

Northern News



The Northern District Newsletter - May 2020

"Strange times" we are all saying to each other. And to be fair, not a lot of ringing! The Central Council's guidance of 5th May to ringers is that currently it is still too early for any return to ringing and that the current suspension of all ringing of any kind should remain in place.

Despite this, we still thought we should stay in touch with a newsletter. Just to say "hello", share a few things, update you on others and generally just to stay connected.

So read on, enjoy and feel connected!

Dates for Your Diary

Don't forget to vote online by Saturday 23rd May!

Check that you have received your emails from Rob Lane, Master of the Sussex County Association of Change Ringers. Look in your junk mail if doesn't mean anything to you! The annual report is here [Download Annual Report](#) [the password is in the email - if you can't find it, contact sec-north@scacr.org]

To vote, you should have received an email which contains an individual link to allow you to carry out the following:

- Ratify the election of Association Officers following nominations at the ADMs
- Vote to elect Alan Collings as an Honorary Life Member.

The link is unique and allows one vote per member. Once submitted the link expires to prevent multiple votes being cast. Votes can be cast online between Saturday 9th May and Saturday 23rd May. Members who have not provided a working email address should have received a paper voting form instead; contact Northern District Secretary Steph Pendlebury with any queries.

Updates from around the District

District ADM and Committee 1st February 2020, Lindfield

This year Lindfield were the hosts for our annual Northern District General Meeting, with Rob Lane in the chair ensuring smooth running of the meeting. The opportunity to ring the new Lindfield bells, and the promise of a slap-up tea afterwards ensured a good turn out from ringers in the district.

The committee voted in is as follows:

Secretary	Steph Pendlebury
Ringling Master	Elaine Farrow
District Committee Members	Susie Bowen, Rosie Gregory, Julie Quinn, Richard Pendlebury, Chris Westwood
Bell Restoration	Simon Alford

The meeting paid their respects to ringers we have lost in the district during the last 12 months. The names of new ringers were read out, but none had been able to attend.

Simon Alford updated the meeting on contacts with bell towers needing help. These were Lindfield with the installation of their new bells, Balcombe, Cowfold, Danehill, and Nutley wanting to bring their single bell back into service.

Events for the year were discussed, but sadly most of these have not materialised due to the lockdown. Only the New Members Event occurred.

A service was conducted by Canon James Clarke, and generous hospitality and teas provided by Lindfield Tower.

Thanks to Chris Westwood for article and photos



Recruitment & Retention Workshop, 29th February, Hurstpierpoint

This excellent half day workshop focused on the ART (Association of Ringing Teachers) Recruitment Toolbox and the Ten Point Plan. To find out more about the individual parts of the plan visit www.smartringer.org/resource/4689. However, here are some of the practical tips I brought home, which will be useful when we can all ring again.

R&R 'for short' needs Leadership and support from your Band. Some of the suggestions can be actioned/planned during the current Lockdown ...

- 🔺 The key to Recruitment is to get volunteers through the tower door. Make a Plan and decide whether you wish to recruit 1, 2 or 3 more and the age group, bearing in mind who is going to do the teaching, the time involved and about safeguarding. When and where (another tower?) would training take place (with another ringer present) - Saturday mornings, 2/3 evenings per week to get started?
- 🔺 Check your church website. What does it say about bellringing?
- 🔺 Is it lively and welcoming? Does it need updating? Set up a special email address instead of giving your own maybe?
- 🔺 Write a regular contribution to your Parish Magazine or Pew News about why the bells are going to be rung e.g. a wedding, visiting ringers, association event, invite people to come and watch etc. What a pity we couldn't ring for Easter and VJ Day this year.
- 🔺 Establish a regular and good relationship with the PCC and Clergy
- 🔺 Run a game or activity at fetes/fairs
- 🔺 Hold a Tower Open event and try this more than once, twice or thrice even.
- 🔺 Have new houses been built in the Parish? Design a leaflet to be delivered.
- 🔺 Is bellringing included on the local 'Things to Do' list on local websites and Facebook?
- 🔺 Visit other tower websites for ideas and get ideas from YouTube video clips
- 🔺 Maybe ask your local committee about finding someone who can help to teach a recruit(s), whether group sessions are held for learners, or enrol on an ART course www.ringingteachers.org Or at least buy one of their DVDs!
- 🔺 Publicity: visit <https://cccbr.org.uk/resources/publicity-material/>
- 🔺 Visit the Sussex ringers website Learning to Ring pages: www.scacr.org

