

North West Ringing Course 2025

PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME

(Version 4 - 3/6/2025)

The North West Ringing Course will be held at Borwick Hall, near Carnforth, Lancashire commencing Thursday 7th August and finishing Sunday 10th August. It is being organised by the Society for North West Bell Ringing Courses.

The Course is residential. Alternative local accommodation can be used if preferred but Course attendees should try to be on-site for as much of time as possible.

A Message from the Course Organisers

The North West Ringing Course is designed to give students the opportunity to learn about many aspects of bellringing. Practical ringing skills are developed in the tower, led by an experienced Tutor and supported by a band of experienced Helpers. In addition, there are theory sessions which complement the practical ringing in each topic, and there are many optional sessions for extra-curricular activities that can be selected from a wide range of choices.

Although the Course is very busy it should not feel rushed and there will be time to enjoy the companionship of roughly 100 fellow bellringers and to learn from them in conversations over meals and during breaks.

We hope you enjoy yourself over the four days and leave the Course having learnt a lot and taken a step up in your ringing ability.

Location – Borwick Hall

Borwick Hall is an outdoor education centre run by Lancashire County Council and is situated near Carnforth in Lancashire. It is campus based with the accommodation, classrooms, catering, gardens and a bar on site.

Accommodation

The accommodation provided by Borwick Hall for Course members comprises a variety of different room configurations. Most rooms have two single beds. We have booked the whole site and all the accommodation for our exclusive use so that some twin rooms can be used as singles and some bunk rooms can be used as twins.

Rooms of between 3 and 7 beds are also available. Please contact us for further details if you're interested in sharing one of these rooms at a reduced cost per person.

Many of the rooms are very basic with shared toilets and showers, but there are some twin en-suite rooms available.

Please bring your own towels as these are not provided. One pillow per bed is provided, so if you want a second one please bring your own.

Camping in the grounds is also an option. Motorhomes are not allowed on-site but can be parked nearby.

Instead of staying at Borwick Hall, you can choose to stay off-site in alternative nearby accommodation. Please make your own arrangements. If staying off-site, you can still sign up for the catering options on-site.

Please note that most, but not all, of the bedrooms have door locks. If you are allocated a room without a lock you will be able to store any valuables securely on site, but it would be best to avoid bringing anything valuable that you won't keep with you while you're not in your room.

Please see the price list below and on our website for details of prices.

Food and Beverages

All meals can be taken on-site, except on Friday and Saturday when the groups will make their own arrangements for lunch. These could be pub lunches, make your own packed lunches, or find alternatives from local shops near your group's towers. The handbell groups will probably stay on-site during the day and lunch will be available for them.

The meals at Borwick Hall are canteen style and there will naturally be some queueing. Vegetarian options are always available. Special dietary requirements can be catered for – please let the organisers know about

these on the follow-up form, which you will be asked to complete if your application to the Course is successful.

Self catering is an option and there are various kitchens on-site that can be used. The kitchen areas are well equipped but please bring your own tea towels and dish cloths.

There will be facilities to self-serve hot and cold drinks at any time in Reception.

You can buy a North West Ringing Course pint glass in Reception when you check in or at any time throughout the Course (while stocks last).

An on-site bar will be open each evening and real ale will be available.

Prices

The pricing is made up of the Course fee, accommodation and catering. You can choose any combination of these and there are options within the accommodation and catering sections.

Course Fee

- Students£160.00
- HelpersNo charge

Accommodation (*price for 3 nights, per person*)

- Single room, shared shower and toilet£225.00
- Twin room, ensuite£165.00
- Twin room, shared shower and toilet£105.00
- Camping (bring own tent)£40.00
- Off-siteNo charge

Catering

- Thursday lunch£14.40
- Sunday lunch£14.40
- 3 x Breakfast£28.80
- 3 x Evening meal£50.40
- Self cateringNo charge

Helpers will have their combined accommodation and catering fee reduced by a £15 subsidy.

