

# GUILD OF DEVONSHIRE RINGERS

## GENERAL COMMITTEE MEETING

*Held at Exeter St Thomas' Church Hall, Saturday 17 January 2015*

- CO15/1 Lester Yeo (President) opened the meeting by welcoming all committee members, visitors and friends of the Guild; there were 32 members present. He hoped everyone had found arrangements at the new venue satisfactory, and made particular mention of the special affinity he felt for St Thomas' Exeter. He reflected on the full agenda, which would focus on the priorities of recruitment and training. There followed an opening prayer.
- CO15/2 Apologies for absence were received from Ian Avery (DRC), Roy Berry (VP), Richard Bowden (VP), Charlotte Boyce (NE Chair), Robert Brown (Safeguarding Officer), John Foster (Guild Report Editor), Derek Hawkins (VP), Bruce Hicks (N/NW Branch Sec), Matt Hilling (Webmaster), Roger King (Aylesbeare Branch Chair), John Langabeer (VP), Mary Mack (VP), Norman Mallett (VP), John Martin (Mid-Devon Branch Sec), Laurie Palmer (East Devon Chair), Matt Pym (Aylesbeare Branch Sec), Robert Perry (VP), Janet Ritterman (Mid-Devon Rep).
- CO15/3 Losses by death: Bill Blake (Stoke Canon, non-Guild member), Dennis Gilley (Plymouth Emmanuel, lapsed member). The meeting remembered them in prayer.
- CO15/4 Minutes of the January 2014 meeting were approved and signed as a true record. (p: Tim Bayton, s: Geoff Hill, carried nem con)
- CO15/5 Matters arising from the minutes: Lester Yeo gave particular thanks to Matthew Hilling for all his work in setting up the new Guild website, and especially his invaluable computer training sessions. He also thanked Clare Griffiths for her work in organising the CCCBR 'Have Your Say' seminar in July, and the catering team for their efforts on the day. He reminded everyone that audio versions of the speakers' talks were available on the website.
- CO15/6 Secretary's Report: Clare Griffiths had circulated her report prior to the meeting. Lester Yeo thanked her for work over the year.
- CO15/7 Treasurer's Report: Sue Sawyer presented the provisional accounts. The General Fund shows a surplus of £2,303, a slight increase on the previous year; income had increased due to more members' subscriptions, and expenditure remained similar. £1,500 had been transferred to the Devon Church Bell Restoration Fund, leaving a balance of £7,810 on the fund. £3,459 was raised in total for the DCBRF, slightly lower than last year, but Quarter Peal week had raised a higher total of £376 this year. The Instruction and Education Fund shows expenditure for the year of £68, and there was an additional transfer of £100 for Guild training. The balance on the fund stands at £532. And finally, the Balance sheet shows the Guild funds in a comfortable position, with an increase of £735 from last year to £8,343.
- Tim Bayton requested clarification on the availability of funding for ITTS training, following a decision taken at the AGM for the Guild to set aside £100 specifically to finance course fees. It was confirmed that, subject to available finances, if delegates apply directly to the Education Fund, their full ITTS course fees would be paid, leaving them to only meet additional local costs such as tower fees and refreshments.
- Lynne Hughes proposed to accept the provisional accounts, seconded by Mike Mears and carried nem con.

