

Press release: Nation's bells to ring out together to mark Armistice Centenary

On 11 November 2018, 100 years since Armistice, bells will ring out in unison from churches and cathedrals in villages, towns and cities across the country. Big Ben will also strike at 11am to mark the centenary.

To mark the final year of the First World War centenary commemorations, 1,400 new bell ringers will be recruited in honour of the 1,400 that lost their lives during the First World War.

Church bells across the UK remained restricted throughout the course of the war and only rang freely once Armistice was declared on 11 November 1918.

The campaign to recruit bell ringers, Ringing Remembers, will keep this traditional British art alive in memory of the 1,400 who lost their lives – linking together past, present and future.

The campaign is being run by the Department of Communities and Local Government in collaboration with Big Ideas Community Interest Company and the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers.

Communities Secretary Sajid Javid said:

The Ringing Remembers campaign will be a fitting end to our projects, events and activities that have marked the end of the First World War and a tribute to the heroic men and women who sacrificed so much for the freedoms we enjoy today.

As the centenary commemorations draw to a close, our priority is to make sure we continue to keep the history of the First World War alive for generations to come, even as it falls out of living memory.

Karen Bradley, Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, said:

Today we begin the final year of commemorations, leading to the 100th anniversary of Armistice. We will look at how we went from the German offensive in spring 1918 to peace, and I have no doubt the public will once again help us tell this important story and share their own connections to the First World War.

On 11 November 1918 the ringing of church bells erupted spontaneously across the country, as an outpouring of relief that 4

years of war had come to an end. I am pleased that to honour that moment and the 1,400 bell ringers who died in the war, we will be recruiting 1,400 new bell ringers to take part in the commemorations next year.

Bell ringers in the First World War

Many bell ringers joined the war effort, and many lost their lives. Just after the war, the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers wrote to all bell towers to compile the Roll of Honour. At the time 1,100 men were reported as lost.

During the First World War Centenary the Central Council of Bell Ringers has been reviewing this list and has discovered a further 400 bell ringers who died in service. Two bell towers – Edington in Wiltshire and Bamburgh in Northumberland – lost 6 ringers each during the war. In total 1,400 bell ringers lost their lives.

Programme for Armistice Day 2018

On 11 November 2018, the day will begin at the Commonwealth War Graves Commission St Symphorien Cemetery near Mons, Belgium where the war began in 1914, where the war's first and last casualties lie and where the government began the commemorations in 2014. It offers a fitting place to reflect on the cost of the war.

The 14-18 Now cultural programme will return for a compelling final season, culminating on 11 November 2018 in a UK-wide event to draw the nation together in a shared moment of remembrance. The full programme will be announced in January.

In the evening, the national commemorations will end with a ceremony at Westminster Abbey. The service will reflect on the Centenary, recognise the impact of the war after the Armistice, and give thanks to all those who were affected over the course of the conflict.

Further information

Become a bell ringer today by emailing RinginRemembers@bigideascompany.org

Case study: The Edington Six

After the First World war the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers wrote to every tower to ask for the names of the fallen for their Great War Memorial book. The beautifully produced volume contains 1,100 names inscribed with their bell towers.

A letter was sent to Edington Priory Church but no reply appears to have been received and so none of Edington's ringers were listed in that first book.

Tucked between the chalk downs and close to Westbury's famous White Horse, the sleepy Wiltshire town of Edington (once known as Tinhead) is dwarfed by the massive 14th century church, Edington Priory Church which, in 1914, had 6 bells.

The Edington ringers were at the heart of the working community. While one was a carer in a local hospital, others were farmers and the wheelwright. Four of the 6 played in the local football team. Along with tens of the village men, 6 ringers went to war.

A hundred years later Alan Regin, one of the world's leading Ringers and Steward of the Rolls of Honour, Central Council of Church Bell Ringers started to look into the names collected immediately following the war. He soon discovered that dozens were missing. Research to date has revealed 300 additional names, enough to warrant the creation of a second volume of the Great War Memorial book.

Perhaps no one reply came from Edington Priory because there was no one to write back. By the end of the war The Edington Six had died. Only one other Bell Tower in Britain – in Bamburgh Northumberland – lost as many ringers. The impact on the village would have been devastating.

Five are buried along the Western Front in Cambrai, Abbeville, Hermies Hill, Arras and Heverlee, but one, Private Leonard Drewett, the hospital worker, served in the Labour Corps and suffered increasingly with epilepsy. He died during hospital treatment in Colchester, and was brought home to Edington for burial. He is buried with a Commonwealth War Grave headstone near family graves in the peaceful Wiltshire churchyard.

More information on the Six bell ringers

The Edington Six, Wiltshire (Four also played for the local football team, Drewett, Lawes, Rogers and Wheeler).

