

**(1) OPENING REMARKS** Teresa Carter (Vice President) took the chair. She welcomed the Guild Master, Katie Lane, and Steward, Colin Lee, as well as 15 members from 7 towers mentioning how we all appreciate being able to meet in person and resume ringing activities. In the absence this year of a church service, Penny Wood had sent two prayers which Hilary Walbank kindly read. Teresa Carter then thanked the ringers of Weston-on-the-Green for making the bells available beforehand and for providing refreshments given the recent power cuts. All present stood to remember Eric Ball, Middleton Stoney (died 5.11.21) and John Hadfield, Bicester & Caversfield (died 5.2.22).

**(2) APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** Steve Vickars, Judith Vickars, Sue Carter, Jeremy Adams, Helen Parkinson, Steve Walker, Andy Windmill, Jill Bailey, Celia Luzar, Gus Bridges, Jan Haseldine, Sue Paine, Ricky Shaw, Willie Haynes

**(3) MINUTES OF LAST MEETING** The minutes of 13 February 2021 which had been made available on the Branch website, were accepted on the proposal of Sue Macready, seconded by Teresa Carter, and signed.

**(4) MATTERS ARISING** None

**(5) CORRESPONDENCE** All under subsequent items.

**(6) OFFICERS' REPORTS**

**Secretary (Kathryn Grant)** 2021 has been a mixture of using virtual technology to maintain ringing prowess e.g the Ringing Room and Wheatley practices for some, our AGM by zoom again in February (15 members from 8 towers as well as the Guild Master, Katie Lane, the Guild Deputy Master, Tony Crabtree and the Guild Steward Colin Lee, and our 'branch chaplain' Penny Wood), Guild meetings virtually e.g. the branch secretaries/ Ringing Recovery or online seminars on recruitment and retention as well as, in the second half of the year, more 'real' ringing in individual towers as well as Branch Practices – masked and carefully distanced - in Bletchingdon, Weston-on-the-Green, Middleton Stoney, Ambrosden, Piddington and Caversfield.

Several towers were able to ring on 23 March (the day of reflection) as well as tolling to mark the death of HRH The Duke of Edinburgh on 9 April, and on 5 July, chiming, to acknowledge the NHS, Social Care & Frontline Workers' Day. Weston-on-the-Green and Kirtlington have taken the opportunity to improve their towers – using funding from the Branch of £1500 and £300, respectively, to help. Weston followed up improvements in 2020 and have now installed a new sound insulation ceiling, pulleys, ropes, lighting and power incorporating emergency escape lighting and heating, and access ladder whilst Kirtlington have completed last year's replacement of pulleys and ceiling bosses by cleaning and re-painting the bell frame.

Gerald Bushby from Weston-on-the-Green rang his first quarter at Bletchingdon on 24 August and then followed it up with a second at his home tower on 7 October with an illustrious group of ringers – Tony Crabtree, conducting and ODG Deputy Master, Lesley Belcher, Chair of ART, Susan Read, head of the ringing school at Abingdon, Jeremy Adams, joint Ringing Master, Bicester Branch and Steve Vickars, Branch Training Officer. It was especially appropriate since all have given much time and effort to re-starting the band at Weston and improving the ringing chamber and bells. Steve Vickars conducted his first Triples quarter peal at Kirtlington on 31 October – Plain Bob Triples.

On 5 November Eric Ball, from Middleton Stoney died – sadly he'd been too ill to come to the Branch Practice there in September, and will be much missed by many.

On the proposal of Anne Martin, seconded by Hilary Walbank, the report was adopted. All in favour.

**Treasurer (Anne Martin)**

Anne Martin thanked all for the prompt payment of subscriptions last year with payment by cheque through the post working really well. She has already contacted Tower Captains regarding payment of fees this year by cheque or direct transfer to our current account (and also cash, if paying in person).

Our income for 2021 consisted of the Branch's part of the subscription (63 x £3) **£189**.

(£8 collected per member, £5 to Guild and £3 retained by the Branch) and the interest on the deposit account, **£3.04**. Interest on this account at end of year is 0.039%.

