



WELLAND VALLEY BELLRINGERS

Come and learn the ropes!

Ashley ● Cottingham ● East Carlton ● Stoke Albany
Wilbarston ● Weston by Welland

Learning the ropes

If you've ever considered having a go at church bell ringing, then the Welland Valley Team of bellringers is looking for new members to come and learn the ropes.

Our ringers come from all walks of life, ranging in age from 12 to 82, and anyone aged 10 or over is welcome to come and have a go.

We are a friendly and welcoming bunch, and you'll be supported by our super calm, endlessly patient, fully trained and DBS-checked tutors, Nick and Helen, who will help you learn how to safely handle a bell, entirely at your own pace.

Why ring?

Bell ringing is an enjoyable pastime that has lots of benefits. Not only does it keep you **fit, mentally alert** and help with balance and co-ordination, it's also **great fun** and is a fabulous **team activity** that opens up a whole new **social scene** for you to get involved in.

We regularly ring for church services at Ashley, Cottingham, Stoke Albany, Weston by Welland and Wilbarston, but you don't need to be a 'churchgoer' to become a bellringer. We also ring for special occasions like the King's Coronation and VE Day, and we get paid to ring at weddings!

Our towers

Three of the Welland Valley towers (Ashley, Cottingham and Weston by Welland) have a 'ring' of five bells, and two (Wilbarston and Stoke Albany) have six bells. The six bells at East Carlton Church are sometimes gently 'chimed' (swung back and forth), but they are unfortunately not in a suitable condition to be rung 'full circle'.



When do we practice?

We practice on Mondays, alternating between Cottingham (7–8pm) and Ashley (7.30–8.30pm), and every Tuesday at Wilbarston (7.30–8.30pm).

You can come to any of these practices, and there's no charge. If you can't make these evenings, there are several other nearby towers where you can learn. There's also a monthly Wednesday morning practice for beginners at Rothwell Church.

Do I need to be musical?

No, not really. It helps if you have a sense of rhythm, but it's more important that you're able to count!

Do I need physical strength?

Church bells are heavy, but they're not heavy to ring. You need some physical strength, but if you can lift a shopping bag, then you can ring a church bell. It's really more about technique, and you'll learn this as you start to ring.

How long does it take to learn?

Even the most experienced ringers will always have more they can learn, and one of the delights of bell ringing is the endless opportunity to learn new things. What's important is to take it step by step, and you'll feel a real sense of achievement as you master each stage.

Our bellringing community

As part of the Peterborough Diocesan Guild of Bellringers (Kettering Branch), there are lots of events you can get involved in where ringing is combined with social activities like quizzes, treasure hunts, dinners and more. The Welland Valley Team also organises an annual outing where we travel a little further afield to ring.

But that's not all. There are some 40,000 bellringers pulling the ropes in over 6,000 towers. And once you've mastered the basics, you can ask to join in with other ringing teams up and down the country, and even abroad! Change ringing is still most prevalent in England, but some of our ringers have rung in towers in New Zealand and Canada, for example!



How bells are rung

Here's a quick overview of the stages you'll go through when you learn to ring.

Bell handling

Each bell is attached to a **wheel** and the **bell rope** wraps around this. The first thing you'll learn is how to pull the rope to get the bell to swing **full circle** through 360°, and how to feel when the bell gets to **balance**, which is the bell's equivalent of doing a handstand!



Ringing rounds

Once you're able to confidently and safely handle a bell on your own, you'll join in with the rest of the team, or **band**, learning to adjust your pace and timing so you can ring with the other bells in sequence. A straight sequence, where the bells are rung in order (1,2,3,4,5,6) is known as a **round**.

Call changes

The next step is **call changes**, where one of the ringers calls an instruction to swap the bells around so they ring in a different order.

Change ringing (method ringing)

It'll probably be a while before you get to this stage, but the next step is to enter the fascinating world of **change ringing** or **method ringing**. This is where the ringers learn patterns to follow, and there are many, many different **methods** to choose from. This is the origin of the phrase **ringing the changes**.

The art of change ringing dates back to the late 17th Century and church bells are amongst the biggest and loudest acoustic musical instruments in the world. It's the ultimate heavy metal!

Contact us

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More information

To find out more about bell ringing, visit ccabr.org.uk

