

This panoramic view of Worcester, UK, is taken from the top of Worcester Cathedral. A large 'North' arrow is positioned on the left side of the image. The view shows the city's layout, including the River Worcester, the Worcester City Campus, and various churches and landmarks. Labels with lines pointing to specific locations are as follows:

- Abberley Hills
- Pitchcroft Racecourse
- All Saints' Church
- The Hive
- St. Andrew's Spire (The Glover's Needle)
- University of Worcester City Campus
- Crowningate
- St. Nicholas Church
- St. Helen's Church
- St. Stephen's Church in the Crompton
- Old St. Martin's Elgar Statue
- St. Martin's Quarter
- Greville's

East

- St. Martin's Quarter
- Elbury Mount
- Grevfriars
- Shrub Hill
- Fownes Hotel
- Vue Cinema
- College Precincts
- Fort Royal Park
- The Connaughty
- Edgar Tower
- Royal Worcester Porcelain Museum

South

Fort Royal Park

The Commandery

Edgar Tower

Bredon hill

Guesten Hall

Ruins

Royal Worcester Porcelain Museum

Chapter House

Diglis Canal Basin

College Green

King's School

Cloisters

Diglis

College Hall

Maiden Hills

Footbridge

West

Malvern Hills

St. John-in-Bedwardine Church

Worcestershire County Cricket Ground

Worcester Bridge

Railway Bridge

Abberton Hills

Old Palace

Pitchcroft

Alkali's Church

The Hive

Worcester College

St. Andrew's Spire


The Glover's Needle

Gowngate



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which was completed in 1374.**


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Tower Plan

9 The Tower Roof

8 The Bourdon Bell

7 The Belfry

6 The Carillon Room

5 The Ringing Room

4 The Cathedral Clock

3 The Teaching Centre

2 The Clock Room

- D access to tower roof
- C second staircase – 125 steps
- B bridge across vaulting
- A first staircase – 110 steps

1 North West Transept

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From the floor of the north west transept the climb of the first 110 steps is within one of the oldest parts of the Cathedral dating from circa 1250. This staircase was retained when the cathedral was rebuilt in the 14th century. The top of the steps leads to a bridge across the top of the vaulting of the transept ceiling. In 1977 one of the tower’s pinnacles fell through this space severely damaging the roofs. The bridge leads to the Clock Room and a unique Teaching Centre for Bellringing.



2 The Clock Room

The internal decorative arches in the stonework, which feature all the way to the top, also make the tower lighter. The wooden floor sits on top of the stone vaulting of the tower’s internal ceiling which you can see from the crossing on the ground floor. There are trapdoors all the way up to the Belfry.



as the “wigwam” and it supports the bell frame and bells. The Ringing Room and Carillon Room are built within its timbers. The “wigwam” was designed by E B Denison (later Lord Grimthorpe). It was an innovative design in 1869; however today the bells are difficult to ring to a high standard because of excessive movement.

The two bells in this room came from St. Peter’s Sidbury which was demolished in 1971. These bells were cast in Worcester in the 17th century.

The large blue boards record special pieces of ringing called peals. These performances, which comprise over 5000 different “changes” and last about four hours, are a feat of physical endurance. There are more boards in the ringing room.

3 The Teaching Centre

The dumbbells on the walls of the Clock Room comprise a unique purpose-built resource for teaching bellringing. Each dumbbell simulates a real tower bell. The flywheels are weighted with railway bedplates. These are special training bells and recreate the experience of having highly skilled ringers working with you. It works just like a flight simulator. It was the first teaching centre to be built in the world and was soon followed by a similar set up in St. Peter’s Cathedral Adelaide.

4 The Cathedral Clock



and the right-hand train operates the “Westminster” quarter chimes; note the large pegged barrel. The central train is the heart of the clock and is the “going train” which controls the time using the 13 foot (4 metre) pendulum. The pendulum ticks once every two seconds. Unusually the clock has no external faces; it tells the time only to the ringers in the Ringing Room and to those in the north transept below.

The second staircase takes you to the top of the tower. There are 125 steps.

5 The Ringing Room



The first doorway on the staircase leads to the Ringing Room, a large Victorian space, where the bellringers perform their unusual music.

Fifteen ropes with their red, blue and white “sallies” lead all the way up to the bell frame where they are tied to the bell wheels. An additional rope is fitted to the clapper of the Bourdon Bell. The room contains a secure area for young children which is probably the highest creche in the area.

6 The Carillon Room

The second doorway on the staircase leads to a room between the Ringing Room and the Belfry. It contains a large Victorian carillon which is now silent and obsolete. It was made in 1872 by Gillett and Bland and played tunes on fourteen of the fifteen bells. It is a large “musical box” using pinned drums to activate mechanical hammers on the bells. There are seven barrels each comprising seven tunes which are a mixture of Victorian folk tunes and hymns.



7 The Belfry

The third doorway on the staircase leads to the Belfry. The tower contains fifteen ringing bells tuned to the major scale of B and a large bell. The largest of the ringing bells, the tenor, weighs 48 cwt (2447 kg) and the smallest, the treble, weighs 6.5 cwt (347 kg).

Three additional semitone bells make Worcester Cathedral unique in providing two additional peals of eight in a major key (E and C#) and a harmonic minor peal of ten (in C#). Half-muffled, the harmonic minor ten create a haunting and mournful sound. The harmonic minor ten are rung every year for Good Friday, Remembrance Sunday, New Year’s Eve, and occasionally before concerts and funerals.



The bells hang in the 1869 oak frame on top of the “wigwam” at the level of the louvres. Unusually these louvres are made of glass. Regular work takes place maintaining the bells and improving the internal acoustics.

The bells of Worcester Cathedral are considered by the bellringing community to form one of the finest rings in the world. Cast by John Taylor and Co in Loughborough in 1928 and ranking as the fifth heaviest ring of twelve in the world, they replaced an earlier peal which had been cast in 1869 as part of the Cathedral’s great Victorian restoration. A commemorative brass tablet in the north transept by the tower entrance records the details. Five of the Cathedral’s eight bells, sold in 1870, were rescued in 1971 and can be found on the east side of the cloister.

8 The Bourdon Bell

The Bourdon Bell or Clock Bell was cast in 1868 and arrived in the Cathedral on Christmas Eve where it was displayed before being



hoisted to the belfry. It was tolled for the first time by Lord Grimthorpe on 17 January 1869. On the waist of the bell are the Coats of Arms for England, the See of Worcester, the Dean and Chapter of Worcester, and the City of Worcester. The original weight is not known; it was retuned to A in 1928, and now weighs 83 cwt (4219 kg).

9 The Tower Roof

The fourth door on the staircase leads to the roof. In 1651 Prince Charles (later Charles II) watched the last battle of the English Civil War from the top of the tower before he fled the city. Enjoy the view.

Text by Mark Regan
Photos and design by Richard Nicholls

The Worcester Cathedral Guild of Bellringers

The bells are rung by the Cathedral’s Bellringers, a skilled team of volunteers who support the work and ministry of the Cathedral by ringing every week.

The bells are rung every Sunday between 09:15 and 10:30. Special ringing for Cathedral and Civic events take place regularly throughout the year. We teach and practise every Monday between 18:30 and 21:15.



Contact us for further information
secretary@worcesterbells.co.uk
or visit our website
www.worcesterbells.co.uk



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