

Survival & Recovery

It's time to talk about ringing recovery

It seems that there is now a little more optimism creeping into people's lives; is it because the days are getting longer or, with recent easing of some lockdown restrictions, is it because we are now able to shiver outside a pub with a pint? Or could it be because we may soon start getting back to a more normal way of life?

Does this mean that ringing can now concentrate more on recovery than survival? We certainly hope that very soon we will be able to stop using the word survival.

During the last year, ART and the CCCBR have been producing information and resources, in addition to circulating ideas for bands to keep together and continue their interest in ringing. In the hope that we will soon all be able to meet up in larger groups and start to ring together, we have put together a series of presentations to illustrate examples of good practice. These presentations will be hosted online during the week commencing **Saturday 8 May** and are aimed at anyone who is wanting to make the ringing recovery a success.

The week's events

We have lined up a range of speakers who are keen to share their experiences. We find it exciting there are a number who could be described as 'new kids on the block' that have agreed to talk about what they have found works, or just as important what hasn't helped. The idea is to suggest ideas that you could try whilst helping ringing recover in your local area.

Early in the programme there will be a Q&A session with a panel ready to answer any questions that may have been bothering you about getting going again. The final composition of the panel for the Q&A session has yet to be decided. Lesley Belcher and Simon Linford are definite but the rest will be selected in an attempt to give the best answer possible; that is the reason why we are requesting that questions be submitted in advance.

You may sign up to as many different events as you like, with the final session, an online beer tasting, only available to those who have joined in at least one of the other presentations. This is to be led by Hayley Young, a production brewer, who lives in Cornwall; she has been involved in this type of presentation before. Like the beer these have gone down well!

The week's presentations will cover a varied selection of subject matter. Please get involved, whether you are stuck in a worm hole with no apparent means of escape or just looking for that portal to a different type of ringing world in the future.

All presentations will be run online during the week commencing **Saturday 8 May**. For exact dates and times and to register go to:

<http://ringingteachers.org/news/articles/book-your-place-recovery-convention>

**David Kirkcaldy, Vice-President
CCCBR**

Recovery presentations

Building Better Relationships with your Church

Max Drinkwater explores strategies for promoting a high-quality relationship between ringers and the church.

Q & A Evening

Hosted by Andrew Kelso, here's your chance to quiz the panel with all your ringing recovery questions.

Attracting and keeping ringers

Sonia Field and Steph Pendlebury share ideas that promote effective recruitment and retention.

Holding a successful practice

Lesley Boyle's top tips for holding a ringing practice that meets the needs of everybody.

How to re-establish ringing in your village

Debbie Phipps explores ways to promote and grow ringing in your village band.

Getting bells and towers in order

David Bassford and Alison Hodge give practical hints and reminders to make sure that everything is in order and as safe as possible before we enjoy ringing again.

Managing expectations

Clare McArdle and Arthur Reeves reflect on the challenge facing ringing teachers as a result of the pandemic, including ideas for managing the expectations of lockdown learners.

Developing a ringing cluster

Vinni Sullivan's insights into how a pre-pandemic ringing hub of 6 towers was built and how it might work for you.

Online beer tasting

Hayley Young invites you to the Social Event of the Year - online beer tasting! This is only open to those who've attended another of the week's events.

Young ringers get ringing again!

Hopefully all those involved in youth ringing will have seen the guidance that enables school-age ringers (18 and under) to resume ringing again in England. This is of course much earlier than adult ringers, but takes advantage of specific government guidance over supervised children's activities in out-of-school settings. The guidance can be found at <https://cccb.org.uk/coronavirus/young-ringers-restarting/>

The government guidance is relatively permissive, so the CC's guidance similarly enables organisers of young ringers' groups and incumbents to decide what is right for their tower. This is an indoor activity of course, so face coverings stay, hand hygiene is important to enable the ringers to swap bells, and a well ventilated ringing chamber is very important.

A reasonable young ringers' session, based on that guidance and Places of Worship guidance, would be:

- Choose a tower that is either ground floor with through draught, or a tower with good ventilation (it should feel breezy).
- A lighter ring of bells is preferable. Exertion ringing heavier bells may result in an increase in aerosol droplets in the ringing room.
- Keep the total session to an hour, or an hour's ringing with breaks in between where you leave the ringing chamber (play outside, ringing handbells in a different space, etc.).
- Limit the group to 10 children, but don't have them all in the tower at the same time.

- When considering the size of the group, consider their age and ability to keep distanced, the size of the space, breakout areas, the degree of ventilation.
- Ideally have smaller groups and keep those groups consistent from week to week.
- Maintain distancing when not ringing, and keep the ringing of adjacent bells to short touches.
- Ropes can be shared, but it is important to sanitise hands between ringing.
- Facemasks in ringing chamber at all times.
- One DBS checked adult in the ringing chamber, one other nearby, and parents nearby.
- If the adult needs to ring in order to make ringing viable they can do so.
- Encourage parents not to hang around together at the tower door.

All this is a balance. If one aspect of guidance is difficult in your tower, compensate with something else.

We are not that far away from 17th May which is hopefully when we move forward with the next relaxation that will allow 'Rule of 6' indoors. The CC team has published draft guidance (only subject to change in Government guidance or timing) that will enable low-risk ringers in well ventilated towers to ring for up to 45 minutes, with 1m+ distancing and facemasks. <https://cccb.org.uk/coronavirus/>

Simon Linford, President, CCCBR

Third Survival and Recovery network meeting

Sunday 18 April was a wonderful sunny afternoon when 81 Survival and Recovery Champions met for the third time. Friends had been invited to join the meeting which was also recorded.



