

Fundamental Ringing Terms

Most activities have a lot of jargon associated with them. Listed below are some of the fundamental ringing terms which explain this specialized language.

Back	The furthest position away from lead
Backstroke	The circle of movement of the bell caused by pulling the rope from the arms length position through to catching the sally
Bearing	Unit fastened to the frame by which the headstock is supported and in which the gudgeon rotates allowing the bell to swing
Behind	When a bell, usually the tenor, is always rung last in a sequence of changes
Bell	Hollow body of cast metal comprising 77% copper and 23% tin, so formed and tuned to emit when struck a clear musical note
Blow	The act of a bell being caused to sound in any particular place amongst the other bells
Bob	A formula which alters the coursing order of (usually) three bells
Boss	A device to prevent the rope from chafing when passing through a floor
Block, Pulley	Wooden structure containing the pulley over which the rope runs directly beneath the bell wheel
Call	An instruction given by the conductor for the ringers to deviate from the normal pattern of ringing. See Bob and Single
Call Changes	When the bells ring in the same order until the conductor calls the bells into a different order
Campanology	The art and science of change ringing - This term is often not used by ringers
Canons	Loops cast into the crown of a bell by which it is suspended from a wooden headstock
Caters	Change ringing on nine bells. Extent 362,880 changes
Central Council	Inaugurated in 1891 to develop and promote the Exercise and arbitrate as required
Change row	A numerical order in which all the bells on the same stroke sound once
Changes	A sequence of change rows
Check	To restrain the upward movement of the rope causing the bell to travel a shorter distance
Chime	To swing the bell through a small arc until the clapper is made to strike the bell
Cinques	Change ringing on eleven bells
Clapper	Wrought iron, spheroidal graphite or composite device hung in the bell made to strike the soundbow at diametrically opposite points at 90 degrees to the axis of swing
Clapper stay	A device used to secure the clapper to prevent the bell sounding when it is rung
Close	A short space between your bell and the one striking immediately before you
Closed lead	When the bell leading in any change row strikes at the same interval as the last bell in the preceding change row

Composition	The arrangement of calls in any method (or call changes) to give a touch, quarter peal or peal of a desired length
Conductor	A person (most usually one of the ringers) controlling the length of a touch by a sequence of calls, namely bobs or singles, or called changes (see call changes)
Course bell	The bell which precedes you to lead
Coursing order	The order in which the bells come down to lead after the treble and is altered by a bob or single
Cover bell	When an odd bell method is being rung on an even number of bells, the tenor strikes last in each change row and is said to be covering or ringing behind. (Colloquially – bonking, bonging, ringing behind)
Crown	The top or closed end of the bell attached to the headstock by bolts or cannons
Crown staple	A loop of iron cast into the crown of the bell on which the clapper is mounted. Now superseded by an independent staple secured by a bolt running through the headstock and bell
Date Touch	A length of ringing commemorating a particular date. The number of changes indicating the date. This could be the year date or that of a particular historic anniversary
Dodge	When two bells change places with each other twice and then continue in the direction in which they were going
Doubles	Change ringing on five bells
Down	Direction of hunting from back to front
Draught	Distance of the ringer to the bell, or to the first set of rope guides
Exercise, The	bell ringing as a whole
Extent	The maximum number of change rows possible on any given number of bells
False	A composition containing a repetition of one or more change rows
Flange	The sides of the wheel which stop the rope from running off
Flight	An inverted conical extension on the ball of the clapper continuing the line of the shank
Frame	A structure of wood, metal or concrete which supports the bells
Front	The position in a change row that is taken by the bell which is first to strike
Garter hole	The hole in the wheel through which the rope passes before being secured to the two upright spokes
Go	Command given by the conductor to commence changing out of rounds. Can also be the "go" of the bells - how easy is it to ring them?
Gudgeon	Bearing spindle incorporated into the ends of the headstock
Half pull	One stroke, either hand or back
Hammer. clock	Independent hammer which strikes the bell mechanically from the clock or chiming apparatus
Handstroke	The circle of movement of the bell caused by pulling on the sally and following through to the arms length position
Hastings stay	A type of stay designed to eliminate the need for a slider, by using a movable toggle on the end of the stay which travels either side of the metal runner and stop at handstroke and at back stroke

