

Technical and Taxonomy Workgroup

Report for June 2022 - May 2023



Overview

This year has focused mostly on business as usual (BAU) activities, and reprioritisation of projects and activities. The main priority for the group as a whole will be the support of initiatives for Ringing 2030. While goals have not yet been finalised for this, a general outline is clear enough to begin some discovery, which is underway. The ringing survey being undertaken by the V&L workgroup will be a valuable source of insight as well, so that we can target relatively scarce resource where it will be most effective.

In other projects, the Method Extension Review will continue its work throughout 2023 and 2024, while the Compositions Team is working on a collection to target new conductors. Although focus rightly remains on data quality and updates, the Dove team has plans for further enhancements to the Dove website.

Methods

The Methods team maintains resources pertaining to method records and names, including the Framework for Method Ringing and the Methods software library. The team also responds to requests about methods and method names and produces method-related articles.

Methods Library

At the end of 2022, there were 23,568 methods recorded in the CCCBR Methods Library, an increase of 389 from the previous year. Additionally, four Dynamic methods such as Dixon's Minor are now included. These are specified descriptively as no concise notation has yet been devised for Dynamic methods.

Five new methods rung in 2022 did not qualify for inclusion in the CCCBR Methods Library: One was not rung to a qualifying length (Framework 5.E.1 (a)); one was not rung to a true touch (5.E.1 (d)); and three methods were not rung by an all-human band (5.E.1 (g)). Bands are requested to take particular care regarding truth when ringing new methods and to include the composition with the performance report so this can be verified.

The Methods team has responded to a number of enquiries about methods through social media and by email. In addition, Adam Beer wrote an article for *The Ringing World* on the new methods and variations that were rung and named for the coronation.

Method Extension Review

Work continues the review of method extension processes. We expect this to take another 1 - 2 years to complete as team members are also working on many other projects. A generalized approach for extending almost any method has been proposed by Philip Saddleton. Graham John has proposed an extension process, tentatively named EP4, which has the following features:

1. Supports all existing EP1 and EP3 extensions.

2. Supports single stage extensions, e.g., Plain Bob, Grandsire, Stedman, Erin, Original
3. Uses more flexible change boundaries to support extension for methods such as Bristol Surprise at all stages.
4. Enables expanding lead-length extensions for principles and Little methods, which supports extension for methods such as Penultimus Little Place.

Where EP4 produces additional extensions beyond those produced by EP1 and EP3, these are now displayed in the Related Methods section of Complib method pages. Graham has also developed an extension visualiser in Complib that shows in place notation how an extension series is derived and displays a grid showing how the blue line characteristics expand. This is in beta and can be viewed by clicking on the extension process in Related Methods.

We are also working on characterizing extensions of general leadhead orders, i.e., those other than the Plain Bob order. For example, a Major method with cyclic leadheads should perhaps retain this feature at higher stages.

Once the team is ready with proposals for updated extension processes, we will conduct a full review with the ringing community to gather comments and feedback.

For reference purposes, a list of extension anomalies is also under development -- these are existing methods that do not follow current extension requirements in some way. These names are grandfathered in and are not anticipated to change -- this list will be for reference only.

Other Framework work

A revised Appendix B (Method Name Syntax) has been prepared that makes some simplifications to the current version and addresses a few issues that could occur in edge cases. This will be rolled out at a suitable opportunity in the coming year.

Richard Smith has demonstrated a process for storing the Framework's content in a way that allows it to be easily viewed on a website or downloaded as a properly formatted .pdf file. We aim to implement this as a 2024 project.

Methods Team

Team leader: Tim Barnes

Graham John runs the process to extract newly rung methods from BellBoard and add them to the Methods Library.

The extension review is being performed by Tim Barnes, Mark Davies, John Harrison, Graham John, Don Morrison, Philip Saddleton and Robin Woolley. Adam Beer assists with enquiries sent to the Methods team.

Compositions

The compositions team supports composition collections and the online library of doubles variations and calls, as well as answering questions and providing articles about compositions.

Simon Bond has retired as team leader but remains as a Composition Library administrator. Richard Pullin has also retired from the team, taking up the role of Felstead curator instead. Thanks go to both for their work over the last five years, which was instrumental in getting the new team up and running.

