

## ENGAGEMENT WITH THE PUBLIC

Recently the Central Council launched a consultation on “*How does your association/ guild/ society involve the general public?*” A number of Guild members responded to me with their ideas/ experiences. I have collated these and sent a response but I thought that other Guild members might also like to hear what others do. Below is a summary of the responses received. If you would like more information I am sure that the Guild members concerned would be more than willing to help – please contact them directly or I can put you in touch.

### Viv Endecott (Lytchett Matravers)

- A bell slot on *Songs of Praise*.
- The BBC hobbyists that are shown before the News, e.g. Rainham Marshes birdwatchers, wheelchair rugby, Asian dancers etc to include bell ringers.
- NHS are trying out different leisure activities to help patients so how about ringing? It's gentle activity, engages the brain and a team sport! Maybe a special course could be put on for people with mental health problems.
- Ringing during Christmas Markets.
- Ringing during folk festivals.
- Taking a mini-ring to the Great Dorset Steam Fair.

### Penelope Samuel (Bournemouth St John)

- Annual visit of Beavers when they can chime a bell and attempt to chime the tenor.
- Open Day for the Church & belfry which originated as just for the belfry but the idea grew to include all the church & all the groups who meet there.
- The bell ringers activities are written up for the parish magazine every issue.

### Margaret Romano (Salisbury St Thomas)

St George's Day Open day: *Promotion*: Local Radio/ Local paper/ website/ Posters displayed prominently on the day outside the church. *In the Ringing Chamber*:

- Short comment on our bells, their number, weights and age.
- Short explanation of full circle ringing using table top model of a suitable bell.
- Demo on ringing 6 bells, rounds, then call-changes into queens and back.
- One to one “have a go” tuition, just handling backstroke, up to 2 persons at a time, experienced ringer on the handstroke.
- Whilst individuals “having a go”, other ringers answering questions, explaining methods.

### Laurie Turner

For several years Wimborne Minster hosted “Lifepath”, a week where 9 year old children from local schools came to the Minster for a day to learn about its function and how it works, as part of their RE syllabus. I was responsible for the organising of the belfry sessions for this event.

### Janet Ranger (Dorchester Branch)

The Dorchester Branch is represented at the annual Dorset County Show. We are lucky to have space at no charge in the Dorchester Benefice/Churches Together marquee. We have the Saxilby Simulator and a table top model with several guild members helping. Plus professional hand bell ringers. The sound of the bells does attract visitors to ‘have a go’.

### Christopher Sykes (Mere Branch)

For some years, the Mere Branch held an annual Open Day at the ground floor ring of Stourton Church, which is within the NT Stourhead Estate. Inside the church, we have volunteers who ring and /or speak to members of the public and explain what is happening, CCTV showing the bells moving in the belfry, model bells, the CCCBR video running on a laptop and other ringing aids, posters and booklets. A couple of years ago, the Branch began to work closely with the National Trust at Stourhead. The advantage to the ringers has been that we have been included in the Stourhead Events Calendar, in NT advertising both on leaflets and the internet, all of which has attracted a greater number of visitors. We are very conscious that we have to provide a quality attraction for visitors. We have seen a large increase in visitors attending, partly due to a better choice of date and largely due to heavy promotion from the National Trust, including on the day.

### Sally Jenkins (Swanage)

- As a way with engaging with the public at Swanage I used to write an article each month for the Church Magazine and also I put up the month's ringing programme in the porch.
- Swanage has its own Facebook page and 24hrs before any extra QP or special ringing I would put a post up about it. This always elicited many 'likes' and positive comments even to the extent of some coming to sit in the churchyard to listen.
- We also used to open the tower every year for the Parish Fete for people to 'have a go'.

### Marion Molden (Corsley)

Our Church Fayre is held every year and gets good attendance. We have had an appeal going for refurbishing the bells and have had amazing support both from the village and the church. We decided to run a bric-a-brac stall and throughout the afternoon rang the bells for 15 minutes every hour. Several ringers from other towers came during the afternoon to ring which gave us the opportunity to ring a variety of things. From the feedback I have had it was an enjoyable experience both from those visiting and those who manned the various stands.

### Gillian Richards (ringer at Wimborne and Canford)

Our local museum, the Priest's House Museum in Wimborne had an evening of consultation with its 'Friends' concerning a further lottery funding bid. One of the areas they were addressing was contacting a wider audience, making people realise that the museum is not just focused on the town of Wimborne and making the museum more accessible. We were asked to think of any displays etc. which might help with this. I suggested a feature on bell ringing as a way of involving the local villages as they could be approached for artefacts, stories, etc. The museum responded positively.

Robert Wellen  
Guild Publicity Officer