



Challenge 500: Call on bell towers and ringers across England to open their doors

Thursday 8 – Sunday 11 September www.heritageopendays.org.uk

For this year's September festival, Heritage Open Days have joined forces with the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers to open up the heritage hidden inside England's bell towers and bring to life the 400-year old tradition of English-style bell ringing.

It will be a unique opportunity for thousands of ringers across England to share their passion with millions of visitors who every year venture out to discover the treasures on their doorstep. To up the ante, we have set ourselves the challenge to open up 500 bell towers for the public to explore and encourage ringing bands up and down the country to offer special bell ringing experiences. In addition, we hope to create a collective bell ringing moment during the festival. The date and time are Thursday 8th September, 6pm.

Lloyd Grossman, Patron of Heritage Open Days, said: "Heritage Open Days provides the perfect opportunity to join together to bring to life the four-hundred year old tradition of English-style bell ringing for a huge audience. We are keen to recruit churches and Cathedrals to become involved in the festival by registering an event for visitors to discover their bell towers and to take part in hands on demonstrations."

Chris Mew, President of Central Council of Church Bell Ringers, said: "We are excited that bell ringers will join this annual celebration of our cultural treasures. There are 5,000 bell towers for change ringing and our challenge is to unlock the doors to 500 of them. What's more, some visitors may be able to see the bells, often locked away over our heads, discover our ringing forebears' achievements recorded on peal boards, learn about bell ringing and maybe have a go themselves."

To be take part in the challenge and to be counted, bell towers need to register with Heritage Open Days by 1st August 2016. By registering all participants will be able to access a free marketing support pack and their event will be listed at www.heritageopendays.org.uk from mid-July. For more information, visit the website or email info@heritageopendays.org.uk

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