



**The Central Council of Church Bell Ringers**

**Working for ringers and ringing**

Registered  
Charity  
No: 270036

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## **Welcome . . .**

. . . to this the fourth occasional leaflet from the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers (usually known as the CC). This issue starts with an article by John Anderson, CC President until June 2002, and continues with an item on the Bell Restoration Funds Committee of the CC. Both of these articles are concerned with the vexed question of fundraising - do read them and make your views known.

## **Heritage matters**

Most of us ring for duty or pleasure or both without giving much thought to our heritage and how it should be preserved. In the past few years, as an officer of the Central Council, I have been exposed to heritage matters, both in disputes over what should or should not be done to bells and, more recently, in seeing the opportunities for funding and becoming part of the machinery which influences decisions.

Central government has appointed English Heritage (EH) to lead and support people in exploring and enjoying our historic environment and conserving it for the future. It has also set aside part of the National Lottery income to be distributed to heritage causes by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF).

CC representatives meet regularly with EH to discuss matters that affect bells and ringing. These meetings are one way in which we, the ringing fraternity, can influence the decision-making process. You may know that EH is consulted on all CofE faculty applications and is thus in a strong position to influence diocesan chancellors in their decisions on bell schemes. The meetings cover a wide range of issues such as helping to produce joint guidelines for preserving ancient bells and frames, radio aerials on churches and, perhaps most importantly, we discuss cases reported to us where ringers are unhappy about EH recommendations. Although there used to be a significant number of these, I am happy to say that we have not had any drawn to our attention for over a year now.

CC representatives recently met with Judy Cligman, Deputy Director of Policy for the HLF, and in preparing for the meeting we decided we would need to define the ringing heritage. In the past any money made available to ringing by HLF and EH has been for work on bells and bell installations and, since they are the most costly items, this is still likely to be the case in future. However, we decided that the

definition should cover more than just the fabric and took the line that ringing in all its aspects is our heritage.

Judy explained that a review within HLF and EH would lead to a new Strategic Plan 2002-7. She said that the scheme previously operated jointly by the two funding bodies had not provided much money for bells because of the high priority given to structural repairs to church buildings. A new scheme, again jointly managed with EH, called Grants for Places of Worship, will be launched this year. There will also be separate funding for contents of buildings, including bells, for schemes up to £50k each.

Using our broad definition of ringing heritage we explored with Judy the opportunity for funding education and training and recording information, such as the National Bells Register currently being piloted, and received encouragement to pursue projects and apply for funding. CC officers are following up all these points.

### **Bell Restoration Funds Committee**

Like many other CC committees we have been thinking about our future work and direction. As long as it is felt useful we will continue to offer support to those who need advice about bell restoration fundraising, but many of the CC's affiliated societies (YOUR Guild or Association) want us to help them raise money so that there are funds available when local restoration projects are contemplated. We have lots of ideas, including some summarised here, and we want YOUR views.

Although the CC is a charity it does not spend a lot of effort on fundraising. This is not wrong, it is simply that fundraising has not previously been identified as a mainstream activity. Should it be so now? What might this involve? We need to be careful not to compete for the same money as local appeals, but there must be many opportunities for fundraising nationally, thus accessing funds not available locally.

As well needing money for restoration work, there is also a need for more ringers. There is little point in restoring all the unringable bells around the world if there is no one to ring them. There has to be a focus on raising money for training and encouraging youngsters to come into ringing. This would probably mean development of the Ringing Centres programme as well as PR work to make people aware of the attractions of ringing

The CC has never had a Patron. Most leading charities have a Patron, who lends weight to help the charity raise money. Should the CC have one? What sort of person should it be? Possibilities might include a senior churchman (the new Archbishop of Canterbury?), royalty, a pop idol or sports personality, or an

influential business person. Do we know anyone like this already who might be suitable and even be a ringer?

We need better data than we currently have about the need for money. Whenever we approach any organisation, such as the HLF, to request funding we are asked for statistics. We can provide many of course - how many churches there are in the UK with bells and how many ringers there are. But we have more trouble with questions like how many unringables there are. Where are the greatest shortages of ringers? How much money would be needed to put ringers and bells in place where there are currently none? Collecting this data is resource-intensive in itself. We might need money to undertake such a task, and it would not be right to embark on such work without being fairly confident that the CC would support the next step of using the data to attract more funding.

There is no doubt that there are funding sources that remain relatively untapped and could yield quite substantial sums if handled in a systematic and professional manner. Many of these sources would not respond to approaches by guilds, associations or individual projects, thus avoiding the potential criticism that CC fundraising might cut across local efforts.

### **Useful contacts**

- If you would like to know more about English Heritage ring 020 7973 3000, and for the Heritage Lottery Fund 020 7591 6000, or visit their websites, <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk> and <http://www.hlf.org.uk>
- If you have queries relating to funding of bell schemes contact Kate Flavell, Chairman, Bell Restoration Funds Committee (020 8942 1662 or (preferably) [pakf@kingsave32.freeserve.co.uk](mailto:pakf@kingsave32.freeserve.co.uk)).
- If you wish to discuss a difficulty you are having with EH write to Chris Povey, Chairman, Towers and Belfries Committee (Three Ways, Wormington, Broadway WR12 7NL [orcmpovey@3wayswormington.freeserve.co.uk](mailto:orcmpovey@3wayswormington.freeserve.co.uk)).
- For all other queries contact the CC Secretary, Ian Oram (01403 269743 or [ihoram@hotmail.com](mailto:ihoram@hotmail.com)).
- for more information on the Central Council (and indeed a whole host of other ringing stuff) visit the CC website at [www.cccbr.org.uk](http://www.cccbr.org.uk).

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