

The Mobile Belfries Trust

# NEWSLETTER



## Welcome to the Mobile Belfries Trust Newsletter

This is the first of what will hopefully be a regular newsletter providing our friends and supporters with updates on our activities.

In this edition:

- History of the Mobile Belfries Trust
- Our mobile belfries
- Past & upcoming events
- Touring Tower update
- Can you help?

## History of The Mobile Belfries Trust

The Mobile Belfries Trust, formerly The Charmborough Trust, is a registered charity with the aim of promoting the historic art of church bell ringing through the use of mobile belfries.

The Trust owns and operates both The Charmborough Ring and The Touring Tower and promotes The Lichfield Diocesan Mobile Belfry (which remains a charitable trust in its own right).

There are currently 7 trustees who oversee the running of the Trust:



In addition to the Trustees we also have some volunteer drivers who give their time to transport our mobile belfries around the country - and we are always on the lookout for more!



## Our mobile belfries

### The Charmborough Ring

The Charmborough Ring was originally designed and built by Matthew Higby, and made its first public appearance at the Ringing Roadshow in 2005. In 2007 it was purchased by Roger Booth and the late Roger Bailey, and it is now operated by the Trust.

The Charmborough Ring is the only ring we currently operate that can be erected indoors (space permitting). More information about the ring can be found on our website: <https://www.mobilebelfries.org/charmborough/>



### The Touring Tower

The Touring Tower was developed with funding from Taylor’s Bellfoundry and the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers. It was designed to be lighter than the two other mobile belfries, so that more vehicles could tow it to events. The total weight of the trailer, bells and tower is just under 1600 kgs. The trailer is also hydraulically operated, so that the Touring Tower can be erected quickly by three people.

The tower and trailer were accidentally damaged in May 2025, but we were insured and both are currently being repaired. The Touring Tower will be back in action in time for our 2026 season.

More information about the ring can be found on our website: <https://www.mobilebelfries.org/touring-tower/>

### The Lichfield Diocesan Mobile Belfry

The Lichfield Diocesan Mobile Belfry was initially funded and jointly operated by 3 ringing societies - The Lichfield and Walsall Archdeaconries Society, The North Staffordshire Association and The Shropshire Association. It was dedicated in 1999 and made its first public appearance at the Ringing Roadshow that year.

The LDMB can be fully enclosed, thereby making it a great option when the weather isn’t favourable! Find out more on our website: <https://www.mobilebelfries.org/ldmb/>



## Past & upcoming events

In 2025 we received around 50 enquiries, of which we took mobile belfries to 17. Had the Touring Tower been available throughout the season we would probably taken a mobile belfry to around 27 events (exluding those also served by the LDMB).

So far we have 19 provisional bookings for 2026 (see below) and the list of provisional and confirmed bookings is updated regularly in the calendar on our website. If you would like a mobile belfry for your event in 2026 it would be best to get in touch as soon as possible to avoid any disappointment - email [hiring@mobilebelfries.org](mailto:hiring@mobilebelfries.org).

Richmond May Fair	Community Event, Wiltshire	Hatfield Broad Oak Flower Festival
Thaxted Fayre, Essex	LACR 150 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations	Private wedding, Dorset
Hurst Show, Berkshire	RWNYC, Nottingham	Big Day Out, Kent
City of London Festival of Bells	Somerset Steam & Country Show	Worthing Lions Seafont Fair, Sussex
North West Ringing Course	Swallofield Show, Berkshire	CCCBR AGM, Warwickshire
Silchester Country Fair, Hampshire	Findon Sheep Fair, Sussex	Cambridge University Freshers Fair
South West Ringing Course		

### Strategy Scout Camp – Cirencester Park



Last year we took the Charmborough Ring to the Strategy Scout Camp in Cirencester Park and an article appeared about this in the Ringing World on 18th July. You can view a copy on our website here:

<https://tinyurl.com/sscmbt2025>

One of our Sponsors, the Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Association and their youth team enthusiastically supported this.



The original enquiry came as a result of us taking the Touring Tower to a Jamboree in Essex, and we did receive other enquiries including one to take a mobile belfry to a week long Jamboree in Norfolk. However we were unable to source enough volunteers to attend this event too.

