtR Level 4.

I first started ringing about 4 years ago at my village church and I have loved it ever since. From mastering basic bell handling, to learning new and exciting methods, ringing provides a never ending series of challenges. Once you have mastered one thing, there is always something else to move on to. This is what I really enjoy about it. Also, now that I am more proficient, it is nice that I can do my bit for the local community by ringing for Sunday services and weddings. I also help out at the Saturday School in Northampton for Level 3/4 learners and I get something out of this too as it means more practice!

In the lead up to my first quarter peal inside, I was a little bit daunted by the idea of ringing a method for 45 minutes. It was difficult enough ringing from the treble for that length of time. It's both a physical challenge and a mental one. However, as the quarter went on, I relaxed into it and began to think that it was achievable. I have to admit though, when it eventually came round and I heard "that's all", I was very relieved. To this day my first QP on an inside bell is one of my biggest achievements and I feel so proud to be able to say I've done it.

At the moment I am learning to call touches and to ring other methods such as Cambridge and Kent Treble Bob. Sometimes I get the methods mixed up in my head but I can usually sort myself out – though not always!

By Hannah Brighty ringer at All Saints, Harpole, Northamptonshire



Hannah in the ringing room with her LtR Level 4 certificate

## Recent Successes

In the first quarter of 2018, 266 certificates were awarded to ringers at the various stages of Learning the Ropes (LtR) as below (last year's numbers shown for comparison):

Level 1 - Bell Handling	155 (92)
Level 2 - Foundation Ringing Skills	59 (48)
Level 3 - Introduction to Change Ringing	29 (18)
Level 4 - Novice Change Ringer	19 (9)
Level 5 - Change Ringer	4 (6)



If you'd like to see more of these and other similar statistics, they can all be found on the SmART Ringer website at [smartringer.org/public/records/](http://smartringer.org/public/records/).

If you have a story to tell of your own success, or that of one of your pupils, please send it to the Editor and we'll help you to share it.

# New Ringer, New Teacher

I always wanted to ring, but never knew how to get into it. When I saw a tower open day advertised at Carlisle Cathedral late in 2013, I went along. Early in 2014 I started handling lessons with Ron East, but made slow progress at first because my work commitments meant I was only able to get to the weekly practice night and there was limited opportunity for handling lessons there.

By Ruth Gilbert, Carlisle Cathedral

In 2015, I benefited significantly from some training sessions with David Horne, the Ringing Master at the Cathedral. We rang methods with the simulator ringing all the other bells. I also took advantage of opportunities to ring at other local practices. Since then, my ringing has gone from strength to strength. I am now more often a helper at the Guild intermediate practices than a learner and I'm making some progress with Surprise methods.

In the Summer of 2015, two of my nephews realised how much fun Aunty Ruth was having in the tower and decided they wanted to learn to ring too. While driving, I was bombarded with questions regarding the whys and wherefores of ringing – I was effectively giving theory lessons and the logical progression of that was to do an ART day course and start teaching ringing, so when the opportunity presented itself in 2016, I attended Module One with Anne East as my mentor. My first learner, Barry Garrett, has worked hard and made rapid progress. He has recently achieved his LtR Level 3.

I initially joined Learning the Ropes to help Ron complete the practical elements of his own Module 1 accreditation, and wasn't really interested in using it to mark my progress; however, when looking at other learners' progress I realised I was probably at LtR Level 5 so I asked Ron if we could look at it. I had a deep sense of satisfaction when he advised me I had reached all the requirements for Level 5. However, the personal satisfaction from my own achievements pales into insignificance when compared with the achievements of the two learners I have had the honour to teach, those of my two nephews, or (most importantly) the slow but steady progress of the Carlisle Cathedral band as a whole.

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## 50/50 Club Draw News

The draw took place at a social organised by St Bridget's Church Moresby, Cumbria, by some of the new ringers.

By Chris de Cordova,  
50/50 Club Administrator and  
ringer at Whitehaven, Cumbria

1st prize of £68, won by Paul Lewis of Edgmond, Shropshire

2nd prize of £34, won by Diane Biggs of St John's, Devizes

3rd prize of £34, won by John Proudfoot of Carlisle Cathedral

The photo shows some of the 12 new ringers who are learning on a dumbbell at Moresby, West Cumbria, who drew the winning tickets. They hope to be ringing on their own light 8 by the end of June.



Have you joined yet? It's open to everyone who is registered on SmART Ringer (that's everyone who is on the Learning the Ropes scheme). All you have to do is make contact with the Club Organiser, Chris de Cordova (35 Thornton Road, Whitehaven, Cumbria CA28 6UW or email [5050club@learningtheropes.org](mailto:5050club@learningtheropes.org)) OR download a form from [www.learningtheropes.org/5050club](http://www.learningtheropes.org/5050club).

It costs only £12 for an annual subscription and all the money collected is divided equally between prize money and essential funding for running Learning the Ropes.



# Ladies Who Lunch

I started to learn to ring at Kineton, Warwickshire in March 2017. I expected it to be easy – but I was in for a surprise! I just thought it was a matter of pulling a rope to make the bell chime, as I'm sure most people do.

