

6. Should there be a fee for visiting ringers?
Usually visiting ringers make a donation to each church they visit, but some churches charge a fee.

7. Who should appoint the tower captain?
Ringers soon learn who among their number is competent to lead them. An accepted leader, democratically elected by the band, with the election ratified by the incumbent, is the ideal.

8. How do I deal with complaints about noise?
Reasonably and openly in the first instance. If necessary, the CCCBR has a Complaints Network whose members cover the country and are always ready to help with problems.

9. What are the most important safety aspects of bells and ringing?

Heavy masses of moving metal must not be treated unadvisedly, lightly, or wantonly. In a nutshell, it's important that access to the bells is restricted only to those who know what they're doing: the tower should never be left unlocked; bells and bellropes should only be touched by experienced ringers or by learners with an instructor; builders or workmen should always be accompanied; and people should not be in the tower alone.

10. Are there particular Child Protection issues involved in ringing?

The CCCBR web page has some helpful bellringing guidelines, but as a general rule the official diocesan guidance will cover most bellringing situations.

These questions cannot, of course, be answered fully in a leaflet such as this. Your local ringing association will be able to give you more comprehensive answers to them; and can help, too, with any difficulties.

Sources of Help

The Central Council of Church Bell Ringers

Web Page: www.cccbr.org.uk

or write to the Council's Honorary Secretary at *The Ringing World* address below.

Your local ringing association, guild, or society

Contacts can usually be found in the local library or from links on the CCCBR web page. The Diocesan web page will normally have links to the local ringing societies.

Local associations usually have

- Bell Advisor
- Education Officer
- Public Relations Officer

who will be able to offer advice or help.

The Ringing World

The CCCBR's weekly journal provides news, information and articles of interest to ringers worldwide.

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Bells in Your Care



Some notes for incumbents
and churchwardens who find
themselves responsible for a
peal of church bells

Background to Bellringing

A “**Ring**” of bells is a set of three or more bells, hung for **full circle ringing with rope and wheel**. A “**Chime**” is any number, hung to be sounded more gently by hammers, or by swinging through a small arc.

The very English art of full circle ringing has been practised in this country for over 400 years, and more recently in other countries around the world.

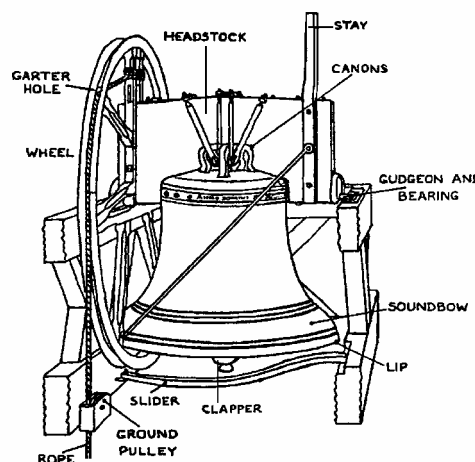
The skill, which takes several months to acquire, lies in **controlling the bell as it swings full circle so that it can be made to sound at a precise point** - like, indeed, any other musical instrument. Younger people generally learn more quickly, **but most people between the ages of 11 and 70, or more, can learn to ring.**

Because ringing is by definition a group activity, each tower with a ring of bells has a **local band**, led by its chosen **tower captain**, and usually belonging to the local bellringers’ guild or association. These in turn are affiliated to the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers (CCCBR), which through its committees seeks to provide **help and information about all bell matters**, including maintenance of towers and belfries, fundraising, redundant bells, publications, public relations and much more.

The Mechanics

Take an early opportunity to visit your tower in the company of your tower captain. **NEVER**, ever, go alone: church towers are fascinating but lonely places, and a fall might mean lying undiscovered for hours. Moreover, if the bells have been left “up”, touching them could be very dangerous, as the tower captain will explain.

Bell installations vary; but you will find that your tower contains something similar to the diagram below. If the bells don’t have complete wheels, you have a “Chime” rather than a “Ring” of bells.



Ten Frequently Asked Questions

1. **Who can I ask about the state of the bells and fittings in our tower?**

Your tower captain can advise on sources of information; or contact the local society - usually “The Barchester Diocesan Guild”, or “The Bassetshire Association” - or ask the CCCBR.

2. **Why is it necessary to practise every week?**
Like any musical activity, progress only comes with regular practice.

3. **Why does it take six months to train a ringer?**

The knack of precisely controlling a large weight of metal with a rope and wheel takes time to acquire! Do try it, with the help of an instructor, and see.

4. **Why don’t ringers always stay to the service?**

Any number of reasons! Other services to ring for, attending another service – or even not a Christian. If the latter, it may be helpful to know that ringing has been a gentle door into church life for many.

5. **Should I let visiting ringers ring our bells?**

If you possibly can, yes: your tower captain or tower secretary will normally make the necessary arrangements. There is a tradition of welcome among ringers; and visiting other towers and ringing on different bells is an excellent way to gain experience and make progress. Your ringers too may find visiting other towers enjoyable and helpful.