

Minutes of GMC meeting held on June 15th 2014 at Stowupland

Present: Alan Stanley (Chair), Jed Flatters (Ringing Master), Mandy Shedden (Secretary), Gordon Slack (Treasurer), Winston Girling (BAC chairman and Technical Advisor), Jason Busby, Jonathan Stevens, Philip Gorrod, Ralph Earey, Tom Scase, Robert Scase, Sue Freeman, Trevor Hughes, Sally Munnings.

Apologies: Received from David Smith, Brian Hale, David Steed and Neil Dodge

Welcome: AS thanked everyone for attending and welcomed two new members to the GMC, Winston Girling as Technical adviser and Chair of BAC and Tom Scase. Jonathan Stevens was welcomed on his return to the GMC representing the North East District.

Minutes: From the meeting held in February were amended to record Roberts Scase's apologies for absence.

Peter Harper had not received any feedback regarding recognition of members who had completed 50 yrs. continuous membership of the Guild.

Treasurers Report:

General Fund

Subscription income is a little down on this time last year, especially in the SE District. The Young Ringers have raised around £950 towards their Worcester trip. As we may hear later, a good-sized group of youngsters are attending in addition to those in the team. There has been no unusual General Fund expenditure.

Restoration Fund

The Gift Aid repayment this year was nearly £1700, boosted by the repayment from the significant donation to the Pipe Fund and the introduction of the Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme, where Gift Aid can be claimed on certain small donations even where a Gift Aid declaration has not been made.

The sum now available for allocation to new projects stands at £42,100. The small grant to Thelnetham is just going through but no other grants have been paid so far this year. The amount reserved for grants allocated to projects still in progress stands at just under £25,000.

You may have heard of a system called "Give as You Live" which many major retailers support. Essentially, if you are signed up to the scheme and make online purchases through supporting retailers, they will make a donation (typically 1% or 1.5% of your purchase) to a charity of your choice. The Guild has been approached by the Give as You Live organisation to sign up so we could benefit in this way. MS is investigating but it seems that there is no cost to us and would welcome any views.

BAC Report (Winston Girling)

Our most recent meeting was at Wissett St Andrew on 4th June. In addition to members of the BAC there were several other people there including members of the Church and ringers who made us most welcome.

After all those who were interested went upstairs to view the installation, our speaker for the evening was Brian Morton, engineer, of the Morton Co-Partnership in Halesworth. His talk was essentially based around the need to use a strong Portland cement mixture to grout bell frame support beams into tower walls – a practise which bell hangers have in fact used for many years and has always been recommended by the Suffolk Guild and is a Condition of Grant.

Work by Technical Advisor:

St. Nicholas, Thelnetham – following problems with the ground pulleys and some intermediate pulleys on a rope guide above the ringers, attended and assisted by Chris Davies and Carol Girling spent 2 days replacing the offending pulleys and generally checking and tightening where necessary. Great improvement all round.

All Saints Hartest – met Derek Rose and Churchwarden and inspected 5th bell which had developed a crack.

Discovered that the crack extends for 25" horizontally around the waist of the bell some 13" above the lip. Unusual place for a bell to crack but is clearly following tuning marks inside the bell. Rope has been taken off and bell not

used, Whites of Appleton have I understand been asked to attend with a view to removing and welding the 1661 John Darbie, one of 4 remaining in the tower by the same founder.

St. Mary's Thornham Magna – With St. John Perry and Carol Girling checked and tightened installation.

SS Peter and Paul, Eye – called in re loose 5th clapper which could not be tightened. Found that clapper has been loose for some time and thread worn as a result. Managed to tighten (2 hours' work) but if it comes loose again will need removing and some work out of tower. Again assisted by St. John Perry and Carol Girling.

Other matters raised at BAC or which have come to the notice of Technical Advisor:

St. Nicholas, Bedfield - letter from George Pipe. George expressed an interest in getting these bells restored. Diana was brought up there and served in choir and other posts. A fund has been started and contributions given already and he is very keen to see this through.

St. Edmund Hargrave – 3 bells. Alan Moulton has attended at request of Churchwarden to see if one of the unringable bells could be swung chimed. Alan says that this should be possible and I will pass this to the new District Advisor for attention.

St. Margaret's, Ipswich – Jonathan Stevens is involved with an external sound survey for this tower where the bells are to be restored.

St. Edmund, Southwold – Are proposing to put toilets in bottom of tower.

St. Margaret, Reydon – will be closed for 2 months from September owing to organ work.

Other Matters Raised.

Grant for Stowmarket – Committee agreed a grant be suggested to GMC for £500 towards replacing the bearings in the back 4 bells, Winston doing the work and expressed an interest. Unanimous decision, no abstentions.

Changes to Technical Advisor – Winston expressed admiration for the work done by Jonathan which the Guild should be extremely grateful for. In view of the increased work load of the Technical Advisor Winston also proposed that we should adopt the NDA system of having a Technical Advisor appointed for each District (Branch in the NDA) this would require no Rule changes and will be raised at the GMC. The Guild Technical Advisor to advise who could be appointed at District level, and to oversee.

