



STARTING TO RING

When you first come to ringing lessons everything will seem strange. It does to all learners so don't worry about it. Everything is explained and demonstrated as you progress. If at any time you do not understand something, ask straightaway. Remember that the only 'silly' question is the one you don't ask.

Church bells are fairly heavy. Most of them are in the weight range between a small motorcycle and a family car. As when driving a car, this mass of metal must be kept under control, thus proper lessons are essential. Two points of safety whenever you are on the ringing floor...

- Until you have gained experience, never catch hold of a rope until you have been told what to do
- When you are 'sitting out' keep both feet on the floor

The reasons for these instructions will soon become obvious.

Before you start any practical lessons the 'mechanics' of a bell swinging 'full circle' will have been explained.

During your lessons always try to relax. This is most important because, if you are tensed, controlling the bell becomes more difficult. Remember that your tutor is standing by your side to assist you and to ensure that everything is kept under control, so stay calm!

The essential action in ringing is, of course, pulling the bell rope. Simple? Perhaps, when you have acquired the knack. Things to remember...

- A long, gentle, steady pull is needed. Never snatch at the rope
- The pull starts from your hands fully up over your head, through to when your hands are fully down (where a Scotsman wears his sporran) with your thumbs pointing at your shoes
- This pull must be straight down, as if sliding your hands down a broom handle. To do this you must bring your elbows back so that your hands move down in a straight line. (You can practice this at home - preferably in front of a full-length mirror)
- Your hands should always be close together and on the body centreline. Don't wave them about
- . Keep your back straight and your head up. Work from your shoulders. (You might see some gymnastics with ringers on heavier bells, but ignore them at this stage!).

All this helps to keep the bell and the rope under control, a very important part of your first lessons.

There's plenty more to come, but that's enough for now.