

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

**MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD AT LUDGERSHALL
ON SATURDAY 23RD FEBRUARY 2013**

(1) OPENING REMARKS

Mrs Teresa Carter (Vice President) took the chair. She thanked Mrs Penny Wood for taking the service, Mr Anthony Cole for playing the organ and Mrs Valerie Evans for making the arrangements for the meeting. She welcomed 15 members of the Branch to the meeting and the Guild Master, Mr Robert Newton, and Guild Secretary, Mr James Champion accompanied by his wife, Mrs Julie Champion.

(2) APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Sue Macready, Jane Singleton, Janet Smith, Fay Harris, Steve Walker, Cliff East, Steve Jeffrey, Sarah Cole

(3) MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The minutes of 25 February 2012 which had been circulated and made available on the Branch website were accepted on the proposal of Keith Thomas, seconded by Anthony Cole, and signed.

(4) MATTERS ARISING

None

(5) CORRESPONDENCE

Following the recommendation on 6 June at Middleton Stoney when Branch members at the practice were in favour of supporting the restoration of the bells of St Andrew, Oddington with a grant of 10% toward the cost (estimated at £8,000) it was proposed by Michael MacArthur, seconded by Valerie East, that there should be a cap of £1,000, All in favour.

The Secretary circulated a letter from the Guild Master about St George's Day ringing

(6) OFFICERS' REPORTS

• *Secretary*

The 2012 AGM was held in Bicester on 25 February with our annual car outing to Northamptonshire on 31 March. Organised by Anthony Cole we rang at Wappenham, Green's Norton, Pattishall and the hidden tower of Easton Neston. We're lucky to have enough ringers who are keen to support each other and it was especially good to see one of last year's elected members on her first outing.

Later in the year Bicester Branch ringers rang for the Queen's Jubilee – a peal at Brill, quarter peals at Bicester, Islip and general ringing at Woodeaton and Souldern. This was followed by ringing for the Olympics in Bicester and Kirtlington when the torch went through both places plus more early morning ringing for the Olympics opening ceremony itself when Fringford rang their 3 bells (and had a video on YouTube as a result!), and Islip took part in the 'All the Bells' project.

On 15 Sept Islip once again hosted the branch social and striking competition with 4 tower teams (up from 2 last year) making for a good competition which was judged by Lorna and Brian Curtis from the Witney & Woodstock Branch). Apart from Islip (which fielded a full local team and finished 3rd), Bicester (finishing 1st), Launton (4th place) and Charlton (in 2nd place) teams were made of 50%+ tower members with a few extras to make up the team numbers – some who had not entered a competition before and whilst apprehensive beforehand, found it was actually quite good fun!

Branch members have taken part in and helped on the Steeple Aston course on 13 October as well as appreciating the Branch Practices which have ranged in number but been thoroughly enjoyable.

Sadly one of the Charlton-on-Otmoor band died in August at the age of 68. Gerald (Ged) Mann had started to ring at the Millennium and, with his wife Angie, sister-in-law Dawn had been a reliable member of the Charlton band. Just before Christmas we had more sad news with the death of Mrs Phyllis East, of Ludgershall, on 23 December. She, and her husband, Cliff have been key members of the Bicester Branch over many years and she will be missed by many.

On the proposal of Anthony Cole, seconded by John Hadfield, the report was adopted.

All in favour.

• *Treasurer*

The Current Account stands at £931.94, the incoming balance for the previous year being £1023.05, but donations to the Restoration and Bell Funds for 2011 and 2012 came out of this year's accounts.

Weddings and donations were up on last year at £212.50 where last year was £150.

The Deposit Account stands at £7,642.72 with the Central Board of Finance, Church of England Funds. Interest accrued this year was £66.85 with interest at 0.88%, a slight increase from last year which was 0.75%

Donations of £75 were sent to ODG Bell Fund and the Bell Restoration Fund.

Ringers went down again from 81 in 2010, 79 in 2011 and 78 in 2012.

Payment of subscriptions were completed early in March well before the deadline for Guild insurance purposes, so we can do it, lets hope this will be the case this year! Tower Captains have been reminded, but so far not too much response.

Subscriptions have had to rise this year from £6 to £8 due to increased insurance premiums.

The accounts have been audited once again by Les Harris to whom a letter of thanks has been written by the Treasurer on behalf of the Branch.

On the proposal of Jeremy Adams, seconded by Jill Bailey, the report was adopted.

• *Branch Representative*

The November General Committee Meeting was held in Long Crendon, attended by 51 members representing 15 branches.

(a) Management of the Restoration Fund

Stuart Gibson thanked all branches and the Guild for donations made to the fund. Stuart said that whilst the Bell Fund is well supported, the Restoration Fund is not. Stuart wondered about dissolving the Restoration Fund at the AGM if it does not receive more support. The adoption of this report was proposed by Len Palfrey, seconded by Keith Vernon, carried *nem con*.

(b) Correspondence

The Secretary had received a letter from John Barnes of the Central Council Bell Restoration Committee encouraging anyone contemplating bell restoration to get in touch with them, as they will give advice on fundraising, visit a parish to help get fundraising started and put them in touch with people who support grants and the preparation of applications. A booklet is available containing helpful advice. The committee would be grateful if anyone who has successfully completed a restoration could give feedback. The Master said Jackie Roberts from this committee had given help when fundraising for High Wycombe was taking place and pointed out that there was an article by John Barnes in the current Ringing World (No 5300, p 1212). Ken Davenport, a member of this committee, said it was very important that people should be made aware of the help available.

A questionnaire from the Central Council had been forwarded to all branches about Change Ringing for the Future. The Secretary was preparing to collate responses for the Guild's submission.

