Discord - an application for voice and text chat (and now video too)
A brief guide for bellringers

1. About this document

This document is intended to be a brief, helpful guide for bellringers on 'need to know' things about Discord.

It is not intended to be a detailed walkthrough of all the features, nor a complete visual guide. These can be found through Google searches and videos on Youtube.

Please make any corrections within this document and add your tips on using Discord!

2. About Discord

Discord is a free application for voice and text chat (and newly for video too). It was initially created for communities of gamers. Other communities are also using Discord, such as study groups, dance classes and book clubs.

Tower bell and handbell ringers are increasingly turning to virtual bell ringing practices while towers are closed. The main platforms used for virtual ringing are RingingRoom.com, Handbell Stadium and Muster.

Whichever ringing platform you use, a method of voice and/or text chat alongside is valuable. This is so that ringers can communicate with each other.

With 200+ members of the 'ChangeRinging' server on Discord (and growing), Discord is a very handy tool for voice and text chat between ringers. This is the case both during your ringing practices and outside of those times.

3. How to access Discord

Follow the link below to access the Changeringing server in Discord.
https://discord.gg/Eaz3wQT

You can use Discord through your web browser. Or you can download the Discord application to your computer, smartphone or tablet from the link below.
https://discord.com/download

You will need to register an account with Discord using your email address.
https://discord.com/register

4. Key features of Discord

[Note that the terms 'room' and 'channel' are used interchangeably in this section]
Once you are registered and signed in to Discord, there are two main screens to use:

1) The 'Home' screen. From here you can:

- Communicate privately with individual ringers (or in groups of up to 10)
- Communicate using text chat, voice or video calls.
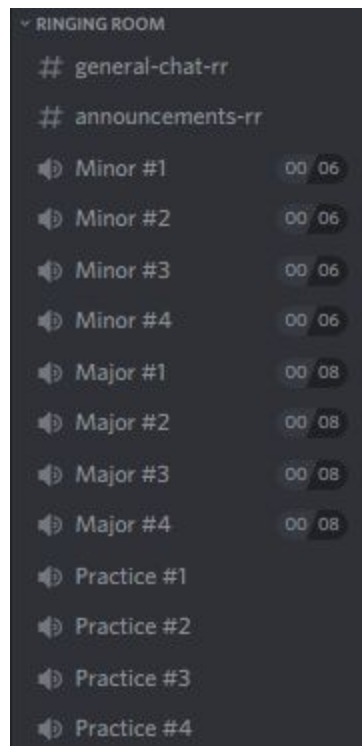- Add friends (in a similar way to Facebook)

2) This is the ChangeRinging server and is the main screen you will use. The server contains a variety of text and voice channels which all members can access. Once you are in a voice channel, you can also turn your video on (a new feature in Discord).

ONLINE—30 On the right side of this screen, you will see a list of ringers who are currently online.

Text and voice channels are grouped into four 'categories' for easy reference: General, Handbell Stadium, Ringing Room, Muster.

RINGING ROOM
\# general-chat-rr
\# announcements-rr
🔊 Minor #1   00 06
🔊 Minor #2   00 06
🔊 Minor #3   00 06
🔊 Minor #4   00 06
🔊 Major #1   00 08
🔊 Major #2   00 08
🔊 Major #3   00 08
🔊 Major #4   00 08
🔊 Practice #1
🔊 Practice #2
🔊 Practice #3
🔊 Practice #4

For each ringing platform, a variety of voice and text channels are available. You will generally be 'in' a text channel, and optionally a voice channel.

There are several practice rooms, which have no limit on the number of people who can join.

There are also Minor, Major, Royal and Maximus rooms. These have limits on the number of people who can join (eg 6 for Minor in Ringing Room). Use these rooms for performances or dedicated practices where you do not want to be disturbed by ringers outside of your band.

To join a voice channel, click on it and your name will appear just below the channel name.
To move to a different voice channel, click on it. You will move from the previous channel to the new channel.
To disconnect from a voice channel, click this button at the bottom left of the screen:

Click on a text channel (such as # general-chat-rr) to view and send text messages in that channel. Everyone can see messages to a text channel.