I was very pleased when I achieved my ART Learning the Ropes (LtR) Level 1 certificate and badge in May. It was then that I also acquired my 50 Ringing Things book. At first glance, I didn't understand the terminology and suspected the book might be too advanced for a new ringer, like me. But gradually, and with the help of my ringing teacher and fellow ringers, I realised that some of the things I was already doing or attending, were in fact 'Things'. This motivated me to start collecting things; driving my teacher mad to splice a rope, whip an end of rope, clean the ringing chamber ... fit a muffle (still on my to do list!).

This book encouraged me to try ringing at different towers, to ring on 10 bells, ring on a bell lighter than 3 cwt, and visit a bell foundry. Attending other tower practices has helped me enormously with my handling and has given me lots more time on a rope. I am nervous of attending other towers, but I have always been made to feel welcome and have gained many tips of experience from other ringers. Sometimes a ringer will explain something to me in a different way to how I am thinking, and it is like a light bulb moment. I often over-think things. I have also found that everyone learns at different speeds.

When I achieved my LtR Level 2 certificate and badge in October, I was thrilled and felt motivated to keep going.

So when I needed to hear a bell over 5 tons, I decided to organise a trip to Oxford to hear Great Tom at Christ Church, which weighs in at 6.25 tons. I decided it would be far more fun to go with others, so I invited other '50 Things' collectors who I ring with regularly – Kathy, Yvonne and Grace. We called ourselves The Luncheon Belles (Ladies Who Lunch) and headed to Oxford on the train. After visiting a coffee shop to warm up on this snowy day, we headed to hear Great Tom chime for midday ... another 50 Things tick! We listened to the bells of Carfax Tower ringing for the Queen's Ascension Anniversary, then joined ringers – all 27 of us – to 'have a grab' at Lincoln College tower. Thanks to Kathy and Michelle for arranging Lincoln College – it was a fabulous experience, and very motivating! Then on to Merton College to take in the spectacle of the unique ringing chamber. The Luncheon Belles ended this most enjoyable day having lunch and glass of wine ... . A Great 'Tom' was had by all!

I have recently completed my first Quarter Peal and have decided to call myself a 'real ringer' now. It is twelve months since I began this LtR challenge. I have found my journey to be great fun, along with sheer frustration and frequent complaints that 'I can't do it', but also lots of laughter.

This article wouldn't be complete without thanking my very patient ringing teacher, Graham Nabb, along with the other ART-accredited teachers and fellow ringers who are tutoring me along the way ... on this challenging but very enjoyable journey.

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By Gillian Hosking, ringer at Kineton, Warwickshire



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The Luncheon Belles: Yvonne Kennedy, Kathryn McCarthy, Grace Wilson and Gill Hosking



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Merton College ringing 'chamber' – around the balcony high above!

# Hyperactive Thursdays!

For over a year now, a group of young ringers have been meeting up for fun and a bit of ringing at St Mary's, Moseley, in Birmingham. They're called the Brumdingers and all eight of them have become great friends. Only three have ringing parents, with the rest having come from an initial article in the church school magazine and then the children inviting their friends. No one who has joined has given up. Founder member Charlie Linford tells us what it's like to be a Brumdinger:

The Brumdingers ring in Moseley from 6:30 until 7:45pm every Thursday. We are mostly in year 6 and get very hyperactive after sugar and caramel wafers! It is more of a playtime than lesson and it helps being a ground floor ring because we can run around. When we are called back to ring we follow LtR, with a chart to show what everyone has done. Another good thing is that we are learning to ring handbells in parallel. At the end of the week the CATTs (Clare, Arthur, Tracy, Trish, Simon - our teachers) award our mascot Simba to whoever has shown improvement, helped someone or overcome a challenge.

Brumdingers have a monthly 'Church Parade' when we ring with the local band.

We enjoy ringing away from home too. We have recently been to Worcester on a trip which Mark Regan and the CATTs organised!

When Dad asked me how I would like to see children learn to ring I instantly said, "YouTube Channel!" So we have started a YouTube Channel called Brum Dingers. We are going to upload lessons weekly and every video will help you learn a different challenge.

We have recently entered the Ringing World National Youth Contest in July. It is a challenge for the Brumdingers; we haven't rung in a striking contest before and we will enter our first ever striking contest, against the towers in Birmingham, in May!

All of our eight Brumdingers enjoy coming. We play and we have formed a family. And we have lots of fun! We play ringing games and it isn't intensive at all.

Brumdingers and the CATTs hope that the Brumdingers will spread all over Birmingham. #simbawarriors



# An Unexpected Journey

It seems very timely to reflect on my new hobby, bell ringing. Not only is it three years since I started ringing, but I have just completed Level 5 of the ART (Association of Ringing Teachers) Learning the Ropes scheme. If someone had said to me three and a half years ago that I would be so enthusiastic and driven by bell ringing, I would have laughed them out of the house!

So what happened?

