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A Legitimate Methods Committee? No thanks!

SIR, – Thank you for publishing the newspaper article on the Julie McDonnell affair (*RW* 1st September p.852) and seeking comments from the main players; the responses you printed are illuminating. I welcome this public exposure to a matter that has affected a large number of sympathetic ringers who were drawn to supporting what they believed to be a worthy cause. However, I am very troubled by the suggestion of changing the names of the Julie McDonnell methods, and the undesirable precedent this would set. Thankfully, the Central Council does not claim to be the Governing Body of Ringing with authority simply to change method names at its discretion, so what might the mechanism be? Go through a

lengthy consultation process to create a new "Legitimate Methods Committee"? Elect suitably qualified people to sit on that committee, and agree criteria for "legitimate" names? Review the whole of the methods library to identify all those methods whose names they find to be unacceptable? NO! There is nothing to be gained from this, and plenty to be lost. Besides, since the height of the fundraising campaign in 2016-17, when almost 800 performances with Julie McDonnell methods were published on BellBoard, there have been only a handful more, mainly by a few diehard supporters.

PETER BLIGHT

Islington

Saving Inveraray from India

SIR, – I read with much interest the front-page article covering the Inveraray week (*RW* 8th September). If you will allow me space I would like to add to the history given.

In 1969 Norman Chaddock rang two peals at Inveraray. On taking the keys back to Anne Noble, it transpired that the bells were going to be sold to India. A conversation took place involving the Bishop of Argyll and this sale was stopped. In April 1970 Norman organised a small group from East Yorkshire to travel to Inveraray to spend a week cleaning and painting the frame and raising awareness, with evening talks and handbell demonstrations. Ray Aldington, the carillonneur from the Bournville Carillon, joined us and played Scottish tunes on the chimes each lunchtime.

The group were privileged to stay at the home of Michael and Anne Noble, at their 'small' house in Cairndow, where bed, breakfast and evening meal were provided. (Michael served as President of the Board of Trade in 1970. Michael and Anne were later ennobled, becoming Baron and Lady Glenkilg.) As a mark of gratitude the group were made life members of the Friends of Inveraray Tower. Anne Noble generously provided an interest-free loan of £10,000 to the Friends of Inveraray to enable repairs to the tower and in August 1970 a group from the East Riding, along with Wilf Moreton and Ray Aldington, returned and made two records to help raise funds. One record was mainly of Scottish tunes played on the chimes and the other was mainly change ringing on six, eight and ten. Most of these 10,000 records were sold to visitors from the USA with all proceeds going into the Tower Funds.

One of the first tasks of the restoration was to repair the roof and install sound control, both of which limited the amount of rain water entering the tower. The central section of the ringing room floor was in a very poor state and some parts were missing. Ringing the eighth and ninth was quite hazardous in the early years! It was not until 1975 that a new floor was installed. Ringers from the East Riding have had a strong link with the town and tower ever since and for many years the peal slot on the August bank holiday weekend was automatically reserved for us.

It is good to see that Inveraray is still a strong focus for ringers from all over and that work continues to maintain the bells and tower.

Photographs of Inveraray can be seen at bnd-online.co.uk/Pics/Inveraray_pics.php

RODERICK R HORTON

Beverley, East Yorkshire

Strike Back: What's in a name?

In light of the recent newspaper article (*RW* 1st September p.852) there have been calls on social media and elsewhere to rename or un-name the 18 methods and one variation that contain the name Julie McDonnell and which were named as part of the fund-raising initiative that she led.

However, there is no universal agreement on this. Some people have argued that the methods remain part of the historical record and were named and rung as part of a specific campaign. It is also worth considering how often any of the methods/variations are likely to be rung again.

Methods are named by the band that first rings them to a qualifying performance. Newly named methods are added to the Methods Library, which is maintained by the Central Council in its role as the central record keeper of all named methods. Once a method is named, the name is considered immutable since the method may be rung by other bands, creating ringing records that use this name.

However, the Central Council also reserves the right to use a different name in the Methods Library from the one proposed by a band, or to leave the method unnamed if it considers this necessary (see Framework for Method Ringing, section 5.E.2). The above also applies to variations, which are recorded in the Variations Library.

BellBoard contains over 800 performances in methods that include the Julie McDonnell name, and there will also be corresponding association and personal records. As it is impossible to update the printed records, there would be little point in just updating the online performance records.

One proposal is simply to remove the references to Julie McDonnell from the CCCBR Methods and Variations Libraries by renaming the methods/variation to align with the aims of the campaign, such as 'Strike Back' or similar. Should they be changed, Complib would enable these methods to be located by a search on either their new or original names. This would not affect historic performances, but any future performances of the methods/variation would use the updated names.

If you have been involved, we would invite your comments via methods@ccbr.org.uk

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