Collections

Composition Library remains a primary resource for compositions, and now features 61,165 compositions from 1,081 composers, with 7,996 compositions having been added since May of 2022 (including 1,300 of compositions added in one week by one composer).

While compositions@cccbr.org.uk remains an option to submit compositions for publication, thanks to CompLib's user-friendly interface and Graham's work with individual composers, there are presently no regular composition submissions via this method. The email address remains open for all enquiries, help, or advice requested.

Special thanks to Andrew Johnson, who over the past year has added over 200 historical compositions to CompLib. The group will continue to work through compositions from sources such as the Ringing World, Bell News, and ringing.info, and add them to collections on CompLib.

Peter Hinton continues to maintain and update varlib.org, a website for Variations and Calls for the Central Council Library; as of May 2023 there are 5,696 Doubles Variations, 66 names have been added or changed from 1st June 2022 to 31st May 2023 -- including some corrections, more newly named variations. In addition to the general maintenance, including adding a lot of historic performance references, another key addition in the past year has been the addition of a database of callings for all the variations.

Future Projects

The workgroup is looking to work on collections of compositions specifically geared toward new and beginner conductors. As collections are published, accompanying articles and resources will be simultaneously made available on CCCBR platforms, aligned with the initiative to ensure resource resiliency. The workgroup is also considering potential additional CompLib search features to allow conductors to find compositions fitting their exact specifications.

Composition Team

Team leader: Kira Chase
Simon Bond, Peter Hinton, Andrew Johnson, Graham John, Richard Pullin, David Thomas

ICT team

The ICT team looks after the Council ICT infrastructure, maintains the Central Council website, the Ringing Forums website, and supports the development of other Council websites and digital publications. The team also offers event support for recording and live streaming.

BAU and support

Throughout the year there has been ongoing support and maintenance of the Central Council's web server and Microsoft collaboration services (email, Teams, Sharepoint etc.), as well as ongoing maintenance of the Central Council members database and mailing lists. This is often an invisible task that happens quietly in the background but is an essential piece of the ICT team services, and many thanks go to Doug Davis and the team for keeping the digital engines running.

As demand for both general support and support for specific projects grows, the near-term focus will be on ensuring business continuity and succession planning. Research and planning are also underway to structure a support offering for association webmasters.

CCCBR website

The website team continues to respond to requests for amendments or updates to the website. A targeted team has been working to improve the display and navigation of the website proactively and incrementally, many thanks to Allen Nunley and Ian Mozely for taking on the bulk of this work. Projects completed this year include:

- Creating a new page for the Bluebells Challenge
- Changes to SMWG resources page supporting launch of three new online documents (Belfry Upkeep, Running a Tower, and Belfry Projects)
- Created pages and uploaded content for Schools and Youth Workgroup
- Reorganized and relocated links from elsewhere to Resources page
- Reorganized Home Page
- Reorganized Bell Fund Links
- Roughed out Document Standards for documents to be loaded onto website

Planned work

Action (delete, archive or leave in place) identified pdfs from Stewardship and Management Working Group on CCCBR website – many documents are on website that no longer serve any purpose. A similar process will be in consultation with the Historical and Archive Working Group.

The team plans to Review other document types and add keywords to make them findable.

Ringing Forums

Ringing Forums now has 267 users, who have posted over 2,268 comments. Growth is slow but steady, and the activity has reached a self-sustaining level. This is a useful forum for ringing queries, reactions to ringing news stories and general advice and support in an independent platform.

Digital publications/microsites

These are hosted using the Github Pages service and lets us store source files and code in an easily maintained repository. There are now 9 separate publications hosted, including three new online publications from the Stewardship and Management Working Group.

There have also been microsites created for Bell Sunday and the National Call Change Competition. Discussion is underway with the publications group on how to use this service to connect online and offline publications more effectively.

Other projects

The Securing the Future group has been stood down for now to regroup and redefine the scope and goals of the work. The group has produced valuable research on over 80 ringing-related websites, apps and software projects. However, before offering a wider redundancy/continuity service, we should ensure that the Council's own services are properly documented and safeguarded.

