

The Mobile Belfries Trust



Getting the most out of your mobile belfry

- The primary purpose of the ring is to raise awareness of ringing. Recruitment is a by-product. It is best to have a plan in place beforehand if you want to recruit new ringers.
- Some excellent advice on recruiting new ringers including a ten-point-plan is available on the Association of Ringing Teachers online portal [Recruitment Resources](#). If you have not visited the portal before, you be asked to set up a username and password, but the resources are free.
- Telling people just to go along to their nearest tower, or to find one in Dove or on a Guild/Association website or in an annual report does not work well. Many towers do not practice regularly, or are not set up to teach new ringers well. Collect contact details, follow up promptly and invite people to a taster session and course of handling lessons.
- At carnivals and fetes you will get a lot of young people wanting to have a go. You may need a box or two, and it is safest if the very small children are given a go at chiming. Do get your young ringers to help. They will engage well with other young people.
- Make sure that you give the parents a go and suggest that it is something that the family can do together. Also follow safeguarding guidelines. Make sure that you explain things carefully and avoid any unnecessary touching, or using inappropriate language.

Experienced ringers as helpers

- At all times throughout your event, make sure that you have at least six experienced ringers to man the ropes, plus another three to talk to members of the public and take turns manning the ropes. Nine is a minimum. The longer the event the more helpers you will need, with volunteers helping in shifts throughout the event.
- As they are lighter than most bells, take a few minutes to practice getting used to them. There are no stays, so to stand just let the bells go over the balance at handstroke. **Do not let them go over at backstroke** (Someone will need to go up and re-rope them, and this will take time).
- If you've not rung on a mini-ring or mobile belfry before, it's best to start on one of the heaviest bells. Begin by just ringing the backstroke, with someone who has rung on one before ringing the handstroke. Once you have got used to the feel of the bell, you can then start to ring the handstroke as well, and gradually move round to the lighter bells. The bells can easily be rung up with just one sharp tug on the sally.
- It is perfectly safe for members of the public to have a go, under the supervision of an experienced teacher. It is best to follow the guidance overleaf.

Non ringers

- To teach a non-ringer, start with the backstroke and use another ringer to demonstrate how to hold the rope and what needs to be done.
- Make sure that they are holding the rope in the right place, **and tell them not to let go**. Practice a couple of dummy runs by pulling the tail end up as if it were the bell ringing. Then try the real thing,
- The instructor should resist the temptation of putting their hands on the backstroke above the pupil. This will prevent the pupil from feeling the bell. <https://youtu.be/2k6TlcrulnI>
- Most non-ringers will be able to ring the backstroke on their own in less than a minute.
- The pupil can then have a go at ringing rounds, with the instructor ringing the handstroke. If you teach on 2, 4 and 6, up three non-ringers can ring rounds at once.
- If you have time, and no queue, you can then teach the handstroke. Best to start by catching with one hand, and the bell rung below the balance. **Stress the need to start with the hand low, and come up to the sally as it rises**. Not to hover higher. The instructor should place his hand below where the pupil needs to catch and tell the pupil to move his hand at the same time as the instructor. <https://youtu.be/U-uoTUqrTiA>
- Once the pupil can do this with one hand, move on to two.
- Then explain about ringing to the balance point and the need to let go when their hands passes their waist when pulling off for the first time.
- The pupil can then have another go at ringing rounds, with the instructor ringing the backstroke this time.
- Please do not spend prolonged periods ringing single bells. This is not necessary, it does not sound good, and those watching will soon lose interest and walk away.
- From time-to-time **ring a demonstration touch** with an experienced band. It does not need be long – 60 or 120 changes – This usually attracts a lot of attention, and you may then have a queue of people interested in having a go.
- If the bells are too loud, please attach some of our **chamois leather muffles**, which are fixed with Velcro straps.