John Taylor said that he thought it was an excellent idea and the Committee was unanimous in recommending it. Following GMC agreement in principle Winston will contact each District with a view to Implementation and inclusion in the next Guild report.

Next BAC – 1st October, 2014 suggested Rattlesden, where bells should be finished by then. Meet at 7pm and visit to see installation followed by short ring and Meeting. No speaker will be organised for this Meeting as there has been a tendency at previous Meetings for things to drag on and limit the time allowed for the BAC Meeting itself. This matter will be raised at Rattlesden to ascertain whether the Members wish for a speaker at future Meetings.

Comments: SM suggested that the bells at St Nicholas should not be rung at the moment.

Neal Dodge expressed concern regarding the restoration project at Lt Cornard where new people were being taught to ring. The concern being that as there were no members recorded at the tower, there was no insurance to cover them. John Taylor and Derek Rose have been involved in the teaching and WG will investigate this further.

R&T Committee Report: JF advised that a meeting had been arranged for the 10th July.

Applications for Grants: A grant of £500 was approved towards the cost of replacing the main bearings of the back 4 bells at Stowmarket.

Ringling master's Report (Previously Circulated):

I have completed work at Thurston church and with help from Chris Nunn and new guild member Paul Ebsworth and tried the bells out to the satisfaction of the structural engineer. I was also asked by Derek Rose to cast my eye over the cracked fifth bell and gave some advice. Finally I was pleased to be able to join Crawford Allen on a trip to Loughborough to see the new Elmsett treble cast.

When possible I have continued my support of the second Tuesday outings organised by Peter and Jane Harper, I recommend these to anyone with some time on their hands.

At the AGM I was elected to serve for a further year and ran the ringing on the day, unfortunately this meant that I missed Ralph's talk which Rowan reported to me as being well thought out and worth following up.

At the guild striking competition at Ashbocking I oversaw a good turnout but a frayed rope held up proceedings making for a late finish and a rushed tea. Judges Lesley Boyle and Gareth Davies placed St Mary le Tower winners of the Mitson Trophy and Hollesley winners in the call change category for the Lester Brett shield.

A late start at Helmingham and an unprecedented entry of 9 teams in the 8 bell competition for the Rose Trophy saw us having to curtail ringing in time for the 9.00 curfew. I thank the two SE teams who were drawn to ring last for withdrawing enabling us to judge the other teams. I am embarrassed but pleased to say that our NW district team came out as winners.

(Further to this JF reported that the Guild had been placed 4th in the Ridgeman Trophy Striking Competition, and that he and recently been to Rattlesden and that work there was now well under way)

Comments: PH had written a letter about the fact that 2 teams had to stand down from the Guild Striking competition. PG commented that the location could have been an issue contributing to the overrun of time. JS stated that the Guild Striking Competition should not exclude anybody and that as many people as possible should take part.

WG reported that there had been no interest in the N District Striking Competition.

Report of CC meeting held on 26th May (from Peter Harper)

This year's CC meeting was hosted by the Kent CACR held at Bearsted nr Maidstone. The headquarters hotel was the Marriott Tudor Park Hotel where a helpdesk was manned by KCACR members each day of the bank holiday weekend. A varied programme had been arranged to suit ringers & non-ringers alike, including ringing tours, a visit to the RHDR, and a trip to France on the Tuesday to experience carillons and lunch!

Jane and I went to Kent on Saturday afternoon, and after checking in spent an enjoyable evening meeting friends old and new.

After a leisurely start on Sunday, there was the new members welcome at Headcorn village hall and a buffet lunch during which the work of the Council was briefly explained by the President, Kate Flavell. There was then the opportunity to meet committee chairmen and find out more about their work. There is no doubt that some of the committees do excellent work and make useful contributions to ringers everywhere (publications, redundant bells, towers & belfries, tower stewardship, bell restoration, education, public relations, ringing centres) whilst others are rather specialist in nature (peal records, compositions, methods, library, biographies, ICT) and some appear rather abstract (ringing trends). The administrative committee consists of chairmen of each of the other committees plus CC officers. I found that whilst looking for a certain number of new members for the various committees, most were content to re-elect those members whose term had come to an end. New members were really required if they had specific skills which the committees required. Whilst I was interested in committee work, I did not seem to have the skills they were looking for and so decided not to put my name forward this year.

This was followed by the AGM of The Ringing Foundation Ltd. Right from the start the directors and trustees seemed to be on the back foot following the letter from Steve Coleman in the Ringing World, as prior to the meeting they issued a paper refuting his comments. Also it was announced that Tim Davis had decided not to remain as a trustee following his recent decision to stand down as company secretary. At the start of his address, the chairman Brian Meads, declared his intention to stand down during the course of the year. He said the RF had achieved one of the aims in its business plan with the development of ITTS which had been his main concern, and he felt that a new chairman was now required to carry forward other items in the plan. He invited comments from the floor, which whilst supportive of ITTS and ART, were skeptical about the future of the RF.

