

# ART WORKS

Issue 31  
May 2020

Association of Ringing Teachers - [www.ringingteachers.org](http://www.ringingteachers.org)  
Patrons: Paul Flavell, Helen McGregor, Peter Bevis and Len Roberts

## ART and Coronavirus

How will ART operate during lockdown with no ringing, which means no courses, no workshops and no teaching? And with no course fees how stable is our future? First, a word of reassurance – our financial position is strong. Over the years our reserves policy has meant that we've built up a financial cushion so that we can operate for a year with no income – which is what the Charity Commission recommends. Reasonable financial forecasts, predict that with existing membership fee income and continued financial support by our generous supporters, we will sustain a loss for the year that we are comfortable with.

Our thoughts are also with the teachers and ringers progressing through our various programmes. We have taken the decision to extend any ART time limits by six months. For example, teachers will now have 2½ years from their day course to accredit and ART Members have the option of extending their membership by six months.

Although we have suspended all courses and workshops ART is planning to be as busy as ever. Our biggest project is the building of an online learning platform, available to all ringers. The basic platform is in place and we have an Editor-in-Chief who is working with volunteers to build curriculums and develop content. The courses will be mixed media and we aim to make them as professional and useful as possible.

We will also be taking this opportunity to review and revamp all our day courses and workshops, build our Learning the Ropes listen and strike resources (including practical tools) and complete the Son of SmART Ringer specification and move onto implementation.

As always, we rely on volunteers to make all this happen, so if you have some spare time and would like to contribute then please get in touch. We're looking for volunteers with a variety of skills – organisation, IT or wordsmithing – however the most important thing is that you have a passion for teaching and want to help others teach or learn better. We are committed to both supporting and training you as necessary.

Our aim is to use our time and resources profitably; building an ART which is fit and able to help ringing emerge from this enforced period of inactivity stronger and better.

I know that the next months will affect all of you in unexpected ways – financially, personally and through your families. Keep safe, follow church and CCCBR advice about ringing and look after your family and friends.

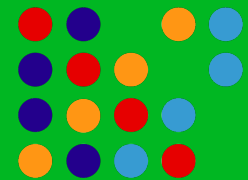
**Lesley Belcher**  
ART Chair  
[lesleybelcher@ringingteachers.org](mailto:lesleybelcher@ringingteachers.org)



**Editor - Simon Needham**  
[artworks@ringingteachers.org](mailto:artworks@ringingteachers.org)

The next issue of ART WORKS will be August 2020.  
Copy Deadline - 30 July 2020  
© Association of Ringing Teachers 2020

 Association of  
Ringing  
Teachers



# Keeping your team together...at a distance

The “lockdown” hit so quickly. Ringing ended very suddenly without any time to plan what the future might be. No time to speak to ringers to find out how they might want to make plans for the lockdown or how they feel about it.

How can a sense of engagement be maintained so that all your ringers will be really keen to return to the tower when the situation returns to normal?

There is very little published work concerning maintaining group or team motivation when the group members are physically separated. Most of the research is to do with togetherness rather than separateness! So the lockdown really does provide challenges for all those involved in group activities including ringing. Bands need to keep their team spirit going during lockdown and social isolation whilst there is no opportunity for teamwork in the tower in the normal way.

The Wellbeing Thesis published in 2000 by Richard Ryan and Edward Deci seeks to explain factors which contribute to the development of intrinsic motivation. It suggests that finding personal significance and meaning in an activity can contribute to a feeling of positive wellbeing. This agreeable sensation leads to individuals valuing their participation and therefore more likely to want to remain engaged. The Thesis builds on previous work published in 1985 by the same authors. In their work on motivation they developed a model known as Self Determination Theory which proposed that people have three basic requirements that need to be fulfilled to develop the sense of inner motivation.

One of these requirements is “Relatedness” and is particularly relevant to enabling our ringers to maintain a sense of engagement during social isolation. Relatedness can be explained by a feeling of belonging or being connected and accepted as part of a group.

This feeling of being valued and connected with others leads on to a sense of ongoing engagement and will enable that feeling of togetherness with others to be maintained. It will nurture the sense of team spirit which is so important to maintaining the band for the future.

To maintain this sense of relatedness, communication is the

key. Consider how your band communicates normally and ask yourself does anything different need to be introduced?

Also ask what should be the aims of the tower leadership during lockdown? What do your ringers need to help them still feel engaged with other group members?

When it comes to what type of communication to use there are a plethora of methods. Keeping in contact by phone is good for contacting individuals. Some will use email, some will have a Facebook page. A WhatsApp group is simple to set up and use and allows all members of the tower to post pictures, videos and comments. Some towers may set up get-togethers via Skype enabling ringers to see the others they are chatting with. Zoom is similar, with some towers holding a virtual pub on Zoom with people chatting while they have a drink. For those who want to continue with ringing and running a virtual practice there is the newly set up [ringing room.co.uk](http://ringingroom.co.uk).

As for what to communicate, past events and the future plans as well as the present day are relevant. Reminders and photographs of past events and achievements, reminiscing about past outings and commiserating about current outings which can't take place could be posted. Plans for what to do when ringing returns to normal could be discussed. The tower leadership could spawn this from time to time, engendering interactive comments from all band members. Also, advice for online learning could be passed on for those who would like to continue learning during lockdown.

The CCCBR is working on a campaign Ringing Returns. This concentrates on two main areas:

- How to make best use of time during the restrictions.
- How we can celebrate a return to ringing once the restrictions are lifted.

The whole band could contemplate these two ideas working out how to make this a successful return to ringing for their own towers. Something positive to look forward to when ringing returns.



**Mark Plater gave a very engaging presentation about Self Determination Theory at the 2020 ART Conference - available at [http://ringingteachers.org/download\\_file/view/1620/1295](http://ringingteachers.org/download_file/view/1620/1295)**

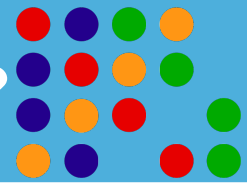
---

**Pip Penney**



# What's inside ART WORKS 31?

ART and Coronavirus	p1
Keeping your team together... at a distance	p2
<hr/>	
When the raison d'être ends - what next?	p4
Hub Pub Zoom! At Northampton	p5
Daily Challenge	p6
Don't let the lockdown get you down	p7
Cracking the wine and cheese code	p8
Tips for your evening	p9
The LtR correspondence course	p9
Make bellringing and YouTube a reality	p11
It's all about the YouTube Challenge	p13
It's all happening at Great Gransden	p14
Enhance your online learning the ART way	p15
Ringing at home	p16
Which comms platform do I use?	p16
Virutal ringing platforms are so now	p19
Learning the Ropes Achievers	p21



# When the raison d'être ends - what next?

Ringling is, by its nature, a practical activity and hence the lockdown has hit the very core of our hobby. To some, it might therefore have appeared that the purpose – the raison d'être even – of ringling associations and guilds had temporarily ended. The view of officers in the St Martin's Guild however was that it was now, more than ever, that we needed to bring people together.

One action Clare McArdle, Guild Master and a member of the ART Management Committee, quickly took was to offer our support as a guild to co-ordinate phone calls or shopping for those self-isolating. Whilst this isn't a bell ringing activity, it was an important way of ensuring that the 250+ ringers we know were cared for and had someone to turn to if they needed it. We also discussed whether we may be able to begin using an online platform to engage members with theory.

We decided on an ambitious plan, where we would host two training sessions a week; Wednesday evenings would be a Guild training event whereas Saturday mornings would remain a Birmingham School of Ringing teaching session. We also decided that we wouldn't restrict inclusion to either session, so non-members could attend Wednesdays and those not involved in the BSoR could attend Saturdays. To help differentiate, we roughly sketched out a plan that Saturdays would focus primarily on the school teaching programme - Learning the Ropes Levels 1 to 5 – whereas Wednesdays would look to host training at a higher level.

We had no idea whether this would be of interest to people, whether we would find people to present or indeed whether any of us could work the technology. But we endeavoured to give it our best shot. I'll also confess to feeling very nervous at whether we'd find enough content to fill two sessions a week, especially when Clare (famous for her tenacity and efficiency) emailed a full seven week programme for Saturday sessions with presenters within a few days of our planning meeting!

To give members – and us – a chance to orientate ourselves around Zoom, we first hosted a quiz night to test the waters. With some trepidation and nerves, the evening was a success. Nearly 30 participants took part and it was

particularly pleasing to see members from across the guild. We worked especially hard at ensuring participants were supported in accessing Zoom, which is important at ensuring inclusivity, and the quiz allowed us to ask people to submit what theory sessions they might like to focus on.

Following this, we began our twice-weekly sessions. A range of speakers planned and led sessions on several different topics including:

- How our minds and memory works
- Ringing connections (focusing on variations of a range of methods)
- How can technology support our ringing?
- What is place notation?
- Coursing – what is it and how do you use it?

So far, all of our courses have been led by guild members. We are lucky to have a good field of experienced and willing presenters, though we will probably be looking to invite external speakers soon. Attendance has been pleasing and solid. We began with 24 members and this has steadily hit to just short of 40 so far.

Online sessions mean we can break geographic barriers. I've had emails thanking us for the regular contact these training sessions provide. Finally, we have worked hard to ensure our website is updated so anyone can access our training resources. You'd be welcome to explore them too, at <http://www.stmartinsguild.org/teaching/training-and-resources/>

Finally, we have been intentional around moving guild events online as far as we can. Our guild business meeting will take place online. Our annual bake-off contest has likewise gone online and whilst we cannot conduct a tasting competition, the online element has simply changed the focus of those participating and we have raised over £1,000 for a local charity.

Our next event is a walking tour in early July. If government guidelines change to mean it is safe for us to walk, we will do so. If not, we will re-invent some social event online.