- 🔔 Retention involves interest in bellringing and explaining the jargon we use, enthusiasm and keeping the learner involved when they are ready to attend practice night with little targets, rather than only sitting and watching. Involve all the ringers in the band.
- 🔔 Arrange a visit to another tower to learn about the Fellowship of Bellringing.

**** Remember: Recruitment and Retention is for Life and not just for Christmas! ****

Many thanks to Stella Bianco, Cowfold for this summary.

New Members' Welcome event, Saturday 7th March, Cowfold



As a new-ish member (I have been ringing for about 2 years) I was particularly interested to try the bells at Cowfold. I have lived in either East or West Sussex for some 50 years and have driven through Cowfold hundreds of times and, in all that time, I never spotted the Church! I think though I may have a reasonable excuse, the church is hidden away behind the old houses which run along the A272 in the centre of the village. It's in a particularly delightful and characterful spot, surrounded on two sides by the back entrances/gardens of those old

houses. Once in the churchyard you wouldn't know the A272 was there at all, it seemed so peaceful.

The tower has a ring of 6 bells rung from the ground floor, which I would describe as a sweet sounding, lightweight ring, with a slightly long draught and rope guides. As a new-ish ringer I'm reticent to stretch my abilities on unfamiliar bells (when visiting other towers for the first time I have broken a stay at one, when ringing up, and had a rope slip its wheel at another) so I happily, and I admit quite lazily, I just rang rounds and call changes. As it happens, I had no problems handling the three bells I tried at Cowfold, despite my short handstroke, and the slightly long draught did not seem to make ringing either difficult or daunting.

There was an excellent turn-out of members, experienced and otherwise, for the event and it was a useful opportunity to catch up with ringers I already knew and to meet other "newbies" with whom I could share "newbie" experiences, always quite comforting! Local ringers were also helpful in explaining the interesting history of the church and the fantastic floor mounted brass they have there.

As usual at ringing events, there was an amazing array of cakes! I remember the Victoria sponge that day looked absolutely fantastic and was very popular. That reminds me, I must learn to make one of those, when (oh when?) I can get hold of some flour.

Thanks again to everyone for hosting and organizing the event, it was a lovely morning and I hope I have the opportunity to ring there again (or indeed anywhere!) in the not too distant future.

With thanks to Karin Freer

In Memoriam

Peter Dewar, who started learning to ring at Coleman's Hatch and was part of the 'Ringing Remembers' numbers, sadly passed away on the morning of Wednesday 6th May. He had been admitted to the Princess Royal Hospital at Haywards Heath due to suffering from Motor Neurone Disease but as I understand, also contracted Covid-19, whilst hospitalized.

Peter, unfortunately, due to his declining health, eventually diagnosed as MND, never fully mastered the 'art' of campanology, so hadn't been proposed/elected as a member of SCACR.

However, Peter was most proud to have received his 'Ringing Remembers' badge, which he wore with honour when he joined in with the service ringing at Coleman's Hatch for Armistice Sunday 2018, something he aspired to do, in memory of his Uncle.

Contributed by Rosalind Cowsill

What are Northern District Towers doing to stay connected?

Update from Worth

We have set up a WhatsApp group for all the ringers so that we can keep in touch.