We had had a request from the Ringing Foundation. Tim Pett said that bellringing should become more professional and with this in mind the Ringing Foundation had set up a Teacher Training Scheme (ITTS) awarding qualifications. So far this has been run by volunteers and £11,000 has come from grants and personal donations. The ITTS now requires a paid administrative assistant and £25,000 needs to be raised over two years. Tim Pett proposed and Maryanne Roach seconded that a recommendation be made to the AGM that a donation of £1,000 be made from the Guild. This was carried with one vote against. Verna Wass suggested branches should discuss this before the AGM to get some feedback.

(c) Subscriptions for 2013 Resident Ringing Members & Associate Members

Tim Pett had made enquires of several other guilds as to their subscription. The ODG is one of the lowest. We also give less to our Bell Fund; others give a percentage of their subscription. There was a long discussion; all speakers supported an increase but some thought it should be little by little. Tim proposed an increase in subscription to £8, seconded by John Davidge, carried *nem con*. Keith Vernon proposed the breakdown be £5 to the Guild (approximately £2 insurance and £3 operating costs) and £3 to the branches, seconded by Lucy Hopkins Till, carried *nem con*.

(d) Kimberley Bells request

Hilarie Rogers said that we have had a request from the Dean of Kimberley, in our link diocese in South Africa. Several of our parishes have been supporting individual projects there. We have been asked if we will help them hang the six bells that they have acquired from St Helen's Abingdon in the Cathedral in Kimberley. The cost of this would be around £40,000. Bishop John is very interested in this and very supportive. It was thought that the Guild should not attempt to raise the whole of the amount but that help nationally should be sought. Hilarie proposed that in principle we support this and form a small committee; seconded by John White, carried *nem con*. On the proposal of Michael MacArthur, seconded by Sally Wale, the report was adopted.

- *Branch Ringing Master*

We've had another busy year ringing with two practices each month.

The branch practices have in the most been well attended and we even managed to ring all the bells at Stratton Audley in July which was a welcome surprise.

The special practices each month have also been fairly well attended – the Bletchingdon practices particularly stand out as we had 19 ringers for that practice – more than at the AGM last year! Given the popularity of that practice (not sure if the draw is Grandsire Doubles or Bletchingdon) I have added a couple more Grandsire Doubles practices at Bletchingdon this coming year. The other special practices have been mixed – we have often managed one of the two methods proposed, but also we have added other methods to cater for those who attend. Sadly we have not managed Grandsire Triples at any of the advertised Grandsire Triples practices so for this coming year's special practice I have focused more on doubles and minor methods. If you wish to progress to Grandsire Triples then please make a special note of those dates (21st May & 19th Nov in Islip, and 16th Dec in Bicester) which are on the new cards. Our outing this year was to Towcester area on 31st March and whilst we did not have that many ringers we managed to ring pretty well at all the towers (when we eventually found them all – Easton Neston was a little tricky to find!). This year's outing will be to the Newbury area on Saturday 23rd March – please do come along to that if you can.

We have also had a number of special events to ring for and even managed to get the media interested which we had hoped would generate some interest in ringing, but I'm not aware of any new ringers as a result of this. However, we must continue to try to encourage new ringers if our bells are going to continue to be rung.

For our striking competition this year we had 4 tower teams which not only made it a more interesting competition, but a few people who had not rung in competition before had a go and found it to be quite good fun. Many thanks to Kathryn for once again opening her home for the BBQ and to Lorna & Brian for judging.

On the proposal of Keith Thomas, seconded by Jeremy Adams, the report was adopted.

- *Website Manager*

I continue to add new articles to the branch website covering the branch & special practices together with other events such as the ringing for the Olympics and the Jubilee and I've added pictures and links to videos for some things too. My thanks to Sarah for submitting a report on the outing and to Kathryn

for reports on the practices I was unable to attend. I have also added a number of interesting articles about ringing items that are reported in the media so please do go and take a look if you are able. Equally if you find something that might be interesting to the other ringers in the branch please do email me the details and I'll endeavour to add it to the website.

On the proposal of Kathryn Grant, seconded by Sally Wale, the report was adopted.

(7) ELECTION OF NEW MEMBERS

The following new member was elected:

Mark Evans (Ludgershall) P: Valerie Evans S: Jeremy Adams

(8) ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Since the existing officers were all willing to stand, Anthony Cole proposed that they should be reelected *en bloc* – this was seconded by Valerie Evans.

All in favour

(9) GUILD EVENTS

- a. Spring General Committee Meeting on Saturday 9 March 2013 (Kidlington)
- b. Radley course on 13 April 2013 – closing date for applicants 31 Jan.

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

- c. Annual Ringing Day on 6 May 2013 hosted by the EBS Branch
- d. Guild AGM on 18 May 2013 in Ascott under Wychwood
- e. Michaelmas Training Day on Saturday 28 September at Shiplake
- f. 6 bell striking competition on 5 October hosted by Monks Risborough
- g. Steeple Aston course on 12 October in Steeple Aston
- h. Autumn General Committee Meeting (Newbury Branch) 23 November

(10) 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.

(11) CHURCH COLLECTION

The collection at the service would be given to Ludgershall

(12) AOB

Bob Hessian, from Weston-on-the Green, reported that a new treble bell had been donated and hung by Taylors and refurbishment had been carried out. A re-dedication service would be held in May.

(13) DATE OF NEXT MEETING

AGM on Saturday 22 February 6pm (confirmed at Weston-on-the-Green with supper at the Chequers). It was noted that it would be beneficial if each branch tower could be represented by at least one member at the AGM.