

GUILD OF DEVONSHIRE RINGERS

GENERAL COMMITTEE MEETING

Held at Newton St Cyres Parish Hall, Saturday 18 January 2014

- CO14/1 Lester Yeo (President) opened the meeting by welcoming all committee members, visitors and friends of the Guild, particularly mentioning three new members and one returning; there were 35 members and 3 guests present at the meeting. He hoped everyone had found arrangements at the new venue satisfactory. There followed an opening prayer.
- CO14/2 Apologies for absence were received from Roy Berry (vice president), Richard Bowden (vice president), Michael Cannon (Exeter rep), Janet Coles (Insurance sec), John Foster (Report Editor), Bruce Hicks (N/NW Sec), Jenny Jones (NE Sec), John Langabeer (vice president), Mary Mack (vice president), John Martin (Mid-Devon Sec), George Mudge (vice president), Laurie Palmer (East Devon Chair), Matt Pym (Aylesbeare Sec).
- CO14/3 Losses by death: Grace Carter (Honiton), Brian Gardner (Shute), James Rich (vice president - N/NW), John Woods (Stoke Canon). The meeting remembered them in prayer.
- CO14/4 The minutes of the January 2013 meeting were approved and signed as a true record, with the following amendments:
- (a) CO13/8 Should read subscriptions for 2014, not 2013.
 - (b) CO13/11 (f) Removal of the sentence 'Ian Avery proposed that the Guild should write off the loan. This was seconded by James Clarke'. No vote had been taken on the proposal.
- (p: Lynne Hughes, s: Alan Furse, carried nem con)
- CO14/5 Matters arising from the minutes: Les Boyce questioned whether detailed guidance notes on Guild insurance cover had been submitted by Janet Coles to the Guild Report. Lester replied they had not, but as Janet was absent, the matter could not be pursued. Lynne Hughes queried whether Janet was still the Guild's insurance secretary; Lester confirmed that she was, although the subject was under discussion as Janet's role had only been seen as a temporary one.
- CO14/6 Secretary's Report: Clare Griffiths had circulated her report prior to the meeting. Lester Yeo formally thanked Clare for her work so far, a sentiment warmly echoed by the members.
- CO14/7 Treasurer's Report: Sue Sawyer presented the provisional accounts. The General Fund shows a surplus of £2,021, slightly less than the figure of £2,180 for last year; income was similar, but there had been a small increase in expenditure, mainly through report printing costs and a larger donation to the Ringing Foundation. £1,500 had been transferred to the Devon Church Bell Restoration Fund, leaving a balance of £7,130 on the fund. £3,810 was raised in total for the DCBRF, a similar figure to last year. Quarter peal week raised £291 this year, slightly less than the previous year, but the successful Barn Dance jointly organised by the Exeter and Mid-Devon branches raised £440. The Instruction and Education Fund shows expenditure for the year of £22, with the balance standing at £478. And finally, the Balance sheet shows the Guild funds in a comfortable position, with an increase of £500 from last year to £7,608.
- Don Roberts proposed to accept these provisional accounts, seconded by James Clarke and carried nem con.

