

Many of you will have already heard much about this project to mark the 300th Anniversary of the first ever peal, rung at St Peter Mancroft, Norwich on 2nd May, 1715. The official launch event for the project was held in the church on Monday 16th February when invited guests from the other Norwich towers, officers of the Norwich Diocesan Association, and from surrounding Associations, local dignitaries and representatives of many local organisations joined with St Peter Mancroft Guild members to hear in more detail about the exciting plans for the tower. As well as hearing from Simon Rudd, the Mancroft Appeal300 Chairman, there were a number of other keynote speakers.

The project has three patrons: The Lord Bishop of Norwich, Graham James, Caroline Jarrold and The 8th Marquess Townshend from East Raynham.

Each gave short speeches endorsing the project and encouraging support. The main speaker was Mark Regan, the Master of the Worcester Cathedral band and he gave us an exciting insight into the background to the



amazing training centre that they created at Worcester and which has inspired us in turn. We were delighted to welcome George Pipe, one of ringing's greats, from Ipswich. He also gave us a morale boosting message.

In addition, we received a short video message from Adelaide Cathedral which has a training set-up similar to the one which we envisage. Guests were then invited to visit the ringing chamber to see some ringing and to look at the display items that had been put on show in the church.

So – what is our project all about? There is a misconception that we are just creating a training centre in the tower. There are several separate elements which form our vision. The two key thoughts behind our planning have been

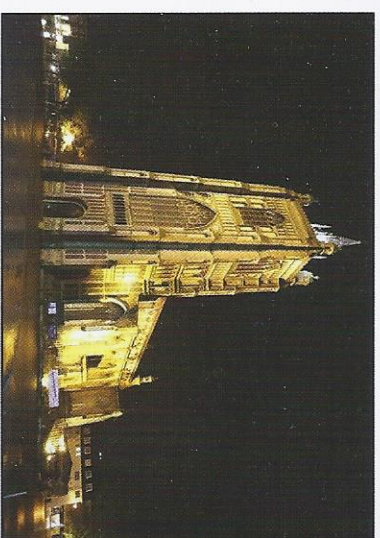
- To develop the art of change ringing, both locally and more widely, through education and training.
- To bring the rich history of ringing in Norwich to the attention of a wider audience.

The core of the project centres on these main elements:

- Installation of a ringing teaching and heritage centre (RTHC) where members of the public will be able to come to find out more about ringing and, in particular, our unique place in its history.
- The installation of a new ringing room floor at a higher level in the tower in order to make space for the RTHC.
- The RTHC will house eight 'dumb bells' linked to computer software, which enable novice and developing ringers to learn and practise with relative ease and without disturbing members of the public.
- Strengthening the bell frame.

Ancillary work such as the screening of the tower from the church to avoid activity in the tower disturbing those using the church and vice versa, and installation of air conditioning.

So, as you can see, this will be both a **Teaching** and a **Heritage** Centre, where both ringers and the general public can visit. This is a facility not just for us in Norwich, but for the whole region and we will be actively encouraging groups to visit and use our facilities, so that means you too! Our bells will also become a little less fearsome as the draft of rope will be reduced by at least a third. We cannot achieve this without a lot of hard work and the official launch is just firing of the starting gun.



You can find out more about our project at our web site www.mancroftappeal300.co.uk or about the Guild on www.mancroftbells.co.uk. Of course, we would also like to ask for your support.

If you would like to donate to our fund, then there is an online giving site at <https://my.donate.bt.com/events/mancroftappeal300> and please accept our grateful thanks.

Simon Rudd