---

**Arthur Reeves**

## What has gone well?

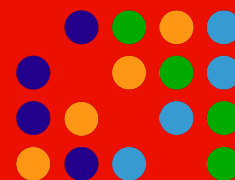
- The range of presenters has meant people hear different approaches in different ways from different people.
- Easily overcomes geographical barriers and can include a large number of participants.
- Can focus on things you wouldn't normally have time to focus on.
- You can re-invigorate events if you let your imagination flow!
- Online events can bring people together and provide an important focal point for ringers.
- Online platforms have the potential to bring experienced and less experienced ringers together from across the guild.
- This social interaction is important for many ringers.
- Keeps ringing a focus for people, keeps enthusiasm high for when ringing does return.
- Online sessions mean you can meet for relatively short periods of time, without the difficulty of travelling.

## What we have learnt?

- Technology does require a bit of practice.
- The mute button is essential!
- Send the codes and passwords early.
- Supporting people onto your online platform is important. Some people feel extremely uncomfortable logging on. Offering support (both technical and emotional) is important.
- There is a lot going on for the presenter. Having a second host and a checklist helps.
- We've struggled to make sessions interactive or properly test participants understanding.
- There are natural limits on how much use theory will be without practice, but archiving the resources carefully should mean they can be referred to when ringing does return.



# Hub Pub Zoom! At Northampton



When it became clear that we were not going to be ringing (or, some might say, more importantly, socialising) for a while, I decided we needed to do something to keep everyone engaged.

We have a wide range of abilities at our Hub, so it needed to be wide ranging enough to keep everyone interested. Having seen 30 day photo challenges on Facebook I thought we could adapt this for ringing and over a couple of days I came up with the 31 day challenge. We have published it through our hub Facebook page and also shared it to the general bellringers Facebook group. Other guilds have taken it on board as well as individual towers. We have had some interesting and amusing submissions as part of the challenge!

We are now coming to the end of our 31 day challenge and some of our ringers want a similar thing for May! We are going to make this a group effort to come up with a May challenge.

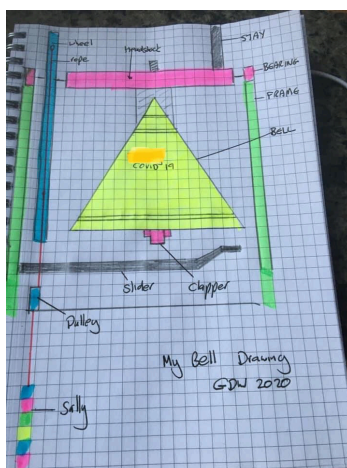
As well as our 31 day challenge we have a virtual pub session via zoom every Wednesday, which is our usual practice night, and this has turned into quiz night where we each come up with a round of 10 questions and then answer as a team. Slightly worried about the husband and wife team who themed their round on poison. Lockdown is obviously going well there!

On a Saturday morning we are continuing with our Saturday School and hosting this on Ringing Room and Zoom. One of our Ltr Level 1 learners had their first attempt at drumming behind last week and did brilliantly so we are moving on to Plain Hunt this week. Our more experienced ringers are mainly too busy for Saturday School at the moment but we are hoping they will be joining in soon!

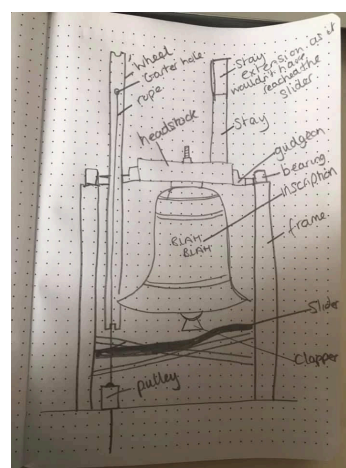
Jennie Higson



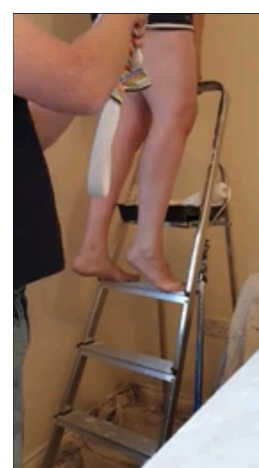
Day 1 - Write out a method



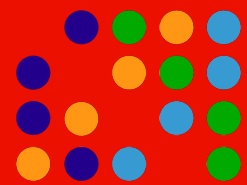
Day 2 - Draw a picture of a bell and fittings then label it



Day 14 - A photo of you practising bell handling at home



# Daily Challenge



The Daily Challenge is great to have this way to keep in touch and to keep connected with bellringing, why not try this with your band?

- Day 1** Write out a method (photo)
- Day 2** Draw a picture of a bell, its fittings and label it (photo)
- Day 3** Something you are proud of in ringing (text/photo)
- Day 4** Your bell ringing ambition (text)
- Day 5** Download a bell ringing app (photo)
- Day 6** Find out something you did not know about bells or ringing (text)
- Day 7** Find a YouTube example of good ringing (link)
- Day 8** Find a YouTube example of bad ringing (link)
- Day 9** Think of good names for bell ringers (text)
- Day 10** Find a bell related pub (link)
- Day 11** Write a limerick about bells & ringing (text)
- Day 12** Photo of bells (photo)
- Day 13** Explain what coursing order is (text)
- Day 14** Selfie of you practising bell handling at home (photo)
- Day 15** A bell ringing word you like (text)
- Day 16** Name of someone you are going to introduce to bell ringing (text)
- Day 17** Something frustrating about bell ringing
- Day 18** A bell related menu (text)
- Day 19** A bellringing book you own (photo)
- Day 20** A teaching video on YouTube (link)
- Day 21** Something you have learned about yourself through bell ringing (text)
- Day 22** A photo of your local Church
- Day 23** The best thing about ringing (text)
- Day 24** The worst thing about ringing (text)
- Day 25** How should we celebrate when we can ring again?
- Day 26** The most useful piece of bell ringing advice you have been given (text)
- Day 27** The tower you most want to ring at (text)
- Day 28** Favourite peal of bells (text or link)
- Day 29** Why did you learn to ring? (text)
- Day 30** Worst peal of bells (text or link)
- Day 31** Best ringing social (text or photo)

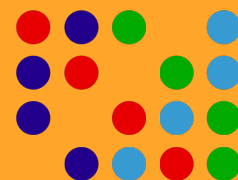


**It has been interesting to see other people's experiences and knowledge and discover something new, like Jennie's ability to compose limericks and how many bellringing books people possess! Oh, and a pub in County Durham has its own set of bells!**





# Don't let the lockdown get you down



Someone asked me the other day whether being President of the Central Council was easier given there isn't any ringing going on! I expect Lesley would give exactly the same answer as me – no, there is even more to do than ever before. Fortunately there are a few more hours in the day available to fit it all in.

I mentioned on social media that I thought we could lose quite a few ringers because of this, and after some initial challenge, Roger Booth made the point that given we have natural wastage each year anyway, if we have a long period with no new recruits, and other ringers who do not resume the hobby when ringing returns, the effect on some bands could be very significant indeed.

We went into the lockdown united in the belief that we need to recruit more and recruit well - that need has now become even greater. 'Ringing Returns' is not just about keeping the ringers we have already got but doubling our efforts to recruit and retain.

Quite a few people have owned up to not actually missing ringing that much. But those people have probably been ringing all their lives. They've been there, done that, and got the t-shirt. What I am worried about is the ringers who have not yet been there, haven't done it, and still dream of getting the t-shirt, the people for whom ART and Learning the Ropes has been a pathway into ringing, perhaps opening up a world of possibilities. Those are the ringers we need to look after, because while many will be still be fired up with enthusiasm for ringing, they may also start to forget about it if life changes too much. If the lockdown carries on through the summer, we mustn't let our efforts slip.

The pro-active territorial associations have gone into overdrive with new ways to interact with and support their members. Zoom sessions are widespread, training webinars are regularly publicised, the St Martin's Guild has even organised a virtual Bake Off with 79 entries, raising over £1,000 for charity. But others have been found wanting. My own band of Brumdingers has just been asked to 'adopt' two young ringers from an association that is doing nothing for its members. Distance is no barrier when you are teaching handbells on Ringing Room.

Just like the management team of ART, the Council Executive and Workgroups are very busy bringing forward new initiatives, perhaps because we all have more time to think about them. Whether it is proposed new residential courses for next year, Mobile Belfry 2.0 which is actively being developed, the YouTube competition we have just launched, the proposed National Ringing Centre, new Workgroups focused on schools, youth groups and university ringing – there is plenty to keep everyone busy.

One thing that is particularly notable is how closely the Council is now working with ART. From the Sunday of the ART Conference, to the training webinars being developed, there is a common bond that recognises that we are all trying to achieve the same thing, and we just all need to work together. There is no point the Council doing something if ART does it better, or ART doing something if a Council Workgroup has got it covered. I am really pleased that we have got to the point where we can all focus on our strengths.

Let's all keep going!

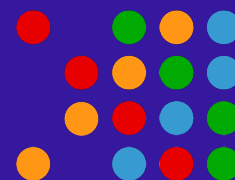


**Simon Linford**  
**President**  
**Central Council of Church Bell Ringers**





# Cracking the wine and cheese code



The Welsh Colleges' Easter tour 2020 was due to be held in the Cardiff area on 2 to 5 April, but as with so many things it was cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic. As a touring society with members spread across the country that left us with the prospect of many months without seeing each other, and with most people having regular video conferences through work the obvious choice was to do something similar with a more social perspective.

In recent years, cheese has become ubiquitous on Welsh Colleges' tours, usually appearing late at night after the pubs have closed. As a result, it seemed appropriate to have a curated virtual cheese evening on what would have been the Friday night of the tour.

The Mousetrap Cheese Shop in Hereford offers online ordering and home delivery across the UK and Waitrose Cellar sells wine for Click and Collect from your nearest store or home delivery. For this event, the suggested cheeses and a red and white wine were all from British producers. The original idea of also having a beer suggestion proved to be logistically too tricky, so people brought their own choice of beer. A guide to the cheeses and wines with space for notes was circulated before the event for people to print at home.

