

Tower Talk

The newsletter for ringers using



**Learning
the Ropes™**

Association of Ringing Teachers / Learning the Ropes – www.learningtheropes.org

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It's great to be producing an edition of Tower Talk knowing that, at least in the UK, ringing is coming back! We know that Australia and NZ were ringing earlier, but they both now have partial lockdowns, while the newly updated North American Guild of Change Ringers website shows that there's not much ringing there at present – though the Honolulu ringers did ring for the 20th anniversary of 9/11. We hope it won't be long before our overseas friends can join us in fully getting back to ringing again.

In UK, recruits are being recruited, teachers are beginning to teach, lapsed ringers are returning and achievements and milestones are already being notched up by Learning the Ropes ringers. What's more, it's great to see young ringers taking centre stage at the National Youth Competition in Worcester, and a brand new Young Ringers association being launched.

In this edition, we celebrate all these successes and hope it inspires and motivates others to continue with their progress.



*Ringling World National Youth Contest. A bright outlook for the future!
Picture by Christopher Teasdale*

A Great Day Out in Worcester

Annie Hall, Warwick

RWNYC is the Ringing World National Youth Competition, normally held annually but cancelled in 2020 because of covid. This year it was held in Worcester. Further articles about this competition can be found in *The Ringing World* issues 5760 (17th September) and 5761 (24th September).

The Coventry Spires Youth Team was one of the entrants, and Annie Hall was a mentor to this team. She writes:

The Ringing World National Youth Competition 2021 was quite different from competitions of previous years. The one scheduled for 2020 had to be cancelled, for obvious reasons, and the 2021 version was speedily put together by a brilliant team under the leadership of Mark Regan and David Hull. It was held in Worcester on Saturday 11 September.

Each team had its own individual timetable for the day. This detailed their ringing times at specific towers and when they had to ring their competition piece.

Also, in a break with tradition, teams could choose whether they rang on six or eight bells, and could choose between ringing call changes or methods. This was so welcome as many teams had not been able to meet to practise very frequently. Indeed, one team only met in person on the day, all their practices having been held on Zoom!

Our team was called 'Coventry Spires'. This is the sixth time we have entered the competition. This time, we only had six members of our band, no replacements, but we had a reserve ready to ring if someone caught the dreaded Covid. We thought there might have been a prize for the greatest height difference in a team - as the picture at the top of the page shows, we think we might have won it!



The Coventry Spires team, not quite arranged in order of height!



The team practising with handbells

Two of our members are only ten years old and in the four practices that we managed to have, it was a privilege to see how their handling and bell control steadily improved.

They all worked so hard to reach the required standard, and we were very proud of them.

Eddie was our tenor ringer and conductor and he has now gone off to Sheffield University. Ria is our very competent treble ringer and Henry, Zack, Noah and Harriet rang our inside bells - all of them with gusto.

Eddie's sister, Estella, was one of the judges in this year's competition. Estella had previously rung with the Coventry Spires team before going to study at Nottingham University, and we are so proud that she is now one of the judges!

Worcester is a lovely city, dominated by its magnificent cathedral. It was a warm day, and walking around, the sound of bells could be heard from all the local churches. Transport had also been arranged to visit towers in nearby villages. This added to the fun for the young people, especially our team as one bus broke down and the other got lost.

A highlight of the day was ringing at the cathedral. Expertly led by Simon Linford, everyone had at least two rings and those brave enough were allowed to ring the tenor.

The Cathedral also hosted a handbell forum where delegates were able to master rounds, call changes and some plain hunt on a variety of different handbells. The Ringing World also had a stall, giving away free copies.

Ringing at All Saints in Worcester was fun, where teams were able to show their skills ringing on twelve bells and also learn the art of ringing on a mini ring, which had been erected in the centre of the Church.

The final venue for the day was at College Hall behind the Cathedral for the results and the presentation of the trophies. Six teams had entered the Method Ringing Competition and fifteen the Call Change Competition.

Under Covid regulations, only the team and two supporters were allowed in the hall, but it was nevertheless a wonderful occasion, full of excited young people who had rung well, enjoyed good company and had a great time.

The picture below shows our team eagerly awaiting the results, and the cover picture on the front page of this edition of Tower Talk also gives an impression of the number of young ringers attending this wonderful event. It really makes one feel confident about the future of ringing.



Awaiting the results!

The full results of the 2021 Ringing World National Youth Competition

Method Ringing Competition		
Position	Team Name	Score
1	Oxford DG	9
2	Sussex Young Ringers	8
3	D & N Young Ringers	7.5
4 =	Yorkshire Tykes	7
4 =	The G & B	7
6	W & P Youths	6

Congratulations to the team from the Oxford Diocesan Guild for winning the method ringing competition and the Whitechapel Trophy. The Kent Young Ringers won the Call Change Competition and the Ringing World Editor's Trophy for Excellence. The full results are shown below.

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Call Change Competition		
Position	Team Name	Score
1	Kent Young Ringers (Y)	9
2	Essex Young Eagles	8.5
3 =	Worcester Cathedral	8
3 =	G & B	8
5 =	Young@Herts	7.5
5 =	Bath & Wells D A	7.5
5 =	Kent Young Ringers (R)	7.5
8 =	Lincolnshire Poachers	7
8 =	Surrey Strikers	7
10 =	Rising Ringers	6.5
10 =	Derbyshire Young Ringers	6.5
12 =	Coventry Spires	6
12 =	Go Bellistic!	6
14 =	Bucks and Berks	5.5
14 =	Cadbury Red Roses	5.5

Young Ringers of the World Unite!

Elena Brake, Plymouth

Are you a ringer under 30? Let us introduce the Young Change Ringers Association (YCRA)! We are a brand new association for all young ringers under 30, all over the world. There is no lower age limit, and we only require that you can handle a bell safely.

The YCRA is an association to support young ringers, to help develop skills and confidence so that they can sustain the future of ringing and become the next generation of ringing leaders.

Set up by seven active young ringers from all over the country, and launched at the recent Ringing World National Youth Contest in Worcester, the YCRA plan to hold several organised events a year where young ringers can socialise and ring together.

As Matthew Jerome, one of the founding members recently told *The Ringing World*, 'I want people to ring with when I'm old!'

