

GUILD OF DEVONSHIRE RINGERS

GENERAL COMMITTEE MEETING

held at Exminster Methodist Church Hall, Saturday 16 January 2010

- C010/1 Lester Yeo (President) opened the meeting and warmly welcomed the 32 members and 3 visitors present, including new reps David Willis (N/NW), Alan Edwards (VP) and Roy Berry (VP). He thanked everyone present for all their hard work over the past year and the contribution they make to keeping method ringing alive in Devon.
- C010/2 Apologies for absence were received from Fergus Stracey (VP), Mary Mack (VP), Wendy Campbell (VP), Robert Perry (VP), George Mudge (VP), Richard Bowden (VP), Mike Mears (Peal Sec), Ian Smith (Bell Advisor), Ian Avery (DRC), Russell Chamberlain (Mid Sec), Cathy Civill (Alyesbeare Sec) and Alison Milen (NE Sec).
- C010/3 Losses by death: Ann Harris (Sidmouth), Donald Salter (Honiton), Merlyn Broadhurst (Gittisham). We stood to remember them.
- C010/4 The Minutes of the January and June 2009 meetings were approved and signed after two minor spelling errors were pointed out. p. Lynne Hughes, s. Michael Cannon, carried nem con.
- C010/5 Matters arising from the Minutes:
- C07/11 (c) The link to the George Dawson website is no longer required as Matthew Hilling has created a section on the website for corrections to the Devon Bells book.
 - C09/11(c) Lynne Hughes asked whether a list of the books in the Library was on the website. Les confirmed it was a work in progress and should be on by the end of the year.
 - C09/16 Lynne Hughes asked whether the Treasurer had put together a template for the Branch Treasurers to use when submitting their accounts. Sue confirmed this had not been done.
 - C09/22 (a) Lynne Hughes asked whether a decision has been made about the use of the Bill Simmonds Trophy. It was pointed out that the matter was on the agenda for discussion later.
- C010/6 Secretary's Report: Janet Coles gave a report saying that this year was similar to last except for the striking competitions with two 8 bell competitions being held in one year. She appealed for more entries in the Novice Competition. The report mentioned that most correspondence was conducted via e-mail now making this a much less arduous task. She finished hoping that everyone would enjoy their ringing in 2010.
- C010/7 Treasurer's Report: Sue Sawyer presented the provisional accounts and said she was still waiting for some information. The General Fund shows a surplus of £992 compared with £1,275 last year. Total income is similar to last year. There was a donation to the library of £200. This is offset by reduced interest and a small reduction in subscriptions. Expenditure has increased by £341 in the year. Additional items of expenditure this year have been £220 on the mini ring and £65 on the Guild Review. £1,000 has been transferred to the Bell Restoration Fund leaving a balance of £5,764 on the fund. £3,003 has been raised this year for the Bell Restoration Fund with quarter peal week raising £641 of this, £300 more than last year. The Balance Sheet shows the Guild in a comfortable position with total funds of £6,178 which is similar to last year.
- Tim Bayton queried why there was no income from the Carol Service this year. As Ian Avery (the organiser) was not present we did not know the answer to this.
- There was a query as to how much money had been received for bag sales. Sue confirmed she had received £250 during 2009.
- Donald Roberts proposed to accept these provisional accounts, seconded by John Foster, carried nem con.
- C10/8 Subscriptions: these were increased in 2010 to £6.00 and there was no need to increase them further this year. However, there was a proposal to sever the link between the Tower Affiliation fee and the membership fee. Bruce Hicks questioned why we wanted to raise the fee and it was noted that towers were already receiving more than they were paying for including 4 copies of RRD per annum, tower affiliation cards as well as the Guild Report. The Review had recommended a Guild Tower Handbook which will be a

one off large expense for each tower with on going smaller expense to keep it up to date. Sheila Scofield questioned whether the member's subscription shouldn't be increased instead to cover the costs of implementing the Review but it was agreed not to do this now. Therefore a rule change was proposed to rule 2.6c to say, "Each affiliated tower shall pay an annual subscription equal to that of a ringing member". P. Tim Bayton, s Tim King. This will be put to the membership for agreement prior to the next AGM, where it will be voted on.

C010/9 Expenses for Central Council representatives: it was agreed to keep the current rate of 25p per mile.