This year there were 63 members, a reduction of 2 from 2020, which is good considering the restrictions of 2020, I feared that more people would not come back to ringing.

There was no income from weddings, nor donations.

Outgoings were: **£325.00** Guild Subscriptions (63 x £5, see above), and a donation to the Bell Fund (agreed at AGM 2021) was **£200.00**. A letter of thanks for the donation to the Bell Fund has been received. Secretarial expenses for 2020 (**£11.88**) are in the accounts for 2021. None have been claimed for 2021.

We paid the donation towards the tower improvement work at Weston-on-the-Green, which was agreed at the AGM in 2020, **£1500** and also a donation to Kirtlington for repainting bell wheels. **£300**

Expenditure exceeded Income by **£1,819.84** giving a financial position at 31st December 2021 as follows:

**Balance sheet as at 31 December 2021**

Current a/c balance	403.28
Deposit Account	5,440.82
Cash held	91.27
Total funds held at year end	<u>5,935.37</u>

(Deposit account interest rate at 31<sup>st</sup> Dec 2021 0.039%)

The accounts were audited by Hilary Bradshaw of Launton. A letter of thanks has been sent to her on behalf of the Branch.

On the proposal of Richard Haseldine, seconded by Fay Harris, the report was adopted. All in favour.

[Report from Deputy Ringing Master \(Richard Haseldine\)](#)

Having only managed to get to two Branch Practices since the last AGM, this report is going to be rather sparse.

At Piddington a small group were met by two local ringers who couldn't be persuaded to ring with us. We rang a fairly wide range of doubles methods with varying degrees of success.

At Ludgershall the attendance was considerably greater. I like to think that we rang something for everyone present and nobody left disappointed. We rang five different doubles methods concentrating mainly on Stedman, Plain Hunt and Reverse Canterbury as requested by those present.

Moving forward to the next twelve months, I think it would be a good thing to continue to attempt to improve our striking, at the same time allowing people to attempt to ring things at a Branch Practice that they may not be able to ring in their own tower. Ringing is a hobby, and needs to be fun to encourage people to take it up or continue to ring, if we can keep it like that we won't go far wrong.

I should be seeing more of you this year than last (hopefully)!

On the proposal of Hilary Walbank, seconded by Anne Martin, the report was adopted. All in favour.

[Report from Guild Representative \(Anne Martin\)](#)

For information on the Guild, see the Guild website: <http://odg.org.uk/> The subscriptions for 2022 are kept as previous year (£8 per ringer).

[Learning & Development Workgroup](#)

It is intended to hold the Radley Course (9.4.22) and the Michaelmas and Steeple Aston courses during 2022 as long as circumstances do not deteriorate significantly.

[Radley Course - Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers \(odg.org.uk\)](#)

Consideration has been given to the future of Guild courses in general and what restructuring might take place including the possibilities of blending practical and online learning.

They have heard encouraging reports of the work of 'Recovery Champions' within our branches and elsewhere, and of a gradual progression to a 'new normal'.

It is disappointing that so few have taken advantage of the opportunity to borrow one of the sets of eBells purchased by the Guild for their benefit.

For those of you who do not know what eBells are, information including a handy video can be found at this link: <https://ebells.co.uk/> and for their companion software package Handbell Stadium here: <https://handbellstadium.org/>

If you are interested in borrowing a set of these bells in exchange for a small returnable deposit, please contact the Guild Treasurer, Stuart Gibson via email at [treasurer@odg.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@odg.org.uk)

Two squads of Young Ringers from the Guild's area participated at Worcester in the RWNYS on 11.9.21. The ODG band were adjudged clear winners of the method ringing section, retaining the Whitechapel Trophy that they won over two years ago in Liverpool. Huge congratulations to them.

The Young Change Ringers Association was launched at the RWNYS. For an annual subscription of £15, members will have access to four events during the year and other benefits. All of those eligible are encouraged to take full advantage of this.

