

West District News

June, 2020

Hello to you all,

I hope that you are all keeping well in this lock down and managing to keep busy without ringing bells. As you will all know the churches are still closed to more than one person entering at a time and, as social distancing whilst ringing is going to be quite difficult in a lot of ringing rooms, it looks as if ringing will be suspended until who knows when. Our monthly get-togethers have been cancelled for June but hopefully by July we can start to think of a get-together walk, even if we can't ring at either end, to see and socialise with our other ringing friends even if it is at a distance.

From the replies I have had to the e-mail I sent out asking how you were all doing and keeping in touch. Here are a few of the responses:

In **Worthing** the three Towers of Heene, West Tarring and Goring now come together twice a week with a Zoom group. Once to ring using Ringingroom.com (gives the brain a workout) and another evening usually at the weekend for a social meet up with either a quiz or bingo.

(See further down in the letter for more info about Ringingroom.com)

Billingshurst ringers have a zoom group with ringers from Pulborough and Kirdford who ring together each week using Ringingroom, and their captain sends them a recording of bells each Sunday morning from "Bells on Sunday" to listen to.

The **Chichester** ringers are meeting once a week on Ringingroom for a practice and then twice a week for a social get-together on Zoom and WhatsApp.

There are several **handbell groups** across Sussex that meet on Ringingroom. Ringingroom is considerably easier for handbell ringing than tower bell ringing although the lag on the internet makes both challenging.

Other Towers that I have heard from are Yapton, Felpham, Angmering, Pagham, Thakeham and Washington who all say they have been keeping in touch with e-mail, phone or waving with a quick social distanced chat at the village shop.

Ringingroom.com: A website "distributed ringing", not unlike Abel. The bells can be set for tower bell or handbell ringing and each person is assigned a single bell to ring (or 2 in the case of handbells), the others being rung by someone

else in the group. You ring the bell by pressing 'j' or the number of the bell on your computer keyboard.

Someone in your group needs to create a virtual 'Ringinroom' by going to www.ringinroom.com type in a name for your group i.e. Chichester or Worthing, for example, and you will be given an ID number for this room which is just for you. Other ringers can then join this virtual tower by entering the ID number which you give them and then click join. They have to do this each time they visit. The first time they enter the site they will have to enter their name which will identify them when assigned a bell. Once in the virtual tower, you now have to log in on that page to be able to ring a bell. A list of ringers present (which is why you had to give your name) is displayed on the left, and individuals can be assigned to one or more bells. There is a help box available at the top left of the room.

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! You will need a Zoom meeting open on your computer or some other way of talking to each other as Ringinroom doesn't have a microphone.

If you would like to try out ringin room or have help setting one up then give Hamish (07808-493692 or secretary@scacr.org) or Moya (07941-178474 or sec-west@scacr.org) a ring. We can either talk you through the process of setting one up and using it or if you wish to try it out then we could invite you to join one of their sessions.

There are also a whole range of other ways to interact with ringers - locally, nationally, and internationally!

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 also have a 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, then join a group. (be sensible though - only include personal data or photos 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.

Ringling 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! It contains 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".

Ringling 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.

Online group video calls - there are several free platforms that you can use, for example Skype, Zoom, WhatsApp and Google Meet. Google and Zoom are free if you stick to the limited time versions - 40 minutes with zoom, an hour with Google Meet. These all allow you online facetime to talk with multiple people - all you need is a smartphone, tablet or computer with a camera (if possible) & microphone and an internet connection (best used over Wi-Fi as the video will gobble up mobile data)..

Once again if you want any help to set up a Zoom account with (www.zoom.us) then either ask a member of your family or contact Hamish or Moya. Once again, going through it with someone in practice gives you confidence to set up your own.

Elaine Farrow from Rusper has some advice on how keep your ringing muscle memory in tone.

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?

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!

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?

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 Ringing World Ltd taking place during the day on Saturday 5th September, possibly remotely.

I haven't heard of any ringers in our area being very ill with Covid-19 so let's hope it continues that way.

Look forward to seeing you all again soon, ringing and socialising face to face!

Moya

West District Secretary