

Appendix 3 - Website details - an appraisal of the CCCBR and related websites

A report from the Ringing Centres Conference in 2004 (Central Council website www.cccbr.org.uk/ringingcentres/reports/2005.php) agreed to try to develop an integrated recruitment and training package not only for use in ringing centres but also in any tower that wished to use it. A pilot DVD 'Basic Change ringing' had already been produced and 100 copies circulated worldwide for comments. We have contacted Barry Peachey, now responsible for the initiative to see whether any follow-on reports have been produced. We await a response.

In the meantime, we undertook a brief survey of what was available from the CCBR websites. There are a number of related websites under the general CCBR umbrella, and reviewing them all comprehensively is quite a formidable task. However, as a superficial overview, it can be said that there is a huge amount of information available, with reports and descriptions of almost every conceivable means of educating the public, attracting recruits and generally raising or improving the profile of bellringing. In the foregoing we accepted that there was no one means of achieving all of the objectives of our brief and that success was dependent on tailoring the information and mechanism of delivery to the target audience.

Taking the target audience as the starting place, the next logical step seems to be to select the most appropriate of the various methods of recruitment etc recorded and explained on the websites. These can be found easily under the CCBR Home Page which gives links to *Bells & Bellringing*, *Information & Services*, *Key Links* and *Other Resources*. Clicking on any of these opens up a labyrinth of information, which enables the reader to select according to style, content and intent. For example, clicking on *Bells & Bellringing* leads on to *Change Ringing*, *Where to Ring*, *Learning to Ring*, *Bell Projects*, *Tower Stewardship*, and *Ringing Foundation*. Clicking on *Learning to Ring* opens up access to *The Process of Learning to Ring*, *Education Committee* and *Courses and Ringing Centres*. Clicking on *The Process of Learning to Ring* leads to descriptions of different types of ringing (*Call Changes*, *Ringing with Others*, *Method Ringing* and *Handbell Ringing*) and to *Bell Handling* with its links back to *What is Change Ringing?*. There is certainly no lack of information, and if anything, the problem seems to be selecting from a seemingly overwhelming choice of material.

One eye-catching item on the CCBR Website was <http://www.cccbr.org.uk/learn2ring/>, described as a recruit/beginner friendly website, and part of an up to the minute comprehensive recruitment and training scheme in the art of bellringing. It states that "The temporary webpages are intended to explain how the complete training package would work. As the whole package would be designed and developed over a period of time, the final content and appearance will vary with the input received from contributors". It replicates or subsumes many of the titles on the CCBR Home Webpage.

Certainly it gives a tantalising insight into the set of documents that the committee is working towards. The site is very much evolutionary, or *work in progress* and the majority of chapter headings and sub-headings are expressions of what is likely to appear in the completed documents.

Some chapters are more complete than others. The Best Practice Case Studies has a number of very good ideas for recruitment and training of ringers that have worked successfully in raising the profile of bellringing. Some really good ideas are listed and the pitfalls and benefits. It is very obvious that careful planning and a lot of willing helpers are two of the main ingredients. Topics include *PR and recruitment*, *Young People*, *Taster sessions*, *Primary School children*, *Intensive bell-handling lessons*, *Secondary school children*, *Saturday morning ringing schools*, *Adult education classes*, *Ringing Centres*, *Equipment* (including the Bampton Dumb Bell), *Fund-raising*.

Clicking on just one of these Case Studies opens up a description of the amount of effort and planning required to use the Lichfield Mobile Belfry as a primary means of attraction in the middle of Barnsley one Saturday morning. Valuable lessons can be gleaned from this, not the least of which is the magnitude of the planning and support effort required, and the potential benefit.

Video clips are also listed. The link to the *What is Tower Ringing* clip frustratingly, failed to open at all for the demonstration of ringing, and the *A Bell Being Cast* could only be opened for sound. These clips could work well in enabling the public to gain a quick grasp of what ringing is and what it entails.

Teaching is always a matter of personal preference and the chalk-board explanation of *Plain Hunting* and *Following the Bell that Follows You*, were in themselves rather arcane, but when linked with a set of video explanations proved very effective. The slowed down videos explained the principles very clearly, and made following the correct-speed video much easier to understand, and illustrated the chalk-board explanations quite well. It seems that constant repetition accompanied by tutoring, practice and looking at the accompanying videos will eventually get the message through. The quality of the videos was rather grainy, but maybe in the finished product they will be less so.

Certainly someone somewhere will have recorded experience of conventional and not-so-conventional ideas, and this should help provide background information and help manage expectations.

Reports of targeted recruitment at schools are valuable additions to the range of information available from CCBR. The recent report of recruitment of children aged 8 to 11 in East Ilsley which appeared on p 1196 of the *Ringling World* (November 14th) is one such. An example nearer home of young ringers attracting other youngsters is graphically presented on the BBC-Devon-People website for 28 October 2008, which gives links to the sound of the bells of Kingskerswell and a fascinating interview with the Kingskerswell Tower Captain Phil Stevens.

As observed previously, there is no one-size-fits-all solution to recruitment and the production of suitable supporting documentation. It is recommended that the starting point should be to review what others have tried, decide what is most likely to work in the given application and use or adapt the material available from the websites.