The curated selection was:

- Dorstone, an ashed goat's cheese from Neal's Yard Creamery in Herefordshire
- Mrs Kirkham's Lancashire, a hard cow's milk cheese from Beesley Farm near Preston
- Finn, a soft triple-cream cheese, also from Neal's Yard Creamery
- Perl Las, a blue cheese from Caws Cenarth in Carmarthenshire
- Glyndwr Red 2018, a red wine from the Glyndwr Vineyard in Glamorgan
- Tom Hill 2018, a white wine from the Halfpenny Green Estate in Staffordshire

However, the idea was always to keep it inclusive, and happily, those that were unable or unwilling (or too disorganised) to order the specified cheeses still joined in with whatever they had in the house. This included Dairylea triangles from one 'connoisseur'.

Over the course of the evening over thirty people joined in, including members from as far flung places as Suffolk, Washington DC, and, er, Wales. Some were there right from the start and others dropped in and out as the evening wore on. Much like the first evening of tour in the pub there was a little cheer and a flurry of waving whenever someone new arrived. Paul and Sarah Parker were characteristically ostentatious, as they appeared in their sitting room perched on a giant inflatable peacock. A hard core of seven even moved on to single malt in the early hours, another thing that is a familiar feature of Welsh Colleges' tours.

Of course, anything like this online is not the same as doing it in real life. Simultaneous side conversations are impossible, so it was necessary to focus on one household at a time. Much like the Eurovision Song Contest, we took turns to hear from the Weybridge, Stockport, Long Crendon, and St Albans juries. Having the cheese to talk about gave it a bit of structure, but we also managed to catch up with everyone's lives.

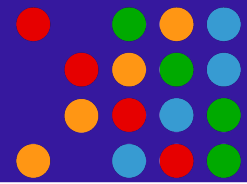
With a number of keyworkers present we were proud to hear about our friends' vital jobs in hospitals and frontline services, and the rest shared their experiences of the pitfalls of work video conferencing (always remember to mute and unmute, and don't stand up if you're not wearing any trousers).

As well as the evening being a huge amount of fun we were reminded that a key part of Welsh Colleges' is that our friendships endure and are just as strong whether we're separated by time, distance, or by quarantine.

---

**Rhiannon Meredith**





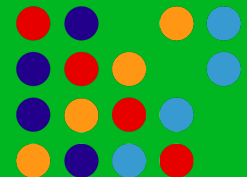
# Tips for your evening

If anyone is keen to hold a similar online event for their own band or society, our top tips are:

- Four cheeses worked really well and meant that those living alone didn't end up with a huge surfeit of cheese afterwards. Most online cheese shops offer 250g portions.
- Think about the order in which the cheeses should be eaten. Generally this will be in increasing strength of flavour (usually ending with the blue cheese). If you're having beer and/or wine with the cheese, encourage people to try all the options with all of the cheeses rather than sticking with traditional pairings.
- Have a designated 'chairperson' who can facilitate the discussions and ask questions of participants. This stops it descending into chaos but also keeps conversation flowing.
- There are plenty of platforms that work for this kind of thing. We used Webex, but Zoom works just as well. Do think about how it is 'hosted' though – it can be a bit of a disappointment if the 'host' has to leave when everyone else is in full flow and cuts the whole thing off.
- It's ok if people can't all take part for the whole session or if they don't have the same cheese or wine. It should be a relaxed experience.



Sarah Parker on her inflatable peacock



# The LtR correspondence course

St Thomas's, Salisbury where I am Tower Captain, has suffered a major reduction in both numbers of ringers and their capability over recent years. Illness, death and people moving away have been the cause to the extent that in the last few months before the lockdown we have on occasions not had enough ringers available to meet our service obligations, and our service repertoire has reduced from usually well struck Stedman Triples and occasionally Yorkshire to not very good Call Changes.

Anticipating the need for more ringers, my wife, Alison, and I attended the ART Module 2, Bell handling course early in 2017 and soon found ourselves teaching seven learners from scratch at our tower. In the next couple of years, three of these dropped out for various reasons and we acquired one more. Two of those remaining are well under twenty but the rest are in the more usual mature category.

A couple of years ago, Alison started running an extra practice each week at Wilton for our learners and the much diminished Wilton band, and we soon acquired a further three learners to teach from scratch at that tower. The Wilton bells are much lighter than ours hence easier for our learners for some aspects of ringing.

Come the lockdown, I was obviously very concerned to try to avoid losing these learners and our established ringers. So I invited members of our tower and Wilton to take part in a course. The idea was that I would provide material, suggest what each person started with and answer questions. Given the capabilities of most of the target audience, I chose the excellent A Ringer's Guide to Learning the Ropes as the written material and Abel for the interactive.

Alison worked up simple instructions for getting started on Abel. I have been sending out a weekly general ringing interest email; the first one included the piece about ringers in the Middle Ages being at risk from lightning. One of my hopes was that some of our older learners might make good listening, striking and even method progress using the interactive programmes while not having to commit lots of brain capacity to just handling their bell; I will be very interested to see if this has actually happened when we get back in the tower.

I was concerned that I might be overloaded with tutoring so limited the extent of the invitations but word spread and we have 16 course members from 6 towers.

So, how has it gone? The book was much appreciated by most of the recipients and many of them are using Abel.

I had ordered 12 copies of the book and had to order a further 6 – all very promptly posted to me, thanks ART. One of the course members is learning Bristol and another is working on touches of Stedman Triples but the rest are at Rounds and Call Changes or the Plain Bob Doubles stage. I have been inviting feedback and the first week or so I got a fair amount but it has tailed off. I have had very few questions. I like to think that this is because of the high quality and usability of the book and Abel but suspect a reduction in course members' activity. After all, perhaps, like me, they are succumbing to the 'there's always tomorrow' syndrome, exacerbated by the continuing extension of the expected lockdown period.

The book was provided to all the course members. It contains reminders about handling which it pays all of us to refresh from time to time. There is advice on how to practise at home. The sections on changing speed, listening, rhythm and striking can all enhance the value of using an interactive programme. There is an explanation of our jargon, essential to ringing with others.

There is theory and advice on counting places. It moves on to Plain Bob Doubles. So it covers all the ground that the majority of our course members need to reinforce their current capabilities and to move on. As it ends with calling touches, it is also relevant to developing the couple of more advanced ringers on the course, neither of whom calls touches at present. It is very well explained and illustrated; hence perhaps the lack of questions I have received.

A lot of good material has become available from ART and the Central Council since I started this course and I have passed on the links to the course members. The three videos about using Abel by Roger Booth are especially useful and go much further than our initial basic guidance.

I know that at least two signed up members are completely inactive. At least half of them I know to be still working on their ringing and I haven't managed to get a recent update from the rest. With all the good material now available online, I have wondered if it is worth my continuing this local effort. I have concluded perhaps that my regular chasing may encourage the course members to keep going and I act as a conduit for relevant material; many of them are registered learners with direct access to ART material but perhaps need it drawing to their attention.

With members from the towers where we do not teach, I cannot enrol them as pupils and I certainly do not wish to tread on the toes of their tower captains or teachers.

I have considered doing a course Zoom meeting but have not done so yet, nor for our St Thomas's ringers of whom very few were regular after-practice pub attenders. I'd be interested in others' experiences with such meetings.

Following this year's ART Conference which we both attended, we started, with Alan and Maureen Frost, developing plans for a big recruitment drive. This included installing a dumb bell and simulator at St Thomas's for which I quickly submitted a paper to the PCC seeking their permission to develop the plans and start the faculty process. Unfortunately, the March PCC meeting was not held owing to the lockdown and the next is not scheduled until September. We will continue developing other aspects of the recruitment plan.

Best wishes to all in these difficult times.

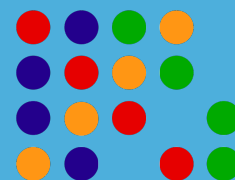
---

**Nigel Orchard**

“  
**I'm up to page 42 now. This guide is so easy to follow and I feel I may be further ahead in my understanding of it all by the time we get back to ringing instead of back at square one. So thanks for that! Using Abel has allowed me to hear the bells and be more aware of what position I am in without the stress of trying to control a rope and muttering 2453 2453 lead lead etc.**

**In the week I shall practise Plain Hunt on Abel whilst saying my PLACE out loud forwards and backwards instead of the bell I am following. I think I may have had a small lightbulb moment.**  
”





In these extraordinary times, the ringing community has found a number of ways to keep ringing going, even whilst we are not able to ring bells for real. Practices, pub sessions and quiz nights have transferred to Zoom, “Ringing Room” appears to have hit it off rather well, and handbells are coming into their own – never have I seen so much love for Minimus!

Of course, social media – a major part of modern society anyway – is playing a not insignificant part in the current climate. However, YouTube is playing an even bigger role than most – if not all – other social media sites.

## **An introduction to YouTube**

I am firmly of the belief that YouTube is the best platform for promoting ringing – on social media at least, but also on a wider scale. This is a view shared by a good number of other ringers. The platform strikes a chord with younger ringers in particular.

For anyone unfamiliar with the site, YouTube is a video sharing platform, with content for any and every topic from the weird to the wonderful. It is the second most visited website in the world (after Google), and the most popular social media platform – with 78% of UK internet users regularly using the site.

Unlike most other social media sites, any content uploaded is publicly available – one does not need an account to watch any of the videos. Indeed, many young people are browsing YouTube clips before getting any other social media account. Videos are relatively easy to look for; just by typing “bell ringing Swindon” into a search, say, the relevant results would likely include a video of said tower.

## **My Experience as a Bell Ringing YouTuber**

YouTube has been a big part of my ringing social life for the last ten years. Going under the alias “simonbellringer”, I have at the time of writing 627 videos uploaded to my YouTube channel. They are almost exclusively of bells and bell ringing, featuring a multitude of towers across the UK (including a couple from Ireland).