With all this nice weather, we would have been hoping that work on the spire could have commenced by now. The shingles need replacing and the stonework needs repointing (at the very least) to prevent further water ingress into the ringing room. If you've been there you may know how sodden the South wall is. Hopefully, work can start soon. In the meantime, I suspect that birds have got into the spire and amongst the bells as we have not been ringing, so who knows what we will find when we are allowed to go back. You may also have seen that all the downpipes on the church were stolen at Christmas!

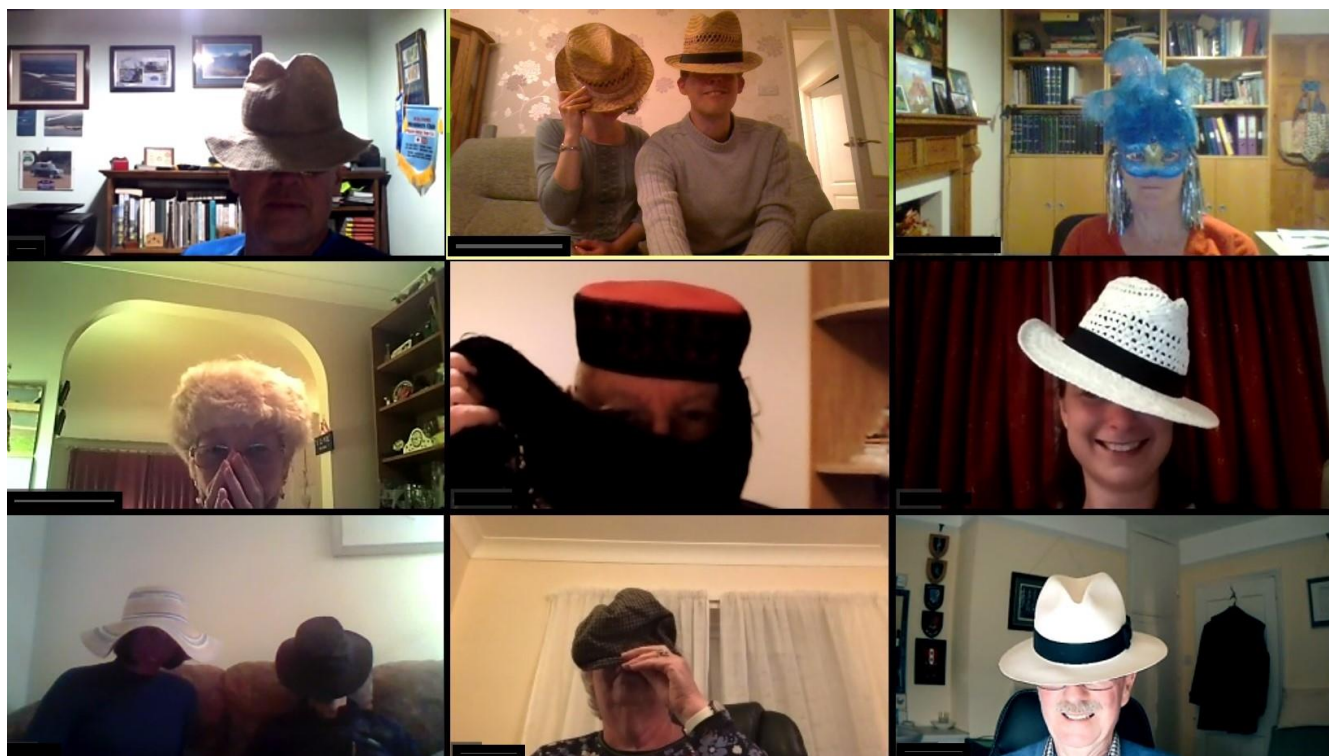
Update from Cowfold

Stella Bianca emails the Cowfold ringers and friends from other towers who ring with us, every Sunday with the link to the BBC "Bells on Sunday" recording and invariably have something to add - sometimes one or two even reply! E.g. leading up to VE day and today we discussed "firing" because the sound clip was Westminster Abbey bells firing for VJ Day in 2015.