[Towers and Belfries Sub-Committee Report](#)

Tributes were paid to the late Keith Vernon who contributed so much to the sub-committee.

The next course is a rope splicing and rope management course on 26.2.22 at Radley.

Hopefully those of you who want to go have already booked your places, details at

## [Rope Splicing and Management Course - Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers \(odg.org.uk\)](https://www.odg.org.uk)

Reminder; There are many good splicing videos on YouTube (as well as some not so good...).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gb-6YwA2e2Y> is instructive.

If you would like to host a course, either for the Guild or locally, for the Branch, please get in touch with the T&B committee.

The T&B page of the ODG website [Towers and Belfries - Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers \(odg.org.uk\)](https://www.odg.org.uk) has more new material since the last report and many useful links. More material is being loaded all the time. You will also find contact details and the services offered by our members.

They would still like more members. We have three counties with 450+ towers so we are spread quite thinly! You don't have to be experienced but you do need to be interested in learning and gaining from the expertise of the other members.

The Tower Maintenance Award (TMA) is still active, despite the pandemic. Towers are encouraged to ask for an inspection. There is a full TMA report in the November *Odd Bob*.

There have also been many "return to ringing" inspections done on behalf of or with the local ringers.

### [Report of Finance and General Purposes Sub-committee](#)

The F E Robinson silver bowl which has been bequeathed to us is now in the Guild's possession. Charles Morrish is currently making a box to hold it.

The Master has purchased a tablecloth which will be available for Guild and Branch activities and is particularly suitable for events attracting the general public.

All subscriptions are to be left at the pre-pandemic levels. An increase in the mileage rate for officers from 14p per mile to 20p has been approved.

The Guild treasurer was given the authority to purchase a limited number of CO<sub>2</sub> monitors if requested by Branches or towers. These assist in identifying the extent that Covid might spread within an enclosed space dependent upon ventilation.

Investigations by the Server Manager (Richard Stanworth) into an alternative host company for the Guild computer server, which might provide a cheaper option whilst still giving us the same facilities are still ongoing

The new Webmaster (Andrew Goldthorpe) reported that he has set up a new diary system and is looking to enhance the appearance of the site.

He has added to the website a full tower list for the Guild. He asked that Branches should check it for completeness and accuracy.

Stuart Gibson reported that we are awaiting a demonstration of a possible membership database, hopefully early next year.

There had been no progress on the Guild registering as a charity.

### [Central Council Representatives' Report](#)

A Full report from the Central Council Representatives was made to the Gen Comm meeting.

### [Safeguarding Update](#)

Following extensive discussions between the CCCBR and the C of E National Safeguarding Team, there have been changes to the training requirements for tower captains. You can read about this in greater detail in the last two issues of the Ringing World (14 and 21 January). The first of those articles is below.

Specific details must be agreed with the Diocese associated with each territorial association and the Oxford Diocese have now agreed that most tower captains in the ODG will only need to complete the online training modules (Basic Awareness and Foundation) which can be accessed through the safeguarding tab on the C of E website. Tower captains who have a significant influence on safeguarding in their church community e.g. those who teach a lot of youngsters will also need to complete the Leadership course with the Oxford Diocese. These can be booked through the Diocesan website.

The CCCBR and the C of E both recommend that all ringers should complete the Basic Awareness course.

Training should be updated on a three yearly basis. Those who have completed their old-style C0 and C1 training less than three years ago can wait until the three years have elapsed.

### [Ringing Day for 400th anniversary of Oxford Botanic Garden – details tbc](#)

Katie Lane has heard from the Oxford Botanic Garden who are celebrating their 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary. They are asking for ringing throughout Oxfordshire on Friday 15.7.22 in association with the Oxford Society. Katie has asked for support throughout the county and to be advised on what is being planned.

## Central Council Representatives' Report

These reports include just some of the interesting/important points from both meetings. Fuller reports of both the CC Meeting and the Ringing World Ltd AGM can be found in Ringing World no.5759, 10 September 2021. The original workgroup reports are available online at [ccbr.org.uk](http://ccbr.org.uk)-2021 Annual Meeting-Meeting Papers.

