

Appendix 1:

Summary of Ringing Roadshow Questionnaires

The Trends Working Group considered ways of obtaining information regarding the state of ringing without carrying out a full survey of ringers. Several reports were available for consultation and analysis, but it was felt that the Ringing Roadshow at Keele in May 2001 presented an opportunity to question a selection of ringers. The attendees at the Roadshow may not be truly representative of the ringing exercise, but they did come with a wide variety of experience, from all over the country and from a range of towers.

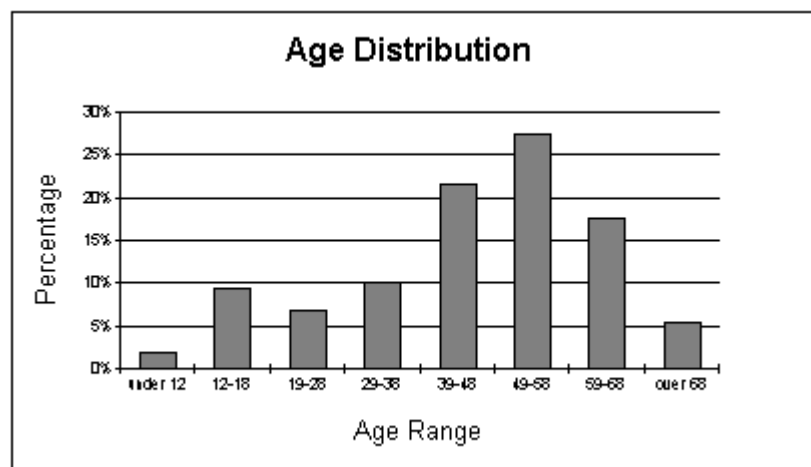
To encourage people to complete the questionnaires, a draw was made for two gift vouchers that had been donated by Robert Newton.

Total number of forms completed: 320

1. Ages:

(Note: the age ranges selected were rather strange but they were designed to assess the number of under 18's but to retain the numbers in 10 year blocks)

Age Range	Number	Percentage
<12	6	1.9%
12-18	30	9.4%
19-28	22	6.9%
29-38	32	10.0%
39-48	69	21.6%
49-58	88	27.5%
59-68	56	17.5%
>68	17	5.3%



Comments:

Note the high proportion of ringers in the 40 to 70 age range. This suggests an aging population and gives some concern for the future of ringing.

There is a dip associated with the 19-28 age range, and the 29-38 age range is quite low. This may indicate people of this age are not interested in events such as the roadshow, but on the other hand, these are the tower captains of the future. The numbers under 18 are greater, but if we are not retaining these youngsters into adulthood, then where will the future leaders and teachers come from?

Of the under 18's, all those under 12 had ringing parents.

Only half of the 12-18 group had ringing parents. This presents Child Protection questions.

It is becoming much more complicated to teach youngsters, and especially to take them outside their home tower because of the Child Protection Act.

If half the youngsters ringing do not have ringing parents, and many towers are not taking on youngsters without ringing parents because of Child Protection issues, there will be a large drop in the number of youngsters being taught.

From the ages given and number of years of ringing, the following statistics were derived:

Number of ringers who learnt as a child: 210 = 66%

Of these, only 76 (36.2%) had ringing parents and

134 (63.8%) did not have ringing parents.

Looking only at those who have been ringing for more than 5 years (i.e. taking out the younger children and older learners who may not continue), 71% learnt in their childhood, of whom 33% had ringing parents and 67% did not.

These figures indicate the need to teach and retain youngsters, and not just those who come from ringing families.

2. Years of ringing:

<5 years	75	up to 40 years	30
up to 10 years	39	up to 45 years	20
up to 15 years	22	up to 50 years	12
up to 20 years	29	up to 55 years	7
up to 25 years	24	up to 60 years	nil
up to 30 years	25	> 60 years	2
up to 35 years	35		

It is good to see that the roadshow attracted so many less experienced ringers, but these figures do suggest that there may be a drop off of ringers within the first 10 years.