Update from Rudgwick

Susan Wightman tells us that at Rudgwick, the bell ringers are keeping in touch through emails. Not all the ringers have the facility to use Zoom etc but we are all trying our best to speak to each other.

Can you guess which band was staying in touch by enjoying a Virtual Pub Evening?



Update from Lindfield

Lindfield has been exchanging weekly emails with one another to ensure that all is well - and thankfully all has been, reports Sarah Beeston! People have shared ideas about good walks, sent pictures of working in the garden, reported completion of numerous jigsaws and even announced the birth of a new grandchild. One has reported ringing virtual peals or quarter peals.

We were delighted that a quarter peal of Grandsire Triples was able to be rung on 6th March 2020 shortly before the lockdown. This was rung immediately after the funeral of Jean Smith (1929-2020), widow of former tower captain A. Edward Smith and conducted by our present tower captain. (Details in RW 20th March 2020)

And here are some more ideas about ways to engage (remotely)

Can't go ringing, can't get down the pub after practice, but still want to discuss and hear about all things ringing with like-minded people? There are a whole range of ways to interact with ringers - locally, nationally, and internationally!

Ringing World - the weekly magazine for bell ringers, since 1911, available in print or electronic editions. You may be used to having a browse through your tower's copy while sitting out during practice, or perhaps you've never had a chance to read it! News and stories from across the ringing community (and the world), ringing-related puzzles, helpful information about maintenance of bells and fittings, letters, "not down the pub", teaching tips, pub quiz, and a fantastic column by "the accidental ringer". *Ringing World* is currently offering a new subscriber discount (25% off all individual subscriptions with the code RW2020), and a new 6-month online-only subscription; more info here: bb.ringingworld.co.uk/subscribe.php.

Facebook - there are lots of bellringing-related groups and pages, including the [SCACR's own members' group](#), [Bell ringers](#), [Bellringing Learners](#), [Ringing Remembers](#), and the Central Council's [group](#) and [page](#). For those less familiar with Facebook, you *follow* "pages" to get updates from an organisation and *take part in* "groups" by posting your own content and reacting to or commenting on others' posts. Don't have a Facebook account? No problem, [sign up for free here](#) (be sensible - only include personal data that you are comfortable sharing).

"Fun with Bells" podcast - from tips on how to improve your striking, to interviews with ringers such as the Ringing Remembers co-ordinator Vicki Chapman. The [latest episode](#) is about lifting the ban on ringing at the end of World War II.

Online group video calls - there are several free platforms that you can use, for example [Skype](#), [Zoom](#), [WhatsApp](#) and [Google Meet](#). These all allow you to have online get-togethers with multiple people - all you need is a smartphone, tablet or computer with a microphone (and preferably a camera) and an internet connection (best used over Wi-Fi as the video will gobble up mobile data). Several towers are using online video calls to have weekly virtual "pub nights". If you have any questions about how to use these, please [get in touch with Steph](#) or [Richard](#), who will do their best to help you!

Remote ringing platforms

Due to the time lag on video conferencing tools (such as those described above), it's extremely difficult to ring handbells over the internet. For those ringers not lucky enough to have handbells or mini-rings (or anyone else to ring with) at home, some clever and innovative people have quickly developed various online platforms for virtual ringing with other people, anywhere in the world. If you want to give these a try, you'll need to use an online chat or video call service alongside, to organise the ringing.

Ringling Room: this is a website for "distributed ringing", for tower bell or handbell ringing. When you visit the Ringling Room, you can start a tower by typing in a tower name. The easiest way to invite other ringers to join your virtual tower is to share the URL with them. Once you're in the virtual tower, the bells may be rung either by clicking them or with specific keyboard hotkeys, all detailed in the help box available at the top left of the room. A list of ringers present is displayed on the left, and individuals can be assigned to one or more bells. Patience and a good sense of humour are recommended as you all get used to the new way of interacting with bells and with each other! See the [Ringling World article](#) (10th April, p 356; subscription required), written by the developers, for more information.