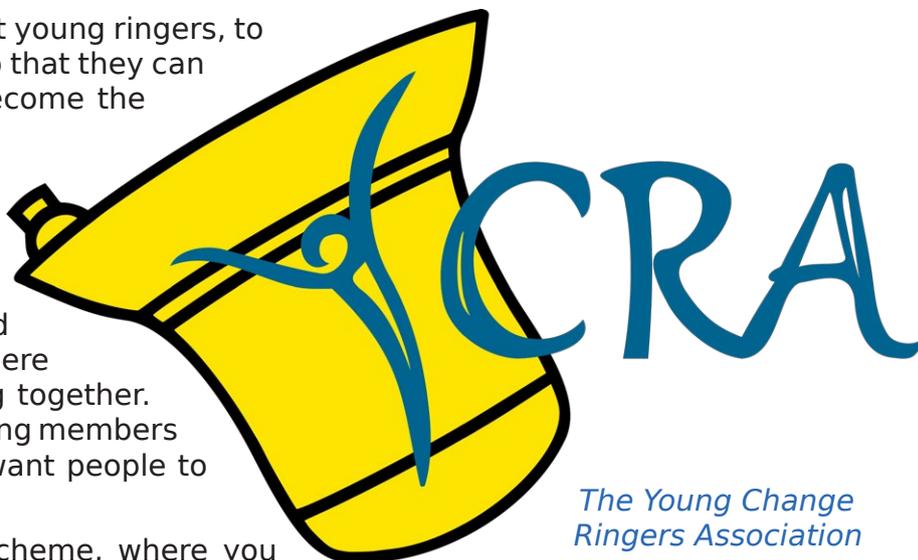
It will also develop a mentorship scheme, where you can sign up to be a mentor or be mentored, and receive training and guidance from another young ringer. We hope this will develop leadership skills in our mentors who will all be young ringers themselves, as well as supporting mentees by answering questions and giving guidance on things such as planning your first bell ringing outing or learning a method you've always wanted to try. Some of us learnt to ring using the Learning the Ropes scheme and some of us are already teaching other ringers.

We want the YCRA to be a safe space for young ringers. We have worked with experts in safeguarding to develop rigorous procedures to make sure that everyone is safe from any kind of harm. We have a strict code of conduct, and all our mentors and activity leaders will undergo an application process including DBS checks as well as in-depth training.

We are an association for young ringers, led by young ringers. Our committee are all members themselves and so you can be sure that the opportunities available will be relevant for you. We also encourage input from our members. Do you want to see something happen? Get in touch and YCRA will help make it a reality. You may need some help and advice as you work your way through the Learning the Ropes scheme, or need a band to ring a quarter peal with – all this is possible and we look forward to you joining us!

To join, visit our website: www.ycra.org.uk

We look forward to seeing you at a YCRA event very soon!

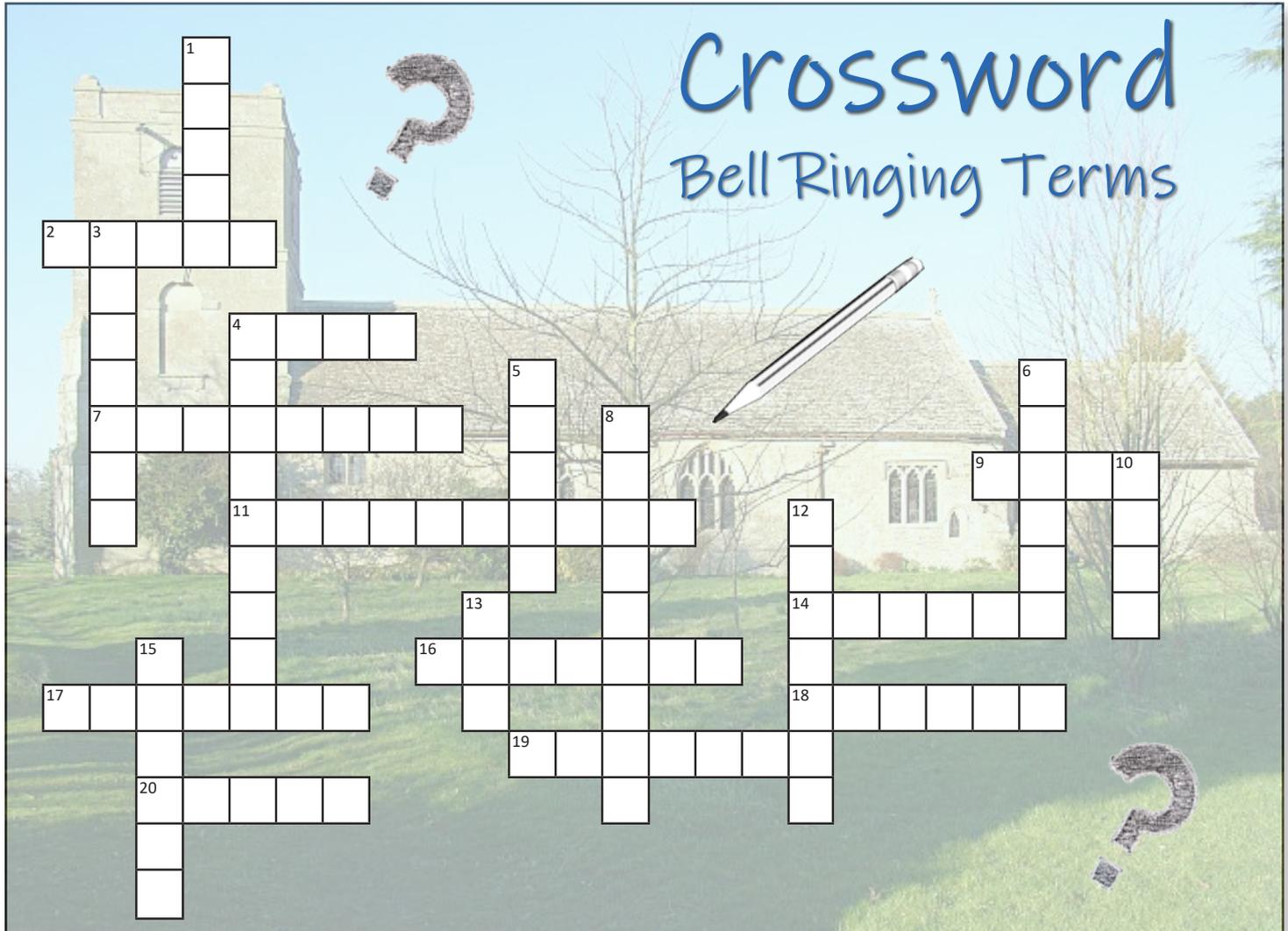


Emily Hall, one of the founders of the YCRA encouraging more members to sign up



Puzzle Corner

Rose Nightingale and Denise Tremain, ART Administrators



Clues Across

2. a touch where one or more rows occurs more than once
4. movement of the tower during ringing
7. collective term for the ringing community
9. to ring at a tower for the first time
11. a ringer who is not a member of a specific home tower
14. daytrip visiting other towers
16. metal peg on the end of a hastings stay
17. length of rope hanging from the frame to the floor
18. ring of hooks to hang your ropes on
19. named call change 12563478
20. ring the bells down

