

# THE KENT MOBILE RING



## Report for KCACR AGM 2019

### How did it all begin?

In 2014 the Association gratefully accepted a 0-2-21 ring of 6 (valued at approx. £12,000) from the Reverend David Cawley.

The General Committee discussed various options relating to how the bells could be put to good use for the Association over the course of a number of meetings and ultimately concluded that, given their weight, the most suitable way forward was to create a mobile ring.

In 2016 there was a countywide survey giving general approval to the Mobile Ring idea.

### Why do we want a mobile ring?

"We can take it where we want it, stand round it and ring it. It can draw people into ringing" Jo Horton

### How and where might it be used?

For: Fun **F**, Fund Raising (for its own maintenance / the KCACR / charities) **FR**  
Public Relations **PR**, Training **T**, Recruiting **R**.

The list below gives many possible uses, most of which were suggested in the Survey. On most occasions it'll be able to serve several, if not all, of the listed purposes. Some might occur incidentally.

Local events as an extra attraction (**F FR PR T R**)

Village/Church/School/Charity Fêtes/Fairs, Open Gardens,....

For KYR (**F T**)

Fun practices (suggested by a KYR member in the 2016 survey)

Using simulator for concentrated practice prior to striking competitions (done at a tower at a far end of the county for SEECON 2019)

Peals, Quarters (**F FR PR**)

Presentations for non-ringing organisations (**FR PR T R**)

Schools, Scouts, Youth Groups, U3A....  
County Shows

#### Training events as a tool (**PR T R**)

To provide an extra tower without extra travelling

To use simulator (if we have one) for multiple, single station use, as at Worcester

#### Other Ringing Events (**F PR T R**)

Striking Competitions (sound arrangements permitting)

AGMs, social occasions

social events for keen small children who are as yet not quite big enough for tower bells

#### Celebrations local or personal (**F FR PR T R**)

Weddings, Funerals, where there are no tower bells

Golden Weddings, Silver Weddings, any kind of celebration

(People will pay for quarters, on Village Green perhaps, especially for local fundraising)

#### Anywhere within reason (**F FR PR T R**)

Any capable member would be able to borrow it.

**At AGM 2017** a KCACR Mobile Ring Proposal was provided, with Phil Gay (heavily involved with the design, build and management of the Lichfield Diocesan Mobile Belfry) giving those present a feeling for how a project such as this would unfold. It was agreed that the Association would put £5000 towards the cost of the project. This was based on:

- |                                    |       |
|------------------------------------|-------|
| • Fittings only from Matthew Higby | £3000 |
| • Trailer                          | £2000 |
| • Metalwork supplied locally       | Free  |

A small workgroup was formed following the AGM (Doug Davis (Chair), Catherine Lewis (Financial/Admin) & Brian Butcher (Technical)) and held an initial meeting on 19 June 2017 to put some plans on paper.

Some notes from this meeting:

- Brian Butcher advised that an offer of a free second-hand trailer (only needing new tyres and a new coupling) had been made. It was agreed that this option would be investigated by Brian, as this could provide a substantial cost saving to the project. However, on inspection it was found to be unsuitable, and therefore a new trailer was purchased for £1,402 on 26 Sept 2017.
- Various physical issues were raised that perhaps needed considering before work should progress, e.g. lighting, weather protection, electrical supply, simulator, provision of built in notice board etc.
- It became clear at this meeting that agreement on a way forward could not be reached, with differing views from all parties.
- It was agreed that far more detailed technical plans were needed before work could progress.

At this point, the project was put on hold until agreement could be reached about a way forward, and around the same time the offer of free metalwork, supply and building, became unavailable.

**In April 2018** the General Committee meeting, appointed Catherine lead on the project going forward.

**In May 2018** the opinion of a suitably qualified mechanical engineer was sought on the plan to tow the bells on the road carried, as in the existing sketches, at ringable height on the

trailer. In a document produced in July 2018, this design was not recommended in its current form.