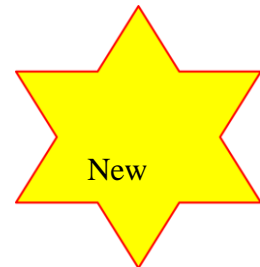
Handbell Stadium: the [8th May edition of Ringling World](#) features an article about the development of this platform, however I have failed to find out anything useful about how it works, or how to access it! If any readers are better informed, or indeed have actually used Handbell Stadium, please do send an article about it to news-north@scacr.org for the next edition of Northern News...

Muster: allows people to ring together by connecting multiple copies of Abel across a network, aimed at handbell ringing. Bells are "rung" by pressing two keys on the keyboard. Everyone ringing needs a copy of [Abel](#) and a copy of Muster on a Windows computer.

Thanks to Steph Pendlebury for this great effort.

Why, When, Where and How? Interviews with...

This is a new feature to turn the spotlight on individual ringers. This time our intrepid reporter, Steph Pendlebury, shines the light on David Smith and Janet Cullen.



David Smith

David was Master of SCACR 1973-75, in his late 20s, following Reg Johnson.



1. When and where did you start ringing?

I learned to ring at the age of 10 (1955), taught to handle a bell by Ernie Wadey at Lower Beeding, with 2-3 other local boys. I progressed as far as Grandsire Doubles, learning it all by numbers - which has stood me in good stead for keeping people right when conducting. At the time, the band was all male, and mostly old men (or seemed so!). Practices only took place during winter months, as most of the ringers worked in the fields during the summer. So, for the first 6-7 years of my ringing life, I just rang Grandsire Doubles by numbers.

Then the family moved to Broadbridge Heath; my father knew George Francis, a member of the Warnham band, so I joined the Warnham band - which was a much younger group of ringers, with 7-8 youngsters my age or younger. George became my tutor and mentor in all things ringing. The young ringers travelled about by bicycle, ringing at several different local towers, encouraged by George. When I was 18 years old, 6 of the youngsters rang a peal at Lower Beeding - the youngest band in Sussex to ring a peal. Partly due to a lucky chance, I got into ringing ridiculously complicated Spliced Surprise peals! And I met my wife, Jenny, through ringing.

2. Where do you ring now? Horsham

3. *How did you get into ringing?*

I was introduced to it by my father, also a ringer, who rang at Lower Beeding when the family moved there.

4. *What do you like most about ringing?*

It's an activity that doesn't recognise age, or social standing, or other life experience - you are all equal and can mix, not just in the ringing room but also through the social activities. I also enjoy the challenge of learning things well, ringing them well, and conducting - there's always something new to learn. And ringing tours and outings - the opportunity to travel round the country (and other countries!) and see different places and ring on different bells; and you're always welcome wherever you go!

5. *What do you find most challenging?*

My biggest challenge at the moment is failing eyesight! Previously it was creating new, interesting methods, and composing peals and quarter peals of them - a very enjoyable challenge.

6. *Who do you get inspiration from?*

Many people, particularly George Francis.

Janet Cullen

Janet started learning to ring in 2018, joining the Ringing Remembers campaign.



1. *When and where did you start ringing?*

I started ringing on 7th June 2018, on my first visit to the tower at Rusper.

2. *Where do you ring now?* Rusper

3. *How did you get into ringing?*

This came about because my youngest daughter was getting married at Rusper, and so I went on the church website to find the contact to book the bells and it was Elaine, who I've known for years (she always used to pester me to come and have a go!). Elaine said, "Of course we'll ring for your daughter, on one condition - that you come and have a go!" So, I met her the next week to have a go, quite enjoyed it, went the following week, had a few private lessons, and have been joining Thursday practices ever since!