Clues Down

1. tenor ringers sometimes stand on these
3. add extra bells to an existing ring
4. rims which form the sides of a bell wheel
5. to write out rows of a method or touch
6. bells ringing simultaneously
8. money paid to a tower by those at a practice
10. slang for ringing a cover bell
12. two bells accidentally swapped in a touch
13. space the bell hangs in
15. tapered metal spike used to separate strands of rope

(Solution on page 19)

London Festival of Bells

Beth Johnson, Shenfield, Essex

Back in June, when we all expected to be released from our Covid restrictions, we were looking forward to the 'Festival of Bells' in the City of London at the end of the month. Imagine how fed up we were when the 'release date' was delayed by a month. However, in a quick about-turn, Dickon Love, the organiser, gave us a new date: 31st July.

On the day, eight of us met early to be at St Paul's just after 9, where we joined others waiting to hear Great Paul ring out at 9.20am. The deep, slightly muffled tone was sombre but impressive. At 16-and-a-half tons, ringing this bell by hand is a mighty task and it is over 15 years since it has been rung. The Lord Mayor and Bishop of London witnessed the ringing.

At St Paul's we met up with friends from Waltham Abbey and Prittlewell, and set off to our first tower: St Sepulchre-without-Newgate, a ring of 12 with a 28cwt tenor. By joining forces with the Prittlewell crew, we were able to make up a complete band, and we acquitted ourselves admirably with well-struck rounds. Then onward to St Mary le Bow, which was probably the highlight of the day. We waited for a quarter peal to be completed, then were invited up to ring. Our three Shenfield juniors, Emily, Emily and Sarah, worked hard to keep the front bells right up to balance on each stroke to give the others space to sound. Afterwards they were complimented by the ringing master, who said, "Ringing on twelve isn't easy, and these are not an easy twelve. You all did very well!" Very pleasing!



St Paul's Cathedral



The band outside St Olave

Our next stop was a favourite tower (we rang here on a City outing a couple of years ago): St James, Garlickhythe. These are the 'Royal Jubilee' bells that were mounted on a barge at the head of the flotilla for the River Pageant on June 3rd 2012. They are an easy-to-ring eight and we enjoyed a course of Grandsire Triples. If you ever get a chance to ring these, do take it!

At lunchtime we walked down to the river and sat outside the old Billingsgate market in the sun with our sandwiches and Tower Bridge obligingly opened for us to see a Thames Barge passing though.

Next stop was St Olave, Hart Street, where Samuel Pepys worshipped and is buried. A picturesque church with a lovely garden, hidden behind a high wall, this was a happy ring. The ringing chamber shows signs of the normal inhabitants - the University of London ringers. Enough said!

The bells at St Katharine Cree are rung from just inside the porch, making an interesting sight for passers-by. Back towards Liverpool Street, our final port of call was St Botolph-without-Bishopsgate. This church may have survived the Great Fire of London unscathed, and only lost one window in the Second World War, but in 1993 was one of the many buildings to be damaged by an IRA bomb. A beautiful stained glass window was dedicated in 1997 to mark the restoration of the church. A course of Bob Triples was a good end to our expedition and we were all pleased that we were so close to the train home.

An excellent day, and thanks to Dickon Love for making it happen.



The interior of St Katharine Cree

Learning the Ropes Achievements

Rose Nightingale, ART administrator, and others

I'm delighted to report that since 1 June this year, when ringers began to get back to their towers, Learning the Ropes achievement certificates have been regularly and increasingly sent out.

To date, these are how they have been awarded:

Level One	48
Level Two	10
Level Three	8
Level Four	7
Level Five	2

And in LtR handbells, one Level four was awarded (to Mary Jones) and two Level Five (to Mary Jones and Catherine Sturgess, shown in the picture with their bandmate Nikki Thomas)

This signifies a strong return to ringing in just four months and still within a more restricted environment. In addition, lots of new ringers have been signed up, many lapsed ringers have started to return and I am very busy with numerous enquiries from people enquiring about learning to ring!

Below, we turn the spotlight on some of these achievers from across the country.



Left to right: Mary Jones, Nikki Thomas and Catherine Sturgess

Peter Hunt, Tower captain at Thurcaston, Leicestershire, writes:

We arranged two weeks of intensive practice in the summer holidays for the ten learners. Five of these were recruited in 2018, and five in 2019 from the local church primary school. The practices were run on Mondays and Thursday evenings, plus half an hour before our regular Wednesday practice and we had three teachers. Our aim was to move them along to the next Learning the Ropes level. The older ones had attained Level 2 and were making progress, but needed more time to ring quarter peals and consolidate for Level 3. Two of the younger ones attained Level 1, another is being assessed as I write, and a fourth merely needs to stand ten times at handstroke to be ready for assessment!



Two of the learners receiving their certificates:

Lucy (left) and Dexter (right)



We are still wearing masks in the tower, having a window open and regularly hand sanitising but it is good to have more than five in the tower. All are having a go at ringing rounds and called changes on the 8 and there is quite a buzz, akin to a youth club. A ready supply of chocolates seems to be important!

As a result of running a teddy parachuting stall at the village fête, we have two absolutely new learners starting tonight! This is rewarding ringing in these difficult times and congratulations to all our students.

Kim Matthews (teacher of Holly Kilgour, Level 3) writes:

During a trip to Alderney in August 2019, Holly Kilgour was taught to handle a bell by Helen McGregor at St Anne's and using the 'Wells Bells' simulator. By the time she left Alderney she could ring rounds unaided.