My interest was piqued fairly early on, aged around 12 or 13, when I

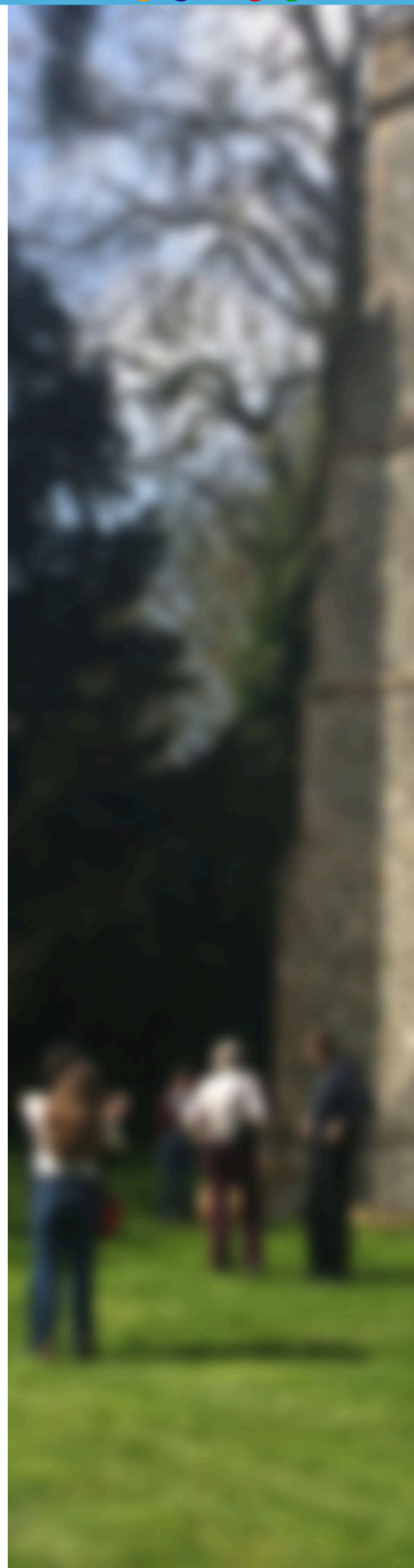
saw a few clips of ringing others had posted, and wanted to get in on the act. In part, this was because there was no footage of any Swindon towers online, and I wanted to show off the bells in my town! It also looked like a fun and empowering thing to do – one way to “get my name out there”. Even then, I could also see the attraction of building a portfolio of towers from across the country, and my (and others’) interest, and as a reminder of all the places I had visited, the people I was ringing with, and the fun I was having. There is also a satisfaction in one’s work being presented, and other people seemed to enjoy my videos, which was encouragement enough to keep making them!

My first video, of some ringing on an outing to Bishop’s Cannings, was uploaded in August 2010. Back then, I used a mobile phone to record ringing – except the quality was awful; grainy footage, distorted sound. It would take a good year or two before I upgraded to a camera, and a while longer then before I started editing – but more on the technology below.

During the last decade I have made friends with a number of ringers through our shared interest of ringing videos on YouTube. I had a YouTube account a good three years before logging into Facebook; the early “virtual” ringing friendships I made all came from YouTube. One particular memory I have is from a few years ago, when Steve Rowe, a ringer in Sydney and someone who I got to know on YouTube, was in the country, and made a trip to a St Mark, Swindon practice to meet me in person.

## **How much ringing is currently on YouTube?**

Bell ringing has a stronger presence on YouTube than many people realise. A YouTube search for ‘bell ringing’ returns 36,500 results, whilst ‘change ringing’ throws up 2,380. Whilst I do not know exact figures, I would hazard a guess that around half of towers with ringable bells now appear in a YouTube video somewhere. With a number of other – mostly, but not exclusively young – “Bell Ringing YouTubers” signing up to the site and publishing their content, that number continues to grow.



Aside from videos of individual towers, there are some of larger-scale events and tours, which capture the flavour of ringing. In particular, the excellent “12-bell broadcasts” from the contest finals of recent years will be an invaluable resource for future generations.

Personally, I have captured some well-known and interesting ringing events down the years, both on a national and a more personal level, including: a number of RWNyCs; various ringing tours; the Isle of Wight 14-quarters-in-a-day challenge; The Grandsire Day; and a selection of towers from a 41-Minor quarter peal week last November. These have tended to receive positive feedback, and perhaps inspired others to try something new, or different. Whilst I don't know for certain, I would like to think a fun video showcasing what a great day out the Youth Contest is – with the number of other young, like-minded ringers in attendance – has perhaps encouraged a young ringer somewhere to sign up for their local team, and experience what the RWNyC has to offer.

### **Hearing from other YouTubers**

I have covered some of my own reasons for using YouTube, and my fellow YouTubers Alex, Ashley, Scott and Thomas, have their own helpful input here.

Primarily, videos tend to be for personal interest, showing a number of different towers across the country we have rung at, capturing memories and that moment in time – we have many sound recordings from our predecessors, but very little video footage; YouTube (and other platforms) are addressing that for future generations. Thomas in particular likes the feedback he gets – through the number of likes and comments received on his videos, and that he can leave on others.

Like me, Alex and Ashley were both inspired to start uploading their own videos having watched other people's channels. Importantly, something all of us – and many other YouTubers beside – class as an important reason to upload videos is to promote bell ringing, featuring different bands, methods and age categories. Scott Adams started uploading his excellent clips to promote and showcase Devon call-change ringing – a world still unknown to many ringers!

We like to present “a good standard of ringing” at the very least – something that is nice to listen or aspire to – and give a good overview of what ringing can be about. I will touch on this again later in the making a video section.

When I asked Alex why he put videos on YouTube, he raised a very interesting point that it not only makes good listening practice but has helped developed his analysis of bells' tonal qualities. For him, it's also the chance to expand his skills – he is keen to experiment with different technology, viewpoints, and ways of making the videos.

Above all, this is something we enjoy – making and editing videos is time-consuming, but it is a part of our hobby, in the same way tower grabbing or peal ringing might be to others. We enjoy recording a small part of our history, and we like the interaction with others, ringers and non-ringers alike.

### **Resource, Recruitment and Training**

A picture speaks a thousand words, and a video shows even more. A good quality film, showing ringing in a good light, has potential to be used as a powerful promotion tool – for non-ringers, or for aspiring bands. This could be an inspiring piece of ringing, for example some of Scott Adams' Devon Call Change ringing, or some “black zone Maximus”, or even a well-struck touch of Stedman.

It could also take the form of a recruitment or training video – some exist on YouTube already, although there is always room for more. I understand that the Central Council is working with ART on a number of training videos, both ringing and more maintenance-type topics, and Roger Booth is in the process of launching a series of training videos to explain how to make the most out of Abel.

As Simon Linford pointed out to me when planning this article – and which is so often true in my experience – a number of ringers do not appreciate or use YouTube, and don't know where to look for things on the site. Young ringers who have been brought up with YouTube's presence will have it as their first source of information. For instance, Simon recalled one of the 10-year old Brumdingers turning up one week asking if she could ring down – he had not taught her how, but she had seen it on YouTube. The first place she turned to for ringing education was YouTube.

When planning a ringing trip, such as an outing or a quarter peal day, the first place I (and many other organisers) will look is YouTube, to get a general feeling for the bells – are they any good; are they suitable for the band; is there anything of interest to watch out for? It is an invaluable resource on that front alone.

### **Young ringers and YouTube**

It's difficult to write a section on young ringers for this topic, as they are (mostly!) the ones leading the way here, whether by making and uploading videos, or watching, commenting, learning and developing their interest in ringing. Over 80% of all 15-25 year olds in the UK use YouTube, more than any other social media platform; one further indicator of the power of the site.

I firmly believe YouTube remains the most attractive site for youngsters to research, watch, learn and talk about ringing, as well as interact with other ringers (as opposed to, say, Facebook – which I am told is for old people these days!) Videos of young ringers enjoying ringing demonstrates to the world that ringing can be fun – it breaks stereotypes, it broadens other ringers' horizons, and very possibly encourages non-ringing youngsters to take up ringing in the first place.

### **The technology, and making a video**

Filming and uploading a video for YouTube is not tricky, and you do not to be wonderfully tech-savvy – all you need is something to film with (most phones do this these days) and an Internet connection.

I am rarely to be seen without my trusty Nikon point-and-shoot camera – it doesn't just take excellent photos, but the video quality is, on the whole, remarkably decent as well. I have filmed in the belfry numerous times, and you can hear the bells clearly on the video, not pure white noise! The video quality on most phones these days is also excellent.

Some people are happy to take the footage and upload it as is direct to YouTube. But most people try to enhance the video, by editing out any unnecessary bits (e.g. chatter), or bad striking or method mistakes. With the right band, it shouldn't be hard to capture a reasonable standard of ringing – especially if the method is within everyone's comfort zone – but nothing is guaranteed!



## YouTube channels which showcase topics addressed in this article:

- [simonbellringer](#)
- [Bellr1nger](#)
- [lovesguide](#)
- [AR\\_RingingVideos](#)
- [markcp81](#)
- [Bells on film](#)

On the subject of editing – it's entirely down to the individual how they make their video, what editing software they use, and what they include in the final copy. Personally, my style is to edit the clips to show around five minutes per tower – less if making a video of multiple towers – as most people's interest (in my experience) doesn't tend to last much beyond that. I take time to listen back to the ringing, and pick two or three "good bits" – the inclusion of poor striking reflects badly on the band and the uploader, and does not show the ringing world in a good light either!

Finally, and most importantly, it is important to ensure permission from everyone who appears in the clip has been sought – if someone requests not to be filmed, that should be respected, above all.

For anyone interested in making their own videos, I have compiled a brief guidance video, which I hope will be useful and helpful – it can be found on the below link, or on my YouTube channel ([simonbellringer](#)): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hT2LHqZloa4>

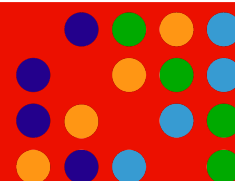
## And finally ...