There is no longer the automatic expectation that CC Representatives serve on workgroups as had been the case with the committees. This is because anyone may apply to join a workgroup now, thus enabling the Council to benefit from the skills of those who have most to offer. However, several of our ODG reps. have continued to be involved in workgroups this year: John Harrison-Historical & Archive, Lucy Hopkins Till-Volunteering & Leadership, Graham John (Leader) and Tim Pett (Dove Steward)-Technical and Taxonomy.

This year's meeting of the CENTRAL COUNCIL OF CHURCH BELL RINGERS was held on Saturday 4th September, online, using Zoom.

### **Safeguarding**

The Safeguarding Officers reported that guidelines had been produced for online ringing. They also called upon the ringing community at large to reject even low-level bullying on social media, by supporting victims and challenging perpetrators.

### **Support Services**

The *Performance Analysis* Report recorded that, predictably, the total of peals rung in 2020 was significantly affected by the lockdown ban on ringing. Nonetheless, the ODG was the leading affiliated society for both tower and handbell peals. Major was overall more popular than peals on other numbers and Surprise was most popular for both Major and Minor peals. This is the first year that data from BellBoard has been used to analyse quarter peals, providing very useful information regarding grass-roots ringing. Naturally there were fewer quarter peals rung too. Somerset and Gloucester and Bristol rang most, and Doubles and Minor were the most popular.

The report from *Publications* noted that, as expected, income from sales was sharply down and no new titles were published during the year.

### **Stewards**

The *Bell Restoration Fund Grants Panel* received 37 applications for grants.

### **Workgroups**

During the year, the *Communications & Marketing* Workgroup had been investigating initiatives to promote bell ringing to a wider audience and also improve communications amongst ringers.

A new *Public Relations* Workgroup was established in 2021 to promote the Central Council and bell ringing to both the ringing community and the general public. It will have close dealings with the media and had a prominent role after the death of HRH the Duke of Edinburgh. The group encouraged ringing for COP26 and, amongst other things, is promoting ringing for the Queen's forthcoming Jubilee.

The *Senior Stakeholder Liaison* Workgroup had a significant role in the last year, interpreting the Government legislation and C of E guidance into guidance for ringing. The Central Council now has direct communication at a high level in the C of E and, likewise, it is the first port of call for the C of E with regard to bell ringing issues.

In the past year, the *Stewardship & Management* Workgroup had a significant part to play in providing guidance to towers as churches were closed and then again, as they were gradually reopened. It also responded to a wide range of enquiries during the pandemic. The workgroup is busy putting more comprehensive information online, relating to Tower Infrastructure, Tower Operation and Major Projects.

The *Technical & Taxonomy* Workgroup reported that despite tower bell restrictions, 683 new methods were named. Much work has also been done on creating the new Dove database.

The *Volunteering & Leadership* Workgroup has been developing and promoting a Recruitment and Retention workshop which had already been produced by ART. A Northwest residential course is planned for summer 2022 and an online Question and Answer Forum is in the pipeline. The workgroup was also involved in writing materials for the online toolbox of the joint CC and ART Survival and Recovery Group. Work is ongoing to create a new list of Ringing Centres.

The goal of the new *Young Ringers-Schools & Youth* Workgroup is to establish new long-term sources of recruits from schools and youth groups. An encouraging development is that there has been cooperation with the Senior Stakeholder Liaison Workgroup to produce lesson plans for Years 5,6 and 7, in all subjects, with ringing as a common thread. The group is also working with the Scout and Guide movements to reintroduce ringing badges. Work is nearing completion on ringing as part of the Duke of Edinburgh Award and the group is also in contact with Young Farmers and the Girls/Boys Brigade.

The *Young Ringers -Universities & Colleges* has taken under their aegis the website for students to find out what is on and where, in terms of university and college ringing. This has also been updated. The workgroup is also encouraging specialist 6th Form maths schools to exploit the theory of change ringing as part of an enrichment programme.