- CO14/8 Subscriptions: Sue Sawyer recommended that subscriptions should remain unaltered at £6.00 for 2015.
- CO14/9 Expenses for Central Council representatives: These were once again reviewed by the meeting. It was felt by all that the current level, relying upon the discretion of representatives, was working well. Les Boyce commented that his claims mostly related to petrol mileage, and he was happy with the arrangements.
- CO14/10 Production of Guild Annual Report: John Foster had offered his apologies immediately prior to the meeting, and with no written report from him, members were unable to discuss further.
- CO14/11 Reports by other Officers:
- (a) Peal Secretary: Mike Mears presented his interim peal report, informing members that the Guild rang 224 peals in 2013, a new record, with the 6,000th peal for the Guild being rung at Thorverton on 28 December. Once again, the leading tower was Thorverton, followed by Bishops-Ting-Tong and Highweek, with Thorverton currently standing ninth on the all time list of peal towers. 41 Spliced Surprise Minor topped the method list, and the year saw three first pealers, Colin Kneebone, Teifi Walters and Evan Jones. It was good to see progress by the Guild's younger members, Hannah Martin and Nick Waterson, and Pauline Champion became the first lady to join the leading conductors list.
- (b) Quarter Peal Secretary: Tim Bayton presented his interim quarter peal report, which saw an appreciable decrease in the number of quarters rung in Devon in 2013, with local bands ringing 389 and visiting bands 78. Handbell ringing also saw a decline, with 43 quarter peals scored, representing a drop of 40%; quarters were only rung at 32% of the 390 ringable towers in Devon. Leading locations of Exeter Cathedral, Lundy, and Exeter (64 Mount Pleasant Road) remain similar to previous years, as do the leading conductors of Tim Bayton, Donald Carter and David Hird. On a more positive note, 18 ringers scored their first quarter, and there were many other significant 'firsts' during the year.
- (c) Librarian: Les Boyce had already circulated his report prior to the meeting, but spoke fully about his work over the year. One particular highlight was the acquisition of the Huntsham Ringers' Attendance & Fine Book, giving a fascinating insight into the early days of method ringing in Devon; thanks went to Mike Hatchett and the Huntsham Society for this gift. Discussions followed on the importance of safeguarding ringing books in the future, alongside the continuing issues of housing the library. Les Boyce confirmed he is still investigating future possibilities, including creating a ringing centre and new library around the DenMisch ring, although he was also considering Janet Coles' offer of storage space.
- (d) Towers & Belfries Advisers: Ian Smith and Ian Campbell had already circulated their report prior to the meeting, and they were congratulated on all their work during the year. Tim Bayton raised a query as to whether Thelbridge bells were ringable, and Ian Smith replied only just, and for a short period; local ringers hoped to maintain impetus for the necessary fundraising. Alena Wardle confirmed that Taylors would be taking out the bells at Plymouth St Budeaux at the end of January, with no date fixed for their return.
- (e) Education Officer: A report detailing the Education programme carried out over the year had been circulated by Lynne Hughes before the meeting. Members expressed their gratitude, and Les Boyce commented in particular on the highly beneficial Surprise Major course he attended, which he thought excellent. Lester Yeo encouraged people to take part in the 2014 Education programme as publicised.
- (f) Clerk to the Devon Ringers' Council: Ian Avery spoke to the meeting, reviewing the work of the DRC during 2013, when regular meetings had been held, bringing together Guild and

Association. Ian was warmly thanked, and congratulated in particular for his work organising the Carol Service held at Exeter Cathedral in December, which had raised almost £600 for the Children's Hospice SouthWest. He confirmed the next DRC meeting would be held prior to the 10-Bell Call-Change competition at Brixham on Saturday 15 February.

(g) Publicity Officer & RRD Editor: Daisy Atkin spoke as Publicity Officer, resuming several successful initiatives including an article in the Exmouth & Budleigh Journal on the Guild Striking competitions, and her work with Exeter Cathedral in publicising the Carol Service. She highlighted the need for continued publicity over the coming year.

Ian Campbell, who had previously circulated his report as RRD Editor, simply repeated his thanks to contributors, and especially all those who help with distribution.

The meeting discussed publicity issues in general, some relating to the approaching anniversary of the start of World War I, although the consensus was towards locally significant ringing between 2014 and 2018, and national ringing marking the date of the war's end. Alan Furse drew the meeting's attention to successful endeavours at St Michael's, Teignmouth, in maintaining good relations with local residents through press and other initiatives. Mike Hatchett confirmed that £2,000 in donations to Huntsham had been received, thanks to a regular presence in the local parish magazine. Lynne Hughes noted how valuable it was for the Guild to have a dedicated Publicity Officer again.

