

GUILD OF DEVONSHIRE RINGERS

GENERAL COMMITTEE MEETING

held at Exminster Methodist Church Hall, Saturday 15 January 2011

- C011/1 Lester Yeo (President) opened the meeting and warmly welcomed the 38 members and 3 visitors present, including new reps John Martin (Mid Devon Secretary), Wendy Gill (Exeter Chair) and Alena Wardle (SW Chair). He thanked everyone present for all their hard work over the past year and the contribution they make to keep method ringing alive in Devon. He hoped the meeting would be shorter than normal as most of the officers reports had been sent out already giving people a chance to look at and reflect on them.
- C011/2 Apologies for absence were received from Mary Mack (VP), Matthew Hilling (Webmaster), Alison Milne (NE Secretary), George Mudge (VP) and Richard Bowden (VP).
- C011/3 Losses by death: Derek Conway (Ottery St Mary), David Row (Topsham), Ken Buckingham (Topsham), Jack James (Pinhoe), Connie Kape (Tiverton) and Dick Sloman (Bampton). We stood to remember them. It was agreed that we would remove this item from the agenda and only remember those who had died at the AGM.
- C011/4 The Minutes of the January and June 2010 meetings were approved and signed. p. Michael Cannon, s. Lynne Hughes, carried nem con.
- C011/5 Matters arising from the Minutes:
CO10/11 (c) Les Boyce confirmed that there was a summary list of the library contents within the Guild Handbook and he would be passing this to Matthew Hilling to go on the website.
- C011/6 Secretary's Report: Janet Coles gave a report saying that the Guild AGM had been poorly attended and took some of the blame as she had requested the meeting be held in the morning. The Striking Competition day had been busy with some excellent ringing and a full novice competition. She commented that the Education Programme had been excellent and thanked Lynne Hughes for all her hard work. She confirmed that her goal of 2,000 quarter peals had been achieved.
- C011/7 Treasurer's Report: Sue Sawyer presented the provisional accounts. The General Fund shows a surplus of £993 compared with £1,011 last year. Income has increased, mainly due to the increase in subscription rates. Expenditure has increased by £465 in the year. An additional item of expenditure this year was £513 on the Guild Handbook. Expenditure on the newsletter has increased by £100. £1,000 has been transferred to the Devon Church Bell Restoration Fund leaving a balance of £5,716 on the fund. The Instruction and Education Fund shows a deficit for the year of £75 due to expenditure on the Training the Trainer course. The balance on the fund stands at £339. The Bell Restoration Fund shows that £3,489 has been raised this year, £486 more than last year. Exeter Branch must be congratulated on raising £666 this year which includes £212 from a wine tasting event. Quarter Peal Week raised £643 which is similar to last year. The balance sheet shows the Guild in a comfortable position with total funds of £6,055 which is similar to last year.
- John Langabeer proposed to accept these provisional accounts, seconded by Les Boyce, carried nem con.
- C11/8 Subscriptions: It was agreed there was currently no need to increase subscriptions, however a suggestion was made that those how pay £3.00 may wish to consider paying a full membership fee of £6.00 as any surplus of income over expenditure would be passed to the DCBRF who are currently struggling for funds. Following the discussion on insurance it was suggested that we may wish to increase the subscription at the AGM if we go ahead with insurance cover for all Guild members.
- C011/9 Expenses for Central Council representatives: Due to the large increase in petrol costs it was proposed by Mike Hatchett to raise this to 40p per mile. Seconded by Tim Bayton, carried nem con. It should be noted that CC reps pay for their own accommodation when attending the meeting.

C011/10 Guild annual report: John had provided a chatty report explaining the difficult year he had had personally which had caused the report to be late and slightly below his own acceptable standard. It was agreed by those present that despite all of this the report was still to be commended. John requested copy of this year's report by 31st March 2011. It was suggested that John request a report on the National 12 Bell Competition final that was held in Crediton in 2011 to go into the report.

C011/11 Reports by other officers:

