



# Rutland Bell-Ringers

## Newsletter

### July 2020

#### Coronavirus (COVID 19) Return to Ringing

The CCCBR has been working with the CofE to establish a way forward to being able to ring again.

The Peterborough Diocesan Guild has been working up a risk assessment template and example prompts to support you in this. These should be available soon.

The initial announcement regarding a return to ringing can be found on the Central Council website:

<https://cccbr.org.uk/2020/06/25/returning-to-service-ringing/>

**The message has been copied and can be read on pages 2 & 3.**

**The full guidance on returning to ringing can be found here:**

<https://cccbr.org.uk/coronavirus/>

As of 23rd June, the CCCBR has had specific confirmation that we are allowed to access towers to get bells ready for ringing. Please see the checklist for some key areas that may need addressing.

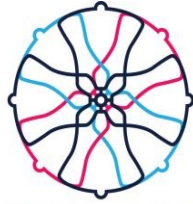
The Cathedrals and Church Buildings Division of the Archbishops' Council have also confirmed that for jobs that cannot safely be done by one person, two or three should enter the bell tower to undertake them, following social distancing guidance if they are not from the same household.

So we can all have a safe return to ringing a set of 6 guidance notes have been produced by CCCBR and will be reviewed monthly. You should find a complete set attached as a PDF with this newsletter.

- |   |                                                       |                                                                          |
|---|-------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | <a href="#">What are we worried about?</a>            | Recommended background reading for all.                                  |
| 2 | <a href="#">Making your tower as safe as possible</a> | Suggested for Tower captains and steeple-keepers.                        |
| 3 | <a href="#">Checklist for recommencing ringing</a>    | Summary for steeple-keepers.                                             |
| 4 | <a href="#">Running safe ringing sessions</a>         | Guidance for Tower Captains and Ringing Masters                          |
| 5 | <a href="#">Can I go ringing safely?</a>              | Considerations for individual ringers.                                   |
| 6 | <a href="#">How bell ringers are assessing risk</a>   | To be given to incumbents to explain how we are making our ringing safe. |

**Items for the next newsletter to Sue Webster**  
**by Friday 31st July**  
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[www.rutlandbellringing.org](http://www.rutlandbellringing.org)  
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THE CENTRAL COUNCIL OF CHURCH  
**BELL RINGERS**

## **Returning to service ringing**

The scene is set for a cautious return to ringing. It won't be all the bells, it won't be all the ringers, but it will be enough for ringing to be part of the resumption of church services and remind people which day is Sunday.

Returning to ringing is a subject dear to all our hearts. Simulators, Ringing Room and Zoom meetings are just not the same although we should applaud all those initiatives. On 12th June bellringing appeared in a list of activities which cannot take place in churches. That made us determined to find out who was advising government so that we could make our case. All the hard work being done on guidance and risk assessments is useless if the keys to the ringing room door have been taken away.

I am pleased to say we have now made a lot of progress. The people with the metaphorical keys to our ringing room doors are Mark Betson, convenor of the Church of England's Recovery Group, and Brendan McCarthy, the Church's Adviser for Medical Ethics, Health, and Social Care Policy. On Monday this week, Mark Regan, Phil Barnes and I had a Zoom call with them to position ringing in the church recovery plan. Note this is Church of England only initially. We intend to have similar discussions in Wales and Scotland and provide what support we can to those in other countries. Hopefully some of this guidance is useful anyway and can be adapted to local circumstances.

Our goal for the meeting was just to establish the Council as the trusted advisor to the CofE team and hence government on bell ringing. We had sent them our suite of six guidance notes, which have now been published on the Central Council website which they were very happy to approve.

Having not really considered bell ringing specifically before, they are 100% committed to making ringing part of the return of church activities. In the first instance though it must be just that. Our return will be about Sunday ringing as part of the church's mission, not practice or self-indulgence, though they understood our longer-term desire and need to resume that as well. Mark Betson said it would be really good to get ringing going again, reminding everyone which day is Sunday, and letting the bells proclaim that the church is open. He wanted "a package of good news" to be launched together.