In August 2014 my lovely younger brother Bob was suddenly and tragically killed in a plane crash in California where he lived. During the plans for his funeral my parents requested that one of the causes for donations should be the Restoration of the Bells fund in their small village church, St Andrews, in Puckington, Somerset. Mum said that Bob used to enjoy listening and trying to ring the bells as a child. We couldn't remember that, but we only wanted what Mum and Dad wanted so we were happy to go along with their wish. Our money was just what they needed to complete the fundraising so work could begin on the bells at the start of the new year.

In those dark days between the funeral and Christmas I began to think about those bells and their restoration. I wondered if I could ring one of them to mark the anniversary of Bob's death. The thought wouldn't go away and so one day, between Christmas and New Year in 2014, I looked up 'bell ringing' on our village website and rang the number.

Well! The very next day I was being shown around the tower of Holy Cross, Pattishall, by Chris and Margaret Bulleid. They were, and have been ever since, so kind and gently enthusiastic about bell ringing. I genuinely had no idea what it involved - I was like a rabbit in headlights! Despite working full time, Chris and Margaret gave up their Saturday mornings for weeks to help me get control of that tricky rope. I started to go to Monday practice which at the start seemed the strangest of places. I used to sit there, listening to the bells, weird Bob words (ironic) and serious faces looking like they were in an odd game of wink murder. However, it wasn't long 'till I was ringing on Monday and then, to my total surprise, was asked to ring on Sundays! I hadn't thought about that at all but was blown away by the emotional impact of ringing for Sunday Service. I will never forget the amazing feeling leaving the church on 19 April 2015 and have hardly missed a Sunday ring since.

As I progressed my handling skills (and started to go to the pub after practice) conversation came round to my original aim of ringing for the anniversary. As the time drew nearer I became incredibly nervous about how to do this. Obstacles were plenty; I didn't know anyone to ring with, would I be able to ring without crying and most importantly would the bells be dedicated? As I talked this through with my new bell ringing buddies, a suggestion was made that maybe the band from Pattishall tower could come down to Somerset and ring with me. In that thought was another new experience for me - a bell ringing tour! How great it was too. A group of about twenty from Northampton and Somerset were

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By Nic Boyd, Level 5 ringer at Pattishall, Northamptonshire



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Nic getting ready to ring the treble



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St. Andrew's church, Puckington

“ I ... was blown away by the emotional impact of ringing for Sunday Service.”

amalgamated using various contacts of old, and we visited towers around the area on Friday and Saturday, finishing at my home village of Puckington on Sunday with a lovely lunch at my parents afterwards.

So many wonderful things came out of this trip. For a start I had never been in so many lovely towers on the same day. All those little doors, funny entrances and first floor rings. We packed seven churches into one of our days, many of which I knew well, and it was wonderful. The ring at Puckington was more than wonderful as it was where all our family events had happened and it felt so lovely to ring there for Bob.

Since then I have rung in over sixty towers, rung for weddings and funerals, completed nine quarter peals and finished my LtR Level 5. None of this could have been done without Chris and Margaret and a fabulous and supportive tower.

Although my entry into bell ringing stemmed from a tragic event, it has given me so much. I have found huge solace but also joy in going to those gorgeous towers and being part of an ancient English tradition; I have loved the technical challenge of ringing, met a fantastic group of people and had lots of laughs. Also, when I've been away in other parts of the country, I have been able to pop into the local church and have a lovely ring with more lovely people (who are usually very grateful to see you).

It really has been the best thing that's happened to me in the last ten years!

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## Australian Diary

G'day from down under rural Australia! Exciting times happening down here!

At present we are still having very hot days and nights. Some are 40 degrees and above – just perfect for ringing. (Well, maybe not. But the thought of missing out ...)

Just recently I was invited by the tower to ring a quarter peal. Oh wow: a quarter peal! The thought of it brought every emotion to the surface. But here I was and then came the bombshell: we were going to have the president of ANZAB (Australia and New Zealand bell ringing association) David Smith join us in the quarter peal. I have been lucky enough to meet him a couple of times, but to ring a quarter peal with him? Wow, what an honour!

The evening came and I got through with no hitches. I actually enjoyed it and was surprised how quickly the time went. Once you start into a rhythm, it just keeps flowing and I am now looking forward to my next one.

Over here we do not have the tower access you have in England and again I travel two hours to practice and two hours home to find a tower with real bells. I look forward to the last Wednesday of each month when I go to the tower and practise ringing on the real bells. Can't wait!

Happy ringing to all!

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By Karen Adamson, ringer from  
Maldon, Australia



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Karen is an enthusiastic bell ringing nurse and she sent us this image to use with her article

“ I travel two hours to practice and two hours home to find a tower with real bells.”

# 50 Ringing Things: Moving Out of My Comfort Zone, part 2

*In the last edition of Tower Talk, Lucy Gwynne from Warwickshire described how, as a ringer of several decades, she didn't think that 50 Ringing Things was for her - until she started to tick a few of them off and realised it was! Several months further into the challenge she shares another startling fact - that once the challenge bug takes hold, there's no stopping it!*

In my Pre-Thing life, I liked to spend Saturday evenings with Strictly Come Dancing and a nice glass of wine easily to hand. I was content with my ringing, learning some new methods now and again and helping with learners' practices.