Private John Frederick Pike Lawes, Edington, Salisbury Diocesan. Died 18 August 1916 age 25. Wiltshire Regiment 2nd Bn. Service No. 10520. Commemorated at Abbeville Communal Cemetery, France, Grave III. A. 11. Born in 1891. Son of Herbert and Elizabeth Lawes, of Tinhead, Westbury. Husband of Sarah Daisy Lawes, of The Lamb Inn, Tinhead, Westbury, Wilts. He worked as a Wheelwright. Born: Edington, Wilts Enlisted: Devizes, Wilts Resided: At 1911 Census at Elen Cottage, Tinhead, Westbury, Wilts.

Private Reginald Cecil Wordley, Edington, Salisbury Diocesan. Died 01 December 1917 age 21. Grenadier Guards 1st Bn. Service No. 28566. Commemorated at Cambrai Memorial, Louverval, France, Panel 2. Born 3rd quarter 1896. One of 7 children. Son of Decimus Wordley and Mary Wordley (née Nash) of Edington, Westbury, Wilts. He worked on a farm before enlisting. Born: Bishops Cannings, Wilts Enlisted: Trowbridge Resided (1911 Census): Tinhead, Wiltshire.

Gunner Reginald Charles Rogers, Edington, Salisbury Diocesan. Died 28 December 1917 age 27. Royal Field Artillery "B" Bty. 93rd Bde. Service No.

176310. Commemorated at Hermies Hill British Cemetery, France, Grave I. F. 42. Son of Frank Rogers and Clara Helen Rogers of Hagg Hill Farm, Hinton, nr. Trowbridge. Born: West Ashton, Wilts. Enlisted: Trowbridge. Resided: Hinton, nr. Trowbridge. He enlisted in the Royal Wiltshire Yeomanry (T.A.) 7 th March 1910 for a period of 4 years. In 1911 census he was working on his father's farm.

Private Leonard Drewett, Edington, Salisbury Diocesan. Died 12 March 1918 age 32. Devonshire Regiment 12th Bn. Service No. 24392. Commemorated at Edington Priory Church (Ss. Mary And Katherine And All Saints) Churchyard, England. Son of Stephen and Ellen Drewett, of Kington Langley, Chippenham. Born at Edington. Born: Bedwyn, Wilts Enlisted: Devizes, Wilts. Worked in a local hospital. Served in the Labour Corps. Became unwell due to epilepsy and died of illness in Colchester Hospital while a serving soldier. Buried a CWGC war grave.

Lance Corporal William John Wheeler, Edington, Salisbury Diocesan. Died 23 March 1918 age Unknown. Wiltshire Regiment 6th (Wiltshire Yeomanry) Bn. Service No. 203199. Commemorated at Arras Memorial, France, Bay 7. No family details recorded. Born: Edington, Wilts. Enlisted: Trowbridge. Resided: Edington, Wilts.

Rifleman Thomas James Blagden, Edington, Salisbury Diocesan. Died 19 January 1919 age 20. South Lancashire Regiment 1st/5th Bn. Service No. 54030. Commemorated at Heverlee War Cemetery, Belgium, Grave XI. B. 8. Son of Thomas and Selina Blagden, of Edington, Wilts. Born: Unknown Enlisted: Unknown. Resided: Unknown.

Press release: New environmental protections to deliver a Green Brexit

Plans to consult on a new, independent body that would hold Government to account for upholding environmental standards in England after we leave the European Union have been set out by Environment Secretary Michael Gove today.

Leaving the EU gives us the opportunity to put the environment at the heart of policy making, while ensuring vital protections for our landscapes, wildlife and natural assets are not only maintained but enhanced.

To help deliver a Green Brexit, ministers will consult on a new independent, statutory body to advise and challenge government and potentially other public bodies on environmental legislation – stepping in when needed to hold these bodies to account and enforce standards.

A consultation on the specific powers and scope of the new body will be launched early next year.

Environment Secretary Michael Gove said today:

We will deliver a Green Brexit, where environmental standards are not only maintained but enhanced.

Today we are setting out our plans to ensure the powerful are held to account. We will consult on creating an independent body – encouraging transparency and preventing careless or irresponsible behaviour damaging our natural environment.

We will consult as widely as possible on these proposals to ensure we get this important decision right for future generations.

Currently environmental decisions made in the UK – from improving air and water quality to protecting endangered species – are overseen by the European Commission, which monitors targets, scrutinises new legislation and takes action against illegal behaviour.

This current system is underpinned by a number of ‘environmental principles’, such as sustainable development and the polluter pays principle, which puts the onus on polluting individuals or businesses to pay to repair damage.

Although these principles are already central to government environmental policy, they are not set out in one place besides the EU treaties. The proposed consultation on the statutory body will therefore also explore the scope and content of a new policy statement to ensure environmental principles underpin policy making.

One of the key questions, which we will explore with the devolved administrations (DAs), is whether Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland wish to take a different or similar approach. We want to hear from as many people and organisations as possible right across the UK – from business, NGOs, the farming sector, civil society, and elsewhere.

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[Press release: Ministers for the UK](#)

Government in Wales to mark Remembrance Day

Ministers for the UK Government in Wales will each take the opportunity to reflect upon the sacrifices and dedication of our service men and women, past and present, at Remembrance Day events in Wales this morning (12 November).