The first presentation was by Frank Seabright about work in the Ledbury District of the Hereford Diocesan Guild. He provided a fascinating insight into how they had taken a rural area with declining bands and changed the way they taught and developed ringing in the area. He provided a clear example of how teaching strategies were developed. These included:

- Teaching learners together, not on their own
- Holding teaching sessions two or three times a week
- Using simulators and dumb bells where possible

Interestingly, in his district, tower practices were cancelled for the first week in every month and specific practices were arranged focused on learners. This certainly prompted interesting questions about whether that was possible in other areas. Frank provided practical information which was very clear and offered great ideas for people to think about and try.

Following Frank's session, the meeting was divided into breakout rooms to discuss barriers hindering the recovery of ringing. The wonders of zoom allowed groups of eight to spend time exchanging ideas and concerns about the future and what could be done. Back in the main room, feedback was taken from different groups regarding issues, concerns and ideas for the future.

Matt Lawrence's presentation focused on the planning the Shropshire Association had for ringing recovery. He talked about how a survey of towers had presented findings to help future planning. There was a short-term plan which included checks on the bells, getting fit for ringing and refresher sessions to improve confidence. The medium-term plan looked at lapsed ringers, recruitment and service ringing support. While the long term plan considered how to attract new ringers, improve teaching and encourage towers to work together.



The final plenary session allowed Simon Linford to give a heads-up on the work he was doing with the Church regarding ringing during the next stage of the Government's road map as we exit lockdown.

Lesley Belcher provided a flavour of the Recovery Convention which is being planned for May 8 to 13. This will feature nine events covering a range of topics from how to develop a village band, ringing clusters and how to build better relationships with your church. The sessions are open to all ringers, and will provide Recovery Champions with another tool to help engage with ringers in their areas.

So much is covered in our 90 minute meeting it is sometimes difficult to take it all in. Thankfully, the recordings are placed on the ART YouTube channel. Check it out.

Annie Hall, Coventry Diocesan Guild

Judging an online striking contest on Ringing Room

Kate and I were pleased to be invited to judge the Guildford Guild 6 bell contest on Ringing Room on 13 March. We have had plenty of experience judging tower bell competitions, but a competition on Ringing Room was to be a first for us and for the seven bands taking part. It was pleasing to see that a good number of bands had entered this competition where they might not have the confidence to enter a tower bell competition.

It is essential to have good communication with the organisers and we kept in touch by text and zoom. We usually judge striking competitions in a cold vestry or sitting in the car in the rain, so it made a pleasant change to sit at my desk in comfort and listen to the ringing. I did miss someone bringing the tea and cake though.

Ringing Room requires a completely different technique to tower bell ringing of course and is not without its own challenges. There are no odd struck bells or ropes of the wrong length, but an accidental 'double touch' on the keypad puts a bell on the wrong stroke, and electronic or broadband glitches are potentially catastrophic to the ringing – and striking! Each team communicated in a zoom breakout room for their test piece. .../contd.

Feedback through zoom can be an issue too and people are recommended to mute zoom whilst ringing.

The bands had been given 15 minutes to practise and ring a test piece of 120 changes so there was time for more than one attempt when required. Most teams managed very well, but where teams didn't manage to complete 120 changes the marks were calculated proportionally.

Kate and I were using the 'listen in' facility on Ringing Room and we minimised the screen so we couldn't see who was ringing. The teams had a pre-arranged draw and time slots so there was no need to hang around in the church hall!

What of judging the ringing? It felt a bit strange for the first minute or so but then you forgot the bells were online and just focused on the striking. There was some good quality ringing overall with the winners Farnham District scoring 87% in their test piece of Plain Bob Minor. Most of the teams rang Plain Bob Doubles but one brave team rang Stedman Doubles and could have been placed higher without the occasional method mistakes.

Kate and I rejoined the zoom meeting after the ringing to give our results. We enjoyed judging the competition and would be prepared to do some more on Ringing Room, but we are also looking forward to getting back to real competitions and seeing our old friends again!

Paul Flavell, Kingston upon Thames

The CCCBR Devon Call Change striking competition

As a band practising regularly with an emphasis on good rhythmical striking, the opportunity for ringing Devon Call Changes added another dimension to our ringing. Nobody in our band had rung Devon Call Changes before and two of us have vision impairments. So we believed entering the contest would be a fun challenge.

Ringing call changes gave us a break from method-focused practice and the contest gave us all a common goal: to win our first ever online ringing competition.

One member of the band has learnt to ring solely in Ringing Room and had only recently explored Call Changes. The structure of Devon Call Changes helped in the musical aspect, which is important for us as a band. The skill of listening, reacting with a finger click to ensure a clean change and not being able to be physically in the same room was key in our ringing. Another key skill was dealing with any technical issues that may have arisen.

A great sense of achievement was felt by the whole band, even before we were declared winners. The stark contrast between where we were at the start and the excellent ringing we produce today is a testament to the hard work and dedication of all members of the team who regularly attend our practices. We're delighted that everything went smoothly on the day and I must admit it feels fantastic to be crowned



winners ahead of some of the bands who we thought were 'favourites' to win.

Ringing Devon Call Changes has been a really enjoyable experience for our band, and some of us intend to ring the whole of 60 on thirds when back in towers. We are proposing to carry on call changes on 6, 8 and 10 bells in future virtual practices too.

**Rebecca Legowski,
Beverley and District Online Band**