Then one evening I picked up the innocent little book I had bought on a whim a few months earlier. It had been sitting quietly on my table since then, just waiting. Ooh I thought, I could do a few of those and off I set on a challenge to try something new.

Here is my word of warning! The challenges start gently but then you start to look in other sections of the book and suddenly you find yourself volunteering where previously you would have stepped back.

See what it has made me do now ...!

Here I am on a Saturday evening roping up the tenor at St Mary's, Warwick, ready for a quarter peal attempt on the Sunday. No wine, no Strictly; just me astride the tenor like some kind of champion jockey, wrestling miles of rope round the wheel with freezing hands. At this point the bells decided to show their appreciation by chiming the hour. Not sure there is a Thing saying 'Sit on bell, holding rope and put fingers in ears' but if there was I'd have ticked that one too.

Phew, I thought, all completed so we can go home; but no. The steeplekeeper pointed out that as it was me who had put the rope on it was only right and proper that I should test it. Help! I don't like standing on boxes and have never rung the tenor at St Mary's before.

And then the steeplekeeper took a short video of a terrified me ringing the tenor before breaking into rather hysterical laughter. That video is now on YouTube so, hey - a bonus, another Thing to tick off.

Did I say I recommend this little book? Yes, I still do, but take it from me you don't know what you may end up doing - you have been warned!

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By Lucy Gwynne, ART-Accredited  
Teacher at Warwick



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Lucy atop the 24-3-20 (1266kg)  
tenor at St Mary's, Warwick



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Time to test her work!

# Rocky Mountain High

I found my interest in campanology relatively late in life at the age of 63 and, being a mature novice ringer with a 'tired' brain, I learn best from lots of practice and actually 'doing'! I've taken up the '50 Ringing Things' challenge to ring at 50 different towers within 100 weeks and I'm giving it a go. I have rung at 20 churches to date and I feel my confidence is growing and my bell handling improving with each new tower. I have always been made welcome and most of the bands had ringers who were at different levels. I have been reminded many times that all ringers started as novices.

My recent adventure to the Canadian Rockies started when I searched on [dove.cccbr.org.uk](http://dove.cccbr.org.uk) (the on-line version of Dove's Guide for Church Bell Ringers) which lists up-to-date details of every church in the world with bells hung for English style full-circle bell ringing. I was disappointed to find that the only ringing practice being held at any of our planned destinations was at the RC Holy Rosary Cathedral in Vancouver and, being a novice and having not yet achieved my Level 2 in Learning the Ropes, I decided that I would be out of my depth ringing there, and anyway I might hinder the practice of the more talented Cathedral ringers.

How wrong I was! With a lot of encouragement from my husband I rang the Tower Captain and found her to be very chatty and friendly. She said that I would be very welcome to join in with their practice and that my limited experience would not be a problem. My nerves immediately kicked in and I had a very restless night!

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## Vancouver

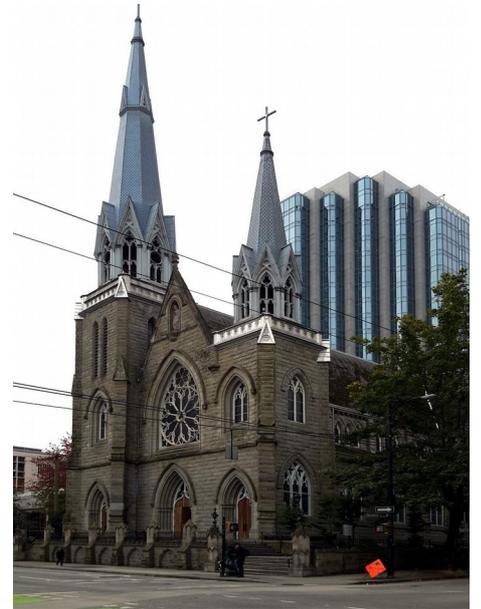
My husband and I arrived early so that we could look around the Cathedral first. The Holy Rosary is the oldest church in Vancouver, opened in 1900, less than 2 years after construction began. It is a late 19th century French Gothic revival church built in the shape of the Latin Cross.

I found out that there was originally a chime of 7 bells which had been cast in France and were not hung for change ringing at first (historical notes show that they had no stays, sliders or ropes). Unfortunately the bells were soon found to be out of tune and after much persuasion from the unhappy clergy and parishioners it was finally agreed that the bells should be shipped to England to be recast and then hung for change ringing. Some of the bells were melted down and recast to make a ring of 8 tuned bells - a full octave.

I climbed the 43 steps and entered the ringing chamber with shaking hands and butterflies in my stomach. I was extremely nervous, but as the friendly band arrived I started to relax a little. They asked about my holiday and my church back home and with their Cathedral not yet 120 years old they were very interested to hear that ours was originally built in 961, had lead shots in the door from the Civil War and had the tallest steeple in Warwickshire. I was told that a very skilled band from England had rung at the

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By Kathryn McCarthy, Ringer at  
Tredington, Warwickshire



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Holy Rosary Cathedral, Vancouver



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Sign in the street outside

Cathedral only 2 weeks before, having previously rung at St Paul's in London. One ringer said how inspiring they had been and how much the local band had enjoyed hearing their bells being rung so beautifully by the visitors.

