

University Ringing



Freshers Fair Kit

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Introduction

This article aims to offer guidance on everything you need to run a successful Freshers Fair stall. Of course, what you are able to use and how you are able to use it will depend on a huge number of factors, including budget, student union affiliation, the size of your society and so on. Consider how you might be able to use each of the below suggestions to suit your society's needs and capabilities!

1. Leaflets

Our [article on Leaflets](#) goes into much more detail about how to design and order leaflets for the Freshers Fair – here's a brief overview of how to use them effectively at the fair.

1.1 QR Codes

These could link to your society social media page or website and provide an easy way to include more information without cluttering your leaflet with text. Encourage students to scan the code while speaking to them on the stall! This way you can easily get them to follow your social media page to receive reminders about taster sessions. [Free QR Code generators](#) are readily accessible online.

Some societies invite students to leave their email addresses, so we can contact them to follow up and advertise when we are running a taster session, etc. If your society plans to do this, it would be worth having a simple Google form set up and working in advance of Freshers Fair.



If running low on leaflets, you can reduce the number you hand out by asking people to scan the QR code and follow your social media rather than taking a leaflet. This might well prove more effective anyway – so many leaflets are handed out at the Freshers Fair it's easy to lose or forget about them!

1.2 On the stall

Keep a stack of leaflets out which are visible and easy for people to take as they walk past. Try to engage students in conversation about your society as they take leaflets and make sure you give one to any students that stop to talk!

1.3 Make sure you have enough!

For a week of recruitment at the Freshers Fair, you can expect to hand out between 500 and 1500 leaflets. Try to roughly keep track of how many you've given away as the week goes on to make sure you haven't run out by the end. Leftover leaflets can always be posted through student letterboxes or handed around campus.

2. Banners

The Freshers Fair will have countless students walking around in a daze of promotional material. Your signs and banners should be eye-catching and accessible enough for people to want to know more!

2.1 Purpose

Whilst the goal of leaflets is to provide all the essential information about your society and taster sessions, the goal of a banner is generally to convince people to stop at your stall, hopefully allowing you to give them a leaflet in the first place. These should be big, include pictures and diagrams, but most importantly they should be simple – don't put people off with lots of cluttered text.

2.2 What to Include

Pictures, branding and slogans are all useful on a roller banner. For example, pictures and images of bells/bellringing, your society's logo and name, or any slogans which are used within the society (if using slogans, it's important that they are relevant and accessible to non-ringers - don't just use them for the sake of it!). Pictures can be used from the society itself, but there are plenty of stock images that can also be found to add your banner. QR codes to your society's webpage, Instagram or other useful landing page should be prominent.

2.3 Where to Order

Websites such as [Instantprint](#) offer good quality printing at reasonable prices – there are many similar websites around, so consider all options before ordering. Make sure to read reviews!



Check discount code websites before buying! There are often deals for 10% off or free postage for first time customers with a number of websites.

2.4 CC Roller Banner Hire

You may be able to hire roller banners directly from the CCCBR for use in recruitment activities – [contact them directly](#) to find out more.

3.Props

Props can make your stall considerably more eye-catching and make people far more likely to stop. Consider using the following:

3.1 Handbells

Even better if your university freshers fair allows you to give people a go using them as it allows you to give people a taste of what bell ringing is about. It's very difficult to convey that ringing bells is all about numbers without an actual demonstration.

3.2 Model Bell

Similarly difficult to convey is what full circle ringing means. "First of all, the bell is mounted on a wheel..." could be a much easier, and more engaging, conversation to have with an accurate model. If you don't have access to a model, even a simple diagram might come in handy.

3.3 Ringing Paraphernalia

A category which really includes anything lying around in the tower. A broken stay? An old sally? Or your society mascot! All will make your stall stand out and hopefully intrigue your countless passers-by. Ringing World magazines could also be useful, as they demonstrate that as niche as ringing may be, it goes far, far beyond small groups of university students. You could have a laptop or pad playing a video, make it visual (or audiovisual) - the more multimodal, the greater the attraction!



TIP

Yes, bring "anything lying around in the tower" – to a point. A filthy piece of rope won't make your stall look especially appealing. While you want your stall to be intriguing, make it a presentable form of intrigue!

4.Portable Mini-Rings

At some Freshers Fairs you might be able to set up a portable mini ring on campus – contact your university to confirm this. Mini-rings can be hugely useful recruitment tools, but how do you make the most of them?

