

Pillaton Church to have ring of eight bells to celebrate 750th anniversary

26/11/2009

The Heritage Lottery Fund has contributed £4,000 towards the rehangng of the refurbished bells and also to allow the local school children and parishioners to be involved in learning about the history of bells and bellringing, and to mount an exhibition to illustrate the project. Other aspects of the £45,000 project have been supported by a number of other charities including SITA Cornwall Trust and Viridor Credits, as well as by some generous personal donations.

St Odulph's Church in the village was founded in 1259 and the original 3 bells were installed in 1809. These were augmented to six in 1909 at a cost of £400, which also included a new frame and a new ringing chamber! It is hoped that the 2009 installation will be completed in early December to allow the bells to be ringing in time for Christmas. The two new bells have been cast at Whitechapel Bell Foundry in London, a company which has been casting bells for more than 400 years.

The ringing of bells 'in peal', swinging them full circle with rope and wheel, is a peculiarly English art, and a very ancient one, which developed in the early 17th century and is now spread all over the English speaking world. Requiring as it does a team of people willing to work together with perseverance, commitment and a sense of order, it seems to spring from, and appeal to, some special qualities in the English character. It is an art which calls for skill rather than physical strength and can be enjoyed by anyone from 9 to 90 or more!

During the week beginning 1st December the bells will be on the floor of the church and available to view before they are raised into the tower. Local schoolchildren will be visiting to look at the bells and study their history. The new bells will be 'hallowed' or blessed during evensong in the church on Sunday 6th December.

Explaining the importance of the award, HLF's Head of Region for the South West, Nerys Watts, said: "The sound of church bells has traditionally marked the important events in the rural calendar and in the lives of the village community, so we are delighted to support the parish council at Pillaton with this project, which will ensure that their bells continue to be heard and to be rung by future generations."

Notes to editors

The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) enables communities to celebrate, look after and learn more about our diverse heritage. From our great museums and historic buildings to local parks and beauty spots or recording and celebrating traditions, customs and history, HLF grants open up our nation's heritage for everyone to enjoy. Since 1994 it has supported more than 26,000 projects, allocating over £4 billion across the UK.

Further information

Dr Richard Warwick, Tower Captain on 01579 350711 or maire.warwick@btinternet.com