

If you check the bell too aggressively it can feel like when it bounces – it tends to come down more quickly than intended making it difficult to stay/get back in line.

Ropesight

You probably find that one day it suddenly happens and you have it. Admittedly, this is quite an unsatisfactory statement, here are a few things that might help it along a bit:

- If your field of vision is in the normal range in most cases you CAN see all the bells from where you are standing (at this point I feel the urge to pay homage to the Treble of Minster-in-Thamet..), the question is: do you pay attention to them all and do you make sense of what you are seeing? This can be quite an important distinction.
- When ringing rounds and call changes, initially it's quite normal to only look at the bell you are following. Look a bit sideways and check whether you can still follow it with your peripheral vision.
- *Follow the bell that follows you* (only when you are hunting/moving out!). In a change pairs of bells switch places: e.g. 1 2 > 2 1, so on the next stroke you will be ringing over the bell that is following you now at this stroke. As soon as you have pulled off, it is therefore more useful to look around to see which bell is following you than to keep looking at the bell you are ringing over now. Two bits of good news when plain hunting: the number of bells you need to check is constantly diminishing, you can ignore those you have passed already. Also, with many methods, the sequence in which you meet the bells on your way to the front is the same as you have passed them on the way out, all you have to do is remember them.

Of course, you can practice spotting the bell that follows you also when ringing call changes.

- It's useful to watch the others even when you are not ringing:
 - Can you spot the bell that's leading? Or the one that's pulling off last?
 - Can you see the sequence in which they are pulling their strokes? You may want to focus on a subgroup of 3 or 4 bells initially.
 - Learn the blue line of methods regularly rung in your tower even if you don't expect to be able to ring them in the near future - you'll get much more out of watching. Standing behind one of the ringers, can you follow his/her course?

Ringers' Hints and Tips

The following may already sound familiar from what your teacher or your fellow band members have told you, it's mostly a list of things that sparked a 'heureka' moment when we re-discovered them for ourselves. For this reason, it's obviously not a complete discourse on each of the topics listed – at least not yet...

Safety

- When ringing a bell for the first time or at another tower make sure the rope is long enough for you to hold it when the bell is stood at back stroke.
- When you have to pull hard (e.g. ringing up), bend your knees to get a longer pull, rather than lean forwards, to keep your neck out of the rope's way.
- If the rope is flying around, e.g. when you missed the sally, concentrate on staying safely out of its way rather than trying to catch it. You get it back under control by giving the rope a good pull at backstroke – possibly take in some rope to make it more effective).

General ringing

- If the bell bounces off the stay, catch the sally a bit higher up/take in some of the tail end next time. If you hold the rope in the right places, the bell can't bounce.
- If the bell pulls but doesn't go up high enough you are checking it - catch the sally a bit lower down /let out some of the tail end next time.
- The best place to catch the sally/hold the tail end differs from bell to bell.
- The bell goes beyond the balance - good if you need to hold up, rather hard work otherwise.
- The bell goes to or near the balance (i.e. it 'hovers' long enough before coming down for you to stay in the correct position) - good for keeping the speed or going fast (here just below balance).
- The bell returns immediately or else comes down earlier than wanted – pull hard immediately (especially on hand stroke) to bring it back under control, otherwise you're in trouble. It does feel counterproductive to pull hard if what you really want is to go slowly but that way you have a chance to recover your position.
- When you ring on higher numbers, you have to follow the bell in front closer than you would on lower numbers. This is because you have to fit more bells into the same space of time.

Ring up

- When making the loops initially, keep the tail end as short as possible – when you come to let go of the last loop the weight of that loop will pull it out of your hand leaving you with a much longer bit you can adjust to the right length. This makes releasing it really easy. With a long tail end to start with you also risk that it forms a knot with the other loops – typically the moment when you remember how fragile the stay can be...

Ring down

- Take in a bit of rope at every backstroke, but otherwise give the rope a good pull. Shortening the rope bit by bit means that the bell comes down steadily, pulling through means you maintain the little control there is to be had – you could even let out a bit of rope again if needed.