

CHURCH BELL RINGING

WHAT IS RINGING ALL ABOUT?

For centuries church bells have been rung to call people to worship, to celebrate special occasions and to mark important national events. Ringers come from all walks of life and all ages. Most ringers practise once or twice a week and ring before or after church services on Sundays, as well for weddings, funerals, other local events and sometimes just for fun.

LEARN TO RING

Almost anyone can learn to ring and you can start at any age. Learning to ring is more about technique than it is about strength, musicality or mathematical ability.

Ringling is a team activity, so after the initial teaching you will be able to join in with the rest of the band and start to make a glorious sound!

Once mastered, ringing is a skill for life and offers a wealth of new experiences and much enjoyment.



BASIC BELL-HANDLING

First, you will be taught the technique of 'handling' a bell, which will require a number of 1-2-1 lessons over the course of several weeks. These lessons may be held before the band's regular practice night, so that you get to meet the members of the band and can see and hear what you are aiming for. Some towers may initially teach you separately from the band, at a time that suits you and the teacher.



For information about learning to ring in Devon:

Guild Education Officer - educationofficer@devonringers.org.uk

Association of Ringing Teachers - ringingteachers.org/get-involved/learn-to-ring

RINGING IN ROUNDS

When you can safely handle a bell you will join the band and start to ring in rounds. This means you will ring your bell in a sequence of descending notes starting with the lightest bell (treble) and finishing with the heaviest bell (tenor). After rounds, you will go on to learn the basics of method ringing, in which you change the position of your bell in the sequence.



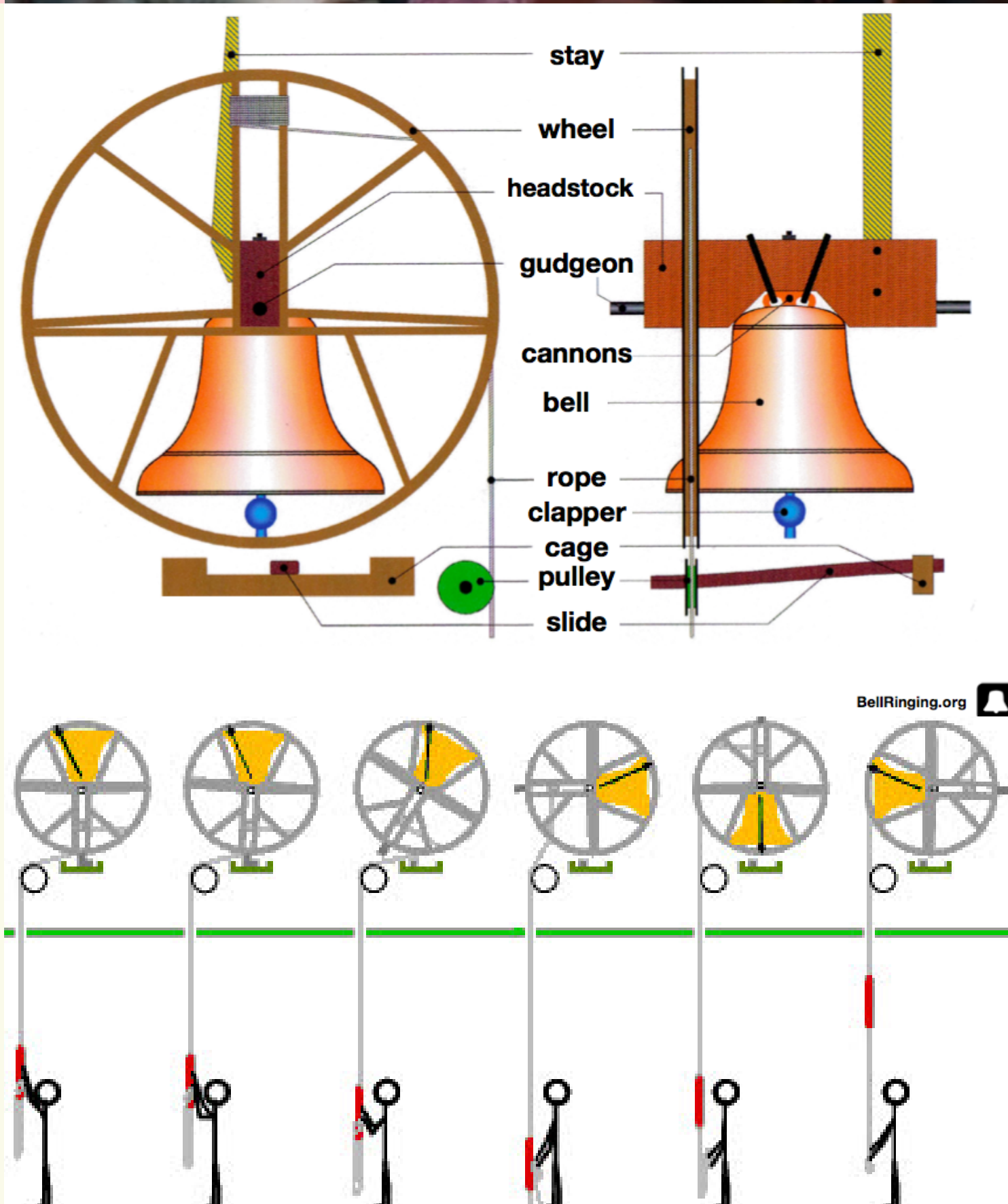
A BIT MORE ABOUT RINGING

Bells are hung in a frame at the top of a tower. Each bell has a headstock which is bolted onto a wheel. The bell ropes are attached to the wheel and the end of the rope falls down several metres to the ringing room where the ringers stand.

The ringer pulls the sally (fluffy part of the rope) downwards (handstroke) causing the bell to start moving and to turn through 360 degrees. At the end of the handstroke the rope snakes upwards through a small hole in the ceiling of the ringing room and the ringer's arms are stretched upwards, holding the very end of the rope (tail end).

The ringer then pulls the tail end back down (backstroke) causing the bell to move in the opposite direction and it finishes back where it started. The bell sounds as each stroke is made, so that one full cycle of handstroke and backstroke causes the bell to ring out twice.

To finish ringing, the ringer will set the bell. This is done by carefully allowing the bell to rotate a little further so that the stay comes to rest against the slider.



LOCAL RINGING INFORMATION

REGISTER YOUR INTEREST IN LEARNING TO RING:



The QR code will take you to the Guild of Devonshire Ringers' contact form, where you can register your interest in learning to ring. You will be directed to your nearest teaching tower.

In Devon there are two styles of ringing...

METHOD RINGING

The order in which the bells sound changes each time they ring. The bells are rung according to a defined sequence, known as a method. Bell ringers learn the path of their bell through the sequence. There are thousands of methods of varying degrees of difficulty. The Guild of Devonshire Ringers represents this style of ringing.



devonringers.org.uk



CALL-CHANGE RINGING

Call-change ringing is a speciality of Devon. Only one pair of bells changes at a time, as the changes are called out by the person in charge of the ringing. In call-change ringing there is an emphasis on ringing competitions with bands from other local towers. The Devon Association represents this style of ringing.



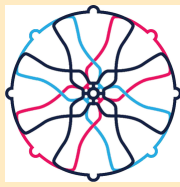
devonbells.co.uk



For general information about church bell ringing in the UK:



ringingteachers.org



Central Council
of Church Bell
Ringers
cccbr.org.uk