

GUILD OF DEVONSHIRE RINGERS

GENERAL COMMITTEE MEETING

Held at Exeter St Thomas' Church Hall, Saturday 16 January 2016

- CO16/1 Lester Yeo (President) opened the meeting by welcoming all committee members, especially those attending for the first time; there were 32 members present. He reflected on this, his last meeting as President, after ten years in office. There followed an opening prayer.
- CO16/2 Apologies for absence were received from Ian Avery (DRC), Roy Berry (VP), Michael Cannon (Exeter Branch Rep), James Clarke (CC Rep), Brenda Coley (East Devon Sec), Bruce Hicks (N/NW Branch Sec), Matt Hilling (Webmaster), Mary Mack (VP), Norman Mallett (VP), Mike Mears (Peal Sec), Laurie Palmer (East Devon Chair), Robert Perry (VP), Yvonne Porter (VP), Matt Pym (Aylesbeare Branch Sec), Mike Rose (North/North West), John Steere (VP).
- CO16/3 Losses by death: Bill Avery (Honorary member Mid-Devon Branch), Jean Gordon (Galmpton), Terry Hampton (North/North West), Henry Trewin (VP), David Trist (Uffculme). The meeting remembered them in prayer.
- CO16/4 Minutes of the January 2015 meeting were approved and signed as a true record. (p: Lynne Hughes, s: Leslie Boyce, carried nem con)
- CO16/5 Matters arising from the minutes: Leslie Boyce raised item 15/19, and the necessity to update Welcome Leaflets. With no-one assigned to the task, it was agreed that the newly formed Recruitment & Teaching Working Party would undertake the work.
- CO16/6 Secretary's Report: Clare Griffiths had circulated her report prior to the meeting. Lester Yeo thanked her for work over the year, in particular as this was her last committee meeting.
- CO16/7 Treasurer's Report: Sue Sawyer presented the provisional accounts. The General Fund shows a surplus of £1,373, a slight decrease on the previous year due to the £1,000 donation towards the DenMisch ring installation. Income had reduced slightly due to lower members' subscriptions, and apart from reduced printing costs for the annual report, expenditure remained similar. £1,000 had been transferred to the Devon Church Bell Restoration Fund, leaving a balance of £8,131 on the fund. £2,702 had been raised in total for the DCBRF, slightly lower than last year, but Quarter Peal week had raised a higher total of £478 this year. The Instruction and Education Fund shows expenditure for the year of £35, and there was a donation of £100 from the North East Branch. The balance on the fund stands at £497. And finally, the Balance sheet shows the Guild funds in a comfortable position, with an increase of £337 from last year to £8,628.
- Lester Yeo thanked Sue for all her work, as she approached her twentieth and potentially final year as Treasurer.
- Don Roberts proposed to accept the provisional accounts, seconded by John Langabeer and carried nem con.
- CO16/8 Subscriptions: Sue Sawyer recommended that subscriptions should remain unaltered at £6.00 for 2017.
- CO16/9 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.

CO16/10 Production of Guild Annual Report: John Foster had produced a written report which he summarised for the meeting. He asked members to consider potential increases in future printing costs, and questioned exactly what content members would like to see included in the report. A discussion followed, where views in support of continued paper copies were ranged against those who favoured electronic format, and some who supported limited paper copies combined with website publishing. It was agreed that the matter would be presented for formal discussion at the Annual General Meeting in June.

CO16/11 Reports by other Officers: Lester Yeo thanked everyone for their work during the year.

(a) Peal Secretary: Due to a broken ankle, Mike Mears could not attend, so Lester Yeo presented his interim peal report on his behalf, informing members that the Guild rang 212 peals in 2015, 12 fewer than 2014 but the ninth consecutive year that 200 had been reached. Once again, the leading tower was Thorverton, followed by Bishops-Ting-Tong and Exeter St Mark, with 41 Spliced Surprise Minor topping the method list. The year saw fourteen first peelers (ranging in age from 14 to 79); Rebecca Harrison, James Allan, Andrew Vincent, Billy Moore, Lynette Costello, Gareth Gill, Lisa Clarke, Lin Horrocks, Katy Owen, Robyn Owen, Richard Coley, Janet Ritterman, Mark Heritage and Trevor Vercoe. In addition, Matthew Thewsey (Truro Guild), Paul Hext and Scott Adams (Devonshire Society) rang their first peals. Other notable performances included Spliced Treble Dodging Minor in 87 methods at Thorverton in March, Bristol Surprise Royal by a ladies band at Exeter St Mark, and 41 Spliced Surprise Minor in hand, both on 30 December. John Martin joined the leading conductors for the first time, Ian Smith became the 46th person to ring 3,000 peals, and Fergus Tracey became the 485th person to ring 1,000 peals.

(b) Quarter Peal Secretary: James Kirkcaldy had already circulated his report prior to the meeting, and although one or two members drew his attention to minor alterations, he was commended for his notably efficient work in this, his first year in post.

(c) Librarian: Leslie Boyce had already circulated his report prior to the meeting, and although he had nothing further to add, he drew members attention to the necessity of finding suitable accommodation for the Guild library. St Marychurch was mentioned, with Leslie making note to speak to Martin Mansley.

(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. Particular thanks were offered for their excellent Bell Maintenance day courses.

(e) Education Officer: A report detailing the Education programme carried out over the year had been circulated by Tim Bayton before the meeting.

(f) Clerk to the Devon Ringers' Council: Ian Avery had already circulated his report, and offered his apologies for absence from the meeting.

(g) Ringing Round Devon Editor: Ian Campbell had previously circulated his report as RRD Editor. However he recommended that the AGM should discuss the issue of raising the cost of individual subscriptions to RRD, perhaps to £8.00, to cover increased postage expenses.