4.1 What it is

Portable mini-rings and mobile belfries both describe small full circle rings of bells that can be used to demonstrate what bell ringing is without having to be in a bell tower. They usually don't have stays, so are rung slightly differently to tower bells.

4.2 How to hire

Mini-rings can be hired from upwards of £150 a day. You can hire these through the [Mobile Belfries Trust](#), or by getting in touch with the relevant contact for a particular mini-ring.



TIP

The ART University Recruitment Package can help with the cost of mini-ring hire – see our [article on ART](#) for more details on how to apply for this.

4.3 Practise Ringing Beforehand

The demonstrations will look a lot better if everyone is confident ringing on the mini-ring! Be aware that it is very different to ringing on tower bells and may take a little bit of getting used to. Ring some practice touches before the fair is at its busiest.

4.4 Have someone not ringing!

If there are six of you on the stall and six of you ringing, that means no one is there to talk to interested students, answer questions or hand out leaflets. Even if this means only ringing on three bells, make sure at least one person isn't ringing at any given moment – this will ensure you make the most of the mini-ring drawing people in.

4.5 Dumb Bell

A visual aid which stands out and attracts people to your stall. It gives prospective recruits an opportunity to 'have a go' without the space or noise generated by a mini ring (though you do have the option to link the dumb bell to a simulator like Abel should you choose to; the sound does draw attention!). Ensure you have enough suitable teachers (preferably those who have teaching experience or have taken an ART course).

5. Talking on the stall

Now you're all set up: you've got your banners, your signs, your leaflets and props, maybe even a mini-ring; no one could possibly not be enticed by this eye-catching display of ringing intrigue and excellence. All that's left to do is to talk. And this is not a step you want to take lightly.

5.1 Where to start

In an ideal world, people will come to your stall with questions about your mysterious props and you can simply start with that. However, it's your job to advertise your society, not their job to find out, so you can take the pressure off them by planning what you want to say. Mention where you ring and when your taster sessions are – these are the most important pieces of information to get across.



TIP

Often people won't have any concept of what change ringing is – they might picture one person swinging a rope from side to side to randomly ring a single bell. It's very difficult to quickly convey that change ringing is not this, especially if you don't have access to a mini-ring, so something as simple as "bells, like you hear at weddings" will often be enough to at least get the idea across. With any luck, they'll stick around to ask about it in more depth!

5.2 Dos

- **Ask questions** – if someone has stopped at your stall, be curious! Do they know anything about ringing? What interests them? Even basic small talk like finding out where they're from and what they're studying shows that you're passionate about recruiting people on a personal level, not just feeling obligated to mindlessly hand out leaflets.
- **Point them towards the society's social media** – it's all too easy to take a leaflet at the Freshers Fair, almost certainly one of many you've collected that day, and forget even to look at it for weeks afterwards. If you can encourage people to follow the society's Instagram, for instance, before they walk off, you're increasing the chance they remember about your taster sessions!
- **Follow up** – send a personal message to anyone whose email address or phone number you collected, or to new accounts that followed the society on Instagram, shortly before your taster sessions. Freshers will have had countless opportunities thrown at them and may simply have forgotten about you. A friendly message reminding them that it was great to chat at the stall, and inviting them along personally, makes a real difference.

5.3 Don'ts

- **Don't use ringing jargon** – as with leaflets, banners and your social media, don't alienate prospective new recruits with unfamiliar bell ringing language.

- **Don't focus solely on the technical side of ringing** – some of the big advantages of ringing are the social side, the opportunity to learn something new, or how much cheaper it is than the lucrative sports societies. Make sure you're not so preoccupied with what ringing is that you neglect to mention the things students will all be interested in!
- **Don't put people off** – easier said than done, but think carefully about what you choose to mention. While talking about the various social or relationship drama within your society might be amusing for those of you on the stall, it'll likely be off-putting for prospective new recruits and should be avoided!
- **Don't wait for them to come to you** – if you're having a particularly quiet moment on the stall, be proactive and speak to the students walking past. Simple phrases like "Free tower tours tonight! Have a go at bell ringing!" can go a good distance towards encouraging someone to stop and have a look.

Conclusion

In truth, it is impossible to fully convey what change ringing is, what it involves and why everyone should try it without being in the tower and demonstrating it live. The ultimate goal of your Freshers Fair stall, therefore, is to intrigue people enough to encourage them to come to a taster session – only then will they know if it's for them. To do this, make your stall eye-catching, accessible and as welcoming as possible.