

## Table tennis anyone?

Whilst attending the hugely enjoyable ART Conference at Royston a few weeks ago there were lots of discussions on how innovative ideas and a bit of technology can help towers to improve various aspects of ringing and in a couple of the more interactive sessions that Tony Croft and I presented together at the conference I mentioned that David Adams (of our Chester Branch of the Diocesan Guild) had come up with an idea that provides a little friendly competition between towers.

I have to say at this point that I am a new ringer of only 18 months, but am of an age where I can remember going to the youth club where we had a "Table Tennis Ladder". Everyone's name was on a "T-Card" and the ladder was carefully preserved after each evening ready for the next week when battle commenced again. The idea was that everyone aspired to improve their position in the ladder by "challenging" the person one or two places above them to a match. If they won, then they swapped places on the ladder. Conversely, if challenged by someone below, then they had to take the challenge or forfeit their position if the challenge was refused over two successive weeks.

It is obvious that David Adams had had a similar experience to mine as he came up with the idea of a "striking ladder" for towers, where the quality of striking was the criteria for progression or demotion on the "ladder".

At the conference the main topic was teaching, but measurement is also a requirement of teaching as it is all about making progress. As a new ringer I need to have personal goals to achieve, but as we all know ringing is about the team performance and a bit of competition is no bad thing to get everyone working and improving together.

Setting up a ladder requires towers to enter a team or teams that should be named and these teams should remain consistent, but this is probably the easy part. When you get to judging who is the best, how subjective can the judging be? You will need to appoint a "Referee" who will judge the striking and decide on the "winner" of the challenge. The thought is that a level playing field should be the aim, but this is where I move slightly away from David's plan as you are only challenging those directly above you, so you should, if the ladder is working effectively, be quite close in skill level in any case.

So you challenge the tower above you in the ladder and the Tower Captains arrange a suitable time and venue, with the choice of tower decided by the toss of a coin or other agreed method. Then they decide what is to be rung. It would be no good if you have a tower with predominantly new ringers expected to ring Cambridge Surprise Major when they are more used to change ringing or hunting.

The referee can be there on the night, or you could record the event and send to a central judge, or even use technology in the form of recording the striking on a simulator and submitting it for analysis, or you can just decide amongst yourselves who was the best on the day! When the dust has settled, the result is published and the ladder moves on.

So ... who's for Table Tennis?

*Steve Farmer, Cheshire*