

GUILDFORD DIOCESAN GUILD OF CHURCH BELL RINGERS
President: BISHOP OF GUILDFORD



MINUTES OF THE 87th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
held on Saturday 14th March