



Campaign Theme

Behind the Bells

Discover the People, Skills and Stories Keeping Britain's Bells Ringing

Church bells are one of the most recognisable sounds of our towns and villages. They mark weddings and funerals, celebrate national occasions, call communities to worship, and have echoed across the country for centuries. Yet few people have the opportunity to discover what happens behind the scenes—or meet the volunteers who make it all possible.

This year's Heritage Open Days campaign invites churches, Associations, Guilds, and towers to take visitors **Behind the Bells**, opening doors to the ringing chamber and sharing the fascinating stories that lie beyond the tower steps.

The campaign celebrates bellringing not simply as part of our architectural heritage, but as a **living tradition** that continues to thrive today. Every practice night, Sunday service, wedding, and community celebration is made possible by dedicated volunteers who generously give their time to learn, teach, and preserve this unique skill.

As you welcome visitors, consider sharing more than the history of your bells. Introduce them to the people behind the ropes. Explain how ringing is learned, demonstrate the teamwork involved, and tell the stories that make your tower unique. Whether it is a family that has rung together for generations, a new learner who has recently discovered bellringing, or a restoration project that brought the community together, these personal stories help bring our heritage to life.

Heritage Open Days provides a wonderful opportunity to challenge common misconceptions. Many visitors are surprised to discover that no musical experience is required, that ringing is open to people of all ages and backgrounds, and that today's bellringers come from every walk of life. A warm welcome and an engaging conversation can be just as memorable as climbing the tower itself.

Throughout your publicity and events, we encourage you to celebrate the theme by showcasing:

- **The People** – the volunteers, teachers, learners, and communities who keep bells ringing.
- **The Skills** – the teamwork, concentration, craftsmanship, and traditions passed from one generation to the next.
- **The Stories** – the history of your bells, memorable occasions, local traditions, and the role your tower plays within the wider community.

Every tower has its own story to tell. By inviting visitors *Behind the Bells*, we can inspire curiosity, strengthen connections with our communities, and celebrate the living heritage of church bellringing for generations to come.