

CHANGE RINGING FOR THE FUTURE

REPORT ON BREAKOUT GROUPS SOUTHWEST REGION

A. What's working well in your area?

Working together	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good communication via Facebook and email lists, and people getting together in person 	
Training and development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concentrated training sessions per week so recruit able to join in with other ringers in 2-3 weeks National Young Ringers Striking Competition Specific training is available (at tower level) eg ring up/down, conducting for beginners Some towers have plenty of well taught learners (via Young Ringers Striking Competition) Young ringers – charging for after-school bell club and holiday club morning sessions Education across the guild is good - from ITTS to teach new learners, up to conducting and Surprise Major course Lots of new recruits from the 50+ age group Spring and Autumn training days Running courses on a very regular basis – we find it helps to get new ringers making quick progress Two annual training days (200+ people) – elementary (Plain Hunt, Plain Bob etc); more advanced (eg Stedman/Cambridge) Very localised (Bisley) – lots of young ringers with good progress Recruitment – one local tower has brought in several new ringers (middle to old age) using a local social medium 	<p>x 2</p> <p>x 2</p> <p>x 2</p> <p>x 2</p>
Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> District practices Special practices (eg monthly Surprise practice) Tea/coffee and light refreshment in ringing chamber after practice! 	<p>x 2</p> <p>x 2</p>
Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The flat structure of the association (DCA) means it can respond to needs of active membership North of the guild works well with neighbouring guild Small branches tend to do better 	
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bell restoration Ringing centre Increase in subscriptions to cover increased education budget Centres of excellence (Bristol, Exeter etc) Strong university societies (Bristol, Exeter) feed into local ringing and supported by local ringers – young, keen and progressive Local towers working together – training, practices, maintenance Open social events with ringing 	x 4



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Social events – not just ringing! ▪ The willing minority ▪ Newly-taught band at a previously silent 5-bell tower in a small village are still ringing together after two years ▪ Limited things we do are done well, but not enough of them ▪ Good communication by road (M4, M5 etc) make wider cooperation possible ▪ A tradition of strong ringing to a high standard ▪ Enthusiasm of district ringing master has increased participation in striking competition from one team four years ago, to 13 in the most recent ▪ Questionnaire used to identify those who want help to progress, and those who are willing to help them ▪ Tower of the Year competition to disseminate good ideas 	
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B. What's NOT working well in your area?

Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Guild not helping at local level ▪ People are still hung up on committees, paperwork and holding office, not just getting with it – holding on to Victorian guild structure despite a guild review ▪ Officers re-elected year on year, and often stand unopposed – lack of ringers willing to stand for posts 	
Recruitment & training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recruitment of young ringers very low (x2) ▪ Poor quality teaching by so-called qualified training from ITTS courses ▪ Lack of experienced trainers ▪ Giving sufficient opportunities to learners from weak tower bands ▪ Large branches tend to recruit well in small parts of the branch [??] ▪ Recruitment – resorting to tower open days, appeals in the Church and in local newspapers has not worked well ▪ Retention of learners after the initial teaching stage ▪ Lack of helpers to ring to support courses ▪ Recruitment in urban towers ▪ We are finding it difficult to follow up on a recent very useful ITTS Module 1 course 	x 2
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Many rural towers with only one or two ringers ▪ The Ringing Centres are not as successful as we need them to be ▪ Not enough willing volunteers ▪ A significant number of ringers are only interested in ringing at their home towers and do not even get involved with association events/interested in bigger picture ▪ Lack of keen, enthusiastic leaders ▪ Resistance of some mainly small village ringers to help from outside ▪ When older ringers will not give over ▪ Sticking rigidly to traditional practice 	x 2 x 2 x 2 x 2



C. What are the cross-boundary opportunities in your region?

Working together	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ We border four other guilds and there could be greater use made of the Ringing Centre ▪ We already have good relationships with our nearest association ▪ The Ringing Centre weekly practices (weekday morning) of mainly Surprise Major draws in ringers from a wide area including four districts ▪ Cooperation across branch/guild boundaries with shared practices across borders ▪ Opportunities to merge the branches of the guild, and to cluster with towers in Cornwall, Dorset and Somerset for those near the border ▪ Two annual social/ringing events – branches from two different guilds ▪ Two branches of a guild supporting advanced practices to help make them happen 	
Training and development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Open novice practices ▪ On all our boundaries we exchange helpers and students on training events 	
Young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Boundary initiatives – some x branch, some x border, young ringer practices 	
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ringing Centre re-organising ▪ Endless if people are prepared to travel! ▪ Handbells in Devon and call change competitions ▪ Regular practices bringing in a large number of less experienced ringers ▪ Tend to be insular ▪ Very limited! ▪ Ringing meetings rarely advertised in Ringing World because of cost – opportunities for cross boundary visitors lost as they're unaware of events. Solution – free online publication? ▪ Unlimited – we have no boundaries – ringers have always ignored parish boundaries – why create others? 	



D. What cross-boundary initiatives are happening near you?

Working together	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Local association officers feel that their spare time is already fully committed locally – therefore very negative to cross boundary working ▪ Devon/G&B borders already goes on 	
Contests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inter-branch competitions and social events ▪ The Tewkesbury Shield 	
Training and development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Shared practices and training help ▪ Dorset members travelled to Plymouth for ITTS Module 1&2 ▪ Good training and Young 	
Young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Works better with younger ringer ▪ 'Southern Universities' activities and Bristol/Exeter university links 	
Private initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Things can happen wherever there are active members – members are all for LIFE so that could mean anywhere ▪ Quite good at a local level – particularly with Swindon area 	
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ None! ▪ Very little ▪ There are very few cross boundary links – we are a big association and find that we can cooperate easily with near branches ▪ Ringing Centre draws from several branches 	