The *Historical & Archive* Workgroup is planning to start recording details of peal boards. The Library has been particularly busy in the past year.

#### **Forward Plan for 2022**

The President spoke of the continued effort to combat the spread of Covid 19 in towers through ventilation and CO2 monitors. He also referred to the task ahead of aiding ringing recovery and commencing a major coordinated recruitment campaign. Other items mentioned were the plans for the National Ringing Centre in Northampton, the new mobile belfry, the direct membership organisation for Young Change Ringers, Ringing Forums and the Cast of 1000 to support aspiring Surprise ringers.

#### **Financial Update**

The General Fund balance brought forward at the end of December 2020 was £166,146 and there was expected to be an approximate £4,000 loss over the course of 2021.

#### **Next Year's Meeting**

This will be at Trent University, Nottingham on Saturday 3.9.22. There will be training sessions, a Roadshow and social events; anyone may attend.

At the RINGING WORLD LTD AGM, the Finance Director predictably reported that performance donations, a major source of income, had been severely reduced by the pandemic, resulting in their largest ever deficit of £28,748. The rate of subscription non-renewals has also increased. The Chairman, Paul Jopp, reported that there were only 2,436 subscribers to the *Ringing World* at the beginning of September 2021. Various changes have been implemented which should save approximately £14,000 per annum and also improve efficiency.

On the proposal of Teresa Carter, seconded by Richard Haseldine, the report was adopted. All in favour.

#### **Training Officer's Report (Steve Vickars)**

The first half of 2021 was largely spent online, with use of Ringing Room for online regular practice nights as well as for specific focused practice of methods, assisted by the amazing AI helper, Wheatley. During this period Sally Cross achieved her first virtual quarter peal.

With the lifting of lockdown restrictions in July we got our ringers back into handling real tower bells, with Gerald Bushby achieving his first Quarter Peals at Bletchington and Weston on-the-Green, the latter in the exalted company of Lesley Belcher, Chair of ART and Tony Crabtree, Deputy Guild Ringing Master.

It is good to see recruits from before Lockdown continuing to make progress, including Dinah Adams from Islip and Christine Redford at Kirtlington, both of whom are regular service ringers and have been attending branch practices. Of particular note, Christine achieved her ART Learning the Ropes Level 2 certificate in October.

Following the rule that opportunities for training should be taken by all ringers, I attended the 10-bell training course at Shrivenham in November, taking the opportunity to ring plain courses and touches of Grandsire Caters and enjoying the striking at fast pace of experienced ringers.

Three new learners have started since September and are making progress, helped very much by attending the Abingdon Ringing School on Saturday mornings. Julie Penny started in September and has made remarkable progress, achieving her ART Learning the Ropes Level 1 certificate in December, and is now a regular service ringer. There are reasons to be confident that teaching of handling and methods will have been only minimally affected by the resurgence of Covid 19 just before Christmas and that the Guild training courses will be able to proceed in April and October and that a number of our existing ringers will be able to ring their first Quarter Peals at cover, treble and inside.

There is also an expectation that there will be a national recruitment drive in 2022 in anticipation of the Platinum Jubilee celebrations in June. It would be good for the branch to play its part in such a recruitment and training campaign. I am therefore an advocate of establishing a branch ringing school to pool our teaching resource as soon as time and opportunity allow.

However, it is of some concern that our branch has relatively few with capability and confidence to teach handling to new recruits, such that should we wish to renew the team of one of our currently depleted or silent towers, we will be very dependent on teaching resource from across the Guild. It is therefore of prime importance that we are able to build our own teaching resources within our teams and to increase the chances of sustainability of the amazing yet threatened art of Change Ringing. I am hopeful that a number of our members will be able to enroll on one of the local ART training courses this year and am more than happy to answer any questions about the scheme.