- CO15/8            Subscriptions: Sue Sawyer recommended that subscriptions should remain unaltered at £6.00 for 2016.
- CO15/9            Expenses for Central Council Representatives: These were once again reviewed by the meeting. It was felt by all that the current level, covering reasonable expenses, was working well.
- CO15/10          Production of Guild Annual Report: John Foster had offered his apologies for absence and circulated a written report prior to the meeting. Following discussions on accuracy it was agreed to progress with measures to make the draft report available initially on the Guild website, thus allowing restricted members only to proof read before printing. Members also decided to recommend John to omit the Guild calendar from the report, as it was now available and regularly updated on the Guild website. Members elected to leave in Guild and/or Competition rules, which appear on a rolling programme from year to year.
- CO15/11          Reports by other Officers: Lester Yeo thanked everyone for their work during the year.
- (a) Peal Secretary: Mike Mears presented his interim peal report, informing members that the Guild rang 224 peals in 2014, equalling the record set in 2013. Once again, the leading tower was Thorverton, followed by Bishops-Ting-Tong, Exeter St Marks and Withycombe Raleigh, with Thorverton becoming only the seventh tower in the world to reach 1,000 peals, in a performance on 30 October. 41 Spliced Surprise Minor topped the method list, and the year saw two first pealers, Josephine Maddick and Benjamin Smith, both from the South West Branch. Notable peals included the 100<sup>th</sup> on Kingsteignton bells, the first on Beer bells since they came from Braywood, Berks, in 1963, and Robert Brown became the 115<sup>th</sup> ringer to attain 2,000 peals. Of particular note was the local band peal of London (No.3) Surprise Royal rung at Exeter St Mark's. Mike concluded by thanking everyone for prompt publication and payment of peal fees.
- (b) Quarter Peal Secretary: Tim Bayton presented his interim quarter peal report, which saw local bands ringing 381 quarters in Devon, and visiting bands 99, much the same as the previous year. Handbell ringing recovered from its slump, and saw 77 quarter peals scored either in Devon or by Devon bands. 16 ringers scored their first quarter and there were many other notable 'firsts' during the year. Particular congratulations were extended to Sue Sawyer on ringing her 7,000<sup>th</sup> quarter peal.
- (c) Librarian: Les Boyce had already circulated his report prior to the meeting. Following a query from Tim Bayton, Les confirmed that he was still actively seeking suitable accommodation for the Guild library. The DenMisch ringing centre remained a possibility, and whilst currently appearing unlikely, Les agreed to discuss the matter more formally with Ian Campbell.
- (d) Towers and Belfries Advisers: Ian Smith and Ian Campbell had already circulated their report prior to the meeting, and they were congratulated on all their hard work, as it had been a busy and fruitful year.
- (e) Education Officer: A report detailing the Education programme carried out over the year had been circulated by Lynne Hughes before the meeting. She confirmed that after six years in the post, she would be stepping down at the AGM.
- (f) Clerk to the Devon Ringers' Council: Ian Avery had already circulated his report, and offered his apologies for absence from the meeting. Lester Yeo requested that thanks to him be recorded for organising such a successful carol service at Buckfast Abbey. Members then discussed the John Scott 10-Bell Striking Competition, and it was confirmed that the event

would be held on the morning of Saturday 25 April at Exeter Cathedral, linking in with the anniversary of the formation of the Devon Association.

Geoff Hill then presented a new trophy to the DRC, crafted in memory of John Scott, which he hoped would encourage more teams to participate in the 10-Bell Competition.. Lester Yeo expressed sincere thanks, and these were warmly echoed by members.

(g) Ringing Round Devon Editor: Ian Campbell had previously circulated his report as RRD Editor, and simply thanked John Foster who is responsible for all the layout and printing.

- CO15/12 Devon Church Bell Restoration Fund: A report had been circulated prior to the meeting, although the accounts had not yet been finalised. Lester Yeo pointed out a small correction to the report, that it should read “Committee & Trustees for 2014-15” not 2013-14 as written. Ian Smith also clarified a query regarding a cash transfer into the liquid fund. Following the recent significant bequest to the DCBRF, Tim Bayton questioned whether there had been any drop in donations; Ian Smith confirmed there had been a small drop, due in part to a reduced donation from the Devon Association. Joan Clarke, however, explained that this was due to one off additional expenses incurred in updating the Association newsletter, and levels would return to normal this year. Ian confirmed also that the dividend from the portfolio should be £7,800 a year, rising eventually to £10,000.
- CO15/13 Frank Mack Bells Report: Ian Avery had already circulated a report, so all that remained was for Lester Yeo to thank him for looking after the Guild’s own ring of bells.
- CO15/14 Proposal for new Vice-President: Anne Bailey was proposed by Richard Coley and seconded by Lisa Clarke on behalf of the East Devon Branch. The meeting unanimously endorsed this proposal, which was carried nem con and will be considered at the AGM.
- CO15/15 DenMisch Simulator: Ian Campbell spoke briefly about current progress with the installation of the ring in Exeter Cathedral School. Work was hoped to start soon, and although there was no completion date yet set, it was still hoped that the ring could be operational in time for the AGM. A discussion paper had been circulated by Ian Campbell, Lynne Hughes and Lester Yeo, setting out the opportunities to develop the DenMisch ring into a resource for teaching and training ringers. A discussion followed, and members all agreed that it was best to start low key, with DenMisch being used as a training tower initially, before progressing onwards into a fully organised ringing centre.
- CO15/16 Guild Review: The Guild Review was carried out in 2009, and five years later, some of the original body met again to assess whether the recommendations made had been successfully implemented. Lester Yeo summarised the resulting Action Plan, many points from which had been brought to the Committee meeting agenda. He made particular note of the importance of Branches to appoint Education Officers, and attend the annual Education Meeting. Lynne Hughes drew attention to the new Guild Facebook group, and Les Boyce promised to write an article for RRD on training courses available. Lester confirmed that many of the recommendations made at the recent meeting were indeed in hand.
- CO15/17 Safeguarding: Robert Brown had circulated a comprehensive policy document containing guidance to protect children, young and vulnerable ringers. These included implications for the website, the Guild handbook, and offered valuable paperwork for use by towers, tower Captains, and Guild members. A lengthy discussion took place, with many questions raised, but all agreed that it was advisable to proceed, whilst continuing to rely upon Robert Brown for further advice, guidance, and fine tuning of the policy document.

