

and if one dumbbell is not enough ...

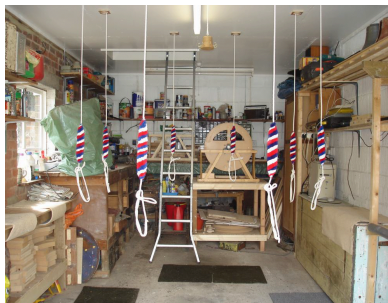


The Wickham Ring

Affectionately known as the 'Austin Eight' after the Austin Seven that normally stands beneath it, the *Wickham Ring* comprises eight individual John Norris dumbbells connected via a set of Griffin optical sensors and a marshall-ing box to two serial ports on a PC running *Abel*.



The Ring evolved out of a project to replace a decaying flat garage roof by a pitched roof, to provide storage space for completed dumbbells. It was then an obvious development to connect a set of dumbbells to ringing software to create a ringing simulator.



Although the 'Ring' is technically just a simulator it could be readily converted to a true ring by replacing the papier maché bells by real bells, with a tenor weighing up to about 20 lb.

Visiting bands are welcome by prior arrangement.
email: jrn@orpheusmail.co.uk
or Tel. 01273 843718

Current prices (Jan 2019):-

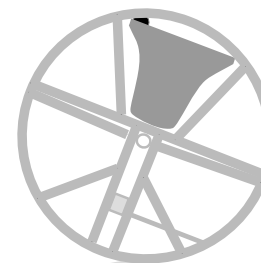
Dumbbell complete with rope, ceiling boss, combined interface and sensor, ready to connect to a serial port on a PC running *Abel*, *Beltower* or *Virtual Belfry* **£160** (excl. carriage).

N.B. If the dumbbell is to be used with a PC lacking serial ports a USB to serial adapter will be required. Typical cost: about £10.

Alternatively,
DIY plans by post £4.00
or download free via:-
www.jrnorris.co.uk/minidb.html

For further information, including lead times and carriage costs:-

Email jrn@orpheusmail.co.uk
Tel. 01273 843718
or write to:-
John Norris,
The Birches,
off Wickham Hill,
Hurstpierpoint,
West Sussex BN6 9NP



A Mini Dumbbell for the Home

Every ringing home should have one – Why press a key when you can ring with rope and wheel and experience true ringing in miniature?

Ideal for

- learning to listen,
- ringing by rhythm,
- practising methods,

– and

It's Fun!

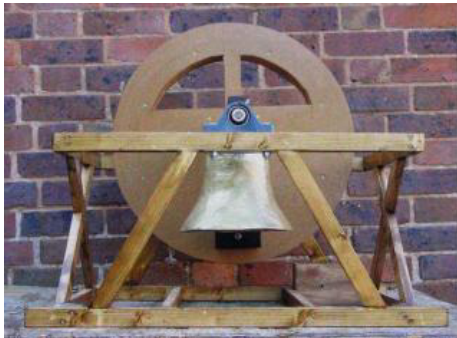


Design

Many towers now have simulators and some have dedicated dumbbells but for the ability to practise what you want, when you want, there is nothing to beat having a dumbbell of your own at home, attached to ringing software such as *Abel*.

Given sufficient space, a strong enough roof structure and a pocket to match, the ideal dumbbell might well have a relatively large wheel, to give a stroke and feel approaching that of a real bell in the tower. (See, for example, the Saxilby Simulator at www.saxsim.com)

However, if space is limited and your loft is not designed to bear the stresses imposed by large rotating masses, a John Norris mini-dumbbell could well be just what you need.



The design uses an MDF wheel approx. 23" (580mm) in diameter, 1¾" (45mm) thick, weighing approx. 12 lb (5.0kg), plus 6 lb (2.7kg) of steel weights attached to the lower half. The wheel is mounted on a headstock in a wooden frame, and rotates on a ½" spindle through the stock running in self-aligning ball bearings. A papier mâché bell is fitted to the headstock, the whole ensemble loosely representing a bell in a traditional frame. No stay or slider is either necessary or fitted (as standard). The design 'goes well' and the handling has attracted much favourable comment.

The dumbbell can be installed in any convenient location with sufficient headroom beneath, typically in a loft with the rope falling through a ceiling boss to a ringing position on the landing. Minimum space requirement is 29" (740mm) long, 17" (435mm) wide and 27" (690mm) high, plus a little extra to allow for access.

Do It Yourself

Plans are available for those wanting to build their own dumbbell. A mini dumbbell built to the design described can be constructed using all new materials and good quality self-aligning ball bearings for about £100. Depending on the availability of suitable materials already to hand it may be possible to cut the cost considerably, though it is unwise to skimp on the bearings – with such a relatively light wheel good bearings are important to ensure free running and pleasant handling.

Connecting to a Computer

The computer can be, for example, a Windows PC running *Abel*, *Beltower* or *Virtual Belfry* or a RISC OS computer (e.g. an Acorn RiscPC) running *Stringing*.

A variety of sensor and interface options is available. For Windows PCs the standard option now offered is a Hall effect sensor made to a design by Derek Livsey, adapted by Alan Griffin to increase its range of application. This comprises a magnet mounted on the wheel and a sensor unit mounted on the dumbbell frame. The lead from the sensor plugs direct into a serial port on the PC. If using a PC not equipped with a serial port a USB to serial converter will be required (available from, for example, CPC at about £10).

Alternative sensor options are available, including a David Bagley photohead and single bell interface (SBI) for Windows PCs and, for RISC OS computers running *Stringing*, a Bagley photohead and Griffin RISC OS interface.

Ringling Style

The dumbbell **can** be rung in conventional two-handed tower bell manner. However it is much easier to use the alternate-handed style common for mini-rings, i.e. one hand for the tail end and one for the sally. Mastering the handling takes only a few minutes – even for a non ringer – and one can then move on to rounds and methods.

What a dumbbell can do for you

A dumbbell is a very useful and enjoyable tool for honing one's listening skills, ringing by rhythm and practising new methods – whenever you want, whatever method you want, and on as many bells as you want – without being dependent on the availability or skills of other ringers.

It takes only a few seconds to restart if you go wrong and, if you wear headphones, your mistakes (but also your triumphs!) will go unnoticed by other members of the household. The ability to stop and restart almost instantly lends itself well to learning methods by place bells and by constant repetition of manageable chunks.

What a dumbbell can't do

It can't be a complete substitute for pencil and paper – a dumbbell won't of itself learn the blue line for you. Nor will it teach you ropesight and, while ropesight isn't essential if you can ring by ear and by rhythm, it can be very useful, particularly if ringing with a band that doesn't strike well!

'Après-ski'

Finally it has to be said that a dumbbell is an excellent aid but not a complete end in itself. Ringing a dumbbell lacks the visual clues, the companionship, the sense of shared achievement and the after-ringing socialising of real ringing in the tower.