

University Ringing



Reviving a University Society

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1. Introduction

This article aims to guide those wishing to revive a university ringing society. This can be an incredibly rewarding experience. Reviving an existing society can bring fresh enthusiasm to an existing group of ringers. This document brings the experience from reviving the society at Leicester University.

1.1 How to start

The easiest part of restarting a society is completing the paperwork the university needs and then affiliating with the student union.

The hardest part is finding the ringers who are at university, especially if the society has been dormant for a while.

1.2 Finding other ringers

Start by attending local practices and asking around for other students who may have attended and enquired about ringing at local towers. This could be a good source of contact details for people who have shown interest in joining a local band.

It is not essential to look for ringing teachers, but if you are generating interest in students who wish to learn ringing, you will need to identify and secure the help of ringing teachers.

Keep a record of existing student ringers and maintain contact to keep them informed of progress in restarting the society.

1.3 Support from local ringers

Tap into the support that local ringers can provide. They will happily give lots of encouragement, ideas and help to get your society started.

They can provide ideas on suitable towers to use and special outings and events, as well as welcoming you to their practices.

The local Diocesan Guild may be able to provide dedicated materials for teaching and possibly grants to help with recruitment. They may have training bells or model bells to help with recruitment at freshers' fairs

Alumni in the local area may also offer to help fill in at society practices and teach new ringers.

1.4 Set your goals

For example, you could ensure the society is focussed on progressing the students with help and assistance from local ringers and alumni, but that the day to day running of the society is by the students. This will help build the skills of students in planning and management as well as bell handling skills.

1.5 Online presence

Use social media to advertise and communicate your activities. This will encourage prospective new ringers to get involved and will enable the wider community to engage with the society and maintain interest in attending.

A WhatsApp Community is an easy way to join people together, share messages easily and instantly and enable the committee to maintain a hidden chat separate to the main group. Ringers can filter themselves into sub-groups of students/staff/alumni to maintain contact.

A university bell ringing website may be another good way of advertising your activities.

1.6 Choosing a tower.

Choosing a tower can be difficult but can be managed based on who has availability and when. Visit each tower and find out about availability to practice, access to the tower and the ringing set up. Find out where the previous university bell ringing society was based and how this worked for them and the university.

Choose easily accessible towers and select the number and weight of bells appropriate to your group.

Ringing at different towers can keep students interested but bear in mind the difference this may make to your lessons.

1.7 Stability to grow and teach.

Choose your towers for the coming year, perhaps a central tower with a backup if this isn't available. This will give stability as well as changes of scenery.

Plan your teaching. Follow a set programme such as the ART Learning the Ropes and see if you can secure the services of an ART trained teacher to help teach learners.

Holding a "give it a go" session after freshers' week will enable people to come and have a quick go with enough teachers to get a sense of bell ringing and hopefully stick with it.

The CCCBR may provide a grant for university ringers to attend an ART course to help build your teaching skills.

ART may be able to help through a sponsored University Recruitment Package. [University Recruitment Package - bellringing.org](https://bellringing.org/University-Recruitment-Package)



TIP

Don't forget the social aspect, after ringing pub and socials all help to build a strong community and sense of belonging

2.The future

Once you have set up your society and chosen where and when you will practice, be prepared to meet new challenges. You will have the support of the local community of ringers to help you become established.

It may take the best part of one academic year to finalise all the plans, but then the society is ready to thrive in year 2. Take the opportunity during year 1 to ring with local bands because this will help to build your network and help to maintain momentum.

It will be fulfilling and worthwhile to see the society thrive.



TIP

Use all the resources available to you through the university which will help you to build and maintain your society. Seek grants from the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers, ART may be able to help through a sponsored University Recruitment Package. [University Recruitment Package - bellringing.org](https://bellringing.org/University-Recruitment-Package)

3.Conclusion

Reviving a university society will be hard work and challenging but very rewarding. You will meet many local ringers who will provide help and support and give you opportunities to ring and join in quarter peals and other ringing.

It will feel daunting but is definitely worth the effort to see what you can achieve and build a strong bell ringing university society.