On her return to Bournemouth, Holly became a regular member of both Sacred Heart and St Peter's bands and made rapid progress ringing the treble to doubles methods - until March 2020 when Covid hit!

Being part of a ringing family, they could ring at St Peter's even when restrictions prohibited it, meaning Holly got the chance to ring the tenor there (20 cwt), amongst other things.

Handbells were also really important to Holly's progress - both within her family group, and, when permitted, with David and Flick Warwick in the garden. So by the end of lockdown, Holly had rung 3 handbell quarter peals (and lost as many, quite late...) and could ring inside to Grandsire Caters, Plain Bob Royal and Little Bob Royal as well as the trebles to Kent. All this at a time when she probably couldn't ring a touch of Plain Bob Doubles on tower bells, and neither had she rung plain hunt on more than 7 bells in the tower.

Holly has just taken up a place at Birmingham University, and has already joined the ringing society. Before she went, she rang a quarter peal of Bob Doubles, her first inside on tower bells, and gained her LTR Level 3 certificate.

Comments from Alex Heaton and Jane Robinson (Nassington / Castor Ringing Hub):

Alex says: In our tower we were fortunate to be able to keep ringing going over lockdown using Ringing Room. This was due to a lot of commitment from our teachers.



Jane Robinson

Once we were able to resume actual ringing it was a pleasant surprise to find that most of the practical skills were still there, and with a lot of support from the more experienced ringers two of us were able to complete Levels 3 and 4 almost immediately. I'm looking forward to the next steps.

Jane says: I was due to complete my level 3 and level 4 at the end of March 2020 (a QP of April Day was booked) but then we were locked down for the first time.

We rang for Sunday service between July and October 2020 and then again from March to end of May when practices started again but hadn't really done a lot of ringing for over 15 months - and certainly not for 45 minutes. We had been using Ringing Room to keep our ringing brains going but I hadn't enjoyed it at all, so was more than happy to get back on to real bells again!



Alex Heaton

Being asked to tenor to the original QP of April Day to gain my Level 3 LtR was somewhat scary without having had any practice or time to get the ringing muscles working for that length of time, but I was very pleased to have been asked to celebrate one of my ringing teachers' wedding anniversary.

I found that, like the rest of my ringing steps, once I started it was easier than I thought it would be! It was really good rope time and a fantastic opportunity to regain some ropesight.

I'd completed the elements for Level 4 LtR 4 in November 2019 ringing my first QP on an inside bell but hadn't had the chance to finish Level 3, so it felt like a real achievement after all the lost time. I'm grateful to all the people who have helped me with my learning to date and know I now have a lifetime of learning ahead!

Nikki Thomas of St Peter Mancroft, Norwich (teacher of Toby, Level 4) writes:



Since we came out of lockdown, Toby has been storming his way through the ART Learning the Ropes targets.

He says "Ringing is my favourite hobby. If you show interest in something you like, then you're going to learn quickly because you're enthusiastic."

Toby started to learn to ring less than four years ago and is now a member of the Mancroft Guild of Ringers. He has very good bell control and easily moves from ringing the tenor to Grandsire Caters to the treble to Little Bob Maximus.

I asked Toby what he enjoyed about ringing and he replied "how much fun I've had". He also wanted to tell us how his autism brings both challenges and has been really useful. He checked I knew what autism is and sent me a helpful link.

A couple of highlights I took from this are:

- to understand that someone with autism may get anxious or upset in unfamiliar situations and social events. Toby is great at telling us when we have pushed him too far, giving us the chance to get things done the way Toby knows will work best for him.
- Autistic people may do or think the same things over and over - well, that can be extremely useful in learning to ring.

Toby knows he is a visual learner; he told me he knows what he's doing when ringing but would find it hard to explain to someone else. He has an amazing sense of rhythm but claims he's no good at maths. As he rings he says to himself, while ringing Plain Bob, "I'm in 5-6 down, I'm in 5-6 up, I'm in 3-4 up, then make seconds, now I'm in 3-4 down. I just say this in my head."

Toby's top tip: count your places firmly then you won't go wrong!

Since contributing this short article, Toby has gone on to pass Level 5! Well done, Toby!

Two other ringers who recently achieved Level 5 are Mary Jones and Catherine Sturgess from Norfolk, who are the first to achieve this level on handbells. (Their picture appears at the start of this article.)

Starting from scratch at the beginning of lockdown, they have steadily worked their way through the levels, culminating in a quarter peal of Kent Treble Bob Minor. Congratulations to them and to all the Learning the Ropes achievers. We hope we will see many more in the months to come.



Toby with his Level 4 certificate

A Busy Return to Ringing

Paul Bennett, South Northamptonshire

Culworth is a branch of the Peterborough Guild with 31 churches.

My small patch is nearer to Oxford and includes three eight bell towers – Aynho, Kings Sutton and Brackley – and two five-bell towers, Evenley and Croughton. That's a total of 34 bells. A smallish team, we practise with enthusiasm weekly at two venues and rotate.

While all bells are ringable, many are unringed week after week. With limited numbers and skills, we nevertheless have a band which enjoys the fellowship of ringing. At 94, our oldest member climbs the 46 stairs at Kings Sutton for practice nights and has turned out to all the churches. Recently we celebrated the arrival of Albie whose mum Ruth will ring again with us in November.

The return to ringing by our small team has been enthusiastic and parallels the return of the congregations.

The surge of post lockdown weddings has tested our capacity to provide a full response, but we can ring eight on Tuesday night practices (with spares). Sadly we are unable to ring for all Sunday services and we really need to recruit new ringers.

We have had some success with recruitment, and five new ringers are learning, with two or three more expressing an interest.

Additionally, two more came to us via an enquiry to the ART website. The mother of Audrey, now 11 and James, 12, has brought them to Evenley every week after school and they have made really good progress.



Audrey and James with their certificates

James is now ringing in rounds and has been awarded his Level 1 certificate. His younger sister has progressed very closely behind him. Sadly their own village church is closed and awaits roof repairs so we hope they will be able to join our travelling band across our wide range of towers. They have been great fun to train.

These young ringers represent the future!

Another of our recruits got married at the end of July to the sound of bells and has promised to return after his honeymoon. Another recruit from nearby Brackley is now learning to ring with me in Evenley, and she too has made great progress and has been awarded her Level 1 certificate.