4. *What do you like most about ringing?*

For me, I've been looking for a new hobby; Scouting used to be my entire life, but I don't do so much of that now. I feel that I've found a new hobby. And I love meeting new people and I've made lots of new friends. When I joined, I had no idea that it involved so much cake, coffee and going to the pub!

5. *What do you find most challenging?*

Everything! Although I'm an extrovert, I'm quite self-conscious.

6. *Who do you get inspiration from?*

Elaine is my main inspiration, because she's just so patient, and has a wicked sense of humour, is so positive, and won't take any c**p! Someone else who has been particularly helpful and supportive is David Finch - and I love watching him ring; he's just so gentle and calm.

Updated Coronavirus Guidance

Coronavirus and Ringing – Updates from CofE and CCCBR

The SCACR and the Central Council are acutely aware of the importance of ringing as a hobby. For many, it is a way of life and the enforced abstinence from ringing has caused a great deal of frustration and unhappiness. Any return to ringing, when allowed by the Government and the church, will nevertheless need to take full account of the severity of COVID-19 and accept that, for the time being at least, a complete return to “normal ringing life” is unlikely to be possible for some significant time.

The UK Government's COVID-19 recovery strategy is [available online](#).

Summary of Updated Church Guidance

Following the House of Bishops meeting on 5th May, the instruction is that **just one “appointed person” may enter a church for one of four limited reasons**, including daily prayer and the ringing of a single bell. The appointed person would usually be one of the clergy, or else a single churchwarden or member of the PCC. This does not allow clergy to get a ringer to ring a bell for them – unless the ringer is the churchwarden or PCC member who will also say daily prayers and deal with the other limited reasons. **That means no team ringing at present.**

Ringling and chiming

1. Ringers should not enter the church or tower for chiming, ringing or any other purpose under any circumstances unless they are the **one** “appointed person” for that church as defined by the guidance from their Diocesan Bishop.
2. Not more than one bell should be rung under current church guidance and only by the “appointed person”.
3. Care should be taken to ensure all clock hammers and any external chiming hammers are pulled off before either chiming or ringing.
4. Always refer to both Church of England and local Diocesan guidance for more detail.

Hand hygiene

For those who are “appointed persons” and wish to chime or ring a single bell:

5. Sanitizer should be applied to the hands and allowed to dry fully before and after ringing activities.
6. No other substance than hand sanitizer should be applied to the hands before ringing, including spitting on or licking the hands

Maximum numbers of people in a ringing room

7. No person other than the appointed person should enter the tower at any time and especially during chiming.

The latest guidance from the Church of England is [available on their website](#).

Central Council Guidance – Ringing and COVID-19: What are the risks and what might we do about them?

The latest guidance from the Central Council (CCCBR) is always available at: <https://cccbr.org.uk/coronavirus/>. A detailed analysis from Dr Philip Barnes and Dr Andrew Kelso is now [available to download](#). This document seeks to provide information and advice for ringers and those responsible for bell towers regarding Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

and what issues ringers and church authorities should consider in responding to changes in Government guidance as we start to ease the current lockdown.

The situation for ringing is difficult and complex. Ringing rooms are unlike the rest of the church building in many respects, so there may be times when what is safe elsewhere in a church is not safe in the tower. The virus can survive on some surfaces for up to 72 hours; it is likely that the virus will survive on ropes for several hours - i.e. the duration of a practice or longer. Access to ringing rooms is often via a narrow, poorly ventilated passage or spiral staircase where it is impossible to get through without touching the sides or using the handrails. Ground-floor rings often have easier access but are therefore more accessible to non-ringers. The use of glycerine or liquid chalk on hands will diminish the effectiveness of hand-cleaning or sanitising. The use of gloves and facemasks have little real benefit (taking them off involves touching them and therefore spreading viruses and bacteria). Of all the issues to consider, safe distancing is the most difficult - there are very few towers, if any, where all of the ropes are 2 m or more apart.

