

# GUILD OF DEVONSHIRE RINGERS

## NORTH EAST BRANCH

### TRAINING REPORT FOR 2011

This is the last report to be submitted by the recently resigned training officer. The Branch training programme is presented to the Branch Committee in the late autumn each year for consideration by tower representatives and with any changes suggested is incorporated into the Branch programme in time to be included in the programme cards issued to all Branch members early in 2011. The approved Branch training programme is also included in the Branch web site.

#### THE PROGRAMME:

##### **22 January 2011      Raising and lowering in peal**

This event was well supported and we progressed during the first part of the morning from ringing down individual bells to ringing down with increasing numbers of bells and then moved on to ringing up individual bells and then ringing up with increasing numbers of bells. The principal problem encountered during this event was associated with bell handling technique particularly when making coils. Most participants tended to move their top hand up when making a coil, rather than keeping the top hand fixed and making the coil with the bottom hand. Making the first coil and releasing the last coil was also a common difficulty.

##### **19 March 2011      First steps in method ringing**

This event started with a theory component aimed at showing how method ringing first developed. We reached a stage when participants could write out the sequence of changes when plain hunting on three, four and five bells. During the practical element we started with place making on two bells and progressed to plain hunting on three, four and five bells. The principal problem was associated with the need to lengthen and shorten the rope at backstroke when moving up or down more than one consecutive place. This problem was made worse by the "floating" top hand used by many call change ringers.

##### **07 May 2011      First steps in method ringing for Cullompton ringers:**

This was a special day arranged for Cullompton ringers as they were unable to attend the event programmed for March. Similar comments apply, except the handling issues were less evident.

##### **14 May 2011      Plain Bob Doubles**

This event took the form of a consolidation day as all the participants understood the basic construction of Plain Bob Doubles and had learnt the blue line. We moved on during the morning from ringing plain courses to ringing extents with different bells as observation bells. The day demonstrated that most learners are not taught to learn

where they pass the treble so that they know what is their next piece of work. Also it is clear that we are not teaching as part of our normal tower practices what is meant by the term "course bell" and the extent to which knowing the course bell can prevent serious method errors.

**11 June 2011            Plain hunting:**

This was a consolidation day for those who could plain hunt but wanted more practice.

**13 August                Moving on from Plain Bob Doubles:**

The training officer received adverse comments from a fellow Branch Officer concerning the content of this day. Clearly the Branch officer concerned had not considered the extent to which the Branch practice bell had been used as preparation for this event. Although we only had two participants wishing to move on from Plain Bob Doubles they each made very good progress during the day.

There is one further training event which this trainer will run and that is an "Introduction to method ringing day" for ringers from Silverton, as they wished to have a training day specifically for themselves at a date which suited them. This event will take place on Saturday 29 October.

The trainer's thanks are due to Sheila Scofield for organising helpers and for all those Branch members who acted as helpers on the above training days. The trainer also thanks Pat Hatchett for doing all the catering for training events held at Huntsham since January 2005. This has been an onerous task and has involved answering such tricky questions as "Is this cheese tasty?"

There are several reasons why the trainer decided during 2011 to resign and it is perhaps worth just spelling out a few of them here.

First, the object of putting together a draft Branch training programme several months before the start of the year is so that tower captains can comment on the suitability of the suggested programme for their ringers and to advise whether or not the dates chosen are suitable. This has never really worked. There has seldom, if ever, been a comment from a tower regarding the programme.

Secondly, it has become increasingly difficult to find helpers for training events, simply because those who are capable of helping have not kept the dates free in their diaries. However the trainer and the caterer are expected to keep these dates free.

Thirdly, it is very difficult to help learners to correct their handling errors if there are no competent ringers from their tower present during the training events. Most tower captains would have been effective helpers for the raising and lowering in peal and for the first steps events and thus would have been able to take back clues as to what can be done to improve performance.

Finally, training events are not "magic wands" they are unlikely to result in significant long term improvement without consolidation. Where consolidation cannot be provided within the home tower in the opinion of this trainer the Branch has a

responsibility to provide opportunities for extended ringing. This the North East Branch seems to find difficult.

Thus the outgoing trainer believes that the problem has been that the training programme has become increasingly divorced from ringing within the Branch. Some people have made it clear that this is the fault of the trainer, therefore it is high time the trainer stood down, and the Branch decided what it wants to do and how it proposes to do it before restarting the programme.

Mike Hatchett

26 September 2011