The Tuition

The Course is divided into eight Topics for practical and theory sessions. Please choose a Topic when filling in the application form. In doing so however, *you must make sure your ringing experience and ability complies with the requirements for the topic you choose*. If you are too ambitious, you will probably not get much benefit from the Course.

Although it's not possible to change Topics after your application is accepted, Tutors will try to ensure that every student, whatever the Topic chosen, gets an appropriate level of tuition and practice.

The Topics

1 Foundation Skills

Aim

This topic's aim is to help ringers become more competent in basic method ringing by strengthening all the required foundation skills and filling in any missing ones.

If you are attempting Plain Hunt on 5 or 6, hunting the treble to doubles or minor and possibly even learning Plain Bob Doubles or Minor and/or Grandsire Doubles, but are finding it all rather difficult and feeling a little "lost" until you've learnt which bell to follow at each pull, then this topic could be just what you need.

Content

If the above description sounds familiar, you've probably missed out on, or haven't yet mastered, some of the foundation skills of method ringing. These are: good rope handling, confident and consistent bell control, good listening skills, ropesight, ringing by rhythm, and ringing by places. This topic aims to strengthen all these skills, or as many as possible in the time available, with lots of practice at useful exercises. The core skills will be developed by a succession of easy small steps. When ready, we will focus on ringing "proper" Plain Hunt, which is the foundation for all early method ringing. Depending on progress, we might also cover some basic methods.

When you have mastered all the essential foundation skills you should be able to ring any method that you can learn the line for. Even if we don't all achieve this rather ambitious goal, you will learn a great deal of useful information and improve your skills to get you closer to it.

Requirements

The minimum ability for this topic is being able to handle a bell safely on your own, but you will benefit much more from the Course if you have already started learning Plain Hunt on 5 or 6, or if you're learning Plain Bob or Grandsire but find this difficult, and you seem to be stuck at this level and not making any progress.

2 Plain Bob Minor

Aim

Students should end the Course thoroughly confident in reliably ringing Plain Bob Minor, including touches and maybe even calling touches.

Content

As well as getting lots of practice, you will learn the theory of Plain Bob along with tips and tricks to help you stay right if you forget where you are and what the next dodge should be. With a few days of high quality tuition and practice you should be able to gain the equivalent of weeks or even months of practice night progress.

Requirements

Ringers who are already reasonably confident in ringing Plain Bob Doubles, preferably touches and even quarter peals, and now wish to extend their repertoire to Plain Bob Minor. Even better if you have already started to learn Plain Bob Minor.

3 Starting Surprise Minor

Aim

Ringers with little or no experience of surprise methods will receive advice and practice in learning and ringing Cambridge Surprise Minor.

By the end we hope you will be ringing full plain courses, and probably short touches too.

Content

There is a lot of theory to cover, both during the course in the theory sessions and in the form of homework handed out beforehand - it is essential to study this homework thoroughly before the course starts. Practical sessions will if necessary start with consolidating treble bob hunting and Kent Treble Bob before we move on to Cambridge Surprise Minor.

Requirements

Applicants must be confident at ringing Plain Bob Minor at a “helper” level (i.e. they have rung quarter peals, and can ring the method confidently with people of about the same or less ability than themselves and on unfamiliar bells). They should be confident with at least one other minor method, and ideally will be familiar with treble-bobbing and have rung plain courses of Kent Treble Bob Minor. They must be prepared to do some homework before and during the Course.

4 From Six to Eight

Aim

For ringers who are experienced and proficient in ringing doubles and minor methods and would now like to move on to ringing triples and major. You might currently be a little apprehensive about attending eight bell practices, but we hope you will leave the Course with the confidence to take full advantage of future opportunities to ring on eight.

