

People News Inspirations

The call is now out for volunteers to ring for peace on Armistice Day 2018

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A campaign that links past, present and future is not only helping keep a traditional British art alive, but is also a poignant tribute to the terrible losses of life of a century ago.

To mark the final year of the First World War centenary commemorations, 'Ringing Remembers' is recruiting new bellringers in honour of people dying in the First World War.

On November 11, church bells will ring out in unison from churches and cathedrals in villages, towns and cities across the country - an echo of the spontaneous ringing of bells a century before to celebrate the Armistice.

Jason Crouch, a ringer at St John the Baptist's church, Westbourne, said: "This year will be the centenary of the end of World War I. Many bell ringers joined the war effort and more than 50 Sussex ringers lost their lives."

Just after the war, the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers wrote to all bell towers to compile a roll of honour and reported 1,000 ringers lost to the war. A century on, this list has been reviewed, leading to the discovery that an additional 400 bell ringers died in service.

Jason said: "In total, 1,400 bell ringers lost their lives: a loss to them, their families and to communities."

"Compared with the rest



All ages at a ringing practice at St John the Baptist's church, Westbourne

of the county, the Chichester area lost fewer ringers in the carnage of war. Those that fell locally have been remembered in their towers and in the ringing world."

Ringers include A Blackman, from Arundel tower, FWJ Allfrey from Billingshurst tower, JF Jervis from Heene, J Daughtry from Pulborough and WH Hollman, also from Pulborough, among others.

Jason said: "In memory of the 1,400 bellringers

throughout the whole country who died in the First World War, a new national campaign was launched on Remembrance Sunday 2017 to recruit 1,400 new bell ringers to participate in the 2018 centenary ringing."

He said: "This is a call-out to all of us and an opportunity for everyone - a chance to make the wonderful, ancient tradition of bell ringing open to all."

"Join the project and become a bell ringer today in

memory of the 1,400 who lost their lives."

The 'Ringing Remembers' campaign is run by the Department of Communities and Local Government in collaboration with the Big Ideas Community Interest Company and the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers. To find out more, read about the Sussex County Association of Change Ringers at www.scacr.org or write to ringingremembers@bigideascompany.org

A team activity for all ages

The evocative sound of change ringing has been a part of the English landscape since the 17th century. Jason Crouch, a ringer at St John the Baptist's church, Westbourne, said peals of bells have been used since then to raise the alarm, for solemnity, as a call to worship and for celebrations. Jason said: "When the bells rang out on November 11, 1918, they announced the end of the most catastrophic war the world had yet seen. "At the time, bells were at the heart of the community, marking events of great significance and communicating to people long before modern technology connected us."

"Bellringing has always had a much wider function than its role in the church, but most of us today are not aware of its broad and inclusive service." In a nutshell, bell ringing creates music by altering the order in which bells sound. A very-low-cost team activity, it is for people of all ages and walks of life.

Jason said: "Although some ringers are members of the church where they ring the bells, ringers can be of any faith or none. Many consider ringing to be their contribution to church life; others do it for pure pleasure and the company it brings. "Bellringing is an excellent

way to keep both mind and body fit and active. Ringers are part of an inclusive and extensive community - at their local tower, within the county, across the UK and even internationally."

There are opportunities across West Sussex: "Each tower has its own practice night and the band will help you progress from beginner all the way through to more advanced levels."

Jason said the best way to get into bellringing is to contact the Sussex County Association of Change Ringers (SCACR).

"There will be an opportunity for you to have a go under supervision and talk to the tower captain and other ringers. As you master each step, you will progress through basic bell-handling on your own, then ringing rounds with other bells, call-changes, 'hunting' and then basic methods."

"Everyone is welcome - there is no upper age limit. With regular practice and the occasional training course, very cheap, you will soon be ringing for services, weddings and other special occasions. Before long, you will be hooked and encouraging the next cohort of new ringers and helping share your knowledge and enthusiasm with them."

See www.scacr.org or email Secretary@SCACR.org.

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