

Bell ringing and learning to ring at Carlisle Cathedral

The Carlisle cathedral ringers have an active recruitment policy. There are three open days each year when visitors are shown into the tower to see the bells and see one bell being rung. These open days are very popular and are nearly always fully booked. There are video cameras in the belfry and ringing room and pictures of both bells and ringers are transmitted down to a monitor in the crossing where visitors and members of the congregation can see the bells being rung on a Sunday morning. There is even a recruitment poster displayed on an A-board on a Sunday morning to attract the interest of passers-by in the cathedral close.

The cathedral ringers have several members who are qualified as mentors and/or teachers of bell ringing as part of the ART (Association of Ringing Teachers) scheme.

For teaching purposes, the clapper of each bell can be tied to stop it striking the bell. The bell wheel is fitted with a sensor that detects the rotation of the bell and relays a signal to a computer and amplifier in the ringing chamber where the sound of the bell is reproduced through loudspeakers. In this way, new learners can be taught how to handle a bell safely without disturbing the neighbourhood until such time as they are ready to ring 'open' with a band. New learners receive intensive teaching, often two or three times each week, but always at a time that is convenient for them. It is not unusual to have new learners ringing in rounds for services on a Sunday within six or eight weeks of beginning teaching.



This photograph shows the presentation of a Level 1 ART Certificate to our latest recruit, Barry Garrett.

The cathedral has a very dedicated band of ringers. We can usually ring rounds and call changes on ten or twelve bells and methods on eight bells for the Sunday services and for civic occasions. When new learners are being taught we also need the help of ringers to ring with them in teaching sessions so many of our band will climb the 117 steps to the ringing room several times each week to help.

The cathedral band welcomes everyone to the tower, including visitors who are non-ringers. We are not selective or restrictive as are some cathedral towers and are proud of this

standing. Please come along, you will be most welcome, but do enquire first if ringing is to take place.

Our tower contact is Anne East on 01228 513633. Practices are on a Friday evening from 6.30 to 7.30 pm using tied bells followed by open ringing from 7.30 to 9.00 pm. We meet at about 9.20 pm on a Sunday morning at the cathedral crossing to ring for the service until 10.30 pm and often ring at 2.00 pm for the Evensong service.

Ron East Tower Captain