I have now been told of two neighbours of the Brackley church who would like to learn to ring, so the future is brightening.

Life is hectic but very rewarding

How do you Learn a New Method?

David Smith, Brisbane, Australia

David Smith is an ART tutor, is on the Central Council Executive, and writes The Education Column in The Ringing World. His home tower is St John's Cathedral in Brisbane, Australia. He also does the type-setting for Tower Talk.

For both novice and experienced ringers, learning a new method can be a bit of a challenge. Your first method was probably Plain Bob or Grandsire. One reason for this is that we generally learn to plain hunt fairly early on in our ringing career, and both these methods can be thought of as essentially plain hunting on five, with a few funny twiddly bits thrown in. So it makes sense to move on from plain hunting to either Plain Bob or Grandsire – we just have to work out where those twiddly bits (the dodges and places) fit in!

Another method that I've used in Ringing Room during lockdown is All Saints Doubles. Novices, even if they are struggling with Plain Bob, find All Saints comparatively easy, and it's a great confidence boost to ring a totally new method after only a few minutes study. It has advantages in tower ringing too – there's no dodging, so less effort is needed when moving your bell around than with Plain Bob or Grandsire.

Let's have a look at the blue line, shown in the diagram, and then see if we can pick up any useful points about how we go about learning a new method. First, we notice that the treble (red line) plain hunts to fifth place and back, just like it does in Plain Bob Doubles and Grandsire Doubles. What do the other bells do?

Well, if you look at the work of the two (blue line), you'll see that in a plain course it visits the back twice. Each time it hunts all the way from leading to fifth place, and once it gets there it rings what is sometimes called a "crankshaft": two blows in fifth place, two blows in fourth, then another two in fifth. Then it hunts back down to the lead. This is true of *both* its visits to the back – it rings exactly the same pattern each time. So the remaining question is what to do at the front.

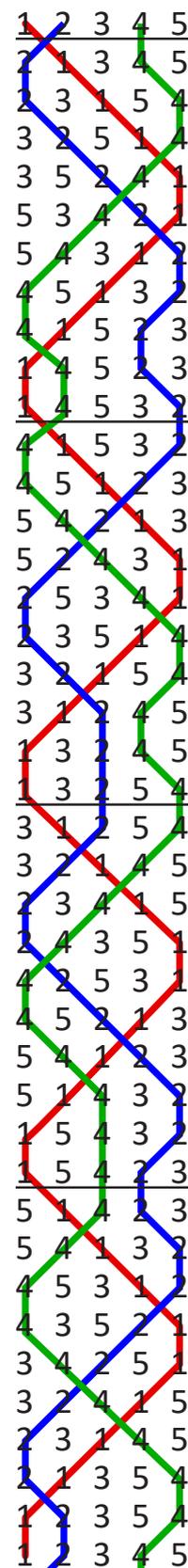
Let's switch to looking at the work of the four (green line). At the start, it's finishing off a crankshaft, and then hunts down to lead. After leading, it makes seconds then leads again, and then it's time for one of those crankshaft visits to the back. When it next gets down to the lead, it makes long thirds (four blows in third place) before coming back to the lead and heading out for another crankshaft.

So we have walked through an entire plain course. Each working bell, in a plain course, has two crankshaft visits to the back, and at the front it either makes seconds or long thirds between leading. So how do we actually ring this?

I suggest that this method illustrates two very important techniques. First, we have to learn and remember certain stuff. Sometimes (as surprise ringers know) there's a lot to be learnt, but here it is short and simple: each visit to the back involves hunting from the front to fifth place, ringing a crankshaft, and returning to the lead.

But when it comes to what we do at the front, it is not so much a matter of learning by rote, but more of seeing what happens when we get there. If the treble takes you off the lead, make seconds over it; if not, go out to make long thirds. Don't stress about this in advance – just wait till you lead, and then see what happens!

So All Saints Doubles shows us two important ways of dealing with a new method – and with each new method we meet, we use a bit of one, a bit of the other, and often both at once! Any new method will have certain stuff that we just have to learn, but there will also be useful pointers that we can pick up by just ringing and then seeing what other bells are doing. In All Saints, we have to learn that each visit to the back involves ringing a crankshaft, but we decide what to do at the front by seeing which bell takes us off the lead when we get there.



All Saints Doubles

News from ART

Lesley Belcher, Chair of ART

ART is the Association of Ringing Teachers which runs the Learning the Ropes Scheme and provides lots of useful resources for teachers and their students.



What's happening with the ART Awards?

We haven't forgotten about the ART Awards and have every intention of holding them again in 2022. It feels wrong to be asking people to think about and write nominations now, and of course few Learning the Ropes ringers have had an opportunity to progress and achieve their LtR Level 5, even if they were close to it a year and a half ago! For this reason, we are keeping a very close eye on how ringing is opening up and will launch the ART Awards when the time seems right. We'll let you know as soon as we can when that is.

Enjoy your ringing!



ART Awards

The 50-50 Club

Joining the 50-50 Club is a great way of supporting the Association of Ringing Teachers, which produces the LtR logbooks and learning materials, supports teachers and produces all the badges and certificates - and it's only £12 a year! Plus it could be you winning an attractive cash prize!

The September draw for the 50-50 Club was made by Glyn at the Belper Self Storage Unit, which at present is the home of the ART Shop.

- First prize of £71 number 49 Helen McGregor
- Prize of £35.50 number 5 Roger Booth
- Prize of £35.50 number 44 Susan Read



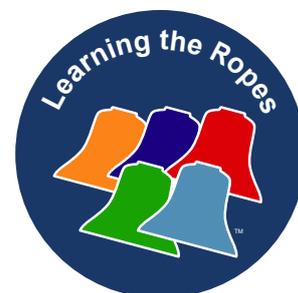
Congratulations to the winners and we look forward to the next draw at Christmas. For a chance to take part and win a cash prize, why not join the 50-50 Club now? All you have to do is visit the 50-50 Club page on the Learning the Ropes website and follow the instructions.

<http://www.learningtheropes.org/5050club>

ART shop

While you are there, why not visit the online ART Shop where you can buy a wide range of learning materials for yourself and your tower. You'll find the shop at

<https://shop.bellringing.org/>



Ringling, from a Different Angle

Vicki Chapman, CCCBR

Vicki Chapman is the Public Relations Officer at the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers.