CO16/12 Devon Church Bell Restoration Fund: A report had been circulated prior to the meeting, although the accounts had yet to be finalised. Ian Smith and Ian Campbell (both present) recorded their own thanks to the other committee members and trustees, and pointed out that the overheads of the DCBRF were practically nil, with all funds going towards the objectives of the charity.

- CO16/13 Frank Mack Bells Report: Ian Avery had already circulated a report. Ian Campbell spoke briefly about the Guild demonstration bell, which had enjoyed much use, and whose consequent new rope had been financed by the Education Fund.
- CO16/14 Proposals for new Vice-Presidents: Lester Yeo was proposed by Wendy Campbell and seconded by Sue Sawyer on behalf of the Exeter Branch. Clare Stagg was proposed from the floor by Geoff Hill and seconded by Fergus Stracey on behalf of the South West Branch. Ian Smith was proposed from the floor by Geoff Hill and seconded by Fergus Stracey, also on behalf of the South West Branch. The meeting unanimously endorsed these proposals, which were carried nem con and will be considered at the AGM.
- CO16/15 Vacant Guild Posts: Lester Yeo reminded members that several committee members would be standing down at the AGM, notably himself, Clare Griffiths and James Clarke. He asked people to consider seriously taking on Guild office, and to speak to either him or Clare after the meeting if they wished to know more about the upcoming roles.
- CO16/16 DenMisch Simulator: Ian Campbell had circulated a report prior to the meeting. He spoke briefly about technical issues, namely the need for a dehumidifier. He also particularly mentioned the legal document that had been drawn up to detail ownership and usage of the bells, alongside a constitutional policy document that was still being finalised. The aim was to present this at the AGM, with committee members appointed. Lester Yeo hoped that the simulator would be well used, and encourage young learners from within the Exeter Cathedral School.
- CO16/17 First Peal 2015 certificates: Following the success of the national First Peal 2015 initiative, with fourteen Guild members scoring their first peal, Lester Yeo proposed to present a special commemorative certificate to all those ringers at the Guild AGM in June. This idea was warmly supported, with many members favouring continuing the award in future.
- CO16/18 Recruitment & Teaching Working Party: Leslie Boyce and Tim Bayton confirmed that members had been approached to form a group that would address the need to lead a Guild programme of recruitment and training. Leslie Boyce detailed the core aims: to work with schools; to run a county wide recruitment event, in conjunction with the Devon Association; and to establish a clear follow-up strategy to improve retention of new recruits. The need for high standards of teaching were emphasised, and a more expansive report was promised for the AGM.
- CO16/19 Special ringing for 2016: Lynne Hughes encouraged members to ring, in particular, to mark the occasion of HM Queen Elizabeth II's 90th birthday, on 21 April and 11 June. She also spoke about Heritage Open Days, held nationwide on the second weekend in September. David Willis remarked that 2016 was also an excellent year for date touches, and promised to write an article for RRD, complete with easy touches.
- CO16/20 Tower Handbook Updates: Lester Yeo drew members' attention to the many updates which had been created over the years for the Tower Handbook, and asked for advice as to how best to circulate these updates to all Guild towers. Following a discussion, it was agreed that a checklist would be sent to Branch towers to ascertain which updates were needed by which towers, and copies of these updates would then be distributed accordingly, possibly in conjunction with RRD. Updates would also be available to download from the Guild website.
- CO16/21 Matters raised by the Branches: There were none.
- CO16/22 Arrangements for 2016 Guild Festival and AGM – 18 June (South West Branch): Alena Wardle, South West chair, spoke to the meeting about their plans for the AGM, centred on the Minster Church of St Andrew, Plymouth. The suggested programme was for morning ringing,

followed by the meeting at 2pm, with service afterwards at 4.30pm. A Flower Festival would be running concurrently in the church, with refreshments available all day. Alena pointed out that parking could be difficult and encouraged members to use public transport or park & ride where possible.

CO16/23 Guild Striking Competitions – 15 October 2016 (Exeter Branch): Wendy Gill spoke about arrangements for the Guild competitions. The back eight at Exeter St Mark were confirmed as the venue for the 8-Bell competition; Stoke Canon for the 6-Bell; and the front six at Exeter St Mark for the Novice competition. After some discussion, and a vote, the major methods for the 8-Bell competition were decided; Little Bob Major and Yorkshire Surprise Major.

CO16/24 Fund-raising for DCBRF – Guild Quarter Peal Fortnight: Clare Griffiths told the meeting that the dates of the annual DCBRF fundraising event had been confirmed as Friday 21 October – Sunday 6 November. In addition, it would now be called Guild Quarter Peal Festival, to better describe this expanding fixture in the Guild calendar.

CO16/25 Date and venue of next meeting: Confirmed as Saturday 18 June, immediately after the AGM.

CO16/26 AOB:

(a) Tim Bayton told members that he had copies available for sale of The Bells of Devon contacts directory, in accompaniment with some updates.

(b) Sue Sawyer had brought the last remaining Guild/Association bags to the meeting, and asked members to consider buying them, for a small donation, to clear the loan.

(c) Wendy Gill drew members' attention to the leftovers from tea, and encouraged them to take some food away afterwards.

(d) Leslie Boyce spoke of the next ART course, Teaching Bell Handling, being held on Saturday 13 February at Bradford, near Holsworthy. He thanked secretaries for passing on the information, and asked anyone interested to contact him.

(e) Lester Yeo thanked everyone involved in organising the meeting, especially all those who had provided and served the tea. He also encouraged members to attend the Open Cathedral practice later that evening.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 4.30pm.

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Alison Waterson (President)

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Date