Age range of learners: (i.e. those who have been ringing less than 5 years)

<12	6	=	8%
12-18	25	=	33%
19-28	6	=	8%
29-38	3	=	4%
39-48	12	=	16%
49-58	15	=	20%

59-68	7	=	9%
>68	1	=	1%

3. Ringing ability:

Learner	4	=	1%
Call Changes	7	=	2%
Basic methods	84	=	27%
Intermediate	23	=	7%
Surprise	202	=	63%

5. Where do they ring? (318 replies)

City	31	=	10%
Urban	38	=	12%
Suburban	42	=	13%
Market Town	82	=	26%
Rural Village	125	=	39%

What can they ring according to where they ring?

City:	Basic methods	3	=	10%
	Surprise	28	=	90%
Urban:	Call changes	3	=	8%
	Basic methods	7	=	18%
	Intermediate	3	=	8%
	Surprise	25	=	66%
Suburban:	Call changes	1	=	2%
	Basic methods	11	=	26%
	Intermediate	5	=	12%
	Surprise	25	=	60%
Market town:	Call changes	1	=	1%
	Basic methods	20	=	25%
	Intermediate	6	=	7%
	Surprise	55	=	67%
Rural Village:	Learner	4	=	3%
	Call changes	2	=	2%
	Basic methods	43	=	34%
	Intermediate	9	=	7%
	Surprise	67	=	54%

6. Where do they ring – by number of bells at home tower? (317 replies)

no. of bells	no. of ringers	
3	1	= <1%
5	4	= 1%
6	114	= 36%
8	136	= 43%
10	35	= 11%
12/12+	27	= 9%

It is not surprising that the majority of ringers ring at town or village 6 and 8 bell towers.

What do they ring according to number of bells in the tower?

3 bell towers:	Basic methods	1	= 100%
5 bell towers:	Basic methods	3	= 75%
	Surprise	1	= 25%
6 bell towers:	Learners	4	= 3%
	Call changes	2	= 2%
	Basic methods	36	= 32%
	Intermediate	10	= 9%
	Surprise	62	= 54%
8 bell towers:	Call changes	5	= 4%
	Basic methods	38	= 28%
	Intermediate	10	= 7%
	Surprise	83	= 61%
10 bell towers:	Basic methods	1	= 3%
	Intermediate	3	= 9%
	Surprise	31	= 88%
12 bell towers:	Basic methods	4	= 15%
	Surprise	23	= 85%

Notes: There is a higher proportion of surprise ringers in the towns and cities and at the 10 and 12 bell towers. This could be because learners are less likely to be taught at these towers, more rapid progress is made here or because experienced ringers migrate towards these towers.

The reasons are probably complex and a combination of all these. Either way, these figures suggest that ringers at city/town centre churches and those with 10 or 12 bells should be encouraged to teach more learners.

7. How many ringers does each tower have? Are there sufficient to man the bells?

No. of bells	No. of ringers		No. of bells	No. of ringers	
3	<5	1	10	10	3
				12	4
5	<5	1		15	19
	6	1		20	6
	8	1		25	2
				35+	1
6	<5	23			
	6	13	12/12+	6	2
	8	26		8	2
	10	27		10	5
	12	19		12	1
	15	12		15	3
	20	2		20	7
	25	2		25	4
				30	2
8	6	14			
	8	26			
	10	19			
	12	28			
	15	35			
	20	10			
	25	2			

These figures suggest that the 10-bell towers are best served with all towers having at least the number of ringers for the number of bells. Overall, 14.6% of towers represented do not have at least one ringer per bell. (Logic indicates that the national situation is far worse than this since towers with no ringers will not be represented, and those with few ringers are less likely to be represented.)

It has been said that to maintain a successful band the number of ringers required is 2.5 times the number of bells. Only 10.2% of the towers represented fall into this category.

