

Stewardship & Management Workgroup

of The Central Council of Church Bell Ringers



Tips for Tying Bells

for Practice or Examination

Introduction

Tying bells is easier than you think and there are various reasons for wanting to silence a bell, including:

- Extensive 'return-to-ringing' refreshing without irritating the neighbours.
- Extensive single bell teaching without irritating the neighbours.
- Either of the above on multiple single bells without really irritating the neighbours.
- Assessing the mechanical state of the bell without being deafened and/or obscuring any unwanted nasty noises, bangs or squeaks requiring attention.
- Demonstrating upstairs (at a safe distance) the working of a bell to newcomers.

It isn't always necessary to tie the bell and we should be aware that some noise, even single bells at appropriate times, is needed and expected, especially after a long period of silence.

Safety

- The bell must be down when being tied and untied. It must be safe to access.
- Do not work alone.
- Wear appropriate clothing and any PPE per your tower's risk assessment.

Silencing

Silencing may be done in various ways:

Cord

Using a simple cord with a loop on one end and a bungee loop on the other. Put the rope loop over a convenient bolt, then, standing on the opposite side of the bell to the pulley, pull the clapper across the bell. Put the rope round the flight (below the ball), pull tight, wrap a few turns round the flight and stretch the bungee up over another convenient headstock bolt.

Advantages

- One size fits most bells.
- You don't have to get right under the bell.
- Quick to put on and very quick to remove.
- If tied to the handstroke side, makes the bell feel normal at handstroke thus reducing the risk of nervous "returners" or learners hitting the stay.

Disadvantages

- Fine set at backstroke which is rarely an issue unless the exercise being done specifically requires a 'normal' backstroke.
- May make the bells hard to ring accurately with a simulator.



The pictures show a tied bell down and then set at handstroke



This video link shows a rope tie in action at a belfry course: <u>youtu.be/J5FVDnWmRZA</u> You can hear the assorted rattles and squeaks and also the students discussing what they can see and hear (from a safe distance, of course).

Wooden Clapper Stay

Using a specially constructed wooden clapper-stay bolted round the clapper shank to fix the clapper centrally in the bell.

Advantages

• May work better when used with a simulator.

Disadvantages

- Each stay is specific to each bell.
- Slow to put on and off.
- The bell is fine-set at both strokes making handling harder for the learner and risking broken stays at handstroke.



Tyre 'Muffle'

Using a tyre 'muffle'. This is a short section of car tyre with a hole in the tread so it can be pushed over the clapper flight. This stays on permanently and would normally be inactive but is turned through 90



degrees to present soft blows to the bell.

This is helpful when you want the learner to hear the relationship between pull and dong if there is no simulator.

It makes a very ghostly sound inside and outside the tower but makes the bell handle completely normally.

Advantages

- Quick to apply.
- Can be left in situ.
- Bell handles normally.

Elastic Loops

A bicycle inner tube or a loop of bungee cord can be used to tie a clapper in any position. Draping the elastic over the headstock and looping both ends onto the clapper will allow it to be held centrally, and can be adjusted to change the clapper position.

Initial set up requires a degree of experimentation to get the correct tension for each bell, e.g. using knots or multiple inner tubes (one inner tube may be sufficient for a small bell, but a larger bell may require two looped together).

Advantages

- Flexible clapper position.
- Fairly quick to fit and remove.
- Works well with a simulator.

Further information

CCCBR Manual of Belfry Maintenance

Available from CCCBR online shop: <u>cccbr.org.uk/product/manual-of-belfry-maintenance</u>

Ringing society's belfry advisory panel members.

CCCBR Stewardship & Management Workgroup: cccbr.org.uk/resources/stewardship-and-management

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Version Control

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