Before we started ringing together I rang a bell on my own and was complimented on my ringing style, which was encouraging and comforting, but then, as I was getting ready to pull off with the others, I was quietly told that it would be better to position myself under the bell (oops!! I was concentrating so hard on other things I had forgotten to position myself correctly - not a good start), but I soon put my embarrassment to one side and started to enjoy my time at Holy Rosary.

With the Tower Captain at my side I was encouraged to ring on different bells and I joined in with rounds and call changes. I had the difference between dodging and hunting explained to me, and I covered for the first time, counting my bell striking in 6th place and feeling the rhythm of the bells. As I said my goodbyes the Tower Captain was amused to tell me that she had been watching the British TV series Heartbeat when I phoned her which was a coincidence!

After an hour's practice I reappeared at the bottom of the steps grinning from ear to ear. I had thoroughly enjoyed my experience and was very proud of myself - I had rung at a Cathedral! I started to brief my husband who pointed to two screens in the Cathedral porch - one was of the moving bells, another of the ringers upstairs. Unknown to me our ringing was being shown live to all visitors passing through, including my husband. I'm so glad that I didn't know that at the time as I would have been twice as nervous!

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## Victoria

Next on our travels was Victoria, Vancouver Island and we ended up staying overnight unexpectedly due to a mix up with travel arrangements. I couldn't believe my eyes when I found that the practice for that Cathedral fell on the same night - fate had played its hand - it just had to be done, but this time the Cathedral had 10 bells!

Christ Church Cathedral is one of the largest churches in Canada and is built in the Gothic style of the 13th Century. In 1889 an architectural competition was launched for the design of a new Anglican Cathedral in Victoria. It was won by a Scottish architect but lack of funds delayed the building of the new Cathedral which started in 1923 and was finally completed in 1986.

So again with lots of encouragement from my husband and with legs already like jelly I entered the North West Tower and climbed the 71 steps up a narrow spiral staircase into the very large ringing chamber. Again I was made to feel very welcome. A lot of interest was shown in my trip to the Rockies and many tips were given for sightseeing. I explained that I was a novice and someone commented that 'there was no such thing as a bad English ringer' - no pressure on me then! I commented that they hadn't heard me ring yet which amused them!

I asked if I could first ring on my own, and with everyone watching I did well and was congratulated on my bell handling and told that I must have a good teacher, which was a nice confidence boost for me. But then it went downhill for a short while when I rang too fast and when we were told to stand it took me 4 attempts to set the bell! I was given a box to stand on and I quickly got back on track. Again, I had the comfort of having a friendly face beside me when we rang rounds and call changes.



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Christ Church Cathedral, Victoria

Later we rang on all 10 bells which was a very new experience for me. I rang the 4th (6-1-13). The ringing sounded fast and furious but it was explained that in actual fact we needed to ring slower than usual to enable all 10 bells to ring. During call changes I found working out the numbers of which bell was which with 10 bells difficult at first, but decided to focus on halfway house no.5 as my starting point and count up or down from there, which worked well for me. We rang for what seemed to be a very long time, certainly longer than I've ever rung before, and I was congratulated at the end on my bell handling.

Again I left the practice after an hour and, when we met, my husband couldn't believe the change in me - having apparently not spoken for two hours before (with nerves) he now couldn't shut me up - I was on such a high!

What an exciting start to my holiday - two more Ringing 'Things' achieved:

- Ringing on 10 or 12 bells
- Ring at a Cathedral, Abbey or Minster

and if this article is published, a third:

- Write an article about ringing

Canadian Rockies here I come!



## Fascinating Facts

Supplied by Kathryn

### Holy Rosary Cathedral, Vancouver

- The ring is part French (3 bells) and part British (5 bells).
- All the bells are hung to swing east-west only, unlike the more common frame where one or more bells are swung at right angles.
- The first peal ever to be rung in Canada took place in 1911 at the Cathedral (rung by eight ringers from England).



The bells at Holy Rosary

### Christ Church Cathedral, Victoria

- By 1936 the new tower had risen to the height of the bell chamber floor and a peal of 8 bells was installed on the top of this floor and rung that year. A wooden shed was built over the bells to protect them from the elements until the upper portion of the tower was completed in 1957. Two smaller bells were added in 1983 and all 10 bells were cast at Whitechapel Bell Foundry in London.
- The original first eight bells are of the same design as the peal at Westminster Abbey.

