

Ringling Remembers- Project Update

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(Christopher O’Mahony writes)

Last month Caroline Stockmann, our Public Relations Officer, wrote regarding broad plans for commemorating the 100th anniversary of the end of the Great War (RW p 1103). That article coincided with a media notice from the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) announcing plans for national bellringing on November 11 2018, along with support for a parallel bellringing recruitment campaign.

www.gov.uk/government/news/nations-bells-to-ring-out-together-to-mark-armistice-centenary

The Context

More than 1,400 of our bellringing community laid down their lives for peace in the “war to end all wars”. Our fallen ringers came from all walks of life, as we ringers still do today. For 2018, government wishes to engage with us in an official capacity to symbolically replace those ringers who gave their lives 100 years ago.

Why is this appropriate?

In the words of Alan Regin, Steward of the CCCBR Rolls of Honour:

“If it were me I think I would have been moved that I had been remembered, I often think when visiting a grave in a cemetery in rural France that I might well be the first person to visit that specific grave and that I am there as another bell ringer visiting one that went before me. Personally I think that if there was a possibility of recruiting another person to follow in my footsteps because of what I did or what happened to me then I would be not be upset by that.”

The Challenge

Following the media notice on November 11 2017, and armed with a prototype email address and webform, we have received around 80 “learn to ring” enquiries. Each of these enquiries has been acknowledged, and we are “matching” them to suitable towers / trainers. However, 80 recruits doesn’t get us very close to our target, and so we are mobilising resources on a number of fronts.

The Big Ideas team, which specialises in community participation projects, is our campaign partner for the “Ringling Remembers” project. Their design team is working up a brand and image suite, of which this “sneak peak” draft poster is an example. This suite will be used in further public relations efforts, and will also be available for use by individual towers and guilds to assist local recruitment.

Current plans for further publicity include a “New Year: New Hobby” message, and publicity to align with the centenary of the Spring Offensive of 1918.

Resources

It's clear that a project of this scale requires appropriate resourcing, and it's our desire to support local, national and international recruiting efforts as much as we can, thus:

- The campaign directs enquiries to a single point of contact. This is already in place (details below);
- We have a central database already set up. This helps us track all enquiries, helps us to align learners with appropriate towers / teachers, and provides a data "dashboard" for the project;
- By end of January we intend to launch a "recruitment platform", which will bring together the central database with a simple website using the branding suite;
- By the end of January: Leaflets and posters available to support local recruitment – designed for church porches, village notice boards, school and community leafletting and the like;
- By the end of January: Editorial and graphics available to assist in generating content for local media;
- For Armistice 2018: Certificates and badges will be available for all "Ringing Remembers" learners.

CCCBR and ART are on hand to support "on boarding" of Ringing Remembers recruits. This will include support for regional events (eg ringing schools), and support for the development of more ringing teachers.

We've assembled a dedicated team of ringers to work on "Ringing Remembers". Vicki Chapman has accepted the role as Project Coordinator. Vicki is a CCCBR rep for the Essex Association, and currently serves on the Public Relations Committee. Vicki is ably supported by leading lights in PR, Education, ICT and ART – all with skills and experience appropriate to the project.

Next steps

What YOU can do:

Sign up your learners! – **Every learner** throughout this campaign year is entitled to join "Ringing Remembers" –
Ask them to enter their details here:

- ringingremembers@bigideascompany.org
- www.bigideascompany.org/project/ringingremembers/

Advertise this call as widely as possible! – church porches, village notice boards, schools, scouts, guides, D of E, U3A, parish magazines, local media / press, etc.

In conclusion

This project gives us the opportunity to raise the profile of ringing and develop a relationship with government and community networks to provide new bell ringers. Ringing Remembers is a poignant and significant programme which appropriately acknowledges the sacrifices made by so many, aspiring to a living legacy for ringing. We commend it to you.

Christopher O'Mahony



Ringing for Peace
Armistice 100 