Headstock	Wood or metal unit to which the bell is secured, and which is supported by a gudgeon and bearing in the frame at each end
Hold up	Holding the bell on the balance to prevent it swing at either handstroke of backstroke
Hunting	Moving the position of the bells amongst the others to the adjacent position
In	In or down to the front of the change row
Inscription	Lettering cast in relief onto the outer surface of the bell. Often gives date, donor, maker and church wardens
Inside	Where a method has a treble hunt and/or tenor cover, the other working bells are known as the inside bells
Lead	In treble dominated methods, the section of changes between the treble leading
Lead end	Generally considered to be the backstroke of the treble lead in treble dominated methods
Lie	to stay in the highest working place for more than one blow
Long places	Four blows in any one place e.g. four blows in 5ths place in plain Bob Doubles is known as four blows behind
Lower, to	To successively reduce the swing of the bell from its raised position to its down position
Major	Change ringing on eight bells with the tenor turned in. Extent 40,320 changes
Maximus	Change ringing on twelve bells with the tenor turned in. Extent 479,001,600 changes
Method	Sequence of changes beginning and ending in rounds
Minimus	Change ringing on four bells. Extent 24 changes
Minor	Change ringing on six bells. Extent 720 changes
Mouth	The open end of the bell
Muffle	Leather pad strapped or otherwise fastened to the ball of the clapper to soften the sound
Observation bell	The bell chosen by the conductor as his guide to making the calls
Odd struck	The clapper striking the bell sooner after pulling off on one stroke than the other
Out	To move away from the lead towards the back
Over	To strike after a bell
Peal	5,040 changes on any number of bells up to and including triples in complete extents. On eight bells and upwards 5,000 changes. Rules as determined by the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers A term used in some parts of the country (esp Devon and Cornwall) to denote a piece of call change ringing
Pit	Space in the bell frame in which the bell swings
Place	Any position in a change row and is identified by the bell that occupies that position when ringing rounds
Place, to make a	Is to strike two blows in the same position in two consecutive rows other than when leading or lying
Plain course	A specified number of changes in any method in which the bells start and finish in rounds without any calls being made
Point	To strike the bell once in any position and then returning the direction from which one has come

Principle	A method in which all the bells do the same work
Pulley	Small wheel over which the rope runs
Quicker	To reduce the interval between one bell and another to make them sound closer together in the sequence of changes
Quick	A bell with a badly adjusted clapper which strikes the bell too soon. A specific piece of work in change ringing
Raise	To swing the bell from the down position to the up position
Right	To lead right is to strike the first leading blow at handstroke
Quarter Peal	A piece of ringing which is usually at least 1260 changes. There are no set rules for quarter peals.
Ring	The collective noun for a number of bells e.g. a ring of eight
Ring, to	The act of causing a bell to sound while swinging full circle
Ring down	To ring the bell gradually quicker by reducing the swing interval, from the mouth up position to the mouth down position
Ring up	To swing the bell progressively slowly from the mouth down position to the mouth up position
Ringing behind	See cover bell
Ropesight	Recognizing the sequence of the bells by the order in which the ropes fall
Rounds	The change row in which the bells are rung in descending order
Royal	Changes rung on ten bells. Extent 3,628,800 changes
Running board	Length of timber which controls the latitude of movement of the free end of the slider by means of a slot in which the slider runs
Sally	Woolen grip woven into the bell rope
Simulator	A sensor system which detects movement of the bells, and which processes the signals into sound, managed through a programme on a laptop PC (or similar). This enables the bells to be rung using clapper stays, with no external sound
Single	A formula which alters the coursing order of (usually) two bells
Singles	Changes rung on three bells. Extent 6 changes
Slider	Piece of wood beneath the bell pivoted at one end, the other sliding on the running board. The purpose is to provide a stop for the stay to rest against when the bell is in the up position
Slow	A bell with a badly adjusted clapper which strikes the bell too soon. A specific piece of work in change ringing
Snap	Same as a point, but used when the point blow is at the lead
Soundbow	The thickest part of the rim/mouth of the bell against which the clapper strikes
Splice	A repair or joining of ropes. Joining two or more methods together in the same touch
Spoke	Wooden struts of the bell wheel
Stand	To set the bell in the up position by means of the stay and slider
Stay	A piece of wood, usually of Ash, bolted to the headstock to rest against the slider when the bell is in the up position

Striking	The sound of the intervals of strike between one bell and another, which ringers try to make as even as possible
Stroke	One complete movement of the rope to make the bell sound once e.g handstroke or backstroke
Tail end	The end of the rope held in the hand when ringing
Tenor	The bell in the ring having the lowest note
That's all	Instruction used to denote the return to rounds at the end of a plain course or touch
Tied	When the clapper is secured in the central position to prevent it striking bell when it is rung
Touch	Any number of changes starting and ending in rounds where calls have been introduced to deviate from the plain course
Treble	The bell in the ring having the highest note
Triples	Changes rung on seven bells with a covering bell. Extent 5,040 changes
True	Infers that no change row in a composition is repeated
Tuck	The method of adjusting the length of the tail end
Turn	When the bell which is either leading or lying vacates that position and caused your bell to take its place
Turn in	Term applied to the tenor when involved in changing rather than ringing behind
Twidle pin	A screw device on the clapper to slightly adjust its central position in the bell to enable equal striking on the soundbow at handstroke and at backstroke
Up	When applied to bells it denotes they are raised, with their mouths facing upwards, ready for ringing
Wheel	A timber wheel fastened to the headstock at the opposite end to the stay
Whole pull	A complete sequence of two strokes
Wrong stroke	When pulling the rope on the backstroke when all the other bells ringing the same change row are on the opposite, or handstroke