

SUFFOLK GUILD OF RINGERS
BELFRY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the first meeting of this new Committee, which replaced the former Restoration and Maintenance Committee, held at the Ten Bells public house, Stonham Aspal at 8.0p.m. on Thursday, 22nd January, 1998.

Present: W. Girling (chairman); Dr. S. Harrison; A. Moulton; C. McArthur; M. Peters; G. Pipe; M. Rolph; D. Webb and N. Whittell.

Apologies: R. Clouston; J. Colman and C. Nunn.

The chairman welcomed those present to the newly formed Belfry Advisory Committee, and thanked all additional members who had joined the team and thereby not only increased the overall manpower situation but added additional skills which should help us in the times ahead.

He also introduced Alan Moulton, who had recently moved to Thurston, and would shortly be living at Woolpit. Alan has agreed to be part of the team and would be of great benefit, especially in view of the fact that he had only just left Eayre and Smith. Alan would be proposed at the next Management meeting in October.

MATTERS ARISING

S. Harrison requested that the minutes be sent out as soon as possible after the meeting and not one month prior to the meeting as at present. The Committee thought that it was a good idea and will be adopted.

DISTRICT REPORTS

NORTH EAST: M. Rolph said that **SIBTON** Church was not now being made redundant - interest in bells being restored at a cost of about £40,000. **LITTLE GLEHAM** may well apply for second stage of Millennium Grant in view of poor condition of the bells. At **REYDON** some work has been done on tenor stay and slider, including easing the slider run, but more work may be needed. Ian Harrison, of **RUMBURGH** has requested and been sent details for re-hanging. There were problems at **LAXFIELD** where the beams supporting the frame were found to be suffering from rot and beetle attack. Terry Howe has reported to M. Rolph that **METFIELD** will have 6 bells by Easter. G. Pipe said that **WORLINGWORTH** have passed the £10,000 mark towards re-casting the tenor and re-hanging the others, and mentioned **HOXNE**, where he gave a talk about 10 years ago and would like to keep interest in the bells alive.

NORTH WEST: G. Pipe spoke about **MARKET WESTON**, where the frame is to be repaired following severe local damage caused by unchecked water ingress, and W. Girling said that the two trebles are about to be re-hung in a steel frame above the other 4 at **HOPTON**, and there is interest in getting the bells at **HEPWORTH** ringing if the tower is in order. S. Young is really working hard in the area of all three towers and W. Girling and others have offered as much help as possible to keep the cost down. W. Girling also spoke about **GREAT ASHFIELD** where the team have added pulleys and moved and repaired guides to allow the bells to be rung from a newly installed gallery, **ERISWELL**, where the two tiny trebles are loose on the headstocks and this is being dealt with together with splicing new top ends on all 5 bells, **STOWMARKET**,

where a new bearing race is to be fitted to the treble and wooden rope shutes are in the process of being fitted in the clock chamber on 4 of the bells, **BARDWELL**, where the Church had requested advice on whether the bells could be rung full circle. Some work is to be done on the bells followed by a try out in due course with the Architect, Tony Redman, and other experts to assess the state of the frame and it's supports. The tower has now been repaired together with the turret. G. Pipe said that the major work on the tower looks very well. W. Girling said that Tony Redman, who lives at Great Livermere, had asked whether the bells there could be rung from the ground floor and the Church wished to consider this. Clearly extra rope shutes and a guide system above the ground would be necessary. W. Girling said he would attend in due course and assess the viability. M. Rolph said that he is shortly to replace the stays on the 3 at **FINNINGHAM**. W. Girling agreed to sort out some ropes for all 3 bells which should then be ringeable. N. Whittell asked about **COMBS** and W. Girling said he was hoping to speak to the new Vicar as soon as possible. G. Pipe said that Sally Fogden would be getting in touch shortly re **TROSTON**.