5. Why should I use Discord?
- Discord is optimised for voice chat. The quality of the sound seems better than Zoom, Webex, or other video-conferencing tools. 'Push to talk' means that background noise, or
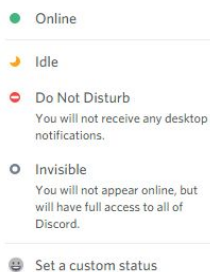
multiple people trying to speak at the same time, doesn't cause the same problems that it does in Zoom.

- A growing bell ringing community of 200+ members on the Changeringing server
- Secure online platform to communicate with other ringers by voice and text chat (and now through video too). There are a variety of channels / rooms for this. Communicate at any time, not just during practices.
- Discord is useful alongside any ringing platform (Ringing Room, Handbell Stadium or Muster)
- Private messaging facility, including voice and video calls. You can message individual members or in groups of up to 10.
- Very useful for managing online ringing practices, particularly with larger numbers of people. Arrange to meet in the general voice channel, then ringers can separate into 1, 2 or more voice channels for the ringing. Ringers move themselves from channel to channel with one click, rather than the host moving people to and from breakout rooms.

6. Tips and tricks

Tip #1: Right click on the name of any other ringer and you can:
- send them a quick message
- start a voice or video call
- add them as a friend

Tip #2: At the bottom left of Discord, click just to the left of your name and you can set your status.

When ringing a performance, you may want to change your status to Do Not Disturb. Then you won't receive any notifications while you are ringing. Remember to set your status as 'Online' afterwards!

Tip #3: Click on the category of channel (for example 'Handbell Stadium' or 'Ringing room'). This will expand / collapse the list of voice channels in that category. Useful if you don't want to see such a long list of text and voice channels.

Tip #4: There are a lot of different settings you can tweak from the User Settings button (see the bottom left of Discord). It is worth taking some time to explore these settings.

Here are some of the most useful settings to tweak (going from top to bottom of the list):

My account:
- Add your picture or an avatar to your public profile
- Change your username

Voice and video:

- If you are using a headset, ensure that this device is selected under 'Input device' and 'Output device'.
- Under 'Video settings', you can test your webcam

Notifications:
- Play around with these settings if you don't want to receive so many notifications and sounds. For example, there is a beep when someone joins or exits the voice channel you're in (which you can turn on / off).

Appearance:
- As a default, Discord starts with the Dark theme. However, the vertical scroll bar on the left can be difficult to see. If you use the Light theme, it is easier to see the scroll bar.
- Change the size of fonts
- Change your Zoom level. There are a lot of different voice and text channels - if you zoom out, you can see more of these channels at the same time (without as much scrolling).

Windows settings:
- Change whether Discord starts up in the background (when you turn on your computer)
- Change whether Discord minimizes itself to the background (when you close the application).

7. Technical fixes
Some ringers have run into technical issues while using Discord. Here are some common fixes:
- Headset not working? Change your voice and video settings (see Section 6 'Tips and tricks' of this document).
- You can't hear other ringers in a voice channel (while they can hear you)? See this video for a potential solution https://youtu.be/fhJrX-fmu0Y. Or see this link (for the more technically minded): https://appuals.com/fix-cant-hear-anyone-on-discord
- You get an error when trying to load the Discord application? Try the 'Delete Discord' solution at this link: https://www.wepc.com/how-to/discord-javascript-error-fixed/

8. Useful links
- Ringing room - the popular website for ringing bells together online
- Handbell Stadium - for how to install, see #announcements-stadium in Discord
- Muster - allows Abel to be used to ring online with others
- Handbell Manager v1.41. This allows the ActionXL motion sensors to be used with Abel, Beltower, Ringing Room and Muster.
- Abel software updates. To use Muster, you need to update Abel to version 3.10.2 (ensuring you are updated to v3.10 first)

Document created by Dave Jones, May 2020