For those unfamiliar with YouTube and the wealth of resources, I hope this article has been of benefit, maybe even enlightening. YouTube is well established and is a very powerful tool. It needs to be treated with respect, but when used correctly, I am firmly of the opinion it is the way to promote bell ringing.

---

**Simon Edwards**

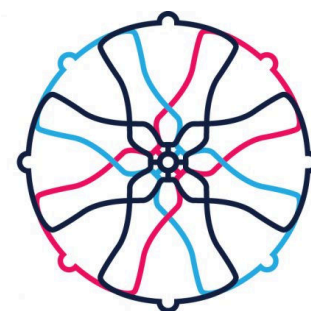
## It's all about the YouTube Challenge



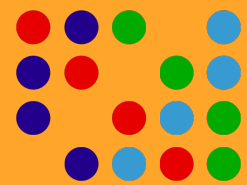
To recognise the coming of age of recording ringing on YouTube, to encourage the discovery and production of high quality online content and to have a little bit of focus and fun while we cannot go out and ring, the Central Council is running a competition for the best YouTube videos of ringing.

This is a monthly competition to uncover the best of these YouTube clips. Full details can be found on the Central Council website, on social media or you can read about it in the Ringing World. Check the details at <https://cccbr.org.uk/youtube-competition/>

For the rest of 2020, submissions for the best YouTube video will be invited each month for a different category starting with the best striking on 6 bells or fewer as the theme for May – keep watching! Or start YouTubing!



THE CENTRAL COUNCIL OF CHURCH  
**BELL RINGERS**



# It's all happening at Great Gransden

We last met for practice night on Thursday 12 March when we talked about handwashing and sanitising, but no-one was particularly concerned at the time or knew what would unfold during the coming week. We rang for service on the following Sunday but very soon afterwards all churches were closed and the lockdown had started.

St. Bartholomew's Great Gransden, Cambridgeshire is an active tower with an enthusiastic team at the Call Change, Plain Bob stage, with a smattering of more experience, ringing for practice and Sunday services as well as visiting other tower practices and arranging outings. Not all our outings are for ringing. Last year we had tours of three different local churches just to see the bells and clocks, but that is another story. We were due to visit Peterborough Cathedral for their practice on March 23 but this, and our weekly ringing routine came to a juddering halt.

My immediate thoughts were about how to keep together as a team and to maintain enthusiasm and learning during a period when we could not practise our art. Doing nothing was not an option and the first thing to do was to expand our online communication. We were already using WhatsApp to share notices and information with each other between ringing sessions and this initially became our main modus operandi.

We had recently taken delivery of our new branded clothing featuring our new tower logo. We were due to have a group photo on Thursday 26 March but were locked out by then so I asked everyone who could to take a selfie of themselves sporting their tee-shirts for me to make a group photo. We launched our new logo on Facebook at the beginning of April and this can also be seen on our website.

The next plan was to get together online. We used WhatsApp for a few one-on-one video meetings but it became clear that Zoom was best for the group meetings. We first tested it in small groups of two or three, mainly to become familiar with it, and our first whole team meeting was on Thursday 16 April when we were all able to chat together for the first time in four weeks.

During our meeting I ran Abel on the desktop and between us we rang call changes on six bells, each ringer taking turns to make a call. This was a very rudimentary system but was successful and we all enjoyed the experience.

Since then the Ringing Room application has been developed and we are introducing this into our meetings. Initial trails have been entertaining as we continue to learn Zoom, how to drive Windows and getting used to group conferencing in general.

Zoom comes into its own for small groups and Sheila (my wife) and I have held successful theory sessions with individuals working through the theory sections of their respective Learning the Ropes levels. Under normal circumstances we cover a lot of theory during our weekly daytime tied bell practices when the white boards in the tower are in constant. Working online has perhaps given even more time for questions and answers to help fully understand the theory of ringing.

These sessions are open to everyone of all abilities and so far, two ringers have completed their LtR Level 5 theory and I expect that two others will complete LtR Level 2 and Level 4 theory during the lockdown.

The Cambridge District of the Ely DA of Church Bell Ringers is holding weekly webinars which Sheila and I are attending. Subjects have included blue lines, composing, conducting, tower maintenance, history of ringing in Cambridge and the history of simulators. We advertise these to our ringers and several have attended different modules.

During lockdown Sheila and I usually ring a quarter peal of Minimus on handbells every week. We post these to BellBoard and also on our personal Facebook pages to maintain a high a profile of ringing as possible, albeit a different discipline to tower bell ringing. On Easter Day we rang a quarter peal on our patio and video recorded it, posting a clip on YouTube with appropriate social media publicity. We received favourable comments from neighbours and the wider local community.

We are also submitting recordings of the church bells and handbells to be included in our weekly benefice church services online at [www.bluebellbenefice.org.uk/](http://www.bluebellbenefice.org.uk/)

Other ringers in the team are responsible for posting to Twitter (@GBellringers) and Instagram (great-gransden-bells) for brief news items which supplement our Facebook page (Great Gransden Bell Ringers) and website at <http://gransdenbells.btck.co.uk/>.

It seems very unlikely that we will be able to return to the tower in the near future and we have decided to hold our annual tower meeting via Zoom in May, which was postponed from Holy Week. We are determined to keep together as best we can and maintain online contact with the church and village communities in these very difficult times.

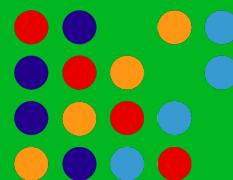
## Phillip George



**The Great Gransden band unveil their new logo**



**Quarter peals of Minimus keep the profile of ringing up**



The Association of Ringing Teachers is set to launch a series of online courses to support ringing learners with the theoretical side of ringing. The aim is to support more effective learning from home and to free up time for the vital practical skills which can only be learnt in a tower.

The courses will be open for anyone to enrol on and will be free of charge. Already five courses are in the development stage and many more are planned, aimed at all levels of ringers.

ART had been thinking for some time about how it could incorporate online learning into its activities, particularly with the aim of creating more practical sessions on its Module 1 and 2 courses. This could be achieved by introducing 'flip learning' type activities – with participants undertaking some of the theoretical activities before they arrived for the course.

Key to its thinking was its core principles on what makes for good teaching of ringing. This involves highly structured planning, breaking tasks down into smaller steps, listening to students, giving feedback and setting achievable targets, in addition to celebrating success.

So the online learning project was born.

Using the open source learning platform, Moodle, in use in over 36,000 educational institutions around the world, the courses will be utilise a variety of materials to provide tuition and interactive feedback for users. Videos, pictures, text and downloadable files will be combined to provide detailed tuition. Each topic will be broken down into small steps and will enable learners to progress at their own pace, as well as being able to jump to the section of the course they wish to review. Quizzes with multiple attempts and detailed feedback, forums and discussion groups will enable those enrolled on the course to interact with each other and to ask questions.

The first courses are already being prepared. Videos have been provided by Clare McArdle, Richard Booth and Rose Nightingale, Simon Linford, Tom Hinks, and Nikki Thomas, Beth Johnson and Ruth Suggett. IT support is being provided by Steve Johnson. Topics currently being developed

are: learning call changes – up, down and by places; how to call simple touches; how to learn methods; and, for more advanced ringers, how to splice methods on practice night.

Of course, in any new initiative learning takes place. In this case producing the courses has brought many lessons. First the time commitment to an online course is all upfront. Tutors have to think carefully of how they can ensure that all key points are covered in addition to popular misconceptions which have to be addressed and rectified – even before potential students have made them. Planning enjoyable interactions to enable students to both receive and give feedback – including well planned and informative questions to ask takes meticulous planning and skilled IT work.

All of this whilst learning new systems for producing the work – learning how Moodle works, how video editing takes place and how interactive tasks can be developed.

And of course, all of this is taking place during lockdown when the ability to film in towers is restricted – often forcing course creators to rely on existing materials. Nevertheless the enthusiasm of course creators has been hugely encouraging and there is a firm belief that the courses will get better and better as time goes on.

To join in the course all you have to do is go to the online learning portal, click the enrol button and enter your name and email.

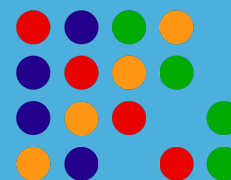
The first courses will be advertised soon via social media and newsletters – so watch this space and get learning!

---

**Tim Sunter**



# Ringling at home



Although we are unable to ring in our towers at present, many people have been busy behind the scenes developing various ways to practise ringing at home, and there have been some very rapid advances.

The basic principles are the same, whether you are using Abel, which is perhaps the most popular computer application, Virtual Belfry or Beltower; or mobile apps such as Methodology or Mobel (which is now available on iPhone or Android).

There are also new web apps Ringing Room and Handbell Stadium, based on the latest remote gaming technology, where several people can practise ringing together over the Internet, and hold virtual practices, which can be great fun.

If you're not used to these, they may at first seem daunting. However, ART has put together a series of YouTube videos, starting from first principles, breaking down the myths, and introducing things in easily manageable steps. There are also some tips, such as slowing the ringing down to start with, or using the 'wait for me' command in Mobel and Beltower.

The videos cover a number of topics including:

- Ringing rounds
- Counting your place
- Picking out your bell
- The open hand stroke lead
- The theory of call changes
- Ropesight
- Covering
- Plain hunting

The videos also contain exercises which you can try at home. Using the exercises will prepare your newer ringer for ringing with others in Ringing Room.

Listening skills are something that many people have difficulty with, and the videos will not only help your band make good use of the current lockdown by developing their theoretical knowledge and skills, but they will also be of tremendous use in helping us teach the many new ringers that we hope to recruit once regular ringing resumes.

Even if some of your ringers do not aspire to ringing methods, ringing really well struck call changes is a very worthwhile end in itself. It is something that not only members of the general public, but also ringers in

the black zone, the pinnacle of method ringing achievement, also appreciate.

You can find these videos on the ART YouTube Channel. They have been collected into a handy playlist - Abel Ringing Simulator.