### Worthing Seafront, West Sussex

The 3 towers in Worthing (Heene, Goring and West Tarring) work closely together with experienced ringers and learners moving between the practices and Sunday service ringing. All 3 towers are in need of some kind of work - for Goring and West Tarring it's mainly about the ringing chamber environments (a core aim of the Ringing 2030 initiative) but at Heene the bells themselves also need some major restoration.

In July 2025, the Charmborough Ring was placed on Worthing Seafront for the 2 days of the Lions' Seafront Fayre (though it had to be disassembled after the first day and reassembled on the second day for security reasons - quite a bit of effort required!). The ringers were busy throughout the whole weekend - demonstrating ringing, giving the public a go, providing sandwiches, talking to people and persuading them to have a try! Around 160 people received stickers and leaflets, and 20 came along to two follow-up sessions arranged at the local towers. A worthwhile event all round.



## Targeting young people

The Central Council's Ringing 2030 Business Plan sets out various targets for engaging with young people. In 2024 we took the Touring Tower to a week long Jamboree in Chelmsford, attended by over 5,000 young people and around 1,000 leaders. Of these over 1,000 had a go at ringing on the Touring Tower.

We found that many of the young people came from neighbouring counties, and this summer there are seven similar events taking place around the country:

25 <sup>th</sup> - 31 <sup>st</sup> July	<a href="#">WINGS</a>	Windsor Great Park
25 <sup>th</sup> - 31 <sup>st</sup> July	<a href="#">Unity 2026</a>	Tamworth, Staffordshire
28 <sup>th</sup> July - 2 <sup>nd</sup> August	<a href="#">New Wine Festival 2026</a>	Bath & Wells Showground
1 <sup>st</sup> August - 8 <sup>th</sup> August	<a href="#">Poacher</a>	Lincolnshire
3 <sup>rd</sup> August - 10 <sup>th</sup> August	<a href="#">Rainbow H.E. Event</a>	Newark Showground
8 <sup>th</sup> August - 15 <sup>th</sup> August	<a href="#">Chamboree</a>	Cheshire
16 <sup>th</sup> August - 22 <sup>nd</sup> August	<a href="#">Scoutmore26</a>	Honiton, Devon



We have written to those territorial societies within about 100 miles of where each of these events are taking place, seeking volunteers to help with the local organisation. Following the success of the event in Cirencester Park last year, we have also asked if their youth group would help man the mobile belfry for one of the days of the event.

We are also being supported by Ian Roulstone the CCCBR Executive's sponsor of the Young Ringers for 2030 workgroup to see if we can employ some university students during their summer vacation to help with manning the belfries at one or more of these events.

This will require funding and we do encourage individuals and societies to consider becoming a Friend or Sponsor of the Mobile Belfries Trust to help fund this work this year, and to expand it in future years.

**School lessons**



Many schools have activities weeks in the last half of the summer term, and often welcome ideas such as bringing a mobile belfry into the school. We have worked with Jason Hughes since we took the Charmborough Ring into Archbishop Tenison's school in Croydon in 2010.

Since then we have taken our mobile belfries to many other schools, and are continuing to work with Jason and the other members of the CCCBR's Young Ringers workgroup to take ringing into schools.

The Trustees are particularly keen to expand this work and have taken the decision to continue to offer a discounted rate of £200 for a one day school event within 50 miles of one of our bases.

Schools are often willing to pay this cost themselves, and your local Guild and Association may also be willing to contribute. Do contact us at [hiring@mobilebelfries.org](mailto:hiring@mobilebelfries.org), if you are interested in taking up this offer.



## Touring Tower update

### Touring Tower repairs nearing completion

Over the winter of 2024/5 Taylor's undertook some repairs and modification to the Touring Tower, including lengthening the four adjustable feet and modifying the four outriggers so that they are adjustable too.

When we took the Touring Tower to our first two bookings in 2025, we were very pleased with the results – tower sway had been minimized as you can see in a video taken at the Oxford Diocesan Guild AGM here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t42pOvdNfmY>

However when raising the tower to the upright position we had accidentally left a ratchet strap fixed to the chassis of the trailer, rather than the lifting bed. Although we only raised the lifting bed a few inches, this had crushed the aluminum tube on two of the outer corners and also bent the lifting bed of the trailer.