**In November 2018** we received a quotation from Matthew Higby, to build a mobile ring, using our bells and trailer.

*My idea would be to have a smaller version of a hydraulic 4-post garage lift, permanently fixed to the bed of an "off the shelf" flatbed trailer. My aim from turning up at the site to actually ringing, would be less than 30 mins - and there would be no complicated construction methods or heavy lifting involved.*

*A ring of six bells, complete with frame and a single full-sized dumbbell (4ft wheel) would travel flat on the bed of the trailer, and would be hoisted into place (approx 2 meters off the floor) when in use. The ringers would stand around the sides and back of the trailer to ring - and would have very little obstructions within their line of sights. The dumbbell would be rung from one side at the front of the trailer and there would be a full hookup to enable this to be used with headphones - independently of the ringing peal.*

His costings for this come to just under £21K +VAT\*

**In January 2019** there was an, apparently unsolicited, offer to David Cawley from Taylor's, saying *we are willing to donate the fittings for the KCACR bells, providing that we are given a free hand to make them. Thereafter Brian is welcome to send the trailer here for the bells to be fitted to the bellframe.*

### Preferred Option

**In February 2019** the General Committee agreed that Matthew Higby is their preferred contractor to build the Kent Mobile Ring.

[Matthew is the acknowledged expert on little bells, both tower bells and mini rings. He produced the Charmborough Ring in 2005 and has been developing and improving techniques ever since. One of the results is that normal double-handed ringing will work on our bells.]

If the Association agrees this decision, then the considerable uncertainty there has been over this project will be resolved.

### How should we proceed?

There are many more issues to be considered. Some are things that Matthew wouldn't necessarily supply. Much research has been done, but decisions will need to be made on, for example:

- weather protection for bells and ringers
- visibility of the bells
- power and lighting
- overall appearance - needs to be a positive addition to any venue, day or night, rain or shine
- possible additional dumbbell (suggested by Matthew)
- possible simulator kit
- different levels of sound, half muffling
- provision for PR - eg notice board, holders for leaflets
- boxes for very young ringers - where should they be kept?

Some are major, some relatively minor, but they all need addressing before any practical building begins.

## **KMR Committee**

We need a committee to work on all this. We could use a plan which the KCACR has used effectively in the past, and invite each District to provide a member. This would not prevent further people with appropriate skills joining too.

We have at least 12 months to work on these issues, because Matthew cannot start work sooner than a year after we place the order.

## **Funding**

We have Matthew's quote above for just under £21K +VAT (£25,200). However he has voluntarily put time into our project already, and needs a firm order and a deposit of a third of the figure above (ie £8,400) before he can begin detailed planning with us.

We have over £3000 left from the £5000 funding provided at the 2017 AGM.

The General Fund does not have further available funds at the moment. The Bell Restoration Fund does have surplus, but, for very good reasons, we cannot use it.

Extra fundraising is needed before we can commit ourselves. I (Catherine) am happy to lead this and make it happen. The final cost is almost certain to be above the basic quotation, but we should be able to cope with that. Fundraising continues until we do!

Some funding bodies require that a project is not begun (ie an order placed) until a grant is promised. This may cause further delay, but it could be worth it. It may not make any difference to us anyway

Fundraising ideas:

- Open Days (the opening lots of towers kind)
- a whole county Barn Dance (as Dinners seemed to get too expensive) .
- Sponsored peals/quarter peals/long length
- Association-wide 100 Club
- Break down mobile ring into components which people can then 'donate' the cost of
- Auction off the first official ring/quarter peal/peal on the completed mobile ring
- Justgiving page to allow people to just donate if they so wish
- Ask Districts to direct all of their fundraising for 12 months to the mobile ring project
- Seek grants from anywhere possible (Central Council possibly)
- Young Ringers could do a handbell quarter peal challenge for sponsorship - how many can they ring in a day maybe
- Plus some exciting, slightly hair-brained ideas, that may just be possible
- and some that are so good we're keeping them under wraps for now!

Until we have the authority to fundraise there is little point in working on ideas or further planning

## **Suggested Proposal**

That this meeting:

1. authorises fund raising for the Kent Mobile Ring
2. authorises an order to be placed with Matthew Higby as soon as suitable funding is available or promised (as judged by the General Committee)

Doug Davis  
Catherine Lewis