

# The aim of Raising & Lowering in Peal

- To strike the bells in ROUNDS, every time
- To have all the bells evenly spaced
- All of the bells should be heard
- It should look like a “Mexican wave”
- THIS IS A TEAM GAME
  - Stick together!
  - Try not to overtake!
  - Try not to clash!
- So ... do it all GRADUALLY, so everyone can see what is happening, adjust, and fit in
- The LOWER is usually right before the Service
  - Lots of people listening ... so it would be nice if it sounded good!
- To do it safely



## Altering the time at which your bell will strike

- If you give the rope a good pull ... the bell will go up higher
  - Remember to let some rope out too, or you'll stop it rising!
- QUESTION: As a bell rises, will the time between dings increase or decrease?
  - It will **INCREASE**
  - It takes longer between dings when the bell swings through a greater arc
  - Your bell will strike **later, as it rises**
- Lowering is the opposite
  - Less time between dings
  - Your bell will strike **earlier, as it drops**
- The ONLY CONTROL you have is to adjust how far up/down your bell is
  - To strike earlier ... bring the bell down a bit
  - To strike later ... take the bell up a bit
- **YOUR MISSION IS ...**
  - ... to adjust how far up or down your bell is to keep it striking **JUST AFTER** the bell in front
  - ... the sooner you can make an adjustment the smaller the adjustment will need to be

## Chiming a bell

- This starts the raise, and ends the lower
- With the bell down, pull & let the bell swing through a small arc
  - The odds are nothing happens ... no sound
- “Check” the bell by stopping the sally rising as the bell swings
  - Clapper overtakes the bell, strikes, and bounces off ... BONG
- But you checking the bell has taken energy out of it...
  - The bell might even have stopped swinging completely
  - A good follow through after the BONG will put the energy back in for the next BONG
- This gets to be hard work! Especially on a big bell
- Chiming in rounds
  - If you’re falling behind ...
    - Move your hands up the sally ... bells swing more quickly through a smaller arc
  - If you start clashing ...
    - Pull & move down the sally, to get the bell swinging higher
      - ... perhaps even down off the sally on the trebles, if you have a large tenor

## Keeping your bell in rounds

- The ONLY CONTROL you have on when your bell strikes, is how far up/down it is
  - To strike earlier ... bring the bell down
  - To strike later ... pull & take the bell up
- If you're clashing with the bell in front
  - Your bell is striking too early
  - Take the bell up ... or hope the others come down to join you
- If you're leaving a large gap
  - Your bell is striking too late
  - Bring the bell down ... or hope the others are coming up to join you
- **ALL YOU NEED TO DO:**
  - Keep close to the bell in front
  - Look at the CHANGE IN THE SIZE of the gap
  - If it is decreasing ... you'll soon be clashing ... you're too low ... pull
  - If it is increasing ... you're getting left behind ... you're too high ... come down closer
  - If it stays the same ... you're OK for now ... keep doing what you're doing
- Give a gentle pull most of the time
  - The lower should be GRADUAL so you need to keep your bell up & not overtake

## Tips & niceties

- Ideally, make SMALL adjustments
  - The earlier you can make an adjustment the smaller it will need to be
  - When you take coils, make them **small coils**, then slowly make them larger ... practice making coils smoothly when ringing up & down on your own
  - Do it **GRADUALLY**, so everyone can see what is happening, adjust, and fit in
  
- As the bells drop, you'll need to ring closer & closer
  - Tenor will swing and strike in its own time
  - Time between each tenor BONG decreases as the tenor drops ... so all the bells need to ring closer & closer to fit them all in before the tenor strikes
  - 8 bells “should sound like a stick running down railings”
  
- The classy way to start a raise ... “Bristol fashion”
  - Bring the bells in one at a time: 1, 12, 123, 1234, 12345, etc. ... also helps get the front bells up high enough at the start to keep the tenor striking
  
- The classy way to finish a lower ... miss and catch
  - You're chiming ... when told to “miss”, release the sally and let the bell swing (silently) ... and catch the sally next time it rises, to make the bells strike in rounds
  - Ideally you've just stopped the bells swinging, *completely* ... if not, let go, or it may well strike again & you'll absolutely **RUIN** the effect
  - FOR BONUS POINTS, catch in Queens ... the even bells must swing TWICE then catch

## Tips for an inexperienced band

- Start on 4, or even 3 bells
  - Four bells gives a good rhythm and is MUCH easier to hear than six
  - There is less weight difference between heaviest & lightest bells
  - It isn't quite so critical to keep all the bells *really* close
  - If you've 6 bells you can ring the front 3 up, then the back 3, and get two goes!
    - Some prefer "odds then evens" ... more difficult ... bigger weight difference
- The front bells are easier work than the back bells ... but don't sound so good
  - Less difference between lightest & heaviest
  - Not so much pulling required when corrections are needed
- Don't put the "learner on the tenor"
  - They tend to drop off the back of the row ... or into the middle!
  - The tenor isn't an easy option ... it is the heaviest & more difficult to get back in place
  - If you're inexperienced in leading down then put your BEST ringer on the tenor
    - Give yourself a chance too!
- When you're happy on 3 or 4, with a ringer to spare, add in an extra bell
  - You'll ALL need to ring closer to fit the extra bell in
- An obvious point: to raise in peal, you'll need to get to ringing on time!