The [Central Council's document](#) clearly explains the risks and proposes several possible mitigation options. None of the suggestions can be implemented at present as we are not allowed to ring; indeed, it may yet be several months before they could be.

Some advice to keep your ringing muscle memory in tone

Keeping up Your Ringing Skills

I have spoken to several people lately who have been worried they might forget how to ring by the time we are allowed back into our towers. Don't worry, it's like riding a bicycle, once you can do it, you never forget...

How to keep up your skills though? Well, for listening practice there are several apps you can use; Abel or Beltower are two examples. If you don't want to go that hard-core you could download the BBC Sounds app and listen to "Bells on Sunday" each week. Try counting along with the bells as they ring, think about the striking, is it nice and even? Or can you hear gaps and clips? Do you prefer one piece of ringing to another? Why?

There are also lots of Bell Ringing related articles on YouTube, from handling to Ringing up and down, maintenance etc.

On the physical side you could try my "Wall exercise" for a short while each day.

Find a quiet room (you probably won't want an audience) with a smooth wall, i.e. no pictures, dado rail etc. Stand facing the wall with the tip of your nose roughly a hand span from it (8 or 9 inches). Put your hands together right above left as though you were holding the tail end of a rope, (you could actually hold a short piece of rope or say, a sock). Now move your hands up and down from as high to as low as you can comfortably reach, remembering to turn your wrists over as your hands pass waist height in each direction so your thumbs point to the ceiling when your hands are up, and the floor when your hands are down. Space your movements roughly 1 second apart to replicate the correct ringing speed.

You won't be able to keep this up nearly as long as you imagine (I can only do about 50 without a rest). So, it needn't take long each day but it will improve your muscle memory. Why do it facing a wall? You will have to bend your elbows so that your hands naturally move up and down in a straight line. When you do come back to ringing you should have a lovely smooth straight pull, even if you didn't before!

Many thanks to Elaine Farrow, Rusper

Lastly, news from the wider world of ringing...

Competition to find the best YouTube videos of ringing

YouTube has for some time now been a place for sharing videos of ringing. Ringing YouTubers record outings, touches, and striking competition entries and share them for the world to see. The interest and relevance of these videos is now perhaps greater than ever. To recognise the coming of age of this form of ringing recording, to encourage the discovery and production of high quality online content (there's some pretty ropey stuff so far!), and to have a little bit of focus and fun while we cannot go out and ring, this [monthly competition](#) aims to uncover the best of these YouTube clips. So, get cracking - start searching for the best videos that show great ringing by a diverse group of ringers...

Ringling Returns campaign

[Ringling Returns](#) is an international campaign which will run over the coming weeks and months, focusing on two areas:

1. How we can make good use of the down time to learn something new so that once the restrictions are lifted, we can put it in to practice by recording a performance, from call changes to peals and everything in between.
2. How we can celebrate a return to ringing once restrictions are lifted.



Of course we don't want this restriction to undo all the great work that has been carried out over the last few years with recruitment and training, and we want to celebrate our return to ringing in a time honoured way, by flooding the air with the sound of bells. Look out for more ideas and information via the [CCCBR website](#), social media, and the *Ringling World*.

Cancellation of the 2020 Roadshow

Given the current uncertainty about movement and gathering restrictions and when we might be likely to be back in the belfry, the Central Council Executive has made the difficult decision to cancel arrangements for the 2020 Roadshow that was scheduled for 4-6th September 2020. The revised programme will focus on the formal business meetings, with the Council's AGM and the AGM of The Ringling World Ltd taking place during the day on Saturday 5th September, possibly remotely.

Keep well, keep safe and let's hope we are all ringing and socialising again soon!

Don't forget to send updates, photos, anecdotes and jokes to news-north@scacr.org for the next issue of Northern News...