CO14/12

Devon Church Bell Restoration Fund: A report had been circulated prior to the meeting, although the accounts had not yet been finalised. Ian Smith spoke at length about the recent bequest to the DCBRF from the late William Smale of Petrockstowe. The funds had finally been paid into the DCBRF accounts, and amounted to some £332,000. This would be re-invested in an investment portfolio, which should eventually net an annual income of £15,000, although for this year it would more likely be £7,500, and £10,000 in the subsequent year. Although lump sums can be removed if necessary, Ian Smith confirmed, with the whole hearted support of the meeting, that it would be the intention of the DCBRF to leave the capital untouched and restrict spending to only the dividend income. Ian Smith expects fundraising for the DCBRF to fall in the wake of this legacy, with Guild funds re-directed elsewhere. Despite these healthy accounts, Ian Campbell emphasised that the rules remain, and grants are not awarded for augmentations, or repairs on tower structures. Matthew Hilling queried whether the current level of grant, at around 10% of the cost, would still remain. Ian Smith confirmed that this would be discussed at a Trustees' Committee meeting, but he felt it could be a significantly higher percentage.

CO14/13

Frank Mack Bells Report: Ian Avery presented his report, showing the Garage Ring continues to be well used, both at Kingsteignton, and a variety of events around the county, including the Devon County Show, the Chapter House at Exeter Cathedral, Dartmouth, Hatherleigh, and Cruwys Morchard. Other noteworthy events included 9 quarters scored on Good Friday, a Wedding Fayre at Kingsteignton, and the First Great Western Santa Specials Train week, when the bells were rung for quarters at Exeter Central Station as part of the fund-raising celebrations. Ian hoped the bells will continue to be well used in the year ahead.

CO14/14

Guild Website: Matthew Hilling confirmed that he had purchased a new domain name for the Guild of Devonshire Ringers website (devonringers.org.uk), and worked on building and designing the new website. He presented a comprehensive demonstration with computer and projector, showing many members the new website for the first time, and explaining that Branch Secretaries and Guild Officers will be able to update the website themselves. He suggested arranging a training session soon, for all those learning to edit the website, but stressed he was always available to help with any technical problems. Lester Yeo expressed the meeting's sincere thanks and appreciation, for Matt's presentation, but more importantly

all his work on creating such an excellent new website. Matt confirmed it would be launched within the next month.

CO14/15 Proposal for new Vice President: James Clarke was proposed by Ken Edwards and seconded by Mike Rose on behalf of the N/NW Branch. James joined the Guild in 1959, served in the East Devon and Aylesbeare Branches before joining the N/NW Branch in 1977 where he became Chairman. He has also served on the Central Council, being Chairman of the Bells and Belfries Committee, as well as Guild Bell Advisor and DAC Advisor. The meeting unanimously endorsed this proposal, which was carried nem con and will be considered at the AGM.

CO14/16 DenMisch Simulator: Ian Campbell gave an update on this ring of 10 simulator bells, being donated to the Guild by their owner, Mischa Thompson, who will be leaving Devon. Various options to house the ring had been discussed, but Ian Campbell had recently met the Headmaster of Exeter Cathedral School, Stephen Yeo. The school was felt to be a potentially good location, with ease of access, excellent security, and a strong ringing connection, including a Ringing Club and teaching at St Petrock's, which could encourage more youngsters to learn. The Headmaster is keen in principle for the Cathedral School to house the bells, but needs to find a suitable place. A visit to Okehampton for him to see the DenMisch bells in situ is planned soon, with the school Ringing Club coming along too. Ian was thanked for his work and involvement with the venture.

CO14/17 ITTS Update: Les Boyce gave an update on ITTS progress within the county, including news of the first two graduates, Matthew Webb as teacher, and Sheila Scofield as mentor. He promised more courses and dates coming soon, with particular potential for new teachers in the Plymouth area.

