

# GUILD OF DEVONSHIRE RINGERS

## GENERAL COMMITTEE MEETING

*held at Exminster Methodist Church Hall, Saturday 17 January 2009*

- C09/1 Lester Yeo (President) opened the meeting and warmly welcomed the 34 members and 3 visitors present, including new reps Heather Somerwill (Exeter Secretary) and Michael Cannon (Exeter rep).
- C09/2 Apologies for absence were received from Fergus Stracey (VP), Ken Wannell (NE), Mary Mack (VP), Wendy Campbell (VP), Robert Perry (VP), Marion Baker (East Chair & VP) and George Mudge (VP).
- C093 Losses by death: Ena Ford (Thorverton), Valerie Oates (Heavitree), Denis Thompson (Okehampton) and Deanne Coward (St Marychurch). We stood to remember them.
- C094 The Minutes of the January and June 2008 meetings were approved and signed. p. Lynne Hughes, s. James Clarke, p. Don Roberts, s. James Clarke respectively, carried nem con.
- C095 Matters arising from the Minutes:
- C0711 (c) The link to the George Hawkins website had not been provided on the Guild website and it was agreed that the secretary would chase this up with Matthew Hilling.
- C07/26 (b) Les Boyce confirmed that the NE Branch had a stand at the Mid Devon Show which proved successful. They have a possible 5-6 new recruits and felt it was a great public relations exercise.
- C08/26 (b) Cathy Civill asked for clarification about the 1100<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations and whether there was a specific date we should all be trying to ring. It was agreed this should be dealt with at Branch level and that the secretary would provide a link to the Diocesan website to find out a suitable date for each area.
- C09/6 Secretary's Report: Janet Coles gave a report of her first full year in office, highlighting the events she had attended and helped to organise including the AGM, striking competitions and the various branch AGM's. She hoped that having found her feet she would be able to help the Guild move forward during this time of change.
- C09/7 Treasurer's Report: Sue Sawyer presented the provisional accounts, and reported on another good year with a surplus of income over expenditure with income similar to last year, with total funds standing at £6,185.96. The cost of producing the report had been reduced by £291, with an increase in CC reps expenses due to the meeting being held in Newcastle. There were additional costs for affiliation cards, library books and a stand at the RW Roadshow. The Instruction and Education Fund was used for the first time in years by the East Devon branch for their Training the Trainer day. The Aylesbeare branch were congratulated on a very successful cream tea event which raised £185 for the Bell Restoration Fund. The balance sheet shows a loan to the Devon Ringers Council for the purchase of "Bags for Life" which is slowly being repaid as bags are sold.
- Mid Devon confirmed they had sent a £50 donation direct to the DCBRF. Tim Bayton queried why there was no surplus for diary sales. It was explained that diaries were currently not being sold through the Guild. Subject to examination the accounts were accepted, p. Tim Bayton, s. Roger King, carried nem con.
- C09/8 Subscriptions: the Treasurer recommended that these should increase to £6.00 and concessions £3.00. The Peal fee and tower affiliation fees are linked to the subscription so they will increase in line. This is the first increase in 8 years. This will be put to the AGM to increase in 2010. Sue also recommended that the affiliation fee be increased on top of this but it would require a rule change as the fee is currently linked to the subscription. It was agreed that this would be carried forward to 2011 when there may be rules changes as a result of the Guild Review. The reasons for this were the extras each tower receives, i.e. Affiliation Card, 4 copies of RRD on top of the Guild Report. P. Sue Sawyer, S. Joan Clarke.
- C09/9 Expenses for Central Council representatives: it was agreed to keep the current rate of 25p per mile.
- C09/10 Guild annual report: John reported that two branches 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. There will be a change to how the peals are published with footnotes being removed and any duplicate performances to be marked as such. Several of the committee members remarked that the report for 2007 was excellent.
- C09/11 Reports by other officers:
- (a) Peal Secretary: The Guild rang 206 peals in 2008, which was 6 more than 2007 and yet again a new Guild record. At the end of 2008, the Guild peal total stood at 4955, which means that we are on target to ring the 5000<sup>th</sup> peal early in 2009. Thorverton was the leading tower for the eighteenth consecutive year, followed by Bishops-Ting-Tong and Pinhoe. First peal on the bells was rung at Kingsbridge and the first peal at Paignton since 1959. Seven Surprise minor was at the top of the method list, followed by Yorkshire S Major and 41 Spliced S Minor. There were a lot of new methods rung for the Guild during the course of the year, including the first of Zanussi and Rigel S

