

**OXFORD DIOCESAN GUILD OF CHURCH BELLRINGERS
BICESTER BRANCH**

**MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD AT BICESTER
ON SATURDAY 25TH FEBRUARY 2012**

(1) OPENING REMARKS

The President asked Mrs Teresa Carter to take the chair. She thanked the Reverend Theresa Scott for taking the service, Mr Tim Jones for playing the organ and Mr Anthony Cole for making the arrangements for the meeting. She welcomed 13 members of the Branch to the meeting.

(2) APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Robert Newton (Guild Master), Hilarie Rogers, Stuart Gibson, Sue Macready, Peter Nicholas, Pat Downing, Jeremy Adams

(3) MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The minutes of 20 February 2011 were read, accepted and signed.

(4) MATTERS ARISING

Mick McArthur suggested that payment of annual subs could be made more promptly if members' subs were paid from tower funds or by the PCCs.

(5) CORRESPONDENCE

The Secretary read a message from the Chairman of the Bicester Local History Society concerning ringing for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in Bicester.

She also read the message from the Guild Safeguarding Children Adviser providing details of ways of promoting vigilance for children

(6) OFFICERS' REPORTS

Secretary

We held our AGM on 19 February at Stratton Audley with Teresa Carter taking the chair for the first time with our President, Willie Haynes, deciding to take a less onerous role following a bout of ill health. Seventeen members were present which was encouraging and five new members in total were elected from Middleton Stoney and Launton towers. The only change of officers was the election of Anthony Cole as joint Ringing Master (alongside Jeremy Adams who had made the arrangements for the AGM and an enjoyable lunch afterwards at the Red Lion).

The website remains Anthony's responsibility but he has introduced new features which make it more lively and interesting. Anthony also organised the Branch Outing on 9 April when eleven ringers (and friends, both canine and human) rang in the Banbury area, starting at All Saints, Middleton Cheney and finishing at Mollington with Chacombe and Copredy in between. At Copredy our audience included two well-known actors – Timothy West and Prunella Scales.

We hosted the Guild AGM on 21 May in Islip and managed to hold our Striking Competition on 3 September for the first time for several years, combining it with a BBQ. Around 24 people (14 ringers and their families) gathered in Islip and we organised ourselves into three teams to compete for our impressive shield (and champagne). The competition was kindly, and expertly, judged by Lorna Smale and Brian Curtis from the Witney & Woodstock Branch and their decision was 1st place: Team C (Branch Officers) with 73%; 2nd place: Team A (Bicester) with 61%; 3rd place: Team B (Islip) with 58%.

Branch Practices and alternating monthly, notational Triples practices between Bicester and Islip have continued with some new methods (to us) tried during the summer. Branch ringers have helped out at other towers – particularly for weddings in Kirtlington where there is no resident band (we took part in the Village Societies Fair in September to publicise ringing but to little effect) and Brill where Peter Nicholas reports that 'ringing has been somewhat spasmodic this year but a peal was successfully rung on September 25th to celebrate the marriage of our Vicar's daughter and we have rung several quarters throughout the year, with the local ringers attempting a variety of methods from Grandsire and Plain Bob through to Stedman and Cambridge'.

On the proposal of Anthony Cole, seconded by Keith Thomas, the report was adopted.

All in favour.

Treasurer

The current account stands at £1,023.05 - £236.40 above the incoming balance for the previous year of £786.65. Wedding donations were £150.

The deposit account of £7,575.87 is the Central Board of Finance, Church of England Funds. Interest accrued this year was £39.43 with interest at 0.75%. The Guild Treasurer advised leaving the Deposit account where it is. To make more interest the money would have to be tied up on a much longer term or with greater risk. Anything else would attract very little, if any higher, interest.

Donations of £75 were sent to ODG Bell Fund and the Bell Restoration Fund. £68.40 was spent on a new stay, broken during a Branch Practice at Brill. Ringers went down from 81 to 79. Payment of subs were made more quickly in 2011 and it is hoped that this will be repeated in 2012.

The accounts were audited by Les Harris.

On the proposal of Keith Thomas seconded by Anthony Cole the report was adopted.

Branch Representative

Keith Thomas reported that he had been unable to attend meetings on the branch's behalf, but his report is based on information received from those present.

The last meeting at the Carter Institute, Main Street, Clanfield on Saturday 26th November 2011 and was attended by 59 members representing 14 branches. The meeting kept silence as a mark of respect

for four prominent Guild members who had died since the last meeting: David Lane, Ann Mayou, Frank White (Vice President) and Jim Diserens.

The Master spoke about the Guild Festival saying he was very grateful to everyone who had helped. Particular thanks go to Hilarie Rogers and Katie Lane. 75 people had attended the lunch. Thanks were expressed to everyone for their support.

The Master had contacted the Lord Lieutenants of Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire about the most appropriate time(s) for ringing to take place for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. The main national celebration will be from June 2nd to June 5th but all three counties will be holding special services the weekend before: on May 26th at Christ Church Cathedral and on May 27th in Berks and Bucks. Perhaps special ringing could take place to coincide with these services when timings are known. There will be a special service at St. Paul's Cathedral on Tuesday June 5th. The Master suggested there should be ringing throughout the Guild to coincide with the conclusion of this service. It was agreed that, if local celebrations were taking place, it would be appropriate to ring specially for them as well. Perhaps branches could find out from their local councils what is being planned.

John Harrison said that Central Council Reps. have looked at the Palace website, but as yet there is not a great deal of information there.