# Rope and Wheel, Bell and Stone - The Magic of Ringing

*Laura E. Goodin is an American writer and academic living in Australia. She's been ringing since September 2017. Her first time in a bell tower was in the northern summer of 2017, on a visit to her cousin's church, St. Andrew's Anglican in Enfield Town. She sends her greetings and thanks to the ringers there who made her so welcome, and inspired her to chase up a tower to ring at when she got back to Melbourne.*

I think it was the magic spells that got me. Sure, the climb up the worn stone steps to the secret chamber at the top of the old tower had begun the transition: after all, secret passageways are designed to entice the soul into another realm, a land of possibilities and oddities, where misfits become heroes and eccentricities become the very forces of destiny. And the warnings of danger - "Hush!", "Don't touch the ropes!", "Stay back here!" - added to a sense that something perilous and wondrous was about to happen. But ultimately, I was captured by the spells.

The ringers stood at the ropes. Their faces were taut with concentration, their eyes fierce and focused. Whatever it was they were preparing for, it was clearly going to demand the best of them. Whoever they were, they were their most marvellous, most utterly present selves at this moment.

"Look to," called one. This was the first spell, gathering the power of each ringer to a single point. "Treble going! She's gone!" These were the spells of release, letting the sound pour down from the bells overhead. Beautiful, intricate patterns of sound, with the note of each bell moving among the others like the streamers of a maypole, or the spirals of DNA, or starlings against the sunset. This was a sound that could simultaneously call the human heart to greatness and send terror through the twisted minds of demons. At intervals the leader would call out another spell, and the sound would change. No explanations, just confidence in each other and an unspoken accord, a shared commitment to making the magic happen.

After a while came the spell to gather the power back in: "That's all!" Finally, the spell of closure: "Stand!" In the silence, I could hear my heart pounding. I want this, I thought. I want to do this; I want to understand this.

They let me try: just a few backstrokes, a few handstrokes. I felt the connection to the bell like electricity running up and down the rope. The force of my muscles built a model of the bell in my mind; I could feel the space it took up and track its swing through the air. I could see there was going to be a long apprenticeship, that such mastery as I'd seen wouldn't come easily. But that didn't matter. I knew that once I got back to Melbourne, I wasn't going to rest until I'd found a tower of my own to learn in.

I was a ringer now.

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By Laura E. Goodin, ringer at  
St. James Old Cathedral in  
Melbourne, Australia



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A look into the belfry at Laura's  
home tower, St James' Old  
Cathedral in Melbourne

“ confidence in each other and an unspoken accord, a shared commitment to making the magic happen.”

“ I wasn't going to rest until I'd found a tower of my own to learn in.”

# Parlez-vous Bonglais?

Sheila and I have always had an unwritten rule – when on holiday we have a break from routine, including a holiday from ringing. But when we first had a chance to visit Canada it somehow seemed foolish to pass up the chance of grabbing some unusual towers. So we got in touch with ringers in Vancouver and were treated to wonderful hospitality by Alan and Maie Ellis and their colleagues at the Holy Rosary Cathedral. Similarly, we have rung several times with the Calgary band and enjoyed convivial sessions in the Dog and Duck pub afterwards.

This summer saw us in Quebec in eastern Canada, a wonderful World Heritage city full of exquisite Anglo-French architecture. And staying just around the corner from Holy Trinity Anglican Cathedral (an 1830 Thomas Mears 8 of 14 cwt) on their Wednesday practice night, we decided to get in touch with their Captain, Benjamin Waterhouse. We had been reminded of our need to revise our French before setting off for Quebec, but “Waterhouse” seemed a reassuringly English name.

Admission to Holy Trinity is gained by the unusual means of pulling on a cord which dangles from the window of the ringing room and sounds a small servants’ bell above. On the evening of our visit an inquisitive Texan couple had pulled on this cord and the ringers, expecting visitors from the UK, had gone down to let them in. The couple undoubtedly enjoyed an unexpected and memorable evening in the tower.

The majority of Holy Trinity’s ringers are English speakers, but several are French Canadians, one or two with a limited command of English. So the usual medium in the tower is French, and Holy Trinity claims to be the only French-speaking change ringing band in the world. Standing behind one of these ringers therefore presented particular challenges for my schoolboy French. In call changes “à quatre” or “à moi” came easily. Plain Hunt presented more of a challenge – “en haut lentement”, “en bas vite!”. Fortunately, the band that took hold for Stedman Doubles was all English-speaking. Otherwise I might have drawn inspiration from Miles Kington – “Faissez les coathangers” ou “Faissez les ... les ears des chats”.

If you ever get the opportunity to ring in Canada do grab it; Canadian ringers are most welcoming. But if you are going to be in Quebec, don’t forget to brush up your “Bonglais”!

[This article was first published in ‘Ringing Around Devon’.]

By Les Boyce (with apologies to the late Miles Kington)



Cathedral of The Holy Trinity, Quebec

## Volunteers Needed

If you’re enjoying your experiences using Learning the Ropes, and you have a bit of time to spare, would you consider volunteering to help LtR continue to offer first class teaching and learning?

So if you are a bit of a “whiz” with Word or Excel, if you “get” social media, if you have an “eye” for design and layout, or if you have a good telephone manner then there are jobs and projects with which you could make a real difference to other ringers. If you know someone who needs a bit of work experience to bolster out their CV then don’t forget to mention this to them too.

Interested? Then contact [lesleybelcher@ringingteachers.org](mailto:lesleybelcher@ringingteachers.org) and let’s chat.