Content

The sessions will ease you gently into ringing on eight bells using exercises and many small steps until you’re completely confident with this. We’ll then focus mainly on Grandsire Triples and Plain Bob Major, but will attempt to cover whatever you currently ring on six bells and would like to ring to triples and major.

Requirements

Proficient and experienced with doubles and minor methods, preferably having rung a few quarter peals in each stage.

5 Stedman Triples

Aim

Students will gain a thorough understanding of Stedman theory and gain lots of confidence in ringing touches of Stedman Triples – yes, even including singles!

Content

This topic will cover and demystify all the fascinating theory of Stedman and provide ample opportunity to practise ringing the method. Immerse yourself in a Stedman Triples boot camp for a few days and never look back!

Requirements

Students must be able to ring Stedman Doubles and touches of Grandsire Triples confidently. Having started to learn and ring Stedman Triples would be an advantage.

6 Basic Conducting

Aim

To learn how to accurately call a variety of touches of Plain Bob Doubles and Minor, and Grandsire Doubles. Depending on time and demand, the topic might also cover calling touches of Stedman Doubles.

Content

This topic will deal with calling positions in Plain Bob Doubles/Minor and Grandsire Doubles and give you the confidence to call a variety of touches, up to calling quarter peals. The emphasis will be on knowing and practising exactly when to make the calls, and building up a repertoire of touches of various lengths.

Requirements

Students must already be confident in ringing touches of Plain Bob Doubles/Minor and Grandsire Doubles. You might even already have some limited experience in calling these methods, which would be an advantage.

7 Advanced Conducting

Aim

To build on existing bob calling skills by learning how to keep the other ringers right, check that nothing has gone wrong (bells haven't swapped) and put things right if they have gone wrong.

Content

You will learn things like the transposition of coursing order resulting from a call and how this explains why the familiar calling patterns work for many different methods.

The topic will cover how you can keep track of the coursing order during a touch, know how a call will affect the coursing order, how this assists you in knowing which bell will do what at a call, and how to put people right if they go wrong.

It will open up the 'magic box' of conducting and cover what you should be doing in your head to help keep the ringing right, or at least know if it has gone wrong. There should be some real "light bulb" moments as you learn and understand some commonly used techniques that can make a huge difference to the chances of success in a touch or quarter.

Requirements

Students must be confident calling touches of the basic methods on 7 or 8 bells, preferably having already called a few quarter peals.

8 Handbells

Aim

To learn to ring changes on two handbells, each pair to plain hunt on six.
To progress on to all pairs to plain bob minor and basic touches.

Content

This topic will cover an introduction to change ringing in hand, exploring the theory and giving plenty of practical experience, tailored to the needs of the students. If time and enthusiasm allows, there will be a chance to explore how the basic principles expand to ringing on more bells and more complicated methods.

Requirements

Students must have some knowledge of tower bell method ringing but don't need any prior experience in ringing handbells.

Extra-curricular Activities (Optional Sessions)

We hope to provide most or all of the following extra curricular activities in the optional sessions. They are provided to complement the tuition of the main topics and provide some variety during the Course. There will be sign-up sheets available at registration and the breaks to give us an idea of numbers for each session. Some sessions will have capped numbers.

Change Ringing on Handbells (Basic and Advanced)

Outside of the more formal tuition topic, these sessions will teach the basics of change ringing on handbells to others who might want to incorporate this skill into their other tuition. Basic is for Plain Hunt up to Plain Bob Minor and Advanced is for Plain Bob Minor and above.

Rope Handling and Bell Control Clinic

Do you want to improve your rope handling technique and develop your bell control skills on tied bells? Then these sessions are for you. This can include ringing a bell up and down.

Ringling Up and Down in Peal

Tuition, demonstration and practice in ringling up and down and/or raising and lowering in peal. A theory session on Thursday evening, followed by some practical sessions over the following days.

Mobile Belfry / Mini Rings

A mobile belfry will be on-site for the duration of the Course.