- (a) Peal Secretary: The Guild rang 205 peals in 2010, which was 3 fewer than in 2009, and at the end of the year the Guild total stood at 5368. Thorverton was the leading tower for the twentieth consecutive year, followed by Bishop's-Ting-Tong and Withycombe Raleigh. Firsts on the bells were scored at Sampford Spiney and Atherington and Bishops-Ting-Tong had its 100th peal. Seven-Surprise Minor was again at the top of the method list, followed by 8 Spliced S Major, Yorkshire S Major and 41 Spliced S Minor. Paul Pascoe and Fergus Stracey became the sixth and seventh respectively to call 100 peals for the Guild, Tom Hinks scored his 100th as Conductor on handbells while Tom Waterson and Martin Gentile scored their firsts as Conductor. There were six first-pealers – Claire Harris, Ron Street, Charlotte Boyce, Trevor Smith, Lucy Davis and Philip Ridley. On the handbell front, Matt's band completed their Surprise major series, ending with a peal in 53 methods. There were firsts in hand for Jon Potter and Tim Bayton. Notable peals included the peal of Grandsire Caters at St Marychurch in August for Don Roberts' 80th birthday, with the birthday boy taking part, and the peal of Stedman Cinques at York Minster (the Guild certainly gets around these days). Also all the peals including someone ringing their first are worthy of note. For the second year running, the Guild had the leading peal ringer, leading tower and leading tower-bell conductor.
- (b) Quarter Peal Secretary: The total number of quarter peals recorded in Devon for 2010 was 535, of which only 367 were by bands comprising at least 50% residents of the county and resident members of the Guild. However, there were also 172 quarters rung in 15 different counties outside of Devon, including both overseas and on the water, by bands comprising at least 50% residents of the county and resident members of the Guild, demonstrating that we were very well travelled this year! This amounts to a grand total of 707 quarter peals. The number of handbell quarters rose dramatically to 78 and nearly half of these were of Surprise.
- (c) Librarian: Les Boyce confirmed that he had acquired all available Central Council publications not previously held. He had put together two travelling collections one for Learners and one for Trainers. These were available to branches for their meetings etc. A summary list of the stock has been produced and is in the Tower Handbooks. Several loans were made and enquiries answered during the year and articles based on the library stock and lists of acquisitions have appeared in RRD. The search for a permanent home for the library continues with one or two possible locations being investigated. The library remains in store in Tiverton. The budget of £150 for acquisitions and £100 for other expenses was requested. P. Martin Mansley, S. Don Roberts.
- (d) Towers & Belfries: The advisers were asked for a report in respect of the installation at Thelbridge, and also presented reports to Feniton, Awliscombe and Plympton St. Maurice. Advice was also given at Plymouth St. Andrew. They also made an inspection and presented a report on the Stoke Damerel installation, arising from a recommendation of the Church Architect, to accompany his Quinquennial Report. The rehang of Merton bells has been completed at last, likewise the six at Atherington. It is especially pleasing to report that Stoodleigh and High Bray have received significant grants from the Heritage Lottery Fund, enabling them to proceed with their rehangs much earlier than had previously been hoped. The re-hangs at Sampford Courtenay and Dodbrooke have been completed and a dozen other churches have received advice on various matters relating to their bells. In October, East Devon was the venue of the third in a series of maintenance days. A dozen members of the Guild and the Association attended the event at Clyst Hydon and Talaton.

James was asked to clarify when he is able to provide help with inspections or provide written reports after he had to decline a request made to him in 2010. As James wears many hats including DAC Adviser and CC Tower and Belfries Committee Rep it can get confusing. It was agreed that he would put together a procedure note to go into the Guild Handbook to help with this.

- (e) Education Officer: Nine events took place as planned in 2010. Two of these were for specific methods: Little Bob Major at Wolborough in January, and Grandsire Triples at Thorverton & Silverton in September. Three further events developed skills: 'Starting to Conduct' at Brampford Speke & Holcombe Burnell in February, 'Teaching the Teachers' at Pinhoe & Silverton in April, and a 'Handbell Workshop' at Okehampton in July. Another three events were for young ringers, they were a spring outing to East Devon, a summer barbecue with ringing at Wolborough, and an autumn outing to the South Hams. The remaining event was the 'Publicity and Recruitment' seminar at the Guild AGM in Braunton in June, chaired by Phil Tremain, the publicity officer from the Truro Guild. One indication of success is that all the training days with limited places were fully subscribed, and some had waiting lists. In October an education committee meeting was held, with representatives from each branch, and other interested parties. This resulted in some offers of organising training days, so an even fuller programme has been put together for 2011. Lynne has started a database of helpers as suggested by the Guild Review.
- (e) Clerk to the Devon Ringers' Council: During 2010, meetings were held in February, June and September. Discussions took place at all meetings during the year regarding participation in the 2010 Exeter Festival with members of both the Guild and Association taking part. Ideas/suggestions included Handbell Tune Ringing and a musical theme performance involving instrumentalists and choir. Also discussed was the possibility of taking the performance around the City as an alternative to one venue as at previous Festivals. Three successful days were again spent at The Devon County Show in May where the good weather attracted large crowds. The Frank Mack Garage Ring attracted large crowds including many school children and The Dean, The Very Reverend Jonathan Meyrick, eager to have a go. Devon Churches have invited us to be part of their stand again at the 2011 show. A survey of training needs and general activity across the county has brought no surprises but acknowledged that ringing is more active in some areas than others. The idea of the survey was to ascertain where there is activity and areas or towers where some advice, guidance or training might be appreciated. This remains work in progress. After the successful 10-Bell Call-Change Competition held at St Marychurch, Torquay in 2010, a similar event will be held at St Mark's, Exeter on Saturday 19th February 2011. The competition is open to individual towers, branches, deaneries and societies giving ringers an opportunity to experience competitive 10-Bell ringing in Devon.

