

Opportunities beyond your home tower

The branches and Association organise practices and opportunities that stretch beyond the ringing available to many of us in our home towers.

Following a survey a few years ago ringers were grouped into zones according to their ringing standard (similar to pistes in skiing): **Green** for those learning up to plain hunt; **Blue** for people able to ring up to touches of doubles (e.g. Grandsire or Plain Bob); **Red** for ringers able to ring Cambridge Surprise Minor upwards and a **Black** zone for those able to ring Surprise Maximus methods competently.

All our branch and Association practices and events map on to this progression:

	Beginners	Intermediates	Advanced	Experts
Monthly branch practices	Green	Blue	Red	Black
Annual branch outings	Green	Blue	Red	Black
Visits to another tower's practice night	Green	Blue	Red	Black
Specialist training days	Green	Blue	Red	
Monthly Association daytime practices		Blue	Red	Black
Monthly branch 8-bell practices		Blue	Red	Black
Monthly Association Surprise Major practices			Red	Black
Branch and Association and Quarter Peals and Peals			Red	Black
Monthly Association 12-bell practices			Red	Black
Regional and National striking competitions				Black



Guide to practices to improve your ringing

Advice from other ringers

Every great ringer was once the worst in the band. They improved with the help given by other ringers.

Do your homework before going to practices

getting out and about will help improve your bell handling no end.

If you feel stuck just ask for help, ringers are amazing at helping

wherever I turn up to ring I'm always amazed how welcoming ringers are

Just like driving or playing instruments, time on the end of a rope is how to get better at ringing

Everybody learns differently, speak to other ringers to find out what worked for them

we can't ring alone and can only have our fun by helping each other



I'm a beginner

At the beginning of your ringing journey your focus is all about how to handle a bell, starting to ring in rounds with a band around you, mastering call changes and learning the skill of ringing up and down.

Initially, most of your ringing will be done in your own tower with your ringing teacher, but, as your confidence grows you should speak to your tutor and other ringers about whether it's time to start coming along to branch practices, branch outings and maybe going to another tower's practice night. Ringing on different bells can be challenging and scary at first, but it really helps hone your skills and you'll notice a huge improvement when ringing on more familiar bells in your own tower.

Around
10% of ringers

Come along to
branch practices

Join your
branch outings

Visit another
tower's practice night

I'm an advanced ringer

Advanced ringing starts with methods like Cambridge Minor inside and you will have made the transition from learning methods by simple method structure (e.g. a circle of work), to learning the blue line and place bell order. By now you could well have some teaching skills and will be both welcome and in demand wherever you decide to ring.

You'll find yourself working harder at practices as you'll be ringing both for yourself and to help others. The Association can support your ringing with its more advanced practices such as the Surprise Major or friendly 12-bell practices. Finally, you'll be involved in specially organised ringing such as quarter peals and even full three hour peals for the really keen.

Around
10% of ringers

Keep supporting
branch practices

Association Surprise
Major Practice

Association
12-bell practices

Association Quarter
Peals and Peals

Around
75% of ringers

Join your branch's
monthly practices

Association wide
Daytime practices

Monthly branch
8-bell practices

Specialist
training days

I'm a intermediate

As an intermediate you are likely to be doing most of your ringing at your own practice night and for Sunday service and are probably ringing some methods with your own band.

To stretch your ringing a little and further explore the social side of ringing joining the branch practices is an excellent idea and for those with availability during the working day, a monthly Daytime Practice visits towers all over the Association. For those wanting to experience ringing on more bells, each branch organises a local 8-bell practice.

Your branch also responds to the needs of its ringers and organises training days giving a focus to a specific skill or method.

Around
5% of ringers

Association
advanced
practices

Regional and
national
competitions

Association
Quarter Peals
and Peals

I'm an advanced ringer

If you've got this far, you no longer need anyone guiding you as to what your next step in ringing should be. You've achieved more than most ringers can only dream about. You have probably also shouldered additional responsibilities helping to run your branch or association. Thank you!

However, there is still more that ringing can offer as your input is critical to the success of others at the advanced practices; what is new for others will just be revision for you. There is an enormous sense of fulfilment and satisfaction seeing a milestone achieved by an up and coming ringer. For the most ambitious and brave, you might even consider joining an Association band to compete in one of the regional or national competitions against the best ringers from other areas.

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