The new company secretary, Bob Hancock, ran through the accounts and whilst these were accepted, there was a skeptical tone to comments from the floor and it appears that the 2014 budget is very much a wish list rather than based on evidence. After that the rest of the meeting was straightforward.

The meeting closed at 4pm to allow time for ringing at Headcorn prior to the CC "Songs of Praise" service.

In the evening the reception and dinner for CC members took place at the HQ hotel at Bearsted and was a very enjoyable occasion.

The main business of the council meeting took place on Monday 26th May at the HQ hotel. After registration of members the meeting opened with a welcome from the President, Kate Flavell who then competently oversaw a very long agenda.

The Guild of St Agatha was accepted for affiliation to the Council with Anne Bray representing the Guild.

47 new members were welcomed and then we had the usual AGM formalities (apologies, minutes, matters arising etc).

2 life members were elected – Alan Frost and David Kelly (Kelttek Trust)

Election of Officers, notably Chris Mew was elected President for the next three years, replacing Kate Flavell whose term has ended.

Election of additional members, all retiring members were re-elected.

Motions: mostly admin, but a few items of wider interest –

- 1) Updating the terms of reference of the education committee to recognize best practice and changes in media to disseminate information
- 2) Appointing a Public Relations Officer as a member of the Council to be the main point of contact with outside media, associations and ringers.
- 3) Non-method blocks to be recognised (a non-method is a block of changes that does not constitute a plain course of a method).

Change Ringing for the Future was a presentation by Elva Ainsworth chairman of the Ringing Trends committee and Chris Mew. It may be that as it was nearly lunch time my concentration was not what it should have been, but I felt this was well-meaning but a lot of public relations waffle which did not seem to be fulfilling its task of how to bring the Central Council to the Ringers.

We then broke for lunch!

The afternoon session began at 1.45 with the AGM of The Ringing World. The RW is still losing money and circulation (3000). However it does support the Young Ringers Competition (perhaps young ringers could support the RW with subscriptions as Christmas/birthday presents) and the biennial Roadshow. Both these events are almost self-financing with little or no cost to the RW.

They have various cost-saving proposals including admin savings by shortening office hours and there are plans to develop Bellboard in the pipeline. There will be a management review and a new business plan later this year re the future shape of the RW with widespread consultation, although one cannot but wonder why this hasn't been ongoing anyway, rather than wait until crisis threatens.

The bulk of the resumed CC AGM was taken up with the acceptance of reports from each of the chairmen and seconders of the 16 committees and the proposing and seconding for the re-election or election of members to fill the various vacancies (George Salter was elected to the methods committee). Time consuming!

By the time we got round to the reports and election of the Stewards of the Carter Ringing Machine, Rolls of Honour & the Dove Database, and the CC Rescue Fund for Redundant Bells, people were visibly flagging.

Then suddenly, the last items:

Next meetings

2015 Beverley & District Hull, 2016 Winchester & Portsmouth , 2017 Scotland

AOB The new President warmly thanked Kate Flavell for her hard work over the past three years.

The meeting was formally closed at 5.40pm and the outgoing President handed the Badge of Office to her successor.

Although this was my 1st CC meeting, I was fairly well aware of how it works and found it an interesting and enjoyable experience overall. If a way can be found to simplify the acceptance of committee reports and the election process for membership of those committees, the business meeting might not be such an endurance test.

Ratification of NRLM's:

The following were all ratified as members of the Guild. Simon W Edwards, Heather M Forster. Timothy R Forster, Kristian D Scudamore, Daniel Graham and Rhona I H McEune

Annual Report:

Many people were not happy about the number of mistakes many of which could have been avoided by adequate proof reading, and more time allowed for the compilation. Suggestions were made that Ruth Suggett could offer help to George Reynolds again so that this year's report is improved. The type setting needs to be of a uniform set and the finished article proof read by an independent editor. PG offered to proof read in manageable chunks, this was welcomed by the meeting.

AGM Review:

It was felt that the catering was excellent and provision of a hot meal alternative was well received.

The fringe meeting did not attract as many attendees as was hoped for. WG asked if timing could have been a possible cause. The Future of Ringing Session led by Ralph Earey resulted in a consensus that this is an important issue for the Guild especially the need to encompass the training of young people in the planning for the future of ringing in the Guild. The question was raised of how or should the Guild support the training of new members. RE, GS and PG are going to look at how the Guild can fund training both now and in the future.

Changes to Technical Advisor:

WG has suggested that each District could perhaps have its own Technical advisor given the large workload and geography of the county.

Succession Planning: Members need to start thinking now about replacements for the Guild Treasurer and Secretary who are now close to completing their five years in office.

Ringling Memorabilia: RE suggested that in 2015 when the SE District are hosting the AGM, an exhibition of Ringling memorabilia owned by George Pipe could be put on display.

AOB: Ringing Foundation- in a letter to the RW Steve Coleman has suggested that the RF Constitution may be flawed especially in the light of their recent letter to all Guilds and Associations requesting fixed sums of money to support their work, based on the number of members each Guild has.

Date of next Meeting: Saturday 18th October 10am and then February 14th 2015 at 2pm