## Other stuff that can go wrong

- Getting a bell “up wrong”
  - The clapper rests on the “wrong” side of the bell when it is “up”  
... on the upper side of the bell, almost vertical
  - A big bell “up wrong” will become VERY light set ... and might not even set at all
  - Good striking might be trickier ... it appears to have got very odd struck!
  - How can you tell? If you bounce the bell very (!! ) gently on the stay, you’ll hear a little ding
- It is caused by failing to get the bell chiming at the start of a raise
- It is VERY hard work to get a BIG bell chiming & then keep it chiming
  - Often 2 people needed to raise a bell over 20cwt
  - Don’t bother on bells over 35cwt ... go up & flip the clapper with a broom
- Even a light bell can sometimes be got “up wrong” by raising it very, *VERY* gradually
- Did you check that the bell was down before you grabbed hold to raise it????!?!?
  - Assume it is up ... don’t take coils ... try and ring it normally
- Best check that **ALL THE BELLS ARE DOWN** before you leave  
... especially if they were lowered singly!

## Leading down in peal

- Shout “lower”, and off we go ... then do nothing
- Then do nothing again! The treble should be the last bell down!
- Your job is to come in immediately AFTER the tenor as it drops ... NOT to set the pace
- Wait, and as the tenor drops, you can start to lower, and gently close the handstroke lead
- Keep it GENTLE; keep listening!
  - One clue ... tenor & treble sallies reach lowest point together (on your handstroke)
- By the time the tenor loses the handstroke everyone should be ringing really closely
- As the back bells start to lose the handstroke, keep the leading closed down tightly
  - Close it down reasonably rapidly; helps keep a big tenor chiming
  - If the other bells start to spread, ask them to keep close: give the tenor ringer a chance!
- You should all now be chiming
  - If treble is still striking BOTH sides ask for the gaps to be closed down a bit
  - The tenor rope will now hardly be moving in the chime
  - You may still be holding below the sally ... especially on heavy, or on 8 or more bells
- MISS & CATCH



## Common problems with leading down in peal

- Coming down too quickly at the start
- Coming down too quickly in the middle phase ... before the tenor loses its handstroke
- Coming down too quickly in the end phase ... as the tenor loses its handstroke
  - The handstroke & backstroke shouldn't overlap ... clashing
- Or coming down too slowly at the end
  - Both strokes drop out on the tenor ... can also be caused by bells too widely spaced
- **YOU MUST WAIT FOR THE TENOR**
  - Keep your leading close, but don't clash ... **LISTEN!**
- If you find you're following the tenor, not leading
  - You've almost certainly come down too fast. Ho hum! Better luck next time!
- Chiming too quickly ... keep your bell up a bit ... hold low on the sally
  - You must strike **AFTER** the tenor
  - If you strike before it you've brought the bell down too far ... ring it back up a bit
- And did I mention ... **do it GENTLY!**

## Leading up in peal

- IN SUMMARY: IT IS **VERY TRICKY!** Partly because it is rarely practiced
- THE START IS **ESPECIALLY TRICKY**
- You'll start by just chiming in rounds...

**123412341234123412341234**

- ... and that's your first mistake! It will quickly sound like this:

**123412341234123412341234**

- There was nowhere for your handstroke (red bells) to fit in
- QUESTION: How many pulls to get the treble striking both sides?  
 ... probably between 3 and 5  
 ... so by then, you need to have opened up a gap

**Let's start again!**

## Leading up in peal

- You need to VERY QUICKLY open up a SLIGHT gap that your handstroke will fill  
**12341234-12341-123412123412-12341231234123-1234123412341234123412341234**
- Then keep the front bells going up briskly until you hear the tenor striking both strokes  
**... 1234123-1234123-12341234123412341234**
- Then ease up and rise more gradually
  - Ideally the TENOR should be setting the pace for the rest of the raise  
 ... so don't put your learner on the tenor!
  - You can open up a SLIGHT gap at lead to see if the bells respond, by rising to fill it
  - If you go up too fast
    - The rows will separate, the tenor will struggle not to clash, you'll hear muttering from the "heavy end"!  
**1234 1234 1234 1234 1234 1234**
  - If you go up too slowly
    - You'll clash with the tenor **123412341234123412341234**
- No need to worry about "open handstroke leads" during the raise/lower
  - Keep all the leading closed until the bells are up at the end, but don't clash
  - **!! LISTEN LIKE MAD !!**

## Common problems when leading up in peal

- MOST COMMON MISTAKE: chiming for too long
  - Treble clashing when its handstroke starts ... you need to open a gap to put it in
- NEXT MOST COMMON: going up too quickly in the middle phase
  - All the bells get very close together ... except at lead, where there are BIG gaps  
**1234.....1234.....1234.....1234.....1234**
- Tell-tale signs:
  - Tenor ringer starts to really HAUL on their rope
  - Tenor ringer can't keep in place and starts clashing!
  - Tenor ringer starts muttering!!
  - Tenor ringer goes pink!!!
  - Tenor ringer offers to swap with YOU next time 😊 !!!!

**!! LISTEN LIKE MAD !!**

... if you can't hear what is going on, perhaps try it on fewer bells