Tim Bayton proposed that the Safeguarding policy be adopted by the Guild, and this was seconded by Ian Smith. In addition, Mike Mears proposed that Robert Brown be appointed Safeguarding Officer, and this was seconded by Don Roberts.

- CO15/18 Recruitment Drive 2016: Lynne Hughes spoke briefly about a proposed recruitment drive for 2016 which had been supported at the recent Education meeting. She also elaborated on ideas to make DenMisch and other Guild towers part of an Exeter based Ringing Academy, able to roll out a teaching programme across the county. All agreed that recruitment was desperately needed, and it was decided that Lester Yeo, Lynne Hughes and Les Boyce would work together to approach and form a small working party, with the necessary drive and core strategy to lead the Guild in a future recruitment and teaching programme.
- CO15/19 Publicity Material and Welcome Leaflets: Following on from discussions at the Guild Review meeting, members agreed to the production of new bellringing publicity leaflets; the existing supply of Guild and Association collaborative material had almost been exhausted, and all were happy for a new leaflet to be jointly produced again.
- The topic of Welcome booklets was also raised. Les Boyce explained that the NE Branch have updated and continue to circulate the booklets to all new members. The meeting agreed that the existing text should be updated, possibly to include the DenMisch ring in time, and that this text should be circulated to Branch Secretaries. Importantly though, it was noted that new covers would need to be printed.
- CO15/20 Guild Public Relations Officer: Lester Yeo relayed to the meeting the feelings of the Review group regarding the importance of electing a Guild Public Relations Officer as soon as possible. He produced a folder detailing the job description, and noted that whilst there was one person considering the role, there were as yet no firm takers for the position. He encouraged anyone with an interest in publicity to speak to him, with any offers of help welcome.
- CO15/21 Tower Captains' Meeting: Lester Yeo again explained that the Review group had felt this topic an important one, with Tower Captains playing an integral role in both recruiting and teaching new ringers. After some discussion, it was agreed that the Committee would request each Branch organise an interesting training event for Tower Captains, but with the Guild leading the way by providing suggestions and/or material.
- CO15/22 Matters raised by the Branches: There were none.
- CO15/23 Arrangements for 2015 Guild Festival and AGM – 20 June (Exeter Branch): Wendy Gill, Exeter Chair, spoke to the meeting about their plans for the AGM, centred round Crediton. The timings for the day had been affected by an afternoon wedding at the church, so that the schedule included morning ringing and a service, to be followed by lunch in the Boniface Centre, provided by the local band. Following the AGM in the afternoon, it was hoped that the DenMisch ring would be available to ring, possibly culminating in a blessing by the Bishop. Alternatively, a non-ringing ringing outing in Exeter was promised, finishing off with Exeter Cathedral open practice in the evening.
- CO15/24 Guild Striking Competitions – 17 October 2015 (N/NW Branch): James Clarke spoke about arrangements for the Guild competitions. So far, Braunton was confirmed as the venue for the 8-Bell competition. After some discussion, the triples methods for the 8-Bell competition were decided; touches of St Clement's College Bob Triples or Grandsire Triples, with James Clarke to provide the competition touches, of equal length.
- CO15/25 Fund-raising for DCBRF – Guild Quarter Peal Fortnight: Clare Griffiths told the meeting that the annual DCBRF fundraising event had now been extended, upon request, to a fortnight, the

dates being confirmed as Friday 23 October – Sunday 8 November. In addition, as part of the celebrations to mark the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first recorded true peal, rung at St Peter Mancroft, members were encouraged to help ringers achieve their first peals this year, and contribute towards the CCCBR’s efforts to see 300 ringers score their first peals in 2015; the Quarter Peal Fortnight could provide a suitable opportunity for Guild members to do this.

CO15/26 Date and venue of next meeting: Confirmed as Saturday 20 June, immediately after the AGM.

CO15/27 AOB:

(a) Michael Cannon asked members to be aware of vital safety checks (such as pulling off hammers and clock chimes) when visiting another tower. This followed recent damage from a group of visiting ringers. He urged people not to overlook these checks, and to be reminded to always look around.

(b) Lester Yeo thanked all those who had contributed to the meeting, especially those had provided refreshments.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 4.41pm.

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Lester Yeo (President)

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Date