Brendan McCarthy was particularly cautious of any misinterpretation of the drop in the UK Government's social distancing rule from 2m to 1m. He cited all the guidance coming to him that 2m was not sacrosanct, but that going from 2m to 1m represents a 10 fold increase in risk, and that he would remain cautious saying "Our first job is not to kill anyone." Our return to ringing will therefore be cautious, socially distanced ringing, for a very limited period of 15 minutes, and only for services.

Mark and Brendan had meetings with Public Health England and UK Government that afternoon and this week. They promised to include ringing in the plans and coordinate with us. We advised that we would need a couple of weeks to get restarted, allowing for maintenance inspections, and they would clear such access with the Director of Cathedrals and Church Buildings. They were happy to link our Guidance Notes from the main Churchcare website where their primary Coronavirus guidance sits.

Ringing three or four bells for 15 minutes for a service is not what keeps most of us ringing. The novelty is going to wear off quite soon. It could be a long time before peals or even quarters are possible, and we

won't be able to do any teaching. However it is an essential part of the strategy for us getting ringing going again that the church values our contribution, and we have managed to get them to include us in their plans and see ringing as a positive that we want it to be. If we do not get bells ringing for Sunday service in this first phase of resumption then it will slow down later phases of opening up. It will reinforce the impression of us that some in the church have.

We don't know exactly which day this will be from yet, although some Dioceses have said they expect to have services after 4th July. We received specific confirmation that access to towers to check bell installations ready for ringing was approved, provided it is done safely by more than one person, socially distanced. We therefore need to try and find ways of making this positive. Perhaps it is the opportunity to get ringing going in all those churches which rarely have their bells rung at all. It could be the start of something for those churches.

Finally I would like to thank all my colleagues on the Central Council Executive and Workgroups (SMWG in particular) who have worked very hard in the last couple of weeks (and Giles Blundell for a dose of inspiration).

The full guidance can be found here <https://cccbr.org.uk/coronavirus/>

Simon Linford  
*President, CCCBR*

“The Central Council is working with the Church of England to include bell ringing in their plans to resume worship, and intends to have similar discussions with the other jurisdictions in which there are bells.

The pace of returning to ringing will disappoint many bell ringers who are missing the activity that is so much part of our lives. The Church is also missing the contribution that bell ringers make and wants ringing to resume.

The Church is however very sensitive to the safety of its volunteers and the relaxation of restrictions will not necessarily be as rapid as it is in certain other settings where other factors are under consideration. It is the start of the road back to normality. “

[www.cccbr.org.uk/coronavirus/](http://www.cccbr.org.uk/coronavirus/)

**And from Helen Allton**  
**PDGCBR Secretary**

**Training**

This week's training video is to help you practice your listening skills. This is a simply presented video that allows you to rewind and check your answers.

<https://youtu.be/NP3v0cEOuaE>

**Brain training**

For quizzzy Monday, I thought it was someone else's turn to set the quiz - and the people at Loughborough Bellfoundry Trust have luckily obliged.

Set by their trustees, I think you can say these have a bell ringing slant to them. Good luck! I have spent most of the week puzzling over the bonus question...

<https://loughboroughbellfoundry.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/ringers-quiz-loughborough-bellfoundry-trust.pdf>

**Holiday idea needed?**

And now for something completely different. The Churches Conservation Trust owns and maintains a number of churches, some with bells. They also offer "champing" holidays (that's camping in a church) at some of their sites: [www.champing.co.uk](http://www.champing.co.uk)

Helen Allton

Secretary: Peterborough Diocesan Guild of Church Bellringers

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**CHURCH BELLS on SUNDAY**

BBC Radio 4 Sunday at 05.43. Monday 00.45

[www.bbc.co.uk/sounds](http://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds)

**5th July** : The Parish Church of Our Lady and St Nicholas, Pier Head, in Liverpool.

The present ring of twelve bells with a tenor of forty one and three quarter hundredweight was cast and hung by John Taylor of Loughborough for the opening of the new church in October 1952 following wartime bombing in December 1940 which in fact had left the tower intact. Hear them ringing Pudsey Surprise Maximus.

**12th July** : Christ Church, Radyr, Cardiff.

The recording comes from Christ Church, Radyr in Cardiff. The bells were dedicated in 1912 and there is a ring of eight, with the tenor weighing twelve hundredweight. We hear them ringing Stedman triples.