I am often asked by the press for suitable photographs to accompany articles about bellringing. We don't actually have a gallery of good quality images that can be used by anyone needing a photo of bells, ringers, or ringing associated things.

Then - ping! I had an idea. Hot on the heels of the successful YouTube competition, I launched the Photo Competition. There will be six categories in all; each category is open for six weeks. The winner of each category gets a £50 Amazon voucher, and the two runners up get a £25 voucher each.

We started in May 2021 with **Ringling Throughout the Seasons**. There were 63 entries with the winner, an image of Dunblane Cathedral and Holme Hill from



Winner of the May competition: Dunblane Cathedral

the west on a sunny winter

day in December 2010, taken by Chris Frye. The two runners up were of Marston Bigot, also in the snow, taken in 2009 by Vicki Rowse and "All together, boys", taken at St Matthew's, Wookey as the bells were being removed for retuning and repairs to the frame on a very cold, frosty day in December 2010, taken by Neville Whitney.

The second category was entitled **Bells and Installations**. There were over 150 entries that the judges had to shortlist before making their final choices. The winner was "The Bells of Up Holland" by Phil Hope and runners up were "The 2nd at Derby Cathedral" by Roger Lawson and "Tenor bell at Arlecdon lowered into a cradle" by Ronald East.

The third and current category **Bells in Art**, has received fewer entries, but entertaining ones nonetheless. The closing date for this category is 8 October, so unfortunately this will be closed by the time Tower Talk comes out, and by the time you read this we may well have a new category.

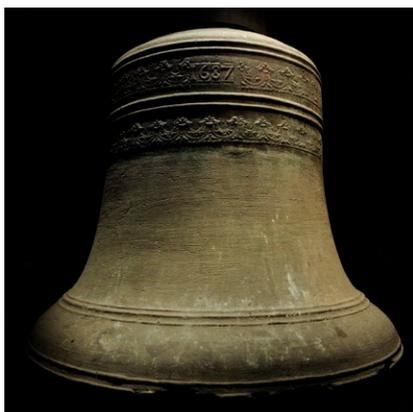
I am extremely grateful to the judges of each category, who have had a hard job choosing between the excellent images that are now available for anyone to download.

At the time of publication of Tower Talk, the 'Bells in Art' competition is being judged, and the results should appear shortly - probably on 22nd October. The next category will be announced then or shortly thereafter.

Visit the website to see the results, to find out what the next category is, to submit a photo, or to browse those that have been submitted:

<https://cccbr.org.uk/competition/>

You'll also find news of the next category in The Ringing World, on the Central Council website and on social media.



*Bells of Up Holland
2nd at Derby Cathedral
Tenor at Arlecdon*

New Start with New Bells

Margaret Winfield, Slapton, Buckinghamshire

Written by Margaret Winfield, with thanks to churchwarden Dave Mann.

At present the only way the five bells in Slapton church, Buckinghamshire, can be heard is as Ellacombe chimes. They have not been rung full circle for many years owing to safety and stability issues, and together with the frame are in need of extensive restoration.

Now at last with various donations, grants, fundraising and the sale of a small plot of land belonging to the church (completion very shortly) comes the exciting news that this is about to become reality! It is expected that work will start in October and be completed by June next year. It is not just restoration that we can celebrate but also the addition of a sixth bell: the Keltek Trust have been very generous and given us two bells in addition to some financial help, and so we are replacing one of the existing bells which is in a poor condition with one of the new bells and adding the sixth.

I started learning to ring three years ago at nearby Marsworth, with several others, in order to take part in the celebration of the centenary of the 1918 Armistice.

Marsworth is a teaching tower with a simulator and there were six of us who started to learn, and all continued for more than a year and completed Level 1 of Learning the Ropes. During 2019, however, people began to drop out, mainly for family or work reasons, though the fact that there was no prospect of imminent bell restoration may have played a part. A lot of work had been done behind the scenes and some funding secured from various sources, but an application for funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund was turned down.



One of the old bells at Slapton



Slapton Church

The church eventually took over the project and the sale of a piece of land has made up the shortfall. Currently there are only two of us left who are really interested, myself and a friend and colleague who unfortunately is often working on Marsworth practice evenings! I completed Level 2 before everything came to a halt last year, and having returned to practices, am learning Plain Hunt.

We clearly need to drum up some more enthusiasm – hopefully the news that work on the bells will start in October will help, and we have a lot of support from Philip Dobson, the Chair of the Chiltern Branch of the Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers.

The redundant bell will be housed in the church with a plaque of some sort so that congregation and visitors can see what a church bell looks like – many will not have seen one close up! We are going to film the entire process from removal of bells to refitting so that future generations will have a permanent record of the works carried out.

I am really enjoying returning to ringing after the prolonged break. Now, the prospect of a newly restored peal of six bells to ring will certainly provide an impetus to my practice in future!

LtR Advanced Call Changes Scheme

Clare McArdle, Birmingham School of Bell Ringing

How do you think of call changes? If you're from Devon, it's possible, if not quite likely, that you think that well struck call changes are something to aspire to. If you get to hear, or even ring with one of the top call change bands, you will be filled with a sense of fulfilment.

If on the other hand you're from a method ringing area, you may feel that call changes are nothing more than a stepping stone, or even a delaying tactic, on the way to method ringing – a stage to be endured whilst your bell control improves. Those two examples are probably the extreme ends of quite a wide range of opinions.

Because method ringing is more widespread geographically, call changes get overlooked as a means to an end to achieve that quintessential sound of church bells. Not all method ringers undervalue call changes. I may be a method ringer from a well-known centre of ringing excellence, but I have always been a fan of call change ringing and I think they are greatly underrated. I am happy to see that this viewpoint is gaining traction with ringing bodies such as ART and the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers.

I was really pleased to be approached by ART to look at developing a new Learning the Ropes scheme, that will focus on call changes, to run alongside the existing scheme. Called the Learning the Ropes Advanced Call Changes Scheme, it ensures a full understanding of all aspects of call change ringing – not just ringing call change sequences, but creating them and conducting them too. It also covers different styles of call changes such as Devon Call Changes and Jump Changes. The cyclic nature of many of the exercises leads to better bell control and greater versatility in the tower. It is a great scheme for bands to work on together – how many towers do you know where call changes are called by everyone?