Maximus. On the conducting front, Paul Pascoe achieved his 100<sup>th</sup> as conductor and Tim Bayton his first of 8 Spliced. It was also pleasing to see Donald Carter returning to the list of conductors. There were three first pealers – Amy Jones, Maff Glover and Kevin Brooks. Michael Squire rang his first peal inside and Ali and Tom Waterson rang their first on handbells. Congratulations are due to Ian Smith on ringing his 2000<sup>th</sup> peal and Mike Rose his 1000<sup>th</sup>. Notable peals for the year mostly revolved around weddings. Matthew Hilling and Rosie Green married in September, in July Bill & Betty Avery celebrated their Platinum Wedding anniversary. I was particularly pleased to take part in the peal with Don Roberts on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his first. Other peals of note include the peal of Doubles by the ECG at Exeter St David, with two first pealers and the peal of Rigel S Maximus at Shepton Beauchamp in December which included nine resident Guild members.

- (b) Quarter Peal Secretary: The total number of quarter peals recorded in Devon for 2008 was 541, of which 457 were by bands comprising at least 50% residents of the county. There were also 138 quarter peals rung in 11 different counties outside of Devon, including abroad in both France and Cornwall, by bands comprising at least 50% residents of Devon. The number of handbell quarters fell to 63 although it is impressive that nearly half of these were in treble dodging methods. This figure represents a considerable drop from 2007, which may be linked to the fact that one band is now ringing more peals than quarters. The leading tower was Lundy with 28 quarter peals, followed by Bishops Ting Tong with 27.
- (c) Librarian: Leslie Boyce reported that he now held all the contents of the Guild Library at his home waiting for a suitable alternative location to be found. He had made various acquisitions during the year helping to bring the library up to date and was in the process of cataloguing John Scott's personal books. He raised the question of whether the Guild should be prepared to acquire second-hand and antiquarian books and memorabilia of Devon ringing interest and felt a policy is needed. The Library has been used during the year and he will seek further opportunities to promote the collection and the library service. Schemes such as a postal loan and for a "Friends of the Guild Library" are now being considered. Getting the list of books in the Library onto the website was now a priority. A photo of the 1894 Guild AGM at Ottery St Mary had recently come up for sale in Bristol and steps were being taken to obtain it. Leslie is to put a proposal together for the AGM to set up the "Friends of the Guild Library". Leslie requested a change to the acquisitions budget agreed at the AGM in 2008 from £100 to £150 per annum and for the expenses budget to remain at £100 per annum. P. Martin Mansley, s. Russell Chamberlain, carried nem con.
- (d) Towers & Belfries: The advisors were asked for technical assistance in only three affiliated towers during the year. At Littleham, Exmouth in respect of sound control, at Kilmington in respect of the fitness of existing timber foundation beams and at Heavitree in respect of the installation of telecom equipment. We also joined discussions at a North East Branch Seminar on the subject of tower health and safety. We are pleased to confirm that the rehang of the eight bells at Berry Pomeroy should soon be complete, likewise the repairs at Merton. The rehang and augmentation at Sampford Spiney is complete and the bells of Emmanuel Church Plymouth, were rehung on new headstocks. The replacement of the foundation grillage at Walkhampton is now complete as are repairs to the frame foundation at Parkham. The bells have been removed from Stoke Canon tower in anticipation of their partial recasting and rehang in a new frame, hopefully during 2009/10. Guild members assisted with this operation. We look forward also to anticipated rehanges at Membury and Sampford Courtenay where fund-raising and preliminary paperwork are underway. Unfortunately there is still no progress as far as we know, on a date for the hanging of the six at Atherington.
- (e) Education Officer: Tim King reported on another quiet year with just a Young Persons ringing event during 2008. This was well attended and some excellent ringing was enjoyed by those present. He went on to talk about plans for 2009.
- (f) Clerk to the Devon Ringers' Council: During 2008, meetings were held in February, June and September. A successful evening was recorded at the Exeter Autumn Festival in November 2007 - organised and performed by members of the Guild and Association. Ideas for future festivals include Handbell Tune Ringing and a musical theme performance involving instrumentalists and choir. The Ringing Roadshow featured quite significantly in all 3 meetings. The first two discussing all the arrangements. The 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting we were able to discuss the success of the Roadshow. £194 worth of goods was sold on the stand and the mini-ring was a particular success despite the weather, as the mini-rings were placed outside. The Devon County Show also has been well discussed over the year and meetings have taken place with representatives from Devon Churches as we will be sharing their stand at the 2009 show in May. The mini-ring will be on show and a rota will be drawn up in order that the bells will be rung and demonstrated at regular times throughout the 3 days of the show. A youth event was arranged and took place at Wolborough in July 2008. Although a good time was had

by all, attendance could have been better. It was noted (after the date had been set) there were other events taking place around the county on the same day. Another event for young ringers is planned for July 2009, again, at Wolborough. The 2009 Carol Service will take place on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> December in Buckfast Abbey at 3.00pm.

