ABEL BELLRINGING SIMULATOR

Starting the Computer

- Connect sensor cable to the *little black box*. It will only fit one way!

- Plug-in the mains cable and switch-on power at the wall.

- Turn on the P.C. The computer will start-up and automatically start the Abel program with its default settings.

- Cancel the *Mute* button on the P.C. speakers (if the light is on), press the J key to simulate a bell sound, and adjust the *Volume* knob on the speakers to suit.

Closing Down the Computer

- When you've finished using Abel, click on the *cross* at the top right hand corner of the Abel window, or on the File menu then Exit.

- Click on the *Start* button at the lower right of the screen; select the *Shut Down* option that will appear on the pop-up menu. Choose the *Shut Down* option from the window that appears, and click the *OK* button.

- The P.C. will shut itself down, when it stops, turn off the mains and remove the mains plug.

- Disconnect the sensor cable from the little black box. This is to protect the system from lightning strike to the tower.

Getting Started with the Abel Program

When Abel starts you'll see that there's a circle of bell ropes with a button marked Start in the centre. Make sure the sound on your PC is turned up, and then use the mouse to click the Start button. You'll hear rounds on six. You'll see that the central button is now marked Go. Click it again, and the bells will start ringing a touch of Plain Bob Doubles. When you get bored with listening to the touch, click the centre-screen button, or press the Esc (Escape) key on your keyboard, to get back to rounds; then press Esc (again) to get the bells to stand.

On the left of the window, you'll see a list of method names; these are the methods used by the current composition. Above the list, you'll see a box labelled "Composition", with a down-arrow at the end. Click the arrow and you'll get a list of the compositions that are available, select another composition, by clicking on it. The list of methods now shows all the methods currently available with the new composition. Double click any of the methods in the list, and then click the Start button to get Abel to ring that method. Notice that there's a Peal Time box on the left too; you can use the up/down arrows next to it to alter the speed of the ringing.

Methods and compositions are held in method collection files. If you click the File menu item at top left of the screen, you can then click Open, (or you can use the usual Open File button on the toolbar below).

Now press the J key. You'll see that it rings the bell at the bottom-right of the screen. If you click Start, you can join in with the rounds by pressing J at the right moment. Because you have pressed J, Abel will not ring the bell and leave it up to you; if you stop ringing for a few blows however, Abel will take over the bell until you join in again. When you're confident about ringing rounds, you can click the Go button (or press the G key) to start the bells into the selected method.

You may want to ring a different bell. Use the mouse (left button) to click the bell you want to ring: say, the 2nd. You'll see it moves to bottom right of the circle, and it's now controlled by the J key. Mostly you'll select a bell in this way before you start the bells into rounds, but you can also do it during the ringing if you want (unless you've turned on Call Changes). Don't forget, the Esc key gets you back to Rounds, or to Stand.

Now you've got started with Abel! If you want to, just explore the various menus and controls to see what's there; try clicking or double-clicking on things (and right clicking bells); see what is included in the various method collection files, and add more methods and compositions, or more files, if you wish. Or, if you prefer a more orderly approach, click the Help menu, then Help Topics, to get access to all the documentation about Abel. If you need assistance at any time when using the program, just press F1 for help.

Tower Bell Simulator

Using Abel as a tower bell simulator, it's normal to have one person ringing a silenced bell (the training bell), and Abel ringing the rest; the ringer has to keep in time with Abel's perfect rhythm, by listening carefully and adjusting the speed of their bell.

Starting the Simulator – AutoStart

The traditional way to ring with a simulator is to start ringing the training bell, then start the simulator ringing at the right moment to fit in with the ringer. Alternatively, you can start the simulator, then start the training bell at the right moment to fit in with it. Both of these require some skilful timing – and, if the ringer is to stay in time, requires that he synchronise his ringing speed with that of the simulator. With Abel, there is a better way.

First, start ringing the training bell. Wait until the speed is steady, and then click the Auto button on the Tower Toolbar (top/right). After a few blows, Abel will join in rounds with the ringer, at just the right time, and at the right speed.

Of course, if it is a learner ringing he may not stay in time with Abel (some experts may not, either). It's good practice to adjust the training bell speed to get back in time, but if this is too hard you can click Auto again; Abel pauses for a moment, then resynchronises with the ringer in rounds, at the speed he's now ringing.

Changing Bell Mapping

The training bell is configured as bell 3 by default. This is equivalent to ringing from the keyboard with the J key; this will ring the bell that is at the bottom-right of the screen. If you want the training bell to sound as the 4th, say, just click the 4 on the screen and then the bell circle will rotate to put the 4 at bottom-right, (The ringing position).

Silent Bells

When teaching learners, it can be useful to make some of the simulated bells ring silently, to make it easier for the learner to pick out their own bell sound. For example, when learning to ring rounds with the simulator, it can be useful if the learner rings the 2, with the simulator ringing 1 and 3 to give a gap to fit in, with 4/5/6 ringing silently, thus getting the rhythm of six bells without all the confusing notes! You can turn off and on the sound for each bell by right clicking it. A dialog appears with a check-box that you click to silence the bell, and click again to restore its sound. (The rest of the dialog contains striking controls for the bell.)

Striking Display and Striking Summary

The simulator is currently set-up to monitor striking. To view this option, wait until the simulator has stopped. Click the Review Striking button at the extreme right of the Tower Toolbar.

Pre-set N.E. Branch Towers

Abel configurations have been set-up for some of the towers in the branch, the settings include the number of bells, the note of the tenor and the peal speed. These settings can be accessed by closing the Abel program, (if it is already running), then clicking on the *NE Branch Towers* icon on the Desktop. Now click on the tower of your choice, then restart Abel.

If you wish to add another tower, but don't know how to go about it, then please ask an experienced Abel user for help.

Suggested Training Options

Abel configurations have been set-up for some basic training options. These settings can be accessed by closing the Abel program, (if it is already running), then clicking on the *Training Options* icon on the Desktop. Now click on the option of your choice, then restart Abel.

1. Single bell handling: bell number 3 is set as the training bell. Now as the training bell is rung, the computer will simulate the sound.

2. Ringing rounds on 4 bells: bell number 3 is set as the training bell. The computer is now set-up to ring rounds. (See *Getting Started* for program controls).

3. Ringing rounds on 6 bells, 2 silenced: bell number 3 is set as the training bell. Silence bells number 4 and 5, (see *Silent Bells* above). This will assist the learner in maintaining place.

4. Ringing rounds on 6 bells: bell number 3 is set as the training bell. The computer is now set-up to ring rounds.

5. Ringing the treble to rounds on 6 bells: bell number 1 is set as the training bell. This will assist the learner to lead, leaving a handstroke gap.

6. Ringing the treble to Plain Hunt on 6 bells: bell number 1 is set as the training bell. The computer is now set-up to ring Plain Hunt.

7. Ringing the treble to Plain Bob Doubles on 6 bells: bell number 1 is set as the training bell. The computer is now set-up to ring Plain Bob Doubles.