Abel (for windows) and Mabel (for Apple) can be purchased from <http://www.abelsim.co.uk/>

Mobel is available in the App Stores for both Android and iOS devices.

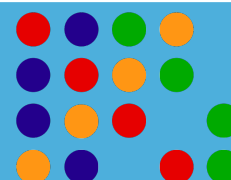
Ringing Room can be accessed for free at <https://ringingroom.com/>

---

## Roger Booth

Editor's note: When searching for the ART YouTube Channel use: Association of Ringing Teachers as your search term.

# Which comms platform do I use?



We've put together some posters (following pages) for you to help you keep your bands and towers together online.

We're team players, working together to ring, to teach and be appreciated for good ringing and regular commitment to our communities. We teach our ringers the value of ringing at other towers, knowing they'll soon learn the welcome they'll receive from ringers anywhere, which may well include the pub, or a ringers' tea!

However, currently we are unable to ring. As the lockdown measures are gradually eased we will all be looking at every aspect of our lives to see how we can adjust to keep ourselves and our community safe but until then we can maintain that bond.

There are lots of different ways to keep in touch, and it's not difficult. Online communication options are expanding, if you didn't feel the need before, then now is the time to keep everyone connected. Choose the one that works for your band – if you don't know how, we'll bet someone in your band does.

---

**Deb Baker, Alison Everett and Emily Ashton**

# SHOULD WE HAVE A TOWER GROUP?



Do we want a tower group that helps keep us connected and is fun and easy to use?

NO

**Are you sure?**  
How do you know if you've never tried?  
One message can be sent to reach all of your band.  
**Why not have a go?**

YES

**Great!**  
Now we can all see tower conversations in one place.  
But are you happy about security?

**Choose wisely!**  
Check the news for past incidents and see if they've been fixed.  
**Do try one!**

NO

YES

**Amazing!**  
Now let's get on with using this high-speed way of connecting us all.

**Off we go!**



# WHICH FREE VIDEO CONFERENCING PLATFORM CAN WE USE?



**Good for:**  
100 participants  
Across all systems  
Across all devices

The race leader that's ramped up its security. The free version stops at 40 min. Re-click to rejoin.  
**To get started:**  
<https://tinyurl.com/sn38bto>



**Good for:**  
50 participants  
Across all systems  
Across all devices

The oldest and still way up there for ease of use and security.  
**To get started:**  
<https://tinyurl.com/zvxyqpm>



**Good for:**  
100 participants  
Across all systems  
Across all devices

Less known but a great conference tool.  
**To get started:**  
<https://tinyurl.com/y8jh6br8>



**Good for:**  
50 participants  
Brand new and still being rolled out worldwide

Worth the wait? Facebook's long history of poor data safety means we need to wait and see if this is a safe environment to use.

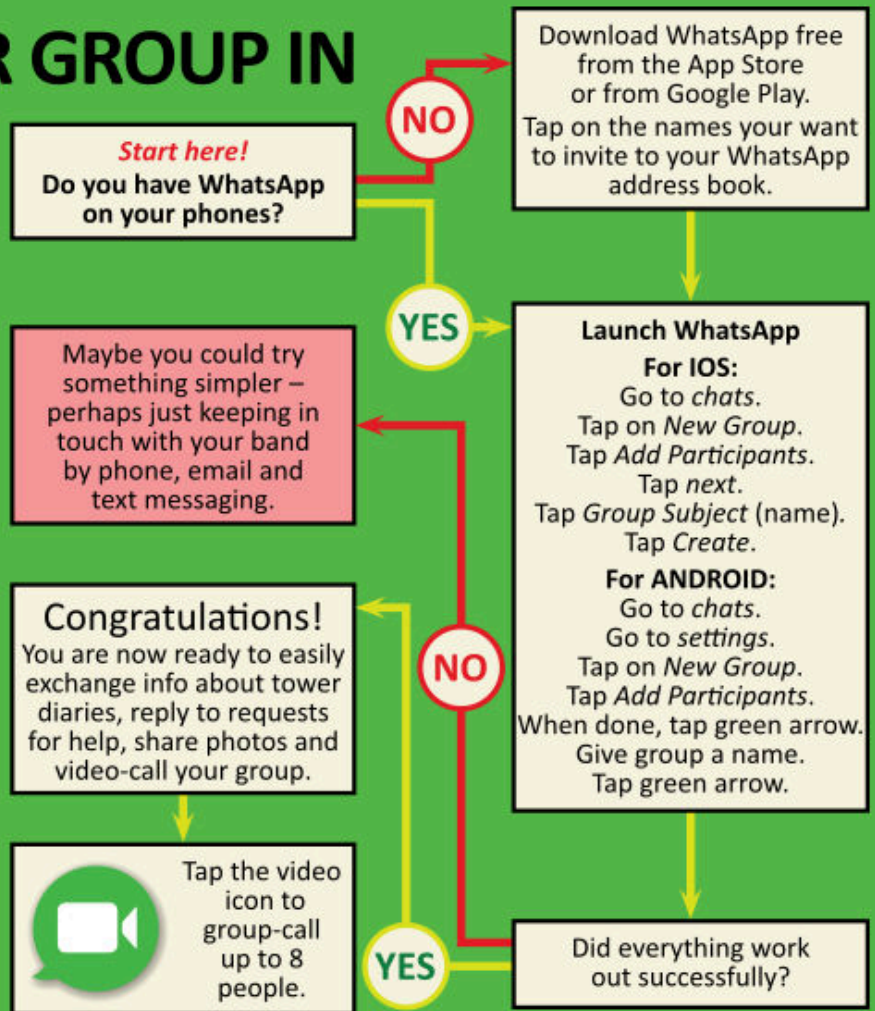




# MAKE A TOWER GROUP IN WhatsApp



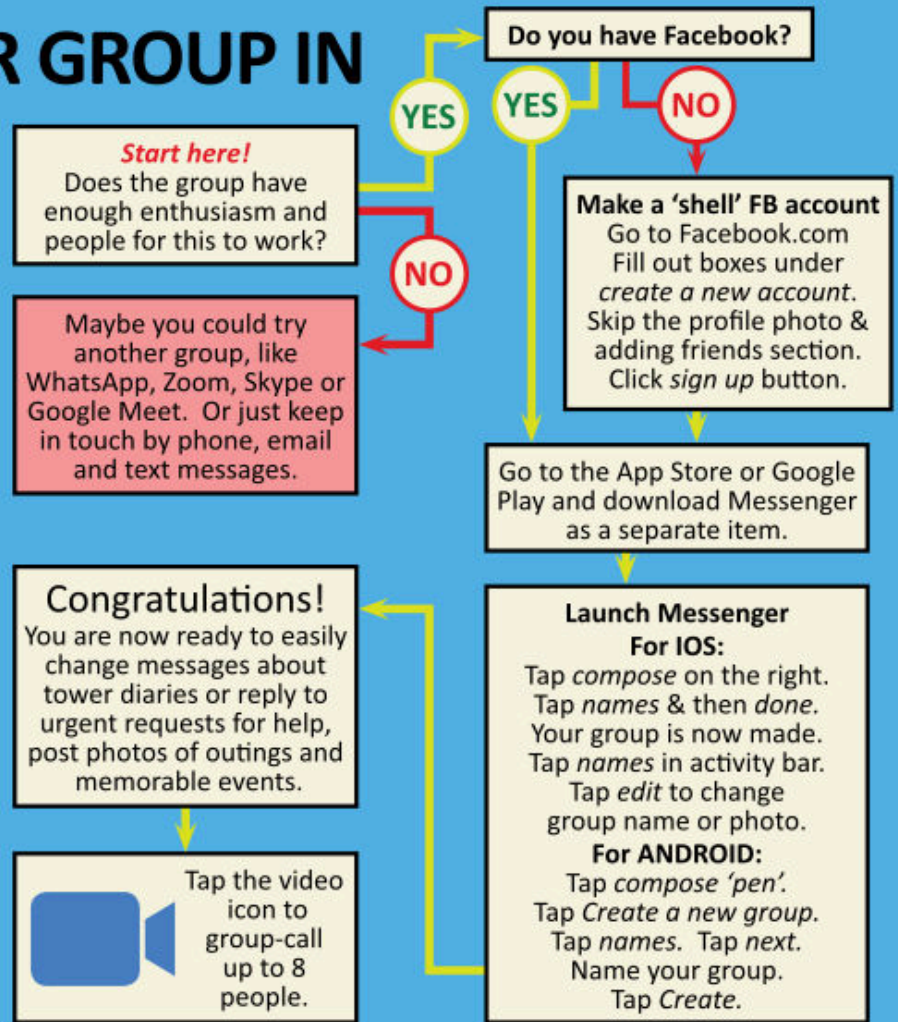

[www.ringingteachers.org](http://www.ringingteachers.org)  
 @RingingTeachers



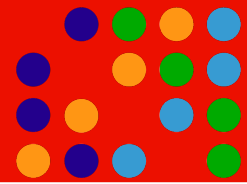
# MAKE A TOWER GROUP IN FACEBOOK MESSENGER




[www.ringingteachers.org](http://www.ringingteachers.org)  
 @RingingTeachers







# Virtual ringing platforms are so now

During this period where we are not able to physically ring together, ringers are increasingly turning to online, virtual practices to develop their ringing skills and keep in touch. Although nobody has yet formed a Virtual Guild or Cyberspace Association, online ringers are developing new friendships with ringers they wouldn't have so easily had the opportunity to ring with in real life.

In this article, two tower and handbell ringers share their account of virtual ringing and offer advice on how to get started.

Lesley Boyle describes how she's been busier than ever, ringing during lockdown.

'When can we next ring together?' 'Actually we're busy every night – maybe at the end of the week – Friday, and then we're already ringing at 5.30 so it will have to be after that ...'

This is not a quote from the pre-lockdown days – this was me earlier this evening talking to someone in Surrey and someone else in Staffordshire about whether we could meet to ring 'handbells' together in five days' time. I've never been so busy – this evening we had two attempts at quarter peals on two different platforms and managed, with a great deal of concentration, to score one of them.

