

# GUILD OF DEVONSHIRE RINGERS

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

*Held at Plymouth on Saturday 18th June 2016*

- A16/1 Lester Yeo (President) opened the meeting with a welcome to the 62 members present, and warmly thanked all those in the South West Branch involved in the organisation. He added that it was an emotional day for him being his last as President, after ten years in Office. Lester confirmed the meeting was quorate and led the members in an opening prayer.
- A16/2 Apologies for absence were received from: Roger King, James Kirkcaldy (Aylesbeare); Lisa Clarke, Andrew Digby (East); Michael Cannon, Rob Franklin, Rebecca Harrison, Matthew Hilling, David Hird, Graham Tucker, Lesley Tucker (Exeter); Rodney Horder, Fiona Rock-Evans (Mid-Devon); Alan Edwards, Richard Johnston (North East); Bruce Hicks, Mike Rose (North/NorthWest); Robyn Owen (South West); Don Roberts (VP).
- A16/3 Losses by death since the last AGM: Bill Avery (Honorary Member, Mid-Devon); Joan Clarke (North/North West); Terry Hampton (North/North West); Brian Horrell (Aylesbeare); John Shephard Walwyn (North/North West); Henry Trewin (VP); Alison Williams. Members stood in silence to remember them.
- A16/4 Minutes of the 2015 meeting were signed as a correct record (p: Lynne Hughes, s: Mark Heritage).
- A16/5 Matters arising from the minutes: none.
- A16/6 Election of new members: Maria Hiscoe, Josh Meredith, Kizzy Meredith (Dawlish) (p: Lynne Hughes, s: Fiona Rock-Evans).
- A16/7 Officers' Reports: These were received as printed in the annual report, and John Foster was thanked for producing the report.
- A16/8 Adoption of accounts/transfer of monies to DCBRF: As published in the annual report and examined by Ruth Rockey. Adoption of the accounts was proposed by Tim Bayton, seconded by Mark Heritage and carried nem con. Sue Sawyer (Treasurer) then proposed that £1,500.00 be transferred to the DCBRF, this was seconded by David Willis, and carried nem con. Ian Smith spoke briefly, thanking the Guild, and explaining that despite the income from the £300,000.00 legacy, with work to the value of £245,000.00 planned in the year ahead, more money was always welcome. Grants had been raised to a level of 15% towards most schemes, but this may now be dropping, and he urged members to raise funds for the DCBRF.
- A16/9 Subscription Review (rule 3.1): Sue Sawyer (Treasurer) proposed that the subscriptions for 2016 should remain unaltered at £6.00. This was agreed.
- A16/10 Election of Officers: Lester Yeo thanked all the Guild Officers for their hard work over the past year.
- a) Master 2016/17: Nigel Birt (p: Lynne Hughes, s: David Willis). Geoff Hill then presented Nigel Birt with the Master's insignia, and thanked everyone for a year which he had considered a privilege, and in which he been made welcome across the Guild; he also wished Nigel Birt well in his year as Master. Nigel expressed his gratitude, before taking the chair to take nominations for President.
- b) President: Alison Waterson (p: David Wilford, s: Janet Deem).
- c) Master Elect: Sue Sawyer (p: Charlotte Boyce, s: Peter Bill).
- d) Vice-Presidents: Lester Yeo (p: Wendy Campbell, s: Sue Sawyer); Clare Stagg (p: Geoff Hill, s: Fergus Stracey); Ian Smith (p: Geoff Hill, s: Fergus Stracey). They were elected nem con.
- e) Secretary: John Martin (p: Robert Brown, s: John Foster).
- f) Treasurer: Sue Sawyer (p: John Steere, s: Yvonne Porter).

- g) Peal Secretary: Mike Mears (p: Jenny Sparling, s: Lynne Hughes).
- h) Quarter Peal Secretary: James Kirkcaldy (p: Neil Deem, s: Peter Brown).
- i) Education Officer: Tim Bayton (p: David Willis, s: Sheila Scofield).
- j) Librarian: Leslie Boyce (p: Steve Taylor, s: Michael Mears).
- k) Report Secretary: John Foster (p: Bruce Hicks, s: Mike Rose). With a note from Tim Bayton that he would like to see the Report issued earlier next year.
- l) Bells and Belfries Advisors: Ian Campbell (p: Ken Edwards, s: Paul Pascoe), Ian Smith (p: Robert Brown, s: James Kirkcaldy).
- m) Publicity Officer: Lynne Hughes (p: Clare Griffiths, s: Tim Bayton).
- n) Ringing Round Devon Editor: Ian Campbell (p: James Kirkcaldy, s: Sue Sawyer).
- o) Safeguarding Officer: Robert Brown (p: John Martin, s: James Kirkcaldy).
- A16/11 Election of DCBRF Trustees (3): Ian Smith, Ian Campbell, Mary Mears (p: Nigel Birt, s: Martin Mansley).
- A16/12 Election of Central Council Reps for 2017-2020 (4): Lynne Hughes (p: Peter Bill, s: Peter Brown); Fergus Stracey (p: Charlotte Boyce, s: Peter Bill); Mark Heritage (p: Lynne Hughes, s: Clare Griffiths); David Willis (p: Tim Bayton, s: Mike Mears). Lester thanked retiring reps Leslie Boyce and James Clarke for their valued years of service.
- A16/13 Election of Devon Ringers Council Reps for 2017 – 2020 (5): After some discussion as to the continuing need for members and meetings, the following reps were elected: Ian Avery (p: Mike Mears, s: Geoff Hill); Don Roberts (p: Martin Mansley, s: Mike Mears); Lynette Costello (p: Lynne Hughes, s: Les Boyce); Geoff Hill (p: Tim King, p: Lynette Costello); Alison Waterson (p: Charlotte Boyce, s: Nigel Birt).
- A16/14 Appointment of Independent Examiner of Accounts: Ruth Rockey (p: Lester Yeo).
- A16/15 Report from Central Council Meeting at Portsmouth: Fergus Stracey presented his report on the Central Council Meeting held in Portsmouth, which was attended by three out of the four Guild representatives. There was a forum which was based on the BBC Question Time, chaired by Elva Ainsworth. The main thrust of the questions and answers concerned training, recruitment and retention, and attempts to broaden the appeal of bell ringing to a wider audience rather than only in association with the Church. This included less emphasis on history and tradition and more on it being a modern activity.
- He told the meeting that over the next year the Council would be undertaking a fundamental review of its structure, its functions, its charitable objectives and even its name in order to determine how it can best serve the interests of ringing. It is possible that the Council will cease to be a body of representatives sent to it by affiliated Guilds but become more of a direct-membership body. It seems probable that the Council will seek to widen its remit from the church in order to attract to ringing those who may be deterred by the emphasis within its current aims on ringing for divine service.
- Fergus urged members interested in the working group to apply by the end of June. The working group will be setting up a number of surveys, possibly via bell board, which we should all endeavour to complete, with implications for the Guild if some of these ideas are recommended. He stressed that the Guild's representatives would need to know members' opinions on all the working groups' proposals before attending next year's meeting.
- Other presentations were all standard with exception of the Ringing Trends Committee which resigned en bloc and no members were prepared to stand, such that this committee cannot transact any business this year. This was a direct consequence of Steve Coleman's letter which was published in the Ringing

World. The Central Council is developing a new website. The Methods Committee agreed that the methods database should now be hosted on the same server as bell board rather than in private hands.

At the Ringing World AGM, ringers were thanked for their generous donations for peal and quarter peal publication; as a result the finances turned a £6,000 loss into approximately £20,000 surplus, and the board have decided to continue to publish a weekly paper and review matters later in the year. Fergus concluded by noting that two of the Guild representatives were standing down, Les Boyce who had served for fifteen years, latterly being Chairman of the Ringing Centres Committee; and James Clarke who had served for twenty one years, primarily leading the Towers and Bells Committee during his time.

- A16/16 Report from Recruitment and Teaching Working Party: Tim Bayton spoke to the meeting about this new initiative, the group being formed of himself, Sheila Scofield, Janet Ritterman and Neil Deem. They had looked at tackling recruitment, but found that retention was the greater problem, stemming from a lack of good teaching, and time given to that teaching. Their objective is to produce a model for good recruitment and teaching, so that this document can be used in schools, groups and church groups. Tim encouraged any interested members to speak to him afterwards.
- A16/17 First Peal Certificates: Following on from the national success of First Peal 2015, the Guild had decided to present certificates to all those who had rung their first peal during 2015. These were: Andrew Vincent, Billy Moore\*, Gareth Gill\*, James Allen, Janet Ritterman\*, Katy Owen\*, Lin Horrocks, Lisa Clarke, Lynette Costello\*, Mark Heritage\*, Rebecca Harrison, Richard Coley\*, Robyn Owen, Trevor Vercoe\*. (Those starred were present to receive their certificates). Richard Coley in particular thanked all those who had helped him through his first peal, and Lester echoed this thanks.
- A16/18 Fundraising: Date of Quarter Peal Festival – 21st October – 6th November 2016: James Kirkcaldy had asked that members link their performances on Bellboard.
- A16/19 Guild 6 and 8 Bell Striking Competitions: Wendy Gill confirmed that the Guild Striking competitions would be held on Saturday 15th October, and hosted by the Exeter Branch. She detailed that the 6-Bell competition would be held at Stoke Canon, the Novice competition on the front six at Exeter St Mark, and the 8-Bell competition would be held on the back eight at Exeter St Mark. The methods for the 8-Bell competition were confirmed as Little Bob Major, or Yorkshire Surprise Major, with touches soon available on the Guild website.
- A16/20 Guild Festival and Annual General Meeting 2017: David Willis told the meeting that the North/North West Branch would be hosting the event on Saturday 17th June 2017, based at Braunton.
- A16/21 Any other business:
- a) Martin Mansley drew the meeting's attention to a book given to Bob Southwood when he left the SW Branch in 1953, and signed by members at the time. He had given the book to the Guild Librarian today, and it would be on display after the meeting.
  - b) Lynne Hughes told members that she had ten sets of laminated posters on "How To/How Not To Handle Bells", but with only four left, they were proving popular, and she asked members to see her if they wanted one for their tower. She also, as Publicity Officer, encouraged members to join the Guild Facebook Group.
  - c) Les Boyce had several points to make. He had brought samples from the Guild Library, including John Richards' Presentation Book from the early twentieth century Exeter Ringers Cycling Club, which contained beautiful calligraphy. He was also displaying material recently acquired for the Library. He told members that the newest ART Module 2 training day would be hosted at Bradford and Black Torrington on Saturday 23 July, with another planned for 5 September. He also focussed upon the Heritage Open Days, whose main theme for the year was bellringing, with the aim to have 500 towers open on the weekend of 12/13 September.
  - d) Fergus Stracey told members that with the meeting finishing early, there would be open ringing before the service, scheduled at 4.45pm.

e) James Clarke thanked all those who had attended Joan Clarke's funeral, and all those who had written to him. Over 200 people had been present, and he thanked everyone for their support.

A16/22 President's handover and closing address: Lester Yeo (retiring President) thanked the South West Branch for hosting the meeting, in particular their excellent and favoured choice of meeting hall. He spoke of his ten years as President, which had been both a privilege and a pleasure. He went on to express sincere thanks to Clare Griffiths, retiring Secretary, for her three years of service, and presented her with a small gift of personal appreciation. Geoff Hill then spoke to the members with great feeling, as he reflected upon Lester Yeo's service to the Guild, and the affection and esteem in which he was held. A collection had been organised, and Lester was presented with an engraved Dartington Crystal decanter, as well as a card and several gift vouchers.

Lester Yeo then handed over the Presidency to Alison Waterson, with an accompanying presentation of a gavel and stand, for use by successive presidents. At this point, there being no further business, she declared the meeting closed at 4:12pm.

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Alison Waterson (President)

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(Date)

**GENERAL COMMITTEE MEETING**

*Held at Plymouth on Saturday 18th June 2016*

The President, Alison Waterson, opened the meeting that followed the Annual General Meeting of the Guild. It was agreed that all business should be deferred to the next meeting of the General Committee on Saturday 21st January 2016. (p: Tim Bayton, s: Wendy Campbell). Meeting closed at 4:15pm.

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Lester Yeo (President)

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(Date)