



The Central Council of Church Bell Ringers

Working for ringers and ringing

Most ringers have heard of the Central Council (CC) but not many know much about what it is or what it does. This leaflet is the first of what we hope will be a series of occasional, not too serious, looks at the Council and its activities.



"CC?
What's
that - a
cricket
club?"

"No! It's
really
quite a
useful
organisation



Background – A little bit of background may be in order. Back in 1890 a well-known (and well-heeled) ringer from Derbyshire, Sir Arthur Percival Heywood, invited a crowd of prominent ringers from all over the country to attend a dinner in Birmingham. At this dinner he put forward the idea of a national organisation of ringers. It needs to be borne in mind that at this time, because of the Belfry Reform movement, many county and diocesan associations had recently been formed, but they were all working separately. Anyway, the following year the Council held its inaugural meeting in London and elected Sir Arthur as its first president. Today the Council represents 67 affiliated societies from around the world, about 90% of which are based in the British Isles. These societies elect just over 200 Council members to represent their interests; there are another two dozen life and honorary members elected by the Council to reflect their past contributions to its work and to provide specific skills or experience. The Council meets annually in locations around the British Isles and members are generally elected by associations for a period of three years. Although final decisions on ringing matters are formally made by the Council at these meetings, the vast majority of its ongoing work is carried out by its officers, 15 committees and the directors and staff of The Ringing World Ltd. The Council holds its AGM each May to review and decide on significant items of business. The AGM of The Ringing World Ltd is held on the same day, members of the Council being members of the Company.

"Loads and loads of money for bells"



A good year – 1999 was a very good one for the Council, culminating as it did in the completion of the two projects connected with the Millennium, which were largely the remit of the **Administrative** Committee. This committee comprises the chairmen of all the other committees together with a number of people elected directly. Many of these latter members have some sort of specialist knowledge. The first Millennium project was the **Ringing in the Millennium** scheme where a £3m Lottery Grant allocated by the Millennium Commission led to 150 separate bell restoration and augmentation projects and a total of £6.4m being spent. This was an "umbrella" project which could not have been undertaken without a suitable organisation available to allocate and control funding. The Council fulfilled that role, and special mention should be made of Stella Bianco and Lin Forbes who put in so much effort on behalf of ringers everywhere. We are specially proud that Stella received an MBE in the New Year's Honours for her contribution. We were also a little sad that Lin, as a US citizen, could not receive the same recognition.

World-wide ring – The other part of the Millennium effort was **Ring in 2000**, also led by the Council. Most readers of this newsletter will have taken part in this project which produced many new ringers and very good publicity both at local and national level. It is estimated that 95% of the bells in the UK were rung on 1 January, mainly for the 12 noon service. We are already considering a similar nationwide ring in 2002 (possibly to mark the 50th anniversary of the Queen's accession as suggested by Gordon Halls, a Council rep for the Derby DA who also received a well-earned MBE this year for his services to ringing). However, perhaps you can suggest an alternative occasion suitable for co-ordinated ringing?

There to help you – the Council can help you with advice on your bell installation, fund raising, training and a range of other services which will be described in future newsletters

Ringling Roadshow – In 1997 the first Ringling Roadshow was held at Knowle and proved to be a great success with over 1000 ringers visiting the many exhibits and entertainment. In 1999, Tewkesbury School was the venue for the second Roadshow and this proved even more popular with more than 2000 visitors. These Roadshows are organised by the Council's **PR Group** and are sponsored by the Council and The Ringing World Ltd and the next one will be held at Keele University near Stoke on Trent on Saturday 31 March 2001. The facilities at the University are excellent and many exhibitors have already booked space. We are also pleased that the Handbell Ringers of Great Britain expect to be represented at this Roadshow. The occasion is a great get-together of all ringers, both novice and experienced, and we look forward to seeing as many visitors as possible. (Details will be published in *The Ringing World* in due course or available from Wendy Daw (01782) 373071 or David Thorne (01327) 359551.)



Sources of information –

The Council's **Library**, the largest of its kind in the world, is housed near Hereford. The Librarian, John Eisel (01432 820336) is happy to provide information on all ringing matters. It is also possible for books to be obtained on loan.

The **Publications** Committee manages the financing, production and sales of a variety of books and pamphlets, including five new publications, two new editions and eleven reprints in 1999 alone. More than sixty titles are currently in print and can be obtained from: Central Council Publications, Mrs B Wheeler, 18 Bankside, MORPETH NE61 1XD. See the web page <http://www.cccb.org.uk/publicns.htm> for price list.



The Ringing World, published weekly, contains news and information for ringers and includes regular adverts for the many ringing publications available. Subscription details from the RW office (01788 822964) or try the website at <http://www.ringingworld.co.uk/>

The Ringing World Diary contains reference information, including contact details for Council officers and committees, ringing associations and guilds, a directory of suppliers, and blue lines and compositions from Doubles to Maximus. It is available from The RW office in September/October.

The Council's website – Thanks to the work of John Baldwin and the **Information and Communications Technology** Committee more and more information is becoming available on the Council's website at <http://www.cccbr.org.uk>

(Leaflet produced by the Public Relations Advisory Group for the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers – August 2000)