- (g) Publicity Officer: Roger King reported that four editions of RRD had been published during the year and that two advertising slots had been sold helping with the cost of production. Circulation remains the same. Production of RRD came in just under budget but consideration may have to be given to raising the subscription rate for out of county subscribers if postage increases significantly. He thanked Ian Campbell for putting RRD onto the Guild website. Roger plans to produce some generic display material during 2009 incorporating promotional material from the CCCBR website.

- C09/12 DCBRF: Ian Smith reported that the Fund had reached a significant landmark in 2008 when it passed the £100,000 mark in grants paid for bell restoration work in the county. Seven grants were paid during the year totalling £9,950. Income during the year amounted to £10,987 with the Guild and its members contributing almost £3,500 of this. The balance of the fund stood at £27,763 at the end of the year, with grants outstanding to several towers, the uncommitted balance stood at £15,313. There was some discussion as to whether the fund should award a grant to Hawkchurch, which is in the Salisbury Diocesan but is actually in Devon. Ian confirmed that the remit of the fund was to award grants for bell restoration of towers in Devon. Therefore Hawkchurch may be in the enviable position of being able to request grants from two bell restoration funds.
- C08/13 Frank Mack Bells: Lester again thanked Ian for his care of the bells and all the improvements he has made including the new legs. Ian is to provide details of his expenses as we all agreed he should not do this work at his own cost. Ian was asked for request a donation whenever the bells were being used by non Guild members as they are a Guild asset.
- C09/14 Proposal for new Vice Presidents: Two were received prior to the meeting:  
Michael Mears (Mid) – p. Norman Mallett, s. Ian Avery  
Alan Edwards (NE) – p. NE Branch  
The members of the committee approved both nominations to be put before the AGM in June 2009.
- C09/15 Review of the Guild: The interim reports from the three working parties had been circulated prior to the meeting and Lester asked that only points of clarification be raised today and that any questions, suggestions etc should be sent in writing to Janet who will then forward them to the three working parties for further discussion. The groups were then to provide their final reports by mid March 2009. The full report would be circulated in time for the RRD prior to the June 2009 AGM.
- C09/16 Examiners for Branch Accounts: This had been raised at the Mid Devon AGM. Sue Sawyer confirmed there was no legal requirement for the branch accounts to be examined. The Guild accounts are examined as a whole but this isn't required by the Charities Commission as our turnover is less than £10,000. Sue confirmed the quality of accounts received was variable and she is going to put together a template showing her requirements which will be sent to all Branch Treasurers. It was further discussed that an induction of new officers was required or at the very least a job description of each role. Janet is to co-ordinate this with her fellow officers.
- C09/17 E-mail lists: Ian Campbell pointed out the use of e-mail lists and that he was able to put these together for other branches and the officers to help when e-mailing large numbers of people. Some thought this would be useful and will co-ordinate with Ian direct.
- C09/18 Arrangements for 2009 AGM: Geoff Hill confirmed that preparations were well underway with the AGM taking place at Lamerton on Saturday 13 June 2009 with various towers being open before and after the meeting hopefully including the new six at Sampford Spiney. The service would be held at Tavistock.
- C09/19 Striking competitions: The competition this year is in the Exeter branch on Saturday 17 October 2009. The 8 bell will be at Heavitree, 6 bell on the back 6 at Pinhoe with the novice competition on either front or back 6 of St Marks. Methods for the 8 bell will be either a touch of Stedman Triples or Plain Bob Triples.

Martin Mansley has offered to provide an extra trophy in memory of Bill Simmonds which could be used for the Striking Competitions. The initial thought is to split the 8 bell competition with the new trophy being awarded for the top ringers in the easier method. The committee agreed that a final decision on its use should be made by Martin and the executive officers.

C09/20 Fund raising for DCBRF: quarter peal week: The dates for this will be 23 October – 1 November 2009 inclusive. Tim requested that branch officers be proactive in getting as many quarter peals organised during the week as possible and for any Gift Aid donations to be made through the Guild and not directly to the DCBRF.

C09/21 Date and venue of next meeting: Saturday 13 June 2009 after the AGM.

C09/22 AOB:

- (a) Martin Mansley confirmed that the role of honour was now on the Central Councils website however it only shows 18 Devon ringers. He felt that were more than this who should be remembered and asked all ringers to look out for memorials for any fallen bellringers and to pass this information to Alan Regin who is co-ordinating this.
- (b) Tim Bayton confirmed that the new Devon contacts directory was due to be published imminently and if anyone knew of any changes of contacts to let him know ASAP.

The meeting closed at 5.23pm