Demystifying call changes for bands will be a great step forward. Removing the element of surprise from ringing them will go a long way towards helping people really listen to what they are ringing and focus on their striking. There is no reason why bands shouldn't learn call change sequences together, so everyone ringing knows what is coming next – it's an essential element of method ringing which has never really been seen as important when ringing call changes.

The scheme aims to raise the profile of call change ringing as a viable alternative to method ringing. Sadly, for many people the resources just aren't available to help further their method ringing ambitions. If you are part of a new band, or a new recruit to a small band that doesn't have much method ringing experience, focusing on call changes could be the perfect pathway for your team. Working together with a goal of improving listening and striking skills should instil your band with a sense of purpose.

We are currently piloting the scheme with six bands around the country, and hope that it will launch early in 2022. Just like the Learning the Ropes scheme, there will be resources for teachers, progress logbooks for learners and certificates for passing each of the five levels, so look out for those!

At Lilleshall in Shropshire, a band is piloting the scheme. Here's what two of them, Julie Hartridge and Sally Green, think of it so far:



Julie and Sally at Lilleshall

I've missed tower bell ringing so much during the last 18 months. On our return to the tower we've all found that our ringing skills are somewhat rusty. The LtR Call Changes scheme is helping us to improve our skills and more importantly letting us have a huge amount of fun now we are back together.

It's great that we have something which we can work on together as a band to improve our ringing. Some of the exercises have resulted in some chaotic ringing, but the scheme is really starting to improve our skills and helping us to make a more glorious sound on a Sunday morning.

Some Original Thinking

Ruth Suggett, Bardwell, Suffolk

Ruth is the editor of Tower Talk.

Just as we are learning to love call changes for the pure pleasure and skill of ringing them (see Clare McArdle's article on page 15), I'm making a similar bid for Plain Hunt.

It's the absolute bedrock of change ringing, but too often is treated as a mere stepping stone on the way to bigger and better things, perhaps because it is seen as a bit easy and not offering enough variety to keep ringers interested.

But if you overlook all the valuable things to be learnt from plain hunting, you miss out on some great fun, some good ringing and the opportunity to become a versatile ringer.

The great thing about plain hunt is you can put calls in, and then it is known as Original. If, like me, you're in a band which just hasn't managed to break through into method ringing, Original can offer a lot of challenge, all within the nice cosy comfort zone of plain hunt, and it is very rewarding. Don't be put off by the mention of calls. These too are fundamental to change ringing so it is really useful to get used to them at an early stage.



How does it work?

When a call is made, it just switches the position of certain bells for one blow, then you go back to plain hunting from the position you find yourself in until the next call is made. The diagram shows what happens at a call in Original Minor: a bell rings two blows in fourth position, while the bells above it dodge. There are excellent explanations online, which I recommend you look at;

<http://ringingteachers.org/handbells/original-minor>

https://cccbr.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/ac_doubles3.pdf

<https://cccbr.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/200407.pdf>

Can my band do this?

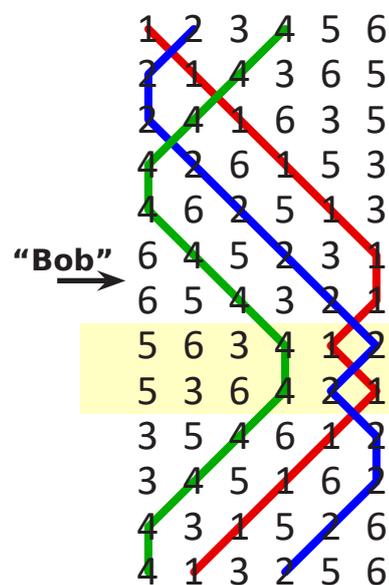
If your band can plain hunt, then, yes!

Plain Hunt is introduced to the Learning the Ropes scheme at Level 3, so anyone moving from Level 2 to 3, or on Level 3 and beyond can do this. If your band isn't ringing plain hunt but would like to, start learning it with a goal of using calls, once the band can get back into rounds comfortably.

You can do it on any number of bells, so for example, if you're in an eight bell tower, you could try Original Doubles with 6,7,8 covering – good practice for newer ringers to ring steadily while being included in the band's efforts.

Ah! But you need a conductor! True, and if you haven't got one then you might feel you've reached an impasse. No you haven't, you just need a brave volunteer!

What we did was to just look at one simple touch, in fact, the one described on page 86 of the Teacher's Guide to Learning the Ropes (available from the ART Shop, see page 12).



A Bob in Original

This touch has just three calls, each one called from the same position.

The brave volunteer just had to be able to know when they were in that position (good counting practice), call 'Bob!', keep ringing, and wait for the rest of the band to deal with the chaos!

Only joking! The chaos soon gives way to competence once everyone 'gets' what's meant to be happening.

In our band, the volunteer conductor rang the 6, and shouted "Bob!" each time they moved from third to second place on the way down. Do this three times, and it comes round. This touch is shown in full in the diagram.

Like everything else in ringing, it can all get a lot more complicated, but it doesn't need to, so don't be put off by that, either. In this touch, only three bells are affected so you should have three steady plain hunters to keep it all together!

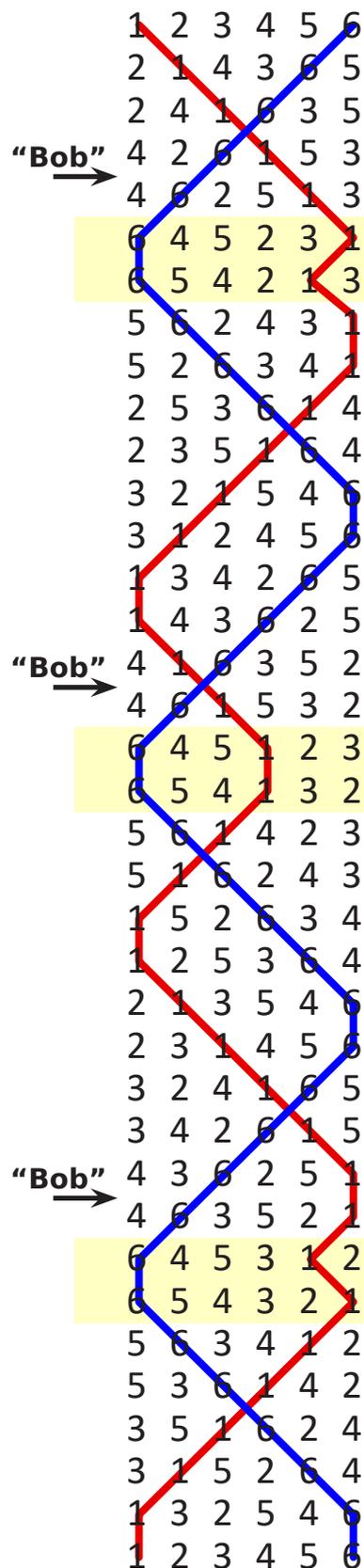
In this touch, shown in the diagram, it's the 4, 5 and 6 just that keep on plain hunting - they are not affected by the calls. It's the 1, 2 and 3 that are affected by the calls, so they have more complicated work: they each make the Bob once (ringing two blows in fourth place), and they each get to dodge in 5-6, once up and once down.