C010/10 Guild annual report: John reported that two branches and two officers were very late with their submissions last year and requested us to be more prompt this year with a deadline for copy of the end of March. The format will stay the same with a the front cover showing the host tower for the AGM. John requested that tower reports be approximately 100 words long. In order to keep costs down, it was suggested the tower captains confirm how many reports they require as there are ringing couples and families in towers, many reports were unclaimed. John also asked that he receive only amendments to tower lists plus the towers write up.

C010/11 Reports by other officers:

- (a) Peal Secretary: The Guild rang 208 peals in 2009, which was 2 more than in 2008 and a new Guild record. At the end of the year, the Guild peal total stood at 5163 – the 5000th being a peal of Yorkshire S Royal at Yeovil on 21 March 2009. Thorverton was the leading tower for the nineteenth consecutive year, followed by Bishop's-Ting-Tong and Pinhoe. Seven-Surprise Minor was again at the top of the method list, followed by Yorkshire S Royal and 41 Spliced S Minor. On the conducting front, Ian Smith became the fifth person to call 100 peals for the Guild. There were three first-pealers – two being ECG members. It was pleasing to see so much activity on handbells – including the Guild record of 43 Spliced S Major. Notable peals included the peal of Grandsire Cinques at Withycombe Raleigh in June with many firsts, the peal of Plain Bob Triples at Exeter St David by the ECG in December, the peal of Spliced Treble Dodging Maximus in five methods in December, and the record length of 15,120 of 41 Spliced S Minor at Bishop's-Ting-Tong also in December. The Guild had the leading peal ringer, leading tower and leading tower-bell conductor in 2009. Mike reminded everyone that the peal fee has risen to 60p in January 2010.
- (b) Quarter Peal Secretary: The total number of quarter peals recorded in Devon for 2009 was 511, of which 383 were by bands comprising at least 50% residents of the county and resident members of the Guild. There were also 122 quarters rung in 13 different counties outside of Devon as well as abroad in both France and the Netherlands. This amounts to a grand total of 633 quarter peals. The number on handbells fell again to 44, although notable progress has continued in terms of method repertoire. Unfortunately, the statistics fail to show the considerable individual achievements of the year such as first quarter peals and milestones. Many of these were accomplished during quarter peal week and have already been highlighted in Ringing Round Devon. However, by next year, the database will hopefully include a facility to also display such achievements in the annual report for the Guild. Other interesting facts and figures: Number of towers/locations: 304/318, leading location: Lundy with 41 quarters (followed by Exeter Cathedral with 15), number of conductors: 133 (an increase on 2008, although only 11 in double figures or greater) and the number of quarters of Spliced: 60
- (c) Librarian: Les Boyce confirm that we were still searching for a permanent home for the collection and was grateful for members' suggestions. In the meantime items were accessible on request from Les and he reported that several postal loans have been made during the year. New acquisitions are listed in RRD but most notable amongst them was the purchase of the Bell News CD covering the period 1881 to 1915. This was a valuable aid to researching the early history of the Guild. We have also received personal donations. The Guild received a generous gift from Richard Bowden (VP) in memory of John Scott. The money has funded several purchases including a set of John's own book on Devon Bells. Work on compiling a detailed catalogue of the collection continues and it is hoped to publish this on the website by the end of 2010. Lester queried what Les's acquisitions policy was. Les confirmed his top priority was for information on ringing and bells in the South West with exceptions for anything of note in the wider ringing fraternity. He confirmed this included CD Rom's, DVD's as well as printed copy. Lester asked whether he would be interested in some ringing LP's he has.

- (d) Towers & Belfries: The advisors were asked for technical assistance in respect of the installation at Kingskerswell, and also presented a report to Russell Chamberlain in respect of East Oghwell. They also noted that it is intended to carry out repairs to the tower masonry of the parapet and roof. Likewise that maintenance work is proposed for Coffinswell. Guild members also answered a request from Cruwys Morchard for advice on maintenance issues, and wielded the spanners accordingly. They are keeping in touch as they hope to have some further work done at some stage. Spanners were also employed at Bere Ferrers to sort out a few maintenance issues. Elsewhere in the county the year was quite busy and about a dozen towers are either contemplating work or have commenced. In relation to last year's report, Merton bells have still not been completed. The hanging of the six at Atherington is now under way. The bells however must not be rung until the middle of the summer, in order to allow the lime mortar used in the masonry repairs, to mature.
- (e) Education Officer: Lynne took over as Education Officer in June, and attempting to organise a 12 month programme from then, proved impossible as most Saturdays for the remainder of the year were already busy. Thus a programme of nine events for 2010 has been put together and circulated. However during the second half of 2009 there were events such as the usual July Young Ringers' day at Wolborough, Tom Waterson taking a leading role. Also in July was the first Guild handbell day, with a surprisingly large turn-out. The Young Ringers' outing in October, to the Buckfast area, came under the patronage of the Guild for the first time.

