

## West Cork Ringing Weekend 2023

Beautiful West Cork, in the southwest corner of Ireland, is Europe's most westerly outpost of bell ringing. Until 2002, Bandon, with its 14cwt six, was about as far west as you could go to ring in this part of the world. That changed when a 3cwt 6 was installed in Skibbereen, a typical laid-back small rural town. Then in 2006 the smashing 12cwt ring of 5 in St Fachtna's Cathedral in Rosscarbery, which had been un-ringable for over 70 years, were restored to full working order. A year or two later the ring of 5 was augmented to 6. In 2018 a ring of 8, the Sam Maguire Community Bells, were installed in St Mary's Church Dunmanway.

In 2002 when the Skibbereen bells were installed there were no ringers at all, a new band had to be found and trained. I asked for help. Kind, enthusiastic, competent and willing ringers from the UK and Ireland gave up their time to come to West Cork for a weekend to assist with our training. This turned into the annual West Cork Ringing Festival which ran for several years.

We are now in a similar position with 4 towers, lots of learners who are dead keen to learn and move on and we desperately need the help of more experienced ringers in order to progress. To that end we are holding a ringing weekend over the 6-8 October 2023 and we offer an open invitation to any ringers to come to this beautiful part of the world; to ring our bells; to help our bands and to experience the beauty, the craic, the Guinness and the hospitality that is associated with this country.

The format is fairly simple. Practical sessions in all the towers over the weekend will last for about 2 hours and each session will have 3 or 4 students. The students take it in turn to ring, each time being surrounded by competent ringers. The session has a leader who conducts the band. Call changes, plain hunt, plain courses and touches of bob doubles or grandsire will be the order of the weekend.

Any theory sessions deemed necessary take place with a coffee and biscuits in the adjoining church halls or over a pint later on.

The weekend is informal, relaxing and above all great fun. It starts on Friday 6 October 2023 at midday in Rosscarbery and closes mid-afternoon with ringing on the magnificent 12 in St Fin Barre's Cathedral in Cork City. However, visitors are welcome to arrive early and are welcome to join the regular practice in Rosscarbery on Thursday evening and there will be ringing on Friday morning. We hope you will stick around for the whole weekend but there will be opportunity to explore some of the surrounding magnificent countryside. More details on the bells and towers can be found on [BellringingIreland.com](http://BellringingIreland.com)

If your curiosity has been piqued please contact me, Diana Pitcher, and I can give you much more information on the weekend; accommodation ideas; travel tips and so on.

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