
Solving common problems when teaching Plain Hunt

Hunting down to the lead

For many ringers, one of the frustrations of learning Plain Hunt can be completely controlling their bell when hunting down to lead, sometimes finding that the bell drops too quickly or they are too slow coming to lead, having not taken in enough tail end.

A few minutes regularly dedicated to raising and lowering in peal can be a helpful step in building confidence with ringing faster and more slowly in a controlled way, taking in and letting out tail.

Instead of simply raising the bells at the beginning of a session and lowering at the end, including raising/lowering as a ringing activity in itself can help significantly with bell control.

Hunting up to the back

Another area where ringers commonly need additional support is striking their bell accurately at the back of the row. Getting right up into fifth place, lying for two blows and turning round can be tricky.

Any time spent on foundation level exercises that involve setting the bell at backstroke or ringing right up to the balance can be helpful in controlling the bell when moving slowly.

Look out for simple methods or Kaleidoscope exercises where ringers can get the feel of ringing in last place and coming on and off the back. Big Change Little Change, or making short and long places at the back in Call Changes can help ringers to strike more accurately.

Learned the numbers off by heart?

After even a few goes, it's difficult for ringers not to have memorised the numbers of Plain Hunt and started trying to predict which bell they should ring over next. Although this is not a problem in itself, it's desirable for ringers to quickly move on from this stage so that they can also begin to ring by place.

If you have a steady band, try calling the bells into different starting orders before ringing Plain Hunt so that the order of bells is mixed.

After a few rounds of Plain Hunt, call different changes and go Plain Hunt again. As ringers gain confidence with hunting over bells in a changing order, the skill of ringing by place develops.

Contributed by Ruth Suggett