



BELLRINGING

Talking Points

The object of the new Bellringing logo is to provoke a discussion about ringing with non-ringers. Please talk to them in language that they will understand and avoid using any bellringing jargon. The logo itself is in the shape of a bell and also musical note and ear. Here are some conversation starters and some responses to typical questions.

- **Where do you live?**
- **Have you seen tower bells rung before?**
- **Do any of your family or friends ring?**
- **What is special about bellringing?** bellringing has so many different aspects to it, which really does make it appealing to so many different types of people. Words like – *challenge, achievement, history, teamwork, competitions, service to the community, fun, a social life, variety, music* – regularly crop up when you ask people why they enjoy ringing so much
- **Will I meet lots of other people?** Because bellringing is carried out by teams of 6, 8, 10, 12 or more people, once you have learnt the basics, you will be able to ring almost anywhere. Lots of teams work together and help each other out.
- **Do I need to be strong?** It's not brute strength as the bell does most of the work. It's the skill of feeling the bell on the end of the rope that matters. Anyone from about the age of 10 upwards can learn to ring.
- **Is it fun?** Being part of a team and learning together, and visiting other churches, abbeys and cathedrals to ring their bells can be great fun. You will also get to see places that many people do not get to see.
- **How much does a church bell weigh?** The typical church bell weighs about 200 – 400kgs (4 - 8 cwt), but they can often go above 500kgs and some are over 1,000kgs. The heaviest hung for change ringing weighs over 4,000kgs.
- **Is this the only portable ring?** There are three other mobile belfries, containing bells of a similar size. In addition, there are over 100 smaller mini-rings, often in people's homes or their garages. These typically have smaller handbell sized bells.
- **Do you play tunes?** No, we ring the bells down the scale, known as rounds and then the conductor calls two bells to swap (call-changes) or the ringers ring a predetermined pattern of changes (a method). The earliest patterns were devised in the early 1600's

- **Are bells hung for change-ringing only found in churches?** No. There are around 120 rings of bells hung in secular buildings and redundant churches that have other uses. For example, Manchester Town Hall, York Arts Centre and various schools and colleges. In 1819 one rich person even built a tower and hung 12 bells in it, on his private estate at Quex Park in Kent.
- **Is there a museum that we can visit:** The last surviving bellfoundry in the UK is in Loughborough and well worth a visit. They have a large museum which also has viewing gallery see moulds being made and possibly new bells being cast. You can also tour the rest of the works and see frames being made and bells being tuned.
- **Do I get paid?** Each ringer normally gets paid around £20 for ringing for a wedding. However, most ringing is not paid.
- **How long does it take to learn?** It takes about 8 – 10 initial lessons to learn to ring a tower bell on your own. Then you need to learn to ring in time with the others in the team. Within about six months you will be ringing regularly as part of the team.
- **Do I need to be a regular churchgoer?** Many bellringers are not regular churchgoers. They come from all faiths and none. However, most teams do ring the bells before church services, as well as holding regular weekday evening practices.
- **Is there a tower near me?** There are around 5,750 towers in the UK with five or more bells hung for change ringing, plus more in the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the African Continent, plus two in the Netherlands and one each in Singapore, France and Belgium.

For parents/youth group leaders

- **Do many young people ring?** There are many young ringers. Most counties have at least one young ringers group. In July 2026, 43 teams from all over the country participated in the annual national competition, held in Nottingham. With 6 or 8 in each team, 325 young ringers participated in this competition alone.
- **Tower visits?** Most teams will welcome a visit. They can often take your youth group up to see the bells, and give them a demonstration, and a go at ringing a bell. See our tower visit video with a group in Birmingham: https://youtu.be/AJzqVCqrF_M?si=QwKfs2k6ki_Np86-
- **What about those under 10?** Why not borrow a set of handbells or chimes and use them during your regular youth group meetings. Boomwhackers can be great fun too.
- **Those over 13?** Can use bellringing as a skill for their DofE Bronze, Silver and Gold awards. As it takes six months to become proficient, most bands will want participants to use it as a six-month option. We are also keen to encourage young people to teach other young people to ring, so please also consider this as a volunteering option Silver and Gold. The Association of Ringing Teachers offers teacher training modules for those over 14 and works with student societies of ringers in Universities to encourage them to teach other students.
- **Further information:** <https://bellringing.org/discover-bellringing/>