John Foster has put together a Ringers Handbook for learners which was passed round. It was agreed that one could go into the Tower Handbook and we will put a copy on the website.

- (f) Clerk to the Devon Ringers' Council: During 2009, meetings were held in March, July and September. It is hoped to participate in the 2010 Exeter Festival. Three successful days were spent at The Devon County Show in May. The Frank Mack Garage Ring attracted large crowds especially children eager to have a go. Devon Churches have invited us to be part of their stand again at the 2010 show. A survey of training needs and general activity across the county is being undertaken. The idea being to ascertain where there is activity and areas or towers where some advice, guidance or training might be appreciated. A 10 Bell Call Change Competition is being held at St Marychurch, Torquay on Saturday 20 February. This will be open to individual towers, branches, deaneries and societies giving ringers an opportunity to experience competitive 10 bell ringing in Devon. Volunteers to help with the Devon County Show were requested to contact Ian Avery.
- (g) Publicity Officer: The main activity in 2009 was the production of 4 editions of *Ringling Round Devon* (RRD), circulation of which has stabilised at approximately 140. Roger thanked all who contributed to issues throughout the year. The Branch Secretaries are to be thanked once again for their co-operation and support, particularly in distributing RRD, thereby keeping costs down. He also thanked the staff at Brightsea Press for their patience and advice during laying-out and printing RRD. Apart from RRD, some more general successes were recorded in raising the profile of ringing. Much PR work remains to be done at Branch and Guild levels, as identified in the Guild Review of last year. The proposed separation of the posts of RRD editor and Guild PR Officer may well help facilitate many of these outstanding PR actions. Rises in the costs of production and postage place increasing pressure on the annual budget for RRD. Economies and efforts to attract subscriptions, advertising revenues and sponsorship are reviewed continuously to ensure we live within our means. Thanks are due to Ian Campbell who efficiently continues to put RRD on the Guild website, whilst carefully observing Guild policy on names and personal details etc. One reason it costs more to publish RRD is because it is a larger publication. Les Boyce passed on comments from Alan Regin who felt it was the best newsletter from any Association/Guild.

C010/12 DCBRF: Ian Smith reported that during 2009 the Fund was involved with some 17 towers at some stage in their restoration projects, some being quite major schemes meaning the Funds resources have been significantly reduced. At the beginning of the year the Fund stood at £27,433, since then six grants totalling £10,080 have been paid to towers including Berrynarbor, Berry Pomeroy, Kilmington, Membury, Chagford, and Meavy. Income during the year amounted to £11,022 including £4,200 From the Association Draw and various payments from the Guild including £1,000 agreed at the AGM and £641 from quarter peal week. At present the fund stands at £28,338. If all agreed grants are taken up the uncommitted balance of the Fund stands at only £2,238.

- C010/13 Frank Mack Bells: The Garage Ring continued to be well utilised both at its home in Kingsteignton and at events around the county, including a beer festival in Kingskerswell and the Devon County Show. One peal was scored in 2009 and 5 quarter peals, one in fond memory of Frank. New ropes have been purchased as the 40 year old originals were showing some sign of wear! The bells have already been booked for events in 2010 including 2 weddings and the Devon County Show again.
- C010/14 Proposal for new Vice Presidents: There were no new Vice Presidents proposed.
- C010/15 Child Protection Officer: With the new rulings that came in during October 2009 it has now become necessary for the Guild to appoint a Safeguarding Officer. We requested that the committee try to help find a suitable person to take on the role before the AGM. Two names were suggested but they would need to be approached first. It was agreed that Lester and Janet would put together a list of what might be required of someone who took on the role. It was proposed that a rule change was required to rule 4.1(d) to include a Safeguarding Officer to be elected each year. P. Martin Mansley, s. Mike Hatchett carried nem con.
- C010/16 Guild Review: A number of recommendations were made and approved at the AGM and some were already being put into action. A final copy of the handbook should be available by the AGM, if not by the end of 2010. For instance the tower maintenance section required some modification and where working parties had made reference to material Lester asked for them to provide this for inclusion.

