

## **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!

The Central Council's Public Relations Committee decided some time ago that it and the Council will concentrate on just two main events for major publicity each year. Next year those events are the Queen's 90th birthday and Heritage Open Days. But there is more to Heritage Open Days than meets the eye and much more than I thought existed. You need to know this:

- Heritage Open Days are in England and for 2016 take place between Thursday 8 and Sunday 11 September. This note focuses on these, with more information to follow later about the others, but for information...
- Doors Open Days are in Scotland
- Open Doors Days are in Wales
- European Heritage Open Days are in Northern Ireland
- Open House London are in Greater London, organised by Open City
- Ride & Stride was developed by individual counties but is now run by the National Churches Trust and operates on the Saturday of Heritage Open Days (10 September 2016)

In the "official" list of Heritage Open Days for 2015 around 20 churches offered some form of ringing experience or visit, although more may have missed out on the official list. For 2016 it's going to be a lot more! Ringers everywhere are urged to open their towers to the public and give talks and tours about bells and ringing. The aim is for an interesting and informative experience for visitors and to celebrate bell ringing as a living heritage that is fun, social and physically and mentally stimulating. This is not a direct recruitment campaign, but of course if your talks are gripping enough you may well find some visitors who are keen to learn. Heritage Open Days are keen to help us promote the ringing possibilities and we are working together to ensure success.

There will be much joint publicity nearer the time, but in the meantime do start thinking about what you can do in your church and your area. Could several churches join together if you don't have enough resources for each church to run visits? Could you run something specifically for younger people? Can you link with what your church is already offering or regularly offers to enhance your local experience? What can ringing associations do to help?

September 2016 will be here before we know it.

*Central Council Public Relations Officer*