Here is my salutary experience which makes me such a fan of Original. During lockdown, I challenged myself to learn to ring handbells. I've made it to Level 2 so far, and the best lesson I learnt was that you need to train your brain to process words that are spoken while ringing, especially the words 'bob' and 'single'.

Despite being reasonably experienced and used to these words when ringing tower bells, I completely went to pieces when ringing handbells, much to my horror and disappointment. I knew what they meant, I knew what to do but somehow I couldn't process it quickly enough and translate it into action. I felt a tidal wave of empathy for all the people I teach who struggle with this same problem when ringing tower bells. Ringing and thinking - that's hard!

Ringling Original gives you the chance to practise this without having loads of other things to think about as well. For example, you don't have to stress about what your next work is going to be after the Bob - you just keep on plain hunting!

The good news is that you can master it if you don't give up at the first hurdle. And honestly, it's good fun! So...



The 'brave volunteer' called from the 6 and was unaffected by the calls



Ringling for Special Occasions

Nikki Thomas, Norwich

Nikki Thomas is the manager of the Mancroft Ringing Discovery Centre in Norwich.

Once you can handle your bell and ring rounds you become a valuable member of the ringing community, and from time to time you may be asked to make up a band to ring for a special occasion. Important events that you may be asked to ring for can be national, regional or just local – but whatever the event they are all just as important as each other because this time you will be ringing as a public performance. It's the time to put everything you have learned into practice to make your ringing as good as it can be and to play your part in the team.

Some special occasion ringing can be planned and prepared for well in advance: Remembrance Sunday ringing, anniversaries, and national events such as an important visit. And 2022 is going to be a big year for ringers up and down the country as we will be celebrating the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in early June!

However, there are also events which cannot be planned for and you could be asked to ring at short notice or a tower nearby might be short of ringers and call on you without much notice to help out.

So being properly prepared yourself and being confident, even on unfamiliar bells and maybe with ringers you don't know so well, is essential.

There are many different scenarios you may encounter. For example, you may be the newest ringer in an established band and this might make you feel uncomfortably aware of your inexperience. Or you might all be inexperienced as a new band, and you need to have a plan in place. You might feel fine ringing at your own tower but the thought of ringing somewhere else is a bit scary. Without a bit of careful preparation, it is too easy to allow yourself to be a bit overwhelmed by the occasion and for things to quickly go the wrong way at a time when it matters the most!

At the Mancroft Ringing Discovery centre, we have occasionally run workshops on how to prepare for ringing for special occasions and so here are just a few tips to help build that all important confidence:

On Practice Night

- Practise a really good pull-off on different bells. Getting the ringing off to a good start builds confidence.
- 'Whole pull and stand' is a great exercise for making sure that first pull gets your bell where you want it to be, and you can set it readily. Moving around the rope circle is really good practice so you get used to different weights of bells.
- It's always valuable, especially at this time of year, to have a practice with the bells half muffled.

Before ringing with a different band, prepare yourself mentally so you are ready for that dreaded question 'What do you ring?' Be honest and realistic, say what you can do rather than all the things you can't. If you are more used to changes called up, rather than down, for example, say so. Everyone in the band wants the ringing to be the best it can be so don't be afraid to speak up.

If you are ringing with your own band, keep things simple and remember you are working as a team and can help each other out. Have a plan for what you might do, and give 100% support to the person who is going to be running the ringing, because they might be feeling apprehensive too!



My Comeback

Ros Smith, Hessle, East Yorkshire

Ros Smith writes about returning to ringing after lockdown.

I was filled with apprehension after such a long time away from the ringing chamber. I need not have been concerned though. I took to ringing again immediately. My teacher, Roz Baxter, was very encouraging as she always is. With such a great teacher, I feel very fortunate to be part of All Saints Bell Ringers in Hessle in the East Riding of Yorkshire.

I had missed meeting up with the folks from All Saints very much. Everyone was glad to be back at the end of a rope again. Oh, we had the zoom meetings, but it was not the same at all. However, it did keep us in touch with each other and my understanding of some of the terminology of ringing grew during lock down.

I originally got involved with ringing when I heard an appeal on the local radio for bell ringers to ring for the 100th Anniversary of the end of the First World War, (1914/1918). To find myself where I am today has been an incredibly rewarding journey, despite lockdown.

On 11 September, I will ring at Hull Minster for the first time, and I am so excited about that. This date marks the 75th Anniversary of bellringing here, and the day has an extra poignancy for me as this was the day, 11 years ago that my dear husband left this earth. So marking this day by ringing bells at Hull Minster is very special in more ways than one. It is also my son's birthday.

I have met some of the most genuine people through the art of ringing. I really enjoy hearing the more experienced ringers ringing methods. I like to hear the bells rung up or down in peal and there are some lovely melodious bells.

I am truly grateful and indeed privileged to be able to go to some of the most beautiful old churches in our area to ring bells, and as a bonus to see such beautiful stained glass windows too - another great interest of mine.



Ros feeling good at Hull Minster



Answers to Puzzles



Here's the solution to the puzzle on page 5.

Across	Down
2 False	1 Boxes
4 Sway	3 Augment
7 Exercise	4 Shrouding
9 Grab	5 Prick
11 Unattached	6 Firing
14 Outing	8 Steeplage
16 Dingler	10 Bong
17 Draught	12 Crossed
18 Spider	13 Pit
19 Hagdyke	15 Marlin
20 Lower	