The two additional officer roles were proving difficult to fill in every branch. It was asked that for the purposes of the Education Group, the Ringing Master be the point of contact to help with the programme of events for the following year.

A thank you event for Guild and Branch officers had been suggested and Lester asked for ideas of what format this could take to be given to him after the meeting.

Expenses for Guild Officers such as the Secretary, President, Ringing Master and Bell Advisers was discussed. Whilst it was in principle felt to be something the Guild should be covering, without knowing what this might cost it was difficult to agree at what level this should be. It was suggested the these officers note their expenses during the coming months to provide a reasonably accurate idea of mileage for attending branch AGM's other than their own and for Bell Advisers where the PCC was not covering the costs. Also discussed was internet usage and how this could be quantified. There was some surprise that the secretary was not given an honorarium but apparently this could have tax implications. A proposal was suggested by Tim Bayton that travelling expenses are covered for the above officers and Geoff Hill seconded this. It was felt that the branches should discuss this further and that a proposal be put to the AGM after the expenses were quantified by the Officers.

Other items such as appointing officers rather than electing them and also term of office were not discussed due to time constraints.

- C010/17 Members belong to more than one branch: This was raised by the Exeter Branch. There were a couple of ringers who were regular Sunday Service and practice night attendees at Exeter St Marks but as they were members of another branch could not be shown to be part of the tower within the Guild Report. The request was therefore made, could members belong to more than one tower and how could this be recorded. This was agreed in principle and that they would be shown in the annual report with an asterisk by their name at their 2nd tower for administrative purposes. This would include members of Exeter Cathedral who already belong to two towers in many cases.
- C010/18 Advance Publicity for Ringing Events: Ian Campell explained that he had started to give regular talks to various groups around the County about bell ringing. Many showing an interest in events that Ian talked about and wondering how they could find out about them in advance in order to come and listen to the ringing. Ian suggested that the Publicity Officer could provide details of forthcoming events including Peals to the local newspaper. Some churches already publish activities in the Parish Magazines. This may be something that could be taken further once the role of RRD Editor and Publicity Officer was split as suggested in the Guild Review. The Carol Service when held at Buckfast Abbey attracts non-ringers as the authorities publish a list of Carol Services being held throughout the season and everyone is welcome.

- CO10/19 Arrangements for the 2010 AGM (N/NW Branch): James Clarke confirmed that meeting would be at Braunton on Saturday 19th June starting with coffee at 10.00 followed by the meeting at 10.30 with a full list of the usual events following that including lunch, service, workshops and general ringing.
- CO10/20 Proposed Bill Simmonds Trophy for Striking Competition: Martin Mansley had produced a set up rules for splitting the 8 Bell Striking Competition where the Bill Simmonds trophy would be awarded to the winning team of the easier method. As the splitting of the competition was discussed at the AGM and the membership requested further discussion, we had a lively debate as to whether this should be done or not. There was quite strong feeling that the competition shouldn't be split and the final conclusion was for the Executive Committee together with Martin make a decision on who the trophy should be used.
- CO10/21 Striking Competitions (NE Branch): Les Boyce confirmed that the 8 Bell would be at Huntsham, 6 Bell at Uplowman and the Novice at Bickleigh on Saturday 16th October 2010. The methods would be a simple touch of Little Bob Major and Double Oxford Bob Major.
- CO10/22 Guild Quarter Peal Week: The dates for this will be 29 October – 7 November 2010 inclusive to avoid half term and Remembrance Sunday. Following the success of the Aylesbeare branch last year, Tim suggested other branches look at how they could maximise their fund raising particularly as the Bell Restoration Fund was so heavily committed at present and was in need of a boost to funds.
- CO10/23 Date and venue of next meeting: Saturday 19 June 2010 after the AGM.
- CO10/24 AOB:
- (a) Norman Mallett said there was a lot of support to go back to Buckfast Abbey for the Carol Service. As Ian Avery wasn't at the meeting it was suggested that Norman write to Ian about this. One concern raised with this was that under 16's were not allowed in the tower and also that moving the service around the County was also a good idea.
 - (b) Lester confirmed that at mock up of this year's Tower Affiliation Card was available and could everyone whose details appear on it to check they are correct before they are finalised and printed.

The meeting closed at 5.52pm