Fortunately we are insured with Ansvar, a division of the Benefact Group, who also own Ecclesiastical Insurance, and they accepted our claim to cover the cost of the necessary repairs.

The trailer manufacturer BSP-TEX have fabricated a new lifting bed for the trailer, modified the hydraulic mechanism (under warranty as we had experienced problems with the pump overheating at the end of last year) and created our new cover in all its glory in the new Bellringing branding.

The tower is now at Loughborough for Taylor's to complete their repairs. and the Touring Tower will be back in action again ready for the 2026 season with its first outing in early May.



## Can you help?

### Towing one of our mobile belfries



We rely on volunteers to take our mobile belfries to events, and with somewhere between 25 and 30 events a year, spread around the country, we need a group of volunteers who have the time and vehicle, to help share the workload.

The Charmbrough Ring and trailer are quite heavy at 2100 Kgs, and needs a SUV or similar to tow it, but we were careful when commissioning the Touring Tower to minimise its weight and it weighs just under 1500kgs, so many more cars can tow it.

The legal requirements for towing are quite complex, so it is best to check on our website. However, in addition to the towing capacity of the vehicle, you do need to be aware that the combined weight of the car and trailer are a factor. We do have a gazebo with both of our rings and some other items which can normally be transported in a boot, if your towing capacity is close to the legal limit. For more information, have a look at the website here:

<https://www.mobilebelfries.org/towing/>

If you also have somewhere the ring can be stored for a few days that would be ideal. We normally arrange to move the trailers around between events, or for one person to take it and another to collect ready for the next event. A front driveway is adequate as we have a hitch lock and wheel clamp for security reasons.

Even if you cannot tow the ring, offers of somewhere to store the ring for a few days at a time are also welcome. Whether you are towing one of the mobile belfries or just storing it, you will have the satisfaction that you are helping to keep transport costs down for anyone in your local area, and we pay 65p mile expenses when you are towing the ring, or 45p/mile for other mileage incurred.

If you would like help, please get in touch with us at [hire@mobilebelfries.org](mailto:hire@mobilebelfries.org).



## Become a Friend or Sponsor

As a charity we prefer to keep our hire fees as low as possible and to at least break even each year. However, in acquiring the Touring Tower we have almost exhausted our reserves, and we need to replenish them so that we have a sound financial base going forward and we can develop and improve the service that we provide.

In the longer term we need to consider the future of the Charmborough Ring (currently in private ownership and on loan to the trust) and whether we need to commission an additional mobile belfry to cope with demand as we are already having to turn away bookings during the peak season.

We have therefore launched a 'Supporters' scheme to help towards our capital costs. There are 2 options available:

*Friends of*



**The Mobile  
Belfries Trust**

**Friends – £50 per year or £250 (one off) for 10 years**

Includes recognition on the Supporters page of the Mobile Belfries Trust website, updates and newsletters from the Trust.

*Sponsors of*



**The Mobile  
Belfries Trust**

**Sponsors – £200 per year or £1,000 (one off) for 10 years**

Package includes all the benefits enjoyed by Friends, plus a discount on hire fees (% to be decided).

For more information and to make a donation, please go to our website:

<https://www.mobilebelfries.org/supporters/>



## Treasurer required

The Trust is looking for a new Treasurer. Do you have the skills to help, or know someone that does? The role involves the following:

- Maintaining the Trust's financial records
- Manage signatories for the Trust's bank account(s)
- Monitor, approve and pay expense claims
- Review expenses policies in conjunctions with the Trustees
- Ensure payment of regular expenditure such as insurance premiums
- Produce reports to Trustees meetings (and possibly at other times)
- Prepare the Trust's annual accounts
- Act as a Trustee for The Mobile Belfries Trust

Please contact Roger Booth on [hiring@mobilebelfries.org](mailto:hiring@mobilebelfries.org) for more information or to register your interest.



The Charmborough Ring at the Hurst Show in 2025

