

## **World War One Centenary Commemoration Project Update for 2019 A.G.M.**

From Day One, it was understood that ringers would do their very best to respond to the nation's call to honour those who had given their lives in The Great War. Each tower would naturally arrange with their own church and community to give of their best.

Our WW1 Centenary Commemoration Project was born out of members' feedback I had received at Annual District Meetings, early on in my term serving as your Guild Master, and the subsequent 'Future Event' item in our Guild's 2015-2018 Action Plan. It was agreed that the project budget was to be discussed at Executive Committee Meetings.

We wished to collate details of as many special memorial ringing performances, relating to those who had died as a result of WW1, that had taken place by Guild members or in the two Dioceses. We planned to harvest existing records, encourage all ringers to participate in special ringing and to gather up the archive material in two identical printed and bound volumes. These archives were to be presented to our Cathedrals as a mark of respect for those who made the supreme sacrifice for us all.

Both our Cathedrals were approached for us to join their local congregations at special services, to offer up all of the Guild's ringing for the souls who had been lost in the dreadful WW1 conflict. Mike Winterbourne, then Master, was keen to show the services as a 'Thanksgiving'.

Every tower and ringer at whatever experience level has had the opportunity to participate in this mammoth exercise and we're pleased to say that the majority did. There were in the region of 1,400 archived records since 1914 from handbell ringers and 193 towers.

A team of three had started the project's activities and research. During the last two-and-a-half years the team was expanded to 11 to deal with the volume of work: there was ongoing research, 'I.T.', fund-raising including 'Tommy's Travels', vital art work, printing and proof-reading, Public Relations, including discussions with the various third parties - their support is acknowledged in the archive books - and the significant organisation of the two Cathedral services and refreshments for ringers and invited dignitaries.

Our Communication Team and WW1 Team dove-tailed very well together to give project updates to the outside world and to help ensure that all ringers, including the new Ringing Remembers folk, had access to monitor project progress and activities. There were many extra volunteers from towers and Districts who offered their help willingly as and when needed. All were much valued and brought their own enthusiasm, knowledge and skills to the tasks in hand.

The services took place in May 2019 after a great deal of liaison with both Cathedral Teams over several years; they have supported us well, alongside both Dioceses. The services were well-attended, much enjoyed and the beautiful archives recording performances to 30th November 2018 were presented. The Chamberburgh Ring was enjoyed by many all afternoon at Winchester and we recruited several new ringers there. The occasions raised the profile of ringing greatly in the community.

The project gave us all many occasions to work even closer with our churches and local communities. We are pleased to report that feedback from ringers and non-ringers relating to the archives, the services and the project overall has been complimentary indeed; it seems our very ambitious project has been seen as a resounding success.

The archive printed volumes are available to us all individually by mutual arrangement with the cathedrals. The digital archives have been available on our website since 19th May and will continue to be updated. This is likely to continue until August 2021 - the date to be confirmed in due course. Please continue to submit your special performances by emailing [ww1bells@aol.com](mailto:ww1bells@aol.com)

Thank you everyone for all of your time, efforts and encouragement over many years now.

Ros will give you an update now of the Project's finances.

Viv Nobbs  
15th June 2019