Clare Griffiths detailed correspondence received from Brian Meads, Chairman of the Ringing Foundation, who had requested donations on their behalf, accompanying this with a personal letter to the Guild in appreciation of the support they had already shown in previous years. The meeting wholeheartedly recommended that a suggested donation of £250 to the Ringing Foundation be proposed at the AGM, pending financial advice from Sue Sawyer (Treasurer).

CO14/18 Central Council 'Have Your Say' – 19 July 2014: Lynne Hughes spoke about the regional seminar coming to Cardinal Newman House, Exeter, in the summer. This day of talks and discussions on the themes of recruitment and training would include speakers: Elva Ainsworth on Ringing Trends, Chris Mew on CCCBR activities, a representative from the Ringing Foundation, Les Boyce speaking on ITTS/ART, and a guest speaker on new countrywide initiatives. Lester Yeo made it clear that to represent the Guild and make the most of this unique opportunity, all Committee members, Branch Secretaries and as many tower representatives as possible were strongly encouraged to attend this event, aimed to draw in ringers from across the southwest.

CO14/19 Ringing Roadshow – 06 September 2014: Ian Avery, as Clerk of the DRC, spoke about the Newbury Ringing Roadshow, where the Guild and Association would be forming a strong presence at two stands, one outside hosting the Guild Mini-Ring, the other inside, where a new CD of Devon Bells would be for sale. He encouraged members to come along and help support them all. Rodney Horder informed the meeting that the Mid-Devon Branch was hoping to arrange a coach trip to the Roadshow; plans were ongoing and they were liaising with neighbouring branches. Mike Hatchett added that he was also organising a coach trip.

CO14/20 Guild Clothing: Clare Griffiths notified the meeting that she would shortly be circulating an order form for Guild clothing, and asked that members complete their orders promptly, as a bulk order was more financially advantageous.

- CO14/21 Arrangements for 2014 Guild Festival and AGM – 21 June (NE Branch): Charlotte Boyce, NE Chair, spoke to the meeting about their plans for the AGM, centred around Tiverton. This year would see the Guild mark the 140th anniversary of its foundation, so the NE Branch plan to ring “140 Bells for 140 Years”, with morning quarter peals to celebrate, as well as two routes of general ringing. After an early afternoon service at St Peter’s, Tiverton, a commemorative photograph would be taken in the large stand at nearby Tiverton Rugby Club. This would be followed by the AGM, with social events and a BBQ planned afterwards, organised by the Cruwys Morchard ringers. It promised to be a splendid day, and Lester Yeo encouraged members to attend.
- CO14/22 Guild Striking Competitions – 18 October 2014 (Mid-Devon Branch): Alan Furse spoke about the arrangements for the Guild Competitions. So far, Stokeinteignhead was confirmed as the venue for the Novice Competition, and Berry Pomeroy for the 8-Bell Competition and headquarters, where refreshments would be available. It was hoped that Marlton would be the venue for the 6-Bell Competition. After some discussion, the major methods for the 8-Bell Competition were decided; a touch of Plain Bob Major, or a plain course of Oxford Treble Bob Major.
- CO14/23 Guild Quarter Peal Week: This was confirmed by Tim Bayton as running from 31 October – 09 November, to avoid Half Term week. Tim Bayton asked that as many ringers take part as possible, preferably during the actual dates of the event; it remains an important fundraiser for the DCBRF.
- CO14/24 Date and venue of next meeting: Confirmed as Saturday 21 June, immediately after the AGM.
- CO14/25 AOB:
- (a) David Willis asked if it was possible for the Guild to own means of preventative tower maintenance and restoration, such as high grade vacuums. In response, members raised concerns about the problems of storage and usage. It was agreed to consider the question further at the AGM.
- (b) Lester Yeo warmly thanked all those involved in preparing such a delicious tea: Wendy Campbell, Amy Gill, Gareth Gill, Wendy Gill, Maureen Hawkins and Sue Sturdy.
- There being no further business, the meeting closed at 4:41pm.