Rope Splicing

Learn and practise the short splice and long splice for repairing bell ropes. Maybe also learn how to do a sailmaker's whipping.

Belfry Maintenance

Learn the basics, and maybe more, about inspecting and maintaining bells, fittings and frames.

Listening Skills

A classroom based session practising how to identify exactly what's wrong with the striking if the ringing isn't sounding quite right.

What is a Method?

An interactive session about the history of methods.

Learning Methods

Some tips about how to learn a method that might help make this an easier process.

Place Bells

What are they, why they're useful and how to use them.

Calling Plain and Little Spliced

An introduction to conducting this popular combination of methods.

Composing and Comp Lib

An introduction to composing new touches, quarters and peals and how to use the Composition Library – complib.org.

Table Tennis

The campus has an indoor table tennis table which we can use. If you would like to play a little table tennis, please bring your own bats and balls with you.

Juggling

There are bound to be a few jugglers among the 100 or so people on the Course. If you're one of them, do bring some juggling equipment, make yourself known and we'll arrange a session or two.

For latest details, please see the Course website: nwringingcourse.uk

Helpers

The Course requires the assistance of many competent ringers, willing to stand in at the practical sessions to provide a strong band for the students to ring with, and to share their experience and advice with the students. Helpers are only charged for the accommodation and catering, if you wish take these up, and are welcome to join in all of the Course activities and take full advantage of the on-site facilities.

What to Bring with You

The Course will supply basic stationery, but feel free to bring any extra.

If you wish to learn rope splicing, then please bring a couple of metres of reasonable quality bell rope with you for each session. If you haven't got access to some spare bell rope, don't worry, you can use some provided by the Course.

For the on-site accommodation, towels are NOT provided so please bring your own.

Only one pillow is provided per bed. We might have access to a few spare pillows on site, but if you would like two pillows it would be best to bring one with you.

Transport during the Course

Parking is available both on-site and nearby. If you are not bringing your own car there will be places in cars for you when travelling to the towers. Passengers are requested to contribute towards the drivers' fuel costs.

Tower Donations

Donations given to each tower used for practical sessions are included in the Course fees.

Sunday Service

Information will be available about service and ringing times in local churches, along with sign up sheets for the service ringing. The Course timetable has optional sessions and a coffee break on Sunday morning, so you won't miss any of the formal tuition if you wish to visit the local churches for ringing and/or attending a service.

Fund Raising for the LACR BRF

A raffle is held during the Course to raise money for the Bell Restoration Fund of the Lancashire Association of Change Ringers, in whose area the Course is being held.

Bookshop

The LACR Blackburn Branch bookshop will be on-site during the Course. Browse the large selection of ringing books and buy something for a little light reading in the evenings?

<https://www.lacr.uk/branch/blackburn-branch/branch-bookshop>

Cancellation

If a booked place is cancelled, we will try to fill the place from the waiting list, but if this isn't possible then we will still require payment of the fee. You should consider taking out private insurance against such a possibility.

Public Liability Insurance

Public Liability Insurance to the value of £5,000,000 to cover all Course members has been arranged. This covers: public liability, employer's liability (attendees count as employees for insurance purposes) and event, venue and technical property. However, the first £250 of any claim must be borne by the person causing it.

General Data Protection Regulations

Personal details given by applicants on the Application Form are held on computer by the Course Organisers. Please indicate your permission for this on the Application Form.

Safeguarding

You can download the NWRC Safeguarding Policy from the Contacts page of our website, or download a copy directly from:

<https://shorturl.at/dV1LD>

Privacy Policy

You can download the NWRC Privacy Policy from the Contacts page of our website, or download a copy directly from:

[URL will be provided here in a future version of this document.]

The Course Timetable

Group Meetings

These are for admin and theory tuition about your Topic (if applicable), but also to discuss anything about the Course or ringing in general.

