

The HRGB 'Crescendo' Scheme

Notes for Teachers and Team Leaders

To the Teacher or Team Leader:

Your ringer has embarked upon the 'Crescendo' scheme which has been designed to help them to progress and develop their handbell skills. We ask you to help and encourage this - and to check that the ringer has met each target to your satisfaction.

Although written around the use of handbells, many of the techniques and requirements can be equally applied to Belleplates or chimes. Where a particular technique is not applicable to the instrument used the teacher or leader is invited to substitute a suitable alternative.

Please do not make Crescendo a chore for the ringer - above all we want ringing to be fun - but we would expect some amount of effort to be put into meeting each target.

As the ringer reaches the target stages please send an email with the ringer's name (as it should appear on the certificate) and the stage achieved to sales@hrgb.org.uk and we will return a certificate for you to print locally. Alternatively, lapel badges and presentation certificates are available from the HRGB online 'shop' for a small charge.

Please remember that if you, as team leader, are not sure about some of the aspects of ringing covered by the scheme, your Regional Committee has a wealth of experience and is always available to help.

The following headings are as shown on the ringer's target sheet (starting from the left of sheet 1)

Show that you understand (column 1):

This covers some of the music theory aspects of ringing, including some commonly used symbols used on printed music. Flash cards are a good way of introducing music symbols to young ringers.

Ring a piece of music (column 2):

The ringer should be aware, at the start of a familiar piece, of the time signature (4/4, 3/4 etc.) He/she should not have to rely on the leader counting out loud throughout the piece.

Become (column 3):

Encourages the young ringer to take an active part in the team's activities - and to try something different.

Ring bells that you usually don't (column 4):

Intended to get ringers moving - round your table and even onto those of other teams (you'd be surprised how many will be willing to give one of your team members a chance to ring with them!). If you don't have access to other instruments, why not contact your local committee - they will usually be able to put you in touch with someone who will let you have a go with them.

Help your team leader to (column 5):

You may not thank us for this one! Don't forget though, that the young ringers of today are tomorrow's team leaders. How else can they experience the trials and tribulations of being a leader, and appreciate the opportunities (and limitations) for a handbell team?

Take the opportunity to explain some of the limitations of copyright to your ringer while covering this.

Ring a piece of music (column 6):

The ringer should be aware at the start of a familiar piece of the key signature and which bells he/she will need

Where repeats, changes of volume, time or key changes are called for within the piece, the ringer should be prepared for them and achieve the transition smoothly without constant prompting

In special effects, such as plucking, thumb damping, LVs, malleting, etc. the ringer should have sufficient control in terms of volume and speed

Ring (column 7/8):

The ringer should be able show **competent and consistent** ringing in each of the categories on the sheet.

In the very early stages, ringing smoothly and in good time (as in a scale) must be demonstrated.

Damping should show an awareness of the required note length.

Thumb damping may require the use of a glove - the ringer should be able explain why.

4 in hand technique may be ringing in or out, up or down as preferred.

Dynamics (louds/softs, crescendos etc.) should be achieved naturally, without constant prompting from the leader.

Half beats and triplets should be properly timed and played as distinct notes rather than as a 'rattle'.

Show that you know how to (column 9):

Part of this section aims to encourage the young ringer to take a share of responsibility for the care and maintenance of the bells. In many teams, the leader is left to set out, put away or clean the bells - this could be a valuable source of help!

The off shoulder and off table style targets are included as it is unlikely that your team uses both. The ringer should be able to explain the difference and what the advantages and drawbacks of each style might be.

Explain (column 10):

This introduces some need for research and the ringer may need help to find sources of information. Please be helpful but make sure that the ringer puts in some effort too.

If you prefer, the ringer might be asked to explain these topics to another team member - or even to someone who knows nothing about ringing - rather than yourself.

Ring (column 11):

The object of HRGB is *"To advance, provide and encourage for the public benefit the art of handbell tune ringing in all its forms"*. The only way this can be achieved is by teams performing in public, whether at a school assembly, in church, at a rally or a large concert. This section aims to encourage ringers to get out and about with their ringing rather than remain in the classroom or practice room.

Show that you know (column 12):

Again, some research may be necessary.

Ring in a team regularly for (column 13):

There is no substitute for experience and a **regular** ringer is worth several who often fail to turn up!

One of the foremost benefits of handbell ringing is the promotion of commitment - the realisation that if a ringer fails to appear, the rest of the group is adversely affected.

In a typical team situation, where practices are held once a week, we would expect that a 10 target award could be earned after a month, 20 after 6 months, 40 after 9 months or a year and 60 after 2 years - but these are only guides.

Write (column 14):

Here we are trying to get the young ringer involved in the activities of the team and of HRGB. Don't feel that you have to censor or correct a piece for your Regional Newsletter - the Editor will do that if necessary. *Young Vibrations* is always looking for material.

Encourage the ringer to write about an interesting bell related topic rather than a boring list of who rang what at a rally!

There are several music writing programmes available on the internet (MuseScore 2 for example is free) so please encourage your ringer to have a go at using one.