



## Heritage Open Days 2016 – Open your towers!

Heritage Open Days 2016 – between 8-11 September. Bells, towers and ringing are to feature hugely. Your help and forward planning are needed!

Further to my note on this topic in RW 23 October 2015, P1070, it seems many ringers are still unaware of the great opportunity to expose our art and science to a much wider community by our link-up with Heritage Open Days. The easiest way to do this is to open your tower as part of what your church is doing, as many churches are open over this period. But if yours isn't, then why not just open your tower for tours, or join with a nearby church to run interesting tower visits? What can local ringing associations do to help their towers take part, or to arrange joint sessions? Our discussions with Heritage Open Days continue and we are hoping to have some joint leaflets available for you to use. We already have a joint logo, shown here. If you are planning your own literature do use this logo.

September will soon be here – it's time to start planning.

Kate Flavell  
Central Council Public Relations Officer

## December Ringing Publicity

Ringers are good at obtaining local publicity for their special events and there has been plenty of evidence of this during December. Here are some extracts, gleaned online. The bells rang true for a team of **Lillington** campanologists. The team from St Mary Magdalene's Church represented Warwickshire in a four-county ringing competition and were crowned champions after out-chiming opposition from Worcestershire, Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire. The contest was organised by the Four Shires Guild of Ringers at **Shipston** Parish Church and brought together the best bands of bellringers from each county's six-bell striking competition.

Sunday schools and bell ringing groups could face 'radicalisation' inspections as there have been warnings that the Government's counter-extremism plan could lead to inspections on thousands of church youth groups and turn Ofsted into a 'state regulator of religion'. Ofsted inspectors could be sent into Sunday schools, church youth groups, Scout troops and even bell ringing circles to search for signs of children being "radicalised" under new counter-extremism plans, church leaders and voluntary groups fear. The proposals, backed by David Cameron, could lead to thousands of "out-of-school education settings" having to be formally registered for the first time and facing inspections to judge whether they are promoting so-called "British values". Christian groups said the proposals, outlined in a consultation paper published quietly by the Department for Education could unwittingly turn Ofsted into a "state regulator of religion". The Evangelical Alliance, an umbrella group representing around two million practising Christians in the UK, said it risked the "wholesale nationalisation of youth work and the indirect state regulation of private religious practice".

The Tour de France continues to ring out for Yorkshire in the shape of a new book. Rod Ismay relates how he organised the ringing of church bells for the entire route of the Grand Depart in 2014. Rod, who is obsessive about both cycling and bellringing, arranged for bells to be rung at locations including **Keighley, Silsden, Oxenhope** and **Haworth**. His new 200-page paperback, *Bells & Bikes*, tells the epic story of the 'Big Ring' by hundreds of volunteers as international cyclists rode past during the three-day race.

Eight bell ringers gathered in (**King's Lynn's** St Nicholas Chapel on Sunday for a full peal of Cambridge Surprise Major. The peal was part of a three-hour exercise held in conjunction with St Nicholas Day. But the project didn't meet with everyone's approval with some local residents claiming that the bells destroyed their Sunday afternoon peace. One angry resident contacted the *Lynn News* to say: "I think it was disgusting for anyone who lives near the chapel. We don't have an objection to the bells ringing for half-an-hour, but it was absolute bedlam for more than three hours." In response to the criticism, Adrian Parker, chairman of the Friends of St Nicholas' Chapel, said: "I believe that those living in nearby areas were actually told about the bells. A full peal is an exercise which is very rarely carried out and it is a feat of stamina. Having had the bells repaired recently, the ringers embarked on an exercise in change ringing. This particular project is so rare that these things get recorded both nationally and in the church itself." A £42,000 project to restore the eight bells at the chapel was completed at the end of August. They were rung for the first time on 17th October.

Coverage of other appeals for, or successful completion of, restoration projects included:

- **Wrexham** St Giles church bells needing £10,000 repair work. Ian Maycock said the bell frame was going rusty and the bells' clappers needed replacing.
- St Peter's in **Newnham** (Glos) have fallen into disrepair and an appeal has been launched. Andy Vivian, member of the Bell Restoration Committee said: "The sound of bells ringing is deeply rooted in British culture. Almost everyone in Britain lives within hearing range of bells. They provide the grand soundtrack to historic moments."
- The two restored bells for St Michael and St John Catholic Cathedral in **Bathurst** (NSW) were this morning lifted by a huge crane back into the belltower. The bells, weighing in at 868kg and 1,330kg respectively, had to be sent back to the foundry in London where they were originally made for repairs.
- St Peter's Church in **Birstall** (W Yorks) will host bell ringers from across the region as the church bells will be rung continuously for 50 minutes as a sponsored bell-ringing marathon to help raise cash to pay for vital repairs. The sponsored bell-ringing, also known as a Quarter Peal, starts at 11am and will be streamed live to the church's fellowship area.