Tim Bayton asked whether anything had been done towards allowing under 16's to be allowed to ring at Buckfast Abbey as the Carol Service was being held there in 2011. Ian confirmed he was working with the Abbey authorities to see if this would be possible and have an answer well in advance of the event.

- (g) Publicity Officer: The majority of the PR activity in 2010 was the production of 4 editions of *Ringing Round Devon* (RRD), though as noted last year, Roger is conscious that more PR work can and should be done for the Guild, as identified in the Guild Review. The proposed separation of the posts of RRD editor and Guild PR Officer may well help facilitate these outstanding PR actions. This year has seen an increase in the number of towers joining the Guild. The circulation of *Ringing Round Devon* increased to about 150 and the number of articles offered for publication has also increased. Rises in the costs of production and of postage have placed increasing pressure on the annual budget for RRD. At present, individual subscribers pay £5 annually for 4 issues (including postage). Postage costs for a single edition (at large letter rate) are £3 for the year and it is recommended that the annual subscription be raised to £6. Roger gave notice that he will be standing down as editor, in June 2012 at the AGM, when he will have been in post for 5 years.

Subscription charge increase P. Martin Mansley, S. Mike Mears.

C011/12 DCBRF: Ian Smith reported that at the beginning of the year the Fund stood at £28,338. Since that time ten grants totalling £15,320 have been paid. These were £4,600 to Sampford Courtenay; £3,200 to Dodbrooke; £400 to Buckland Brewer; £4,000 to Atherington; £500 to Coffinswell; £1,000 to Merton; £300 to Awliscombe; £350 to Sourton; £420 to Brixton; and £550 to Chittlehampton.

Income during the year amounted to £12,892, including £5,000 from the Devon Association Annual Draw, £1,000 from the Guild, £1,097 from the Guild Branches, £643 from the Guild Quarter Peal Weeks, £539 in

memory of Derek Conway of Ottery St Mary, £500 from the National 12-Bell Competition Final at Crediton, £500 from the sale of Devon Directories, £200 from the St Brannock's Society, £191 from the Dunsford/Doddiscombsleigh Competition, £108 from Peal and Quarter Peal ringers, £250 from the Troyte Ringing Centre, and £100 from Stoke Damerel. Bank interest and tax refunds following Gift Aided donations amounted to £818.

At present the Fund stands at £25,891.

In addition to the grants already paid, five further grants were awarded during the year; £1,400 to Plymtree; a further grant of £200 to Sheepstor (this is in addition to the £2,800 already offered for the main rehanging work); £3,000 to Brentor; £2,800 to High Bray £440 to Uffclme. Approaches to the Fund have also been made by Hawkchurch and Weare Giffard.

If all agreed grants are taken up, the uncommitted balance of the Fund stands at only £3,751.

Ian confirmed the fund was struggling in the short term due to the large amount of work being carried out at present. Many of the rings of bells in Devon are some 100 years past their last re-hang!

- C011/13 Frank Mack Bells: The Garage Ring continues to be well utilised both at Kingsteignton and at events around the county. The latter including visits to a fund-raising event for the Truro Diocesan Guild and the Devon County Show at Westpoint – the latter seeming to have now become a regular event for the bells. The general consensus of opinion is that the new ropes (with slightly thicker sallies) appear to have made the bells a little easier to handle. Come and try for yourselves as the bells remain available 24/7, 365 days a year.

The question was asked as to whether the mini-ring was insured, Ian confirmed it was whilst in his garage but it would be covered by the hirers insurance when it was away from it's home location.

- C011/14 Proposal for new Vice Presidents: Ian Campbell, P. Janet Coles, S Lynne Hughes. Ian has just stepped down as Chairman of the Exeter branch after 25 years. He has been tower captain at Heavitree for many years and has also been Ringing Master at Exeter Cathedral where he still holds an executive position. He also puts RRD onto the web and supports more than one of the branch e-mail lists. During retirement he has started to give talks on bell ringing to many of the local societies such as Probus, WI etc. The proposal was carried nem con. Janet will put together a full report of Ian's achievements for the AGM in June.

- C011/15 Guild Insurance: The Mid Devon Branch requested that the officers of the Guild negotiate to provide insurance cover for members both in respect of personal accident and public liability i.e. accidental damage to people or installations arising from ringing. Whilst your own PCC may provide some cover it didn't extend to outings unless specifically agreed with them and not to an individual ringing in another tower.