## (7) ELECTION OF NEW MEMBERS

Andrew Dudley (Weston-on-the-Green) Proposed Gerald Bushby; Seconded Mandy Jones  
Pinder Parkes (Bicester) Proposed Fay Harris; Seconded Anne Martin  
Julie Penny (Bletchington) Proposed Sue Macready; Seconded Sally Cross  
Leandro Shaw (Islip) Proposed Teresa Carter; Seconded Kathryn Grant  
Dinah Adams (Islip) Proposed Teresa Carter; Seconded Kathryn Grant

## 8) ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The following were elected: President: Willie Haynes Proposed: Teresa Carter S: Michael MacArthur  
Vice Presidents: Jeremy Adams Proposed: Michael MacArthur S: Richard Haseldine  
Vice Presidents: Teresa Carter Proposed: Michael MacArthur S: Richard Haseldine  
Secretary: Kathryn Grant Proposed: S: Anne Martin S: Teresa Carter  
Treasurer: Anne Martin Proposed: Hilary Walbank S: Fay Harris  
Guild Representative: Anne Martin Proposed: Kathryn Grant S: Michael MacArthur  
Training Officer: Steve Vickars Proposed: Sally Cross S: Sue Macready  
Joint Ringing Master: Jeremy Adams Proposed: Teresa Carter S: Fay Harris  
Joint Ringing Master: Richard Haseldine Proposed: Teresa Carter S: Fay Harris  
Website Manager: Gus Bridges Proposed: Sue Macready S: Teresa Carter

## (9) GUILD/ BRANCH EVENTS

Rope Splicing & Maintenance Course	Radley	Saturday 26th February
Branch Practice	Souldern	Tuesday 1 <sup>st</sup> March
March General Committee and Bell Fund AGM	St Mary's Church, Wendover	Saturday 12th March
Branch Practice (Bob Triples, Grandsire Triples)	Islip	Tuesday 22 <sup>nd</sup> March
Branch Practice	Kirtlington	Monday 4 <sup>th</sup> April
Radley Course	Radley	Saturday 9th April
<i>St George's Day and Branch outing</i>		<i>Saturday 23rd April</i>
Ringing Day	Sonning Deanery Branch	Monday 2nd May
Branch Practice	Ambrosden	Wednesday 4 <sup>th</sup> May
AGM and Eight-Bell Striking Competition	Goring-on-Thames	Saturday 21st May
Branch Practice (Doubles and Minor)	Weston-on-the-Green	Thursday 26 <sup>th</sup> May
All	HM Queen Platinum Jubilee ringing	Thursday 2- Sunday 5 June
Branch Practice	Middleton Stoney	Wednesday 8 June
Branch Practice	Bicester	Tuesday 21 June
Branch Practice	Launton	Wednesday 6 July
Oxford Botanic Garden 400 <sup>th</sup> anniversary		Friday 15 <sup>th</sup> July at 2.15pm
Branch striking competition	Islip	Saturday 3 September at 6pm
Michaelmas Course	EBSB and neighbouring branches	Saturday 24th September?
Six-Bell Striking Competition	Newbury Branch	Saturday 1st October
Steeple Aston Course	Steeple Aston	Saturday 29th October?

November General Committee	VOWH Branch	Saturday 26th November
Ten-Bell Striking Competition	VOWH Branch	Saturday 26th November

**(10) DONATION TO THE BELL FUND**

On the proposal of Sue Macready, seconded by Richard Haseldine £200 will be given to the fund. All in favour.

**(11) GENERAL DISCUSSION**

Hilary Bradshaw (Launton) to be asked to audit the 2022 accounts.

Katie Lane gave an overview of the work of the Bell Fund and thanked the Branch for their donation. She also explained that June Wells (Guild Safeguarding Officer) had been working with the Diocese on ensuring that the onerous safeguarding undergone by Gerald Bushby and Sue Macready is to be reappraised. All members to take the online course (LINK). She raised a further point on the Guild's reliance on Branch records to retain membership details.

Good wishes were sent to Rosemary Henson, from those present, following her recent illness.

**(12) PRESENTATION OF FIRST QUARTER CERTIFICATES** Gerald Bushby and Christine Redford will be presented with their certificates in due course.

**(13) DATE OF NEXT MEETING** AGM on Saturday 18 2023 – (Ludgershall proposed venue).