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns will attend a service in Barry having attended the opening of the Field of Remembrance in Cardiff earlier this week. Guto Bebb will attend a service at St Grwst's Church in Llanrwst in his constituency.

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns said:

At this time of remembrance, we pay tribute to the generations of service men and women who lost their lives serving our country, and defending our freedom. The people of Wales will always honour, with respect and appreciation, the memory of those who made the ultimate sacrifice on our behalf.

Earlier this year, I had the honour of travelling to Belgium to join thousands of descendants of First World War soldiers for the centenary commemorations for the Battle of Passchendaele. I was struck by the enormous loss of the Welsh soldiers who played a pivotal role in the bloodiest of battlefields.

Today, as we bow our heads in silence, we will remember those that paid the ultimate sacrifice for the freedom that we all enjoy today and those members of the Armed Forces who are currently away from loved ones, defending our values, our democracy and our nation.

UK Government Minister Guto Bebb said:

Today, thousands of people across Wales will wear their poppies with pride, and gather at war memorials to mark the sacrifices made by our service men and women around the world.

The debt of gratitude that we owe to those serving today, and to those who never came home, is immeasurable and today we say thank you. We will remember them.

Later this month, the Secretary of State will deliver a speech at the Armed Forces in Wales awards on 30 November, an event which celebrates high achievers who have provided the most outstanding contributions to defence in 2017.

Press release: CCTV to be introduced in all slaughterhouses in England in 2018

CCTV recording will become mandatory in all slaughterhouses in England next year, [Environment Secretary Michael Gove has today confirmed](#).

Defra will take the plans forward following an extremely positive reaction from the industry, welfare groups and the public.

In August, the Secretary of State [launched a consultation](#) on the plans to deliver a manifesto commitment for CCTV to be required in every slaughterhouse in England in all areas where live animals are present, with unrestricted access to footage for Official Veterinarians – reassuring consumers that high welfare standards are being effectively enforced.

Legislation will be introduced in the New Year, coming into force in the Spring. All slaughterhouses will be required to comply following an adjustment period of up to six months.

A summary of responses published today (Sunday) shows that of almost 4,000 respondents, more than 99% were supportive of the plans.

Environment Secretary Michael Gove said:

We have some of the highest animal welfare standards in the world and want to cement our status as a global leader by continuing to raise the bar.

The reaction to this consultation highlights the strength of feeling among the public that all animals should be treated with the utmost respect at all stages of life and be subject to the highest possible welfare standards.

These strong measures also provide a further demonstration to consumers around the world that as we leave the EU we continue to produce our food to the very highest standards.

Having carefully considered all of the responses, the Government agrees with the overwhelming proportion of respondents that were in favour of mandatory CCTV to protect animal welfare in slaughterhouses. The proposals will also give the Food Standards Agency's (FSA) Official Veterinarians (OVs) unfettered access to the last 90 days of footage to help them monitor and enforce animal welfare standards.

The FSA has strict processes in place for the approval of slaughterhouses, and specially trained vets carry out checks to make sure the welfare of animals is protected throughout their time in the slaughterhouse. If breaches are found, a slaughterhouse can be given a welfare enforcement notice, have its staff's licences suspended or revoked, or be referred for a criminal investigation.

The RSPCA's Head of Public Affairs David Bowles said:

This is a very welcome and crucial step towards introducing higher welfare right across the food chain.

We applaud the Secretary of State for his steadfast and focused commitment to ensuring the highest possible animal welfare standards in the UK once we have left the EU.

The RSPCA looks forward to seeing the details of the proposal as issues such as where the cameras will be located, footage quality and storage, and who can have access to it are essential to making the legislation meaningful.

British Veterinary Association Senior Vice President Gudrun Ravetz said:

The mandatory installation of CCTV is a vital tool to ensure high standards of animal health, welfare and food safety in all slaughterhouses.

Official Veterinarians carry out an essential role in slaughterhouses by independently assessing and reporting breaches of animal welfare, and unrestricted access to CCTV footage will allow them to carry out this role even more effectively.

We have been campaigning for these measures for a number of years and it is reassuring to see such a high level of support for their implementation from industry and the public.

Heather Hancock, Chairman of the Food Standards Agency, said:

The Secretary of State's decision to require CCTV in all slaughterhouses is a welcome step towards ensuring that animal welfare and hygiene standards are met across the meat industry.

Last year, the FSA Board concluded that, without mandatory CCTV in slaughterhouses, we would see minimal further progress in businesses improving animal welfare or complying with official controls to protect public health.

We look forward to working with the industry as CCTV plans are implemented, and to seeing public confidence rise as a result.

The government will now further discuss the details of bringing in the proposals and present draft legislation to Parliament as soon as Parliamentary time allows.

1. Read the ['Mandatory Closed Circuit Television \(CCTV\) recording in slaughterhouses: Summary of responses and Government response'](#).
2. For more information on this press release, contact the Defra press office on 020 8225 7318.