# Ringling Remembers in 2018

To commemorate the 1400 bell ringers who died in the First World War, the [Central Council of Church Bell Ringers](#), together with the [Big Ideas Company](#) and the [Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government](#), have launched a new campaign to recruit 1400 new bell ringers. This is a call out to all of us and an opportunity for everyone, a chance to make this wonderful ancient tradition open to all.

## Bells rang out for the Armistice

When the bells rang out on 11 November 1918 they announced the end of the most catastrophic war the world had yet seen. At the time, bells were at the heart of the community, marking events of great significance and communicating to people long before modern technology connected us. Bell ringing has always had a much wider function than its role in the church, but most of us today are not aware of its broad and inclusive service.

## Bell ringers lost their lives

Many bell ringers joined the war effort, and many lost their lives. Just after the war, the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers wrote to all bell towers to compile the Roll of Honour. At the time 1077 men were reported as lost. More recent research has uncovered over 300 ringers who died in service. In total some 1400 bell ringers lost their lives in the Great War. A loss to them and their families. A loss to communities.

## Join the project

If you started Learning the Ropes since November 2017 you are eligible to become part of the 1400 Armistice 100 band. All you need to do is register at [a100.cccbr.org.uk/register](http://a100.cccbr.org.uk/register) and tell us that you've already started to learn.

On 11 November 2018 bells will ring out in commemoration, but also in celebration of peace. Whether you join in at 11am, or later in the day as part of the Government's International Moment, or at some other suitable time in your local area, we will remember them.

*If you would like to help the Ringing Remembers campaign to recruit new ringers, various resources are available on the Central Council's [Armistice 100](#) web site. There is a poster that you can download, print off, and display in your own church, or, if you'd like to produce your own, there are high resolution versions of all the images used in this article and many more. Look in the [resources](#) section.*

You can also ask people to email [bells@big-ideas.org](mailto:bells@big-ideas.org), search for 'Big Ideas' on facebook, tweet [@Big\\_Ideas\\_Co](#) or use the tag [#ringingremembers](#).

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By Vicki Chapman, CCCBR  
Ringing Remembers Project  
Coordinator



# Learning Tips No.7: Breaking the Code

'Thing' number 20 in '50 Ringing Things' is "Write out a method using Place Notation". Debbie Phipps, a Level 5 Ringer at Lychett Matravers, Dorset, told us that she had to get help with this one, but discovered that it was not quite as mysterious as she first thought. So, with her input and help, we decided to share more information about Place Notation.

By Mike Rigby, ART-Accredited Teacher and Tower Captain at Lighthorne, Warwickshire

Place Notation is a compact way to represent a method without writing out all the lines or describing it in diagram form. You can use it to learn a method, but more often it is used to communicate a method to others by text or for a computer program.

The essence of change ringing is that the bells continually change place; they rarely stay in the same place. So noting where places are made, and assuming that all other bells change place, results in a compact notation. The 'rules' of change ringing let assumptions be made that allow even more compactness to be used than we're going to explain here, but this is enough to give you the idea.

Let's start by looking at where places are made in Plain Hunt, both Doubles (PH5) and Minor (PH6). Here are the first three rows of each, with an indication of the changes made between rows:



## Plain Hunt Doubles (PH5)

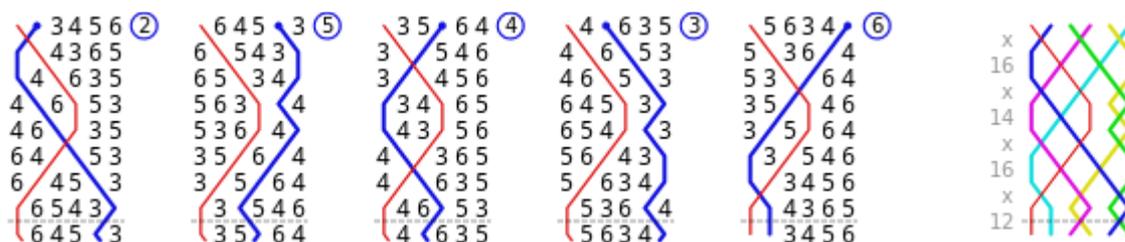
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	
X	X				← A place is made in 5 <sup>th</sup>
<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	
	X		X		← A place is made in 1 <sup>st</sup>
<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	

## Plain Hunt Minor (PH6)

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	
X	X	X				← NO places are made
<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	
	X		X			← A place is made in both 1 <sup>st</sup> and 6 <sup>th</sup>
<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	

Suppose we write these two changes of PH5 as '5.1', where the numbers represent the places made and the dot just separates the changes. For PH6 we could write 'X.16', where the 'X' means 'all change' or 'no places' and we see that 1<sup>st</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> place are made in the same change (there is no dot between). This is the basis of place notation. The main thing we need to add to this is the convention that we write down a complete 'lead' of any method: from when the treble leaves the lead, to when it leads again at backstroke.