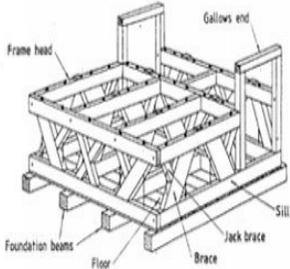
Many thanks go to Tim Gatland, who has been evaluating specs for a potential striking app, including helpful guidance on developing use cases and creating value. More discovery work needs to be done to ensure we are committing resource to a thing that people might want.

The ICT Team

Team leader: Doug Davis
 Andrew Hall, Mark Elvers, Alison Everett, Ian Mozley, Colin Newman, Allen Nunley, Matt Thewsey, David Richards, Leigh Simpson

Stewards of the Dove Database

The past year has been one of consolidation following a couple of years of deployment of the new databases and expansion of the scope of Dove. We have continued to drive quality using development to minimise inconsistencies, and running projects to pick out inaccuracies. A huge number of hours go into maintaining and developing Dove and the team is proud of the results we are seeing. Whilst maintaining Dove is a bigger task than it used to be with the addition of other CofE bells, the team is bigger, the tools are better, and everyone is equally passionate about getting things right.

	<p>Bellframes Migrating the bellframes data last year from the old database into the new gave us the ability to analyse its quality and consistency in a way not possible before. Effort has been put into highlighting and addressing those inconsistencies to improve accuracy. There is still more to be done in this area, both in terms of the quality of the data already there while we continue to fill gaps. The highest quality submissions are those following physical inspections, rather than viewing photographs and videos, so we remain cautious with updates we accept. We have worked with Chris Pickford to provisionally extend his layout scheme pending his more substantive review.</p>
	<p>Location The historical county for each tower has been identified. In due course, we will allow the reader to choose which to highlight by default. We hope this will appeal to all those who mourned the deprecation of Middlesex! Other metropolitan and city regions have also been assigned. This has helped us revise our approach to whether a place should be principally referred to by its suburban name or wider area, to follow popular use. Thus we find Moseley, Birmingham rather than Birmingham, Moseley.</p>
	<p>References, notes and audit trails There is greater facility to add commentary, references and notes, either for public information or for admin purposes. Notes are being added to individual towers, bells or frames, with the option to include media. Admins can also access the full audit trail of all changes and even view the website as it would have looked on a particular day since the new database was launched.</p>

A few coverage statistics (as of June 2023)

	Bell Collections	(last year)	(latest)
	Full circle rings (at least 3 bells)	7,937 (7,148)	7,946 (7,153)
	Carillons	15	15
	Chimes	7,030	7,083
	Display sets	50	63
	Ancillary sets	1,758	1,700
	Bell Frames		
	Frames	8,288	8,775

	Bells	(last year)	(latest)
	Standard	60,323	60,569
	Hemispherical	245	248
	Tubular	1,085	1,118
	Fragments	17	26
	There were 14,137 separate updates to Dove between Jun 2022 and Jun 2023 (with bulk updates counting as 1 update)		

Future work to begin in the next year

- Continue our focus on the quality and input of data on **bellframes**.
- Extend the scope of Dove to include **mini rings** and **portable rings**.
- Develop the means to record **events** against individual bell collections and bells themselves, i.e. when a ring turned into a chime, when a bell was tuned or had its canons removed, when and where a ring was transferred from one place to another.
- A project on **dates**, how we store and display them and note uncertainties and attributions.

Plus target work carried over from last year:

- Prepare for users to **log in**, register preferences and ultimately **record tower grabs** and related data.

- Improve the way information on bells is **displayed** on the website.

The Dove Team

The team continues to be led by Dickon Love, with Tim Jackson and Tim Pett as Dove Stewards and Richard Smith as the Lead Developer. They are assisted by Dove Clerks Neal Dodge and Lewis Benfield. Richard is assisted by David Giles in web development and we are pleased to welcome back Peter Harrison. Doug Davis maintains the *DoveTickets* software that organises the practicalities of passing updates to the team. Chris Pickford acts as a consultant on bellframes, Scott Orr (Secretary of the Carillon Society of Great Britain and Ireland) on carillons and Michael Williams on mini-rings.

Tina Stoecklin