The NE branch already provides insurance cover to its members at a cost of £1 per member. It also covered their stand at the Mid Devon Show this year.

Janet had looked into this prior to the meeting and had been provided with figures which equated to 50p per member for the public liability insurance but did not have figures to include personal injury. After some discussion it was agreed that she would obtain quotes for Public Liability only and also Public Liability and Personal Injury. These figures were to be provided in time to go into the Annual Report. Confirmation of the cover and premiums would also be provided to the committee at that time. Due notice would be given to the membership that this will be discussed at the AGM.

- C011/16 Appointing Officers of the Guild: The Guild Review had suggested that some of the roles currently elected at the AGM could be filled by appointment instead such as the Quarter Peal Secretary and Peal Secretary. We had already set a president with appointing a Webmaster and as Steward for the Guild Mini Ring. After much discussion including the suggestion that the roles were still elected but for say 3 years it was decided that all the current roles that were elected would continue to be filled by election rather than appointment.

- C011/17 Guild AGM Format and Date: Due to the poor attendance at the 2010 AGM the executive officers had asked the branches to discuss what would attract them to the Guild AGM and festival day. Janet reported back that more ringing, cheaper food and the possibility of having a tower for call changes would all be an incentive to go. Also targeted training events. It was also considered whether the venue should be centralised, however, the majority felt that they would prefer to it continue to be spread around the branches as now. Also should we move the date away from mid June. Suggestions of a separate meeting day and festival day or having an Annual Dinner and AGM were all put forward. It was agreed that there would be sub committee put in place to help put forward suggestions for a new format. The committee is Les Boyce, Martin Mansley and Lester Yeo. Their proposal will be put to the AGM in June.
- C011/18 Loss Making Guild Events: At the N/NW branch AGM it was noted that the Guild AGM had proved to be a loss making event which the branch had to cover. Should the Guild cover the cost of this as it was a Guild event. The AGM does incur significant costs these days including and organist which is approximately £50, hire of a hall which can be between £7-10 per hour plus catering costs. After some discussion it was felt that overall the branches should do their utmost to make the event a profitable one but should carry the cost if it wasn't. However, if a branch were in financial difficulties due to such an event the Guild would help. Sue pointed out that overall the branches had some £5,000 which is a similar amount to the Guild.
- C011/19 Arrangements for the 2011 AGM (Mid Devon Branch): John Martin confirmed the venue would be Teignmouth Baptist Church. There would be targeted training in various towers in the morning, plus a general ringing venue. Also there would be seminars at the main venue during the morning. The service would be at 2.00 pm followed by the AGM at 2.30 pm. Light refreshments only would be provided as there were plenty of venues to find lunch in the town. Day tickets would be £4 in advance but more on the day. If only attending the service and meeting there would be no cost. The branch was congratulated on what sounded like an excellent day.
- C011/20 Striking Competitions (SW Branch): Alena Wardle confirmed that they were still in the planning stage and as yet had not decided on the actual towers. The methods for the 8 bell are to be Stedman Triples or St Simons Bob Triples. Matthew Hilling will be asked to provide suitable touches.
- C011/21 Guild Quarter Peal Week: The dates for this will be 28 October – 6 November 2011 inclusive to avoid half term and Remembrance Sunday. Tim mentioned that branches who pulled together for this event had proved very successful and suggested that other branches should follow suit.

It was suggested that other ways of raising money for the DCBRF be found and it was confirmed that some sponsored peals were due to be rung this year.

- C011/22 Date and venue of next meeting: Saturday 18 June 2011 after the AGM. Lester pointed out that this was usually a very short meeting but if there was significant business that needed to be dealt with it would be done here and encouraged all committee members to be at the AGM. The next full meeting would be Saturday 21 January 2012 probably at Exminster again.
- C011/23 AOB:
- (a) In Matthew Hilling's absence Janet reminded everyone to send articles and photos to him to go on the website and also to send the branches events list to him.
 - (b) Janet informed the branch secretaries present that she had been given Beltower leaflets to go into the Tower Handbook and could they take the relevant number away with them.
 - (c) The Bell Maintenance part of the handbook will be available soon. John Foster has had agreement from the Central Council that we can use their handbook at a cost of £50 for the copyright and re-print enough for each tower. The executive committee confirmed that John could go ahead with this.
 - (d) Lester had a draft of the affiliation card for inspection.
 - (e) Les Boyce had been sent details of the Jubilee People's Millions fund which is making available grants for bell restoration. It is part of the Big Lottery Fund. So if any tower was undergoing major restoration work they should get their application in soon.
 - (f) Alan Furse reiterated the call for every tower to be represented at the Guild AGM.

The meeting closed at 5.23pm

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Lester Yeo (President)

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(Date)