Towers that do not have as many ringers as bells:

6-bell towers: 18.5%

8-bell towers: 10.4%

10-bell towers: nil
12-bell towers: 34.6%

Towers where the number of ringers is at least 2.5 times the number of bells:

6-bell towers: 12.9%
8-bell towers: 9.0%
10-bell towers: 8.6%
12-bell towers: 7.7%

8. State of band:

Declining:	23	=	7%
Struggling:	59	=	19%
Steady:	165	=	53%
Prosperous:	67	=	21%

It was interesting to note that the opinions regarding the state of the band did not always relate to the number of ringers – e.g. 8-bell towers that were said to be prospering but only had 6 ringers.

9. Age of tower captains: (314 replies)

Age	Number	
19-28	6	= 2%
29-38	43	= 14%
39-48	57	= 18%
49-58	96	= 30.5%
59-68	77	= 24.5%
>68	35	= 11%

Note: More than 60% of tower captains are aged over 50.

How does age of tower captain relate to prosperity of band?

	State of band:			
	Declining	Struggling	Steady	Prosperous
T/C's Age:				
19-28	0	0	3	3
29-38	2	5	15	21
39-48	0	14	29	14
49-58	15	15	49	17
59-68	6	17	48	6
>68	0	8	21	6

These figures suggest that the younger tower captains may be rather more successful than the older ones.

10. State of branches/districts: (316 replies)

Declining	16	=	5%
Struggling	25	=	8%
Steady	216	=	68%
Prosperous	59	=	19%

11. Age of Branch/District Ringing Master:

19-28	37	=	13%
29-48	153	=	52%
49-68	98	=	34%
>68	4	=	1%

Only a small proportion of branches/districts were described as declining or struggling, which indicates a healthy state of affairs.

12. How/why did people first learn to ring?

31% taken along by ringing member of family (mostly parents)
14% went along with friends
11% joined from Church choir, confirmation class, congregation, youth groups
7% were invited by tower captain, another ringer, vicar, churchwarden or vergers

(i.e. 63% joined because of direct approach from family, friend or Church member)

6% responded to an appeal (more than half of whom were Millennium recruits, others when bells were rehung or when bells were to fall silent).

2% learnt at University

1% learnt for Duke of Edinburgh Award

1% started through Guides (but none through Scouts)

6% just said they learnt because of interest or something to do, so some of these may come into the above categories as well.

Of the remaining 21% the reasons given were many and varied e.g.:

“because my Dad wouldn’t buy me a racing kart”

“financial possibilities”

“quieter inside tower than out”

“when ban on bells lifted after the war”

SUMMARY:

Analysis of the responses to questionnaires at the Ringing Roadshow at Keele University in 2001 indicate the following:

72% were aged over 40, with a high proportion being in the 49-58 age range.

71% of the experienced ringers (i.e. ringing more than 5 years) learnt to ring as a child.

It is therefore important to maintain the intake and retention of young learners. This is getting increasingly difficult.

Of the experienced ringers who learnt as children only 33% had ringing parents.

15% of towers represented do not have at least one ringer per bell in their tower.

Only 10 % of towers represented had at least the ideal number of ringers, being 2.5 times the number of bells.

Ringing ability seems to be greater in 10 and 12 bell towers and in towns and cities rather than in urban/suburban areas or villages.

The predominant view was that bands and branches/districts were in a steady state. This suggests that there are no significant trends that we need to be concerned about.

63% of the people questioned learnt to ring because of direct approach from family, friend or a church member. This suggests that the direct approach is more successful in recruiting than general advertising.

Further comments:

The Child Protection Act seems to have put off some tower captains from teaching youngsters, and it is believed that young ringers are giving up more readily because of peer pressure. There is a lot of competition from other activities, TV, computers and school exams, so we need to make ringing attractive in appropriate ways to retain our young learners.

Increased mobility has probably lead to the strength of ringing being in the towers with higher numbers of bells because they attract experienced ringers. Maybe the stronger towers (e.g. 10 and 12 bells towers in towns and cities) should be encouraged to teach more learners.