- Villagers in **Marden** (Herefords) were treated to a rare sight when the six ancient church bells from the 14th century tower of St Mary's were removed in preparation for a major restoration. Three of the bells had remained undisturbed in the tower for almost 400 years.
- Church bells over a century old at St Mary's Parish Church, **Ilkeston**, Derbyshire have been restored to their former glory after a five-year appeal. Work included refurbishing the frame and fitting and rehangng the bells. Dave Bamford, from Taylor's Bell Foundry in Leicestershire said help from local offenders on community service was "absolutely incredible". Mr Bamford said the offenders carried out much of the heavy-lifting and the "lightest is over half a tonne".
- The ringers at St Mary's Church, **Richmond**, (N Yorks) have raised almost half of their fundraising total to replace a crumbling bell tower and save its historic bells. Dr Peter Trewby, one of the bell ringers, said the bell tower frame rocks – not only making ringing more difficult but also putting more strain on the building. "We do have some fundraising event ideas – including a big one next year where two of our bell ringers, will attempt a tandem bike ride from Richmond to Richmond in London."

An a-peal for **Buriton** bellringers has sounded out as a significant anniversary is celebrated. This year is the 300th since a set of five bells was installed at the Church of St Mary following a fire caused by a lightning strike. To mark the occasion the bellringers will be providing a full peal on Saturday for two hours and 45 minutes, starting at 9.30am. Trevor Hitchcock, a bell ringer from Combe Raleigh, said: "Bell ringing is a skill that can be learnt at any age, locally we have had learners from pre-teens to their seventies, age is no barrier. You will be welcomed anywhere there is a tower with ringable bells." Lisa Clarke, also from Combe Raleigh, has been trained to teach by the Association of Ringing Teachers. She is now looking for pupils.

Church bells in **Gillingham** (Dorset) will ring to mark the 500th anniversary of the town's secondary school on Monday, 4th January. Pupils, staff, parents, former students and invited guests of Gillingham School will join bell-ringers at St. Mary the Virgin to ring the church's bells between 10.45am and 11.30am.

Bells will be ringing out across **Bexhill** as a group of campanologists embark on an 'impossible' three-hour challenge in aid of a life-saving charity. Julie McDonnell came up with the 'barking mad' challenge to raise funds for the Anthony Nolan Trust – a charity which saves the lives of people with blood cancer – and a cause very close to Julie's heart. Julie, who has been bell ringing for just 14 months, said: "This is a difficult challenge for me at the moment, not just physically hard but coupled with the challenge of ringing Grandsire Triples from a new ringer's perspective, it's really hard. The challenge involves up to 5,040 changes which, trust me, is an awful lot." The physically gruelling challenge will see Julie and her six fellow campanologists ringing for three-hours straight – with some describing Julie's challenge as 'impossible'. The 48-year-old said: "I have had quite a lot of interest because it's such a crazy thing to do." Julie, who lives in Hastings, regularly rings at her church in **Brede**. However, the church only has six bells, and with eight required for the ding-dong marathon, St Peter's Church in Bexhill was chosen as a more suitable venue. [Peal successful – well done Julie!]

Bell ringers at a Hampshire church have halted a two-and-a-half year boycott over early Sunday service times. In June 2013, bells at St Mary's in **Bramshott** fell silent after plans were unveiled to bring forward services from 11:15 to 09:15. Campanologists said that as the bells were pealed 30 minutes before the service, villagers would be disturbed. A later service time of 09:30 has now been agreed, which means the bells will ring again.

Church bell ringers will be silent at Christmas for the first time in centuries after their ropes were eaten – by squirrels. **St Erth** Parish church has held a festive service since the 15th Century but this year it will be silent – because of rodents in the belfry. Church bell ringers

discovered its long pulling ropes lying on the floor – after the tops were chewed through by squirrels. Verger Peter Pascoe, 71, is concerned that the church will not be able to perform the annual tradition. Mr Pascoe has since installed a guard in the window to stop the squirrels getting in but they have beaten it before and he fears the few remaining ropes may also be destroyed.

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