Optional Sessions

These are optional in every sense. They are your free time to do with as you wish. Maybe have some downtime from ringing – a snooze in your room, a walk around the grounds, a game of table tennis, etc. However, there are many ringing related activities to have a go at, talks to attend and mini rings to ring on.

Practical Sessions

These take place in local towers. If you have to travel a long distance to your morning tower, please have breakfast early. If you have a short journey, please allow others to have breakfast before you.

NB The time period given in the timetable for the practical sessions includes the travel time, so the closer towers will have a little more ringing time, especially at the simulator towers, or you can leave a little later. Groups going to the more distant towers should try to set off a little earlier if possible. The travel distance to towers is equalised for all groups over the whole Course as much as possible.

The bells are a typical mixture of those found nationally, with different weights and draughts. Some are easier to ring than others.

Reception

Reception, in the Borwick Hall Conference Room, will be open pretty much all the time. Here you can browse the bookstall, NWRC merchandise, ART merchandise and, probably most important of all, help yourself to refreshments – tea, coffee, soft drinks and biscuits.

Thursday 7 August

12.00 - 13.30 Arrival and Registration

Check in at the Course Reception which is just across the road from the main car park to collect details of your Group, Tutor, fellow Students and Helpers, room locations and Borwick Hall maps.

The canteen will be open and serving lunch from **12.15-13.30**. If you wish to have Thursday lunch on site, you have to book this in advance on the follow-up form that will be sent to successful applicants.

Depending on when you arrive, there will be time to explore the grounds.

If you arrive early, please don't try to check in and register before 12 noon. (We will probably still be setting up and not ready to handle registrations.)

14.00 - 14.45 Welcome Meeting in Reception

A welcome and introduction by Andy Ingham.

15.00 - 15.45 Meet Your Group

Get to know your fellow attendees, take care of some initial admin and maybe a first theory lesson on your topic.

16.00 - 16.30 Refreshments

16.30 - 17.30 Optional Sessions

18.00 - 19.00 Evening meal

19.30 - 21.00 Practical Ringing Session

21.30 - ...? Relax and chat in the various rooms near the bar

21.45 Quiz in the Hall

Friday 8 August

07.45 - 08.45 **Breakfast**

09.00 - 09.45 **Group Meetings**

10.15 - 12.15 **Practical Ringing Session**

Lunch (each group makes their own arrangements)

14.00 - 16.00 **Practical Ringing Session**

16.30 - 17.00 **Refreshments in Reception**

17.00 - 17.55 **Optional Sessions**

18.00 - 18.55 **Optional Sessions**

19.30 - 20.30 **Evening meal**

20.30 - ...? **Relax and chat in the various rooms near the bar,
but also...**

21.00 - 22.00(ish): Question Time

Saturday 9 August

07.45 - 08.45 **Breakfast**

09.00 - 09.45 **Group Meetings**

10.15 - 12.15 **Practical Ringing Session**

Lunch (each group makes their own arrangements)

14.00 - 16.00 **Practical Ringing Session**

16.30 - 17.00 **Refreshments in Reception**

17.00 - 17.55 **Optional Sessions**

18.00 - 18.55 **Optional Sessions**

19.30 - 20.30 **Evening meal**

20.30 - ...? **Relax and chat in the various rooms near the bar,
but also...**

21.00 - 22.30(ish): Raffle Draw, NWRC 2025 Awards
Ceremony and Guest Speaker

Sunday 10 August

07.45 - 08.45 Breakfast

09.00 - 09.30 Check out of rooms

09.30 - 10.25 Optional Sessions or local service ringing

10.30 - 11.25 Optional Sessions or local service ringing

11.30 - 11.50 Group Meetings

12.00 - 13.00 Lunch

13.15 - 13.30 Closing Meeting in Reception

14.00 - 16.00 Final Practical Ringing Session

Please make your own arrangements with the people in your group if you need a lift back to Borwick Hall or elsewhere after the last practical session.