Let's work through a sample method. We've chosen Little Bob Minor as it's short: the lead is only eight blows. Here's the blue line for each of the place bells and the grid with the places made written beside it:

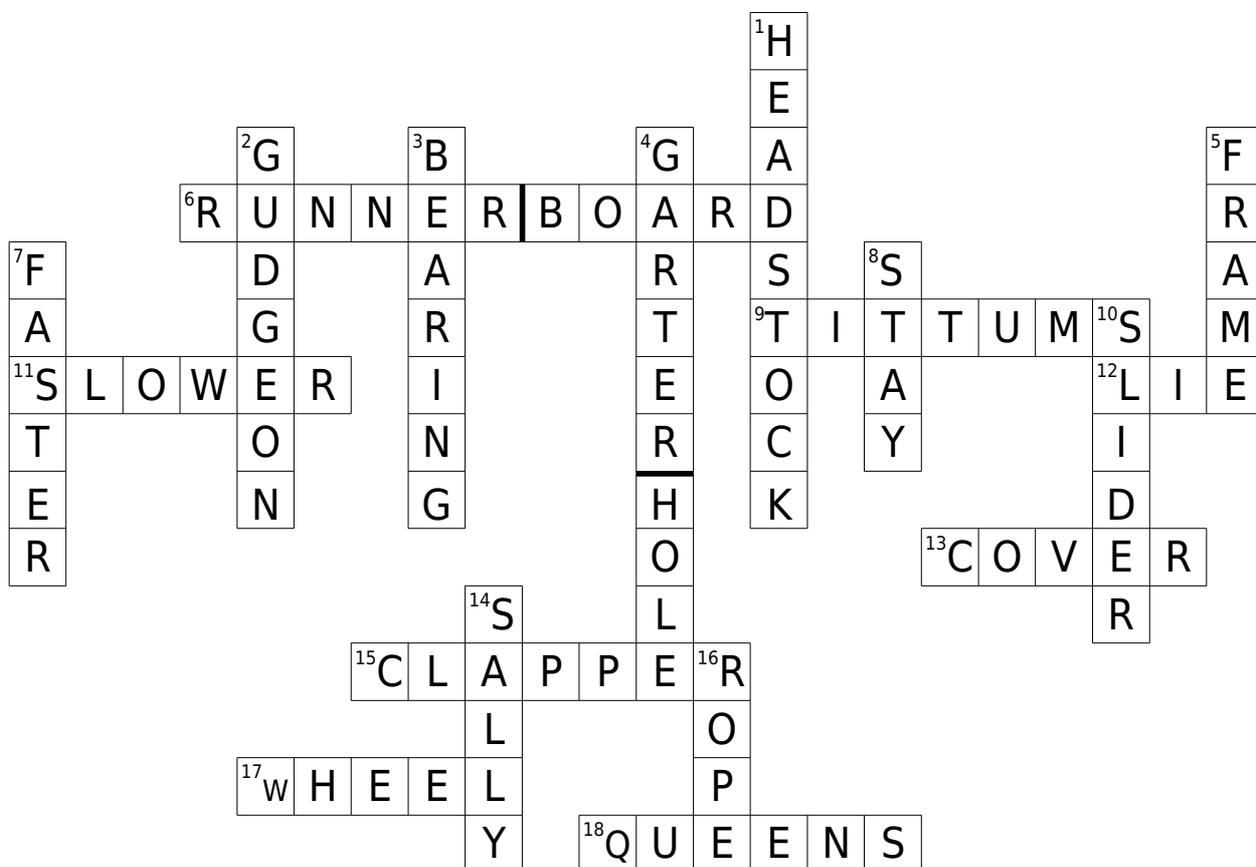


It should now be fairly clear that X.16.X.14.X.16.X.12 is the place notation for this.

There is no single convention for place notation; other symbols are sometimes used, and use can be made of symmetry in a method. Robert Wallis's BLUELINE site at [rsw.me.uk/blueline/methods/notation](http://rsw.me.uk/blueline/methods/notation) will give you more (it's also the source of the diagrams reproduced above). But now - try one for yourself!

# Crossword and Quiz Answers

Here is the "Parts of the Bell" crossword grid from issue no.6, with the answers filled in:



And here are the answers to the "Two Ringing Quizzes for Children" from issue no.6:

## Starter Ringing Quiz

1. The fluffy part of the rope is called the *sally*.
2. The heaviest bell is (usually) the *tenor* [the bell with the lowest note].
3. The lightest bell is (usually) the *treble* [the bell with the highest note].
4. Before ringing rounds, the treble ringer says something like: "*Look to! Treble's going... She's gone!*"
5. To stop ringing you say "*Stand!*"

## More Experienced Ringing Quiz

1. The row 13572468 is called *Queens*.
2. In a Doubles method there are *five* bells changing. [In Plain Hunt Doubles two pairs of bells change in any row, hence a "double" change.]
3. At any one time there are *two* bells plain hunting in Grandsire Doubles [the treble, and the hunt bell (the second in a plain course)].
4. The person who calls the methods or calls the changes is the *conductor*.
5. You would take coils in the rope when *about to ring up* (raise the bells).