SOUTH EAST :C. McArthur reported that **HACHESTON** are progressing along quite nicely, the bells are to be hung on one level, they have £16,000 and should be O.K. for the Millennium, ringers are being taught at Marlesford. At **EASTON** reasonable sum in local funds and going ahead with re-furbishment of headstocks and support beams. S. Harrison mentioned that **BARKING** are now back ringing again following major tower repairs. At **IKEN** they wish to rehang with 50% grant and add 5th bell A new frame will be required though. A loft ladder has been suggested to get up to a ringing gallery, but they are likely to lose some ancient and interesting rope guides. G. Pipe said that it would be excellent if the Committee could ensure that interesting items were not lost but saved, possibly for a museum, etc. He also spoke about **HACHESTON**, asking that if Nicholson Engineering were, as reported, the only ones who would put the bells on one level, why wouldn't anybody else do it?. A. Moulton said that it was always possible to go back to the bell hangers and have a further discussion re pros and cons. S. Harrison reported that the Faculty Application was being seen by the D.A.C. the next day re **ORFORD**, and arrangements were being made for the bells to be delivered via the river at 11.30a.m. on Sunday, 23rd August 1998. **CAMPSEA ASHE** had also expressed an interest in bell restoration, a heavy going 8 cwt 4.

SOUTH WEST: N. Whittell said that **BOXFORD** are now complete. **BILDESTON** 4th slipped the wheel recently due to water ingress through incomplete roof on tower, negotiations are taking place for a ladder to get to the bells, as there is only the builders ladder there at the moment. Kersey and Boxford ringers are looking after this tower at the moment. M. Rolph said that he found a loose collar on the independent staple on the 5th but hoping to have cured as soon as possible. N. Whittell mentioned **MONKS ELEIGH** where the ringers are not too happy with the hole in the ringing floor and would like to have it filled in. W. Girling said that he had removed all the pulleys at **POLSTEAD** and after restoring them by mounting in a lathe and refacing, had replaced them and also tightened the tenor clapper on which he had to re-cut the thread.

TECHNICAL ADVISER'S REPORT: M. Rolph said that we will have 2 more towers in the Guild Report, the bells at the **ROYAL HOSPITAL SCHOOL AT HOLBROOK** and the small ring of Frank Price's.

RINGING FOR THE MILLENIUM: (brought forward from the last meeting) R. Clouston had supplied a list of the bell conditions in the South West District. M. Rolph said that perhaps we could ring on the ones that are not too difficult to do up. The general feeling was that we could

improve as much as the Committee was able to but must not try to go "over the top" The matter, it was agreed, will remain under review. A. Moulton asked about what will happen after the Millennium, will be able to continue ringing these bells? It was agreed that it could be a problem.

BRIEF DISCUSSION ON THE WAY FORWARD FOR THE NEW TEAM: The chairman asked the Committee if they had any suggestions or ideas as to how we should tailor the work of the group to try and streamline and improve it. He envisaged gradual change, to include perhaps more in the way of workshops, perhaps in towers around the Guild, to advise and teach on bell maintenance, seminars, and also importantly, great stress on public relations and information to clergy, Church authorities, ringers and public alike to bring bells and their care out into the open. S. Harrison suggested holding afternoons, with 4 or 5 people dealing with different aspects, i.e. splicing, particularly terylene, care of roller bearings etc. It was agreed that we should all consider the aspects of this item for the future.

DATE AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, 19th May, 1998, at 8.0p.m. at the 10 Bells public house, Stonham Aspal.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS: G. Pipe suggested that an information sheet be sent to each member of the Affiliation Scheme, possibly at renewal, setting out the work it had done, and that although £10 was suggested as a donation, best to not put a limit on it as some might wish to donate more. W. Girling said that the members did each have a copy of the Guild Report which gave details of work done, but he would see if this could be done as it was a good idea. Also, a few members had donated over £10 already. G. Pipe also mentioned that it was important that expenses were claimed for work done by the maintenance officer and team, not all would be able to fund mileage, etc., themselves, and also that the **CATHEDRAL MILLENIUM TOWER** only needed to raise another million pounds to have all the money required.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 10.0p.m.