I'm an experienced handbell ringer and I'm lucky to know a lot of other handbell ringers, some of whom have put their ingenuity to the test to develop some really exciting virtual ringing platforms. I want to encourage you to have a go at one of these and seize the opportunity out of this restriction imposed upon us all to practise ringing, a single 'tower bell' or a pair of handbells, in a different way, and maybe with different people. Part of what we enjoy in our hobby is ringing with each other.

These virtual ringing platforms let us indulge without the hassle of leaving our houses or fear of what it all sounds like to the general public! And it offers us the chance to offer teaching on topics which are often difficult and time consuming to cover adequately in the tower.

## Missing the social side of ringing or want to keep in touch with your band?

If you want to ring with other people you have some new fun and exciting options, all developed since 'lockdown'. Many thanks to all the clever people in our ringing community for putting their energy and efforts into doing this!

For all of these you need a voice channel – a way of communicating with each other over distance. This can be whatever you are used to, maybe Microsoft Teams, Facebook Messenger, Google Meet or Zoom.

Many people are using Zoom and getting on very well with it. It has a 40-minute limit on using the free version but actually that is a pretty good amount of time. If someone has a paid account (approx. £12/month) then they can set up the meeting and everyone then benefits from unlimited meeting time.

Discord is another option that is commonly used by the gaming community (my son uses it) and I like it because you can appear to talk over each other more naturally.

One of the most popular platforms which is very simple to access is Ringing Room.

Lesley says:

I would say that this has become the most popular platform since it is so simple. Ringing Room has now been used by countless towers and ad-hoc bands holding virtual practices across the web. You simply press computer keys to ring the bells. It requires no downloading or set up expertise. You can also try 'two in hand' handbell touches with participants in multiple locations. The handbell ringer can simply assign two bells to themselves and click the left and right arrow keys to ring them.

Or it has been enabled to work with the Graham John action controllers with some nifty programming by Robert Johnston adapting the Handbell Manager driver to work with Ringing Room.

If you haven't tried Ringing Room yet, Nigel Mellor has some top tips for getting started.

- It will work on any computer, tablet, phone platform with a browser however a PC is recommended.
- Use either Google Chrome or Firefox, Microsoft browsers have had some issues. Safari works on a Mac, but again the software behind Ringing Room is likely to work better with Chrome.
- Agree which audio channel to use with all participants. I would recommend that you use Discord and set up your own group within it and share that with your ringers inviting them to join (a link can be created in the app). Although Discord can be run in a browser, I would recommend downloading the app. Once this is set up both a chat and voice channel may be created, ringers can then join without the organiser having to set it up and call each ringer as you have to in Skype.

When first entering Ringing Room, the organiser should create a 'Ringing Room' which will then be given a number ID. This number should then be shared using the voice or chat channel on Discord.

Once the Ringing Room has been created other ringers may join it. They will be asked to enter their name which will then be displayed in the Ringing Room. From this point whoever is organising the ringing should ask ringers to assign themselves to a specific bell(s).

Pressing SHIFT and a number will both assign the bell to the ringer and place the bell at the bottom of the screen. There is a help screen on the Ringing Room website.

The ringer should press the number associated with the bell they have been assigned to ring the bell, left and right arrow keys also work. Although using a mouse click will work, it is slower and can disrupt the striking.

It is likely that it will take a few goes using Ringing Room for your band to become used to it but it is worth persevering as it does become easier. One of the current downsides is the noise created when users press the keyboard – if pressed too hard it can be distracting.

One way we have overcome this keyboard distraction is using motion sensors. Some users of Abel will have them, and they work by sending the keyboard stroke to Abel by using a separate piece of software, Handbell Manager. Handbell Manager has been modified to allow it to be used with Ringing Room and Muster and this new version is expected to be released soon on Graham John's website. There has also been a recent software development to allow an Android phone to be used as a motion sensor.

### **If you just want to practise methods alone for the time being**

Lesley Boyle suggests that solo ringing with computer simulators could be for you.

This is great for a learner who is on their own or who just wants to dip their toe in the water, or who just needs a bit of time and space to become familiar with ringing on a computer. Simulators such as Abel ([abelsim.co.uk](http://abelsim.co.uk)) for computer or Mobel for iPhone or (just released) Android have a lot of functionality but even so are simple to use for someone just starting out. Other computer-based ringing simulators are available – search the web for Virtual Belfry or Beltower. Also check out [tadhill.co.uk](http://tadhill.co.uk) and [ringing.org](http://ringing.org).

These programs will ring anything you like with you – check out Call Changes, or learning exercises in Abel, or ring Original on any number on your phone. Secrets to help with success: slow the speed right down by changing the peal speed to 4 hours 30 mins to begin with. You can speed it up later. On the File menu you'll find the Learning Exercises your students will already be familiar with. ART's YouTube channel has got some excellent videos giving you a quick guide on a number of topics with more coming soon, so subscribe to the [ringingteachers](https://www.youtube.com/user/ringingteachers) channel at <https://www.youtube.com/user/ringingteachers>

### **If you're already familiar with Abel as a front end app, take a look at Muster**

Nigel says:

Muster is the latest virtual ringing platform and has been designed to work with Abel as the front-end application. The principle of operation is similar to Ringing Room allowing remote users to ring bells with keystrokes or motion sensors. Abel in this case is not being used for ringers to ring with (i.e. you do not select a method to ring) but just to create the moving image and

sound of a ringing bell. Our initial testing showed that we could ring a little faster than the other two simulators, however it did suffer from what appeared to be Internet buffering, with bells ringing on top of one another occasionally. It is, though, in the very early stages of development and I expect there to be further improvements. The big advantage and attractiveness of Muster is the familiarity of the Abel interface and the lower latency than Ringing Room and Handbell Stadium.

If you're keen to try something new and have always wanted to develop your handbell ringing, pop along and visit Handbell Stadium (developed by Graham John). Nigel feels this is going to especially benefit ringers who have quite a visual approach to ringing.

Lesley says:

As the name implies, this platform is designed to simulate handbell ringing. It expects each participant to ring two bells and to use a pair of action controllers. These are mandatory. They are available from Graham John who sources them from a manufacturer in the US and has just taken delivery of another consignment, so if you're seriously interested in handbell training, bag yourself a pair quickly before they all go.

Graham can provide them for £27.50 a pair including P&P. Email [graham@changingringing.co.uk](mailto:graham@changingringing.co.uk) to arrange this. You'll be able to use them with Abel and Ringing Room as well. Perhaps this is more for the serious handbell ringer but who knows who might get bitten by the bug if they are introduced to it?

Graham is organising open practices so that you can find other people to ring with, and it is amazing to find yourself ringing handbells with someone from the US and someone in France. These tend to be on Mondays and Fridays at 8.30pm (UK time) and everyone is made welcome. Go to the Discord 'Changingringing' channel first to see who's there. Make sure you have downloaded the 2D or 3D software – the links are available from [discordapp.com](http://discordapp.com).

### **What about quarter peals or other online performances?**

Nigel tells us about a couple of virtual quarters he has rung recently, one of Plain Bob Minor in Ringing Room and the other using the 2D version of Handbell Stadium.

Both have been slow (42 minutes for Ringing Room and 50 minutes for Handbell Stadium) compared to normal quarter peals on handbells. Handbell Stadium was possibly slower than Ringing Room due to the way the 2D graphics work. One other variable that needs to be taken into account when ringing longer lengths is the reliability of the Internet connection. Whilst ringing both quarter peals we did experience one or two instances of bells appearing to rush or ring on top of one another. One could blame this on the ringers, but it was clearly the Internet connection causing it for some of the cases of bad striking!

I should also note that this review is current as at the time of writing as all these virtual ringing platforms are still under development and constantly evolving. Whilst we are locked out of churches and prevented from ringing with our friends, these virtual ringing solutions certainly merit trying. It will require a few hours of investment in your time to become used to them, but well worth it in the end.

Finally, some more words of practical advice from Lesley on how to get started:

### **Practical things you can do**

All of these programs work best if you're on the best possible internet connection. So you may find that things work better if you plug an Ethernet cable into your router rather than using your house wi-fi. One person in my tower got his internet supply upgraded as he's in social isolation so needs it for all sorts of things including ringing. Now's the time to do it!

If you are going to get a group of people to ring on (I suggest) Ringing Room, first plan a whole session just to get everyone up and running. Set up the Zoom meeting (or whatever you are using to communicate – you don't need the video part to be running but it is nice to see everyone's face). One person has to set up the Ringing Room in advance and acquire the ID. You then supply that ID number via Zoom chat to every subsequent visitor to the tower. When everyone is there, you click on a rope to 'assign ringer' to each bell. Focus on counting your place and listening to the whole row – both these skills are invaluable later on in the actual tower. Err on the side of simplicity. Have fun!

---

**Nigel Mellor and Lesley Boyle**



# Learning the Ropes Achievers



**Level 1 - Bell Handling and Control: Safe and competent bell handling including raising and lowering a bell.**

## January 2020

Lucy Moore	Rushden
John Harwood Bee	Cottered
David Chambers	Swainswick
Michelle Bishop	Newport
Elizabeth Sutcliffe	Loddon Hub Wargrave
Max Fuggle	Gosforth
Victoria Lavender	North Shields
Julie Fisher	Sandon
Jeannie Bagshaw	Sandon
John Bagshaw	Sandon
Anne McClean	Drumbo
Chris Morland	North Shields
Katy Hulatt	Harrow Weald
Sabrina Bloecker	Glasgow Cathedral
Alex Edwards	Warden Hill
Sue Grainger	Appleby in Westmorland
Lizzie Lynes	Appleby in Westmorland
Deborah Mansfield	Stretham REC
Cathy Cleevely	Warden Hill
Antonia Norris	St James Queen's Sq, Sydney
Lenka Nadejova	Highgate
Freddie Barwise	Childswickham
Fergus Crew	Tottenham
Kate Moore	Maiden Bradley
Lou Hitchens	Gwennap
Mark Hitchens	Gwennap
James Wood	Mattersey
Adrian Banford	Appleby in Westmorland
James Farrow	St James Queen's Sq, Sydney
Andrew Lanham Cook	Bradford on Avon
Elizabeth Wilby	Birmingham School of Ringing
Helen Surr	Harborne
Jamal Khan	Warfield
Helen Cornford	Nassington
Neil Evans	Tickhill
Sue Evans	Tickhill
Daren Edwards	Warden Hill
Alan Godfrey	Eckington
Polly Goodall	Eckington
Sarah Bent	Eckington
Rob Sadler	Eckington
Andy Jones	West Hanney
Jo Reeves	Dorstone
Sue Levett	Sandwich
Denise De Speluzzi	Brent Pelham
Robin Wilcox Wood	Mattersey

## February 2020

Nicola Silk	Castor Ringing School
Polly Ann Bridges	Castor Ringing School
David Snaith	Eckington
Ishbel Gair	Eckington
Ed Gardner	CUG Teaching Hub
Isidore Hiscock	CUG Teaching Hub
Stephen Hartley	South Wigston
David Savory	Kineton
Judith Haste	Stretham REC
Catherine Bryan	Willingale Ringing Centre
Malcolm Ross	Abingdon St Helens
Edward Goode	Leominster Priory
Robert Wornham	Sandon
Stephen Rice	Bradford Abbas
Colin White	Bishops Itchington
Ella White	Bishops Itchington
Rosemary Doughty	Arnold
Daniel Wiles	Newport, Shropshire
John Deer	Newport
Ross Clarke	CUG Teaching Hub
Trudie Yandell Young	Thurcaston
Shirui Lu	CUG Teaching Hub
Greg Chu	CUG Teaching Hub
Dima Szamozvancev	CUG Teaching Hub
Elmar Rollings	CUG Teaching Hub
Simon Crinson	Kineton
Matilda Martin	Chilton Cantelo
Daisy Martin	Chilton Cantelo
Penny Fox	Chilton Cantelo
Wendy Crampton	Bushey
Abby Jones	Loose
Christine McCormack	Tackley
Nathan Shestopal	Abingdon St Helens
Ken Haslar	Aldenhams
Hilary Haslar	Aldenhams
Carine Sinnaeve	St Georges, Ieper
Jane Holterman	Drumbo NI
Shuowang He	CUG Teaching Hub
Yansheng Zhang	CUG Teaching Hub
Alicia Kasto	CUG Teaching Hub
Fiona McKenna	Northampton Ringing Hub
Alexandra Robinson	Llandaff Cathedral
Desmond Crone	Kedington
Joseph Parvin	Roos
John Constable	Stretham REC
Peter Maddams	Romsey Abbey
Ricky Moore	Rushden





**Level 2 - Foundation Ringing Skills: Ringing with others: able to dodge, make places and ring simple call changes.**

**January 2020**

Les Dixon  
David Burton  
Sally Green  
Kathryn Stelle  
Cathy O'Connor  
Amy Steele  
Elaine Cheeseman  
Zelda Doyle  
Asia Canas  
Lucille Dhing  
Kay Thwe Myint  
Seok Lin Lim  
Mia Jing Goh  
Priscilla Chua  
Benjamin Tai  
Shane Yuen  
Kate Kemp  
Isaac Smith  
Geoff White  
Bobbi Cookson  
Mary Leneis  
Tabitha Mills  
Karen Hildreth  
Carol Keys  
David Nicholls  
Alexandra Young  
Cathy Cleevely  
Jenny Thomson  
David Morgan  
Lois Kennedy  
Steve Dean  
Daniel Hearn  
Pippa Cooper  
Moses Cooper  
Max Cooper  
Jana Valenkova  
Lizzie Lawrence  
James Wood  
Jessie Sharpe  
Ella Sharpe  
Sally Filby  
Louise Griffiths  
Andrew Harrison  
Tom Sheppard  
Helen Cornford  
Michael Jay  
Corinne Wood  
Jo Low  
Eleanor Williamson  
Robin Fieldhouse  
Jo Harris  
Robin Wilcox Wood  
Katie Mitton

Monksilver  
Swainswick  
Lilleshall  
Lilleshall  
Lilleshall  
Lilleshall  
Birmingham School of Bell Ringing  
Hoskins Memorial, Lithgow  
St Andrew's Cathedral, Singapore  
St Andrew's Cathedral, Singapore  
St Andrew's Cathedral, Singapore  
St Andrew's Cathedral, Singapore  
St Andrew's Cathedral, Singapore  
St Andrew's Cathedral, Singapore  
St Andrew's Cathedral, Singapore  
St Andrew's Cathedral, Singapore  
St Andrew's Cathedral, Singapore  
Writtle  
Greens Norton  
Steventon  
Steventon  
Loddon Hub Wargrave  
North Shields  
North Shields  
Stretham REC  
Stretham REC  
Warden Hill  
Cottered  
Cottered  
Cottered  
Wellington  
St Michael, Macclesfield  
Southover Lewes  
Southover Lewes  
Southover Lewes  
Southover Lewes  
Goldhanger  
Mattersey  
Sprotbrough  
Sprotbrough  
Ashover  
Northampton Ringing Hub  
Blackburn Cathedral  
Wimborne Minster  
Nassington  
Capel  
Capel  
Ashover  
Sandon  
Brompton Regis  
Harrow Weald  
Mattersey  
St John's Felixstowe

**February 2020**

Alan Godfrey  
Janet Cullen  
Nick Toovey  
Doug Peel  
Daisy Bradshaw  
Claire Dickson  
Chloe Smart  
Parick Hughes  
Susan Cartwright  
Hannah Brooks  
Jacqueline Whinnett  
Ian Stewart  
Ann Prigmore  
Joshua Bardens  
Lizzie Whitefoot  
Roseanna Tree  
Lizzy Gardiner  
Andrew Finlay  
Jennifer Finlay  
Robert Finlay  
Harriet Riches  
Fiona Barclay  
Dora Slater  
Dima Szamozvancev  
Greg Chu  
Louise Finlay  
Shan Stewart  
Shirui Lu  
Paul O'Hare  
Sunita Parr  
Jayden Newton  
Louis Gregory  
Gail King  
Kayleigh Nichols  
Peter Maddams  
Polly Goodall

Eckington  
Rusper  
Great Wilbraham  
Roker  
Roker  
Clewer  
Bramcote  
Addington St Mary's  
Clarborough  
Shenfield  
Harold (Beds) and Scaldwell (N'hants)  
Carlton (Beds) and Scaldwell (N'hants)  
Carlton (Beds) and Scaldwell (N'hants)  
Beeston and Bramcote  
South Walsham  
South Walsham  
Attenborough  
Attenborough  
Attenborough  
Attenborough  
Alresford School of Bell Ringing  
Scaldwell  
Bushey Heath  
CUG Teaching Hub  
CUG Teaching Hub  
Attenborough  
Stanford le Hope  
CUG Teaching Hub  
Ringwood  
Stratton  
Roos  
Bradfield St Nicholas  
Conisbrough  
Conisbrough  
Romsey Abbey  
Eckington



**Level 3 - Introduction to Change Ringing: Competent at Plain Hunt and covering (demonstrated by ringing two quarter peals at least one of which is on the treble)**

**January 2020**

Suzanne Timms	Messingham
Sue Taylor	Great Gransden
Sheila Pickrell	Brewood
Cathy Cleevly	Warden Hill
Sue Carter	Islip
James Wood	Mattersey
Andy Blackwell	Pattishall
Wendy Archibald	Barnes
Mary Ruth Mayo	Highgate
Tilly Cooper	Barford St Martin
Brandon Pickering	Cannock
Georgia Emmott	Llandeyrn
Mike Gilliatt	Caistor

**February 2020**

Polly Goodall	Eckington
Adrian Foulser	Rusper
Shirui Lu	CUG Teaching Hub
Abigail Little	Roos
Viv Endecott	Lytchett Matravers
Mandy Lawford	Sandon
Lizzy Gardiner	Attenborough
Dima Szamozvancev	CUG Teaching Hub
Tony McAlister	Birmingham School of Bell Ringing
Andrew Thomas	Dulverton
Holly Newton	Cannock
Howard Kerman	Barrow upon Humber ART Hub
Natasha Burns	Brent Pelham



**Level 4 - Novice Change Ringer: Ringing and calling touches of a Doubles or Minor method (demonstrated by ringing a quarter peal inside). Raising and lowering a bell in peal**

**January 2020**

Sarah Robbins	Shenfield
Georgia Yarrow	Great Gransden
Colin Helyer	Northallerton
Jill Faiers	Pattishall
Pauline Fox	Northallerton
James Wood	Mattersey
Gill Fisher	Ashover

**February 2020**

Sarah Robbins	Shenfield
Georgia Yarrow	Great Gransden
Colin Helyer	Northallerton
Jill Faiers	Pattishall
Pauline Fox	Northallerton
James Wood	Mattersey
Gill Fisher	Ashover



**Level 5 - Change Ringer: Ringing and calling a second method and ringing touches of Plain Bob (demonstrated by ringing three quarter peals including inside to Plain Bob Minor).**

**January 2020**

Clare Gebel	Goldhanger
Kate Jennings	Caistor

**February 2020**

Simon Lockhart	Shirenewton
Ross Havenhand	Doncaster Minster



**Learning the Ropes Plus: For ringers who have progressed beyond Level 5. Acknowledges achievements in ringing, conducting and organisation.**

**January 2020**

Steve Vickars, Kirtlington	Surprise Minor
Ruth Gilbert, Carlisle Cathedral	Surprise Major
Harry Helyer, Northallerton	Conducting First Qtr Peal
Judy Farrimond, Fleggburgh	Ringling Plain Minor
	Ringling Doubles
	Ringling First Peal
Martin Farrimond, Fleggburgh	Ringling Plain Minor
	Ringling First Peal
	Ringling Doubles