There was a discussion about the Olympic Torch will be travelling through the Guild's area from Monday July 9th to Wednesday July 11th and it is suggested that ringing should take place as it travels along the route.

John White noted that there is a surplus of funds from courses; traditionally this forms part of the General Fund. Brian Gatward agreed that a considerable sum has accrued over a large number of years, the bulk of which came from refunds at the Easthampstead Course. It was felt that education and training were an important part of the Guild and that a pot of money should be earmarked for education. Other financial matters were discussed including the cost of auditing and the cost of running the guild. It was also decided for the Guild to keep the subs at the same level for 2012: £2 to the branches and £4 to the Guild for resident members.

The next meeting will be held at Shellingford Community Hall, Shellingford, Oxon. on Saturday, 10th March 2012.

On the proposal of Stephen Cameron, seconded by Fay Harris, the report was adopted.

Branch Ringing Master

It seems like we've had a busy year! We've had 11 branch practices and apart from Stratton Audley in July, they have been all well attended, and we've received thanks from the locals in some towers who felt we helped them along – that is exactly what the Branch Practices are for so that is great.

As was noted at the AGM last year the Triples & Major practices did not seem to be working well as we were generally not ringing Triples or Major due to the number of ringers attending. The practices were always at Bicester on the third Monday, and that was not convenient for all those who wanted to attend. We therefore decided to change the format, both alternating the practice between Bicester on the 3rd Monday one month and Islip on the 3rd Tuesday of the next month, and also advertising specific methods that would be rung to help people focus their learning and make it a little more interesting. Attendance has improved, and whilst we may not have always had enough to ring the chosen methods, in the main we were able to and we've learnt a few new methods too which is encouraging.

The branch outing was held on a warm and sunny Saturday 9th April in the Banbury area. I admit Middleton Cheney were a little hard to ring, but the rest of the bells at Chacombe, Cropredy and Mollington were much nicer as was the Goerge & Dragon at lunchtime. We had 11 ringers, some non-ringers and 3 dogs and a good day was had by all. This year's Branch Outing will be on Sat 31st March in the Towcester area – all the details have been confirmed and are available on the website.

In September Islip hosted a Branch BBQ with a light hearted striking competition tacked on the side - the first branch striking competition for 7 years. We had 3 teams and it was won by the branch officer's team – thanks to the Islip and Bicester teams for taking part too. The winners' champagne was very nice and we did share it around with those who wanted to try some; my thanks to Brian and Lorna Curtis for judging the competition, thanks to all those who helped with the catering and a special thank you to Kathryn for opening up her home for the BBQ – it was a lovely evening and the kids thoroughly enjoyed playing Giant Jenga.

A big thank you to all those who have attended the practices this year – it hasn't always been the same faces – we have encouraged a few new ringers from the comfort of their own towers and long may it continue. Kathryn has produced some cards with dates for all the practices for the remainder of 2012 (including details of chosen methods at Special Practices).

On the proposal of Michael MacArthur, seconded by Sally Wale, the report was adopted.

Website Manager

Just prior to last year's AGM I gave the branch website a facelift. All tower pages now have Google maps images showing visitors where the towers are. I have also been adding write-ups on each branch & special practice and any other interesting things I see/hear about ringing, and Kathryn provided a lovely article on last year's Branch Outing. I hope this has added more life to the website, and I do receive favourable comments about the reports so I know someone is reading them.

As ever, if anyone would like to write a report or comment on anything ringing related that might be useful to publish then do please send them to me and I will be more than happy to add those to the website.

On the proposal of Keith Thomas, seconded by John Hadfield, the report was adopted.

(7) ELECTION OF NEW MEMBERS

There were no new members.

(8) ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Since the existing officers were all willing to stand, Teresa Carter proposed that they should be reelected en bloc – this was seconded by Keith Thomas.

All in favour

(8) Guild events

Sponsored Ringing Week 25 February- 3 March 2012

Spring General Committee Meeting on 10 March 2012 (VOWH)

Radley course on 21 April 2012

St George's Day, 23rd April, suggested ringing at 6pm

Annual Ringing Day on 7 May 2012 hosted by the South Oxon Branch

Guild AGM on 19 May 2012 in Wokingham, St Paul's

Diamond Jubilee Ringing

Weekend of 26th/27th May; also Tuesday 5th June (and for any local events)-Anthony Cole agreed to act as co-ordinator/ organiser for ringers who are able to ring and branch towers.

Olympics Ringing

Torch relay 9th – 11th July (Bicester and Kirtlington Monday 9 July)

Opening ceremony 27th July

Michaelmas Training Day on 29 September

6 bell striking competition on 6 October hosted by the Banbury Branch

Steeple Aston course on 13 October

Autumn General Committee Meeting (Central Bucks Branch) 24 November

(9) Branch event - Striking Competition on Saturday 1 September with BBQ at Islip.

(9) Donations to Bell Fund and Restoration Fund of ODG

On the proposal of Michael MacArthur, seconded by Anthony Cole £75 will be given to each fund. All in favour.

(10) Church Collection

The collection at the service would be given to St Edburg's with a request that part would also be given to Emmanuel Church in Bure Park, Bicester.

(11) DATE OF NEXT MEETING

AGM on Saturday 23 February 6pm (subsequent to the meeting confirmed at Ludgershall with supper at the Bull and Butcher). It was noted that it would be beneficial if each branch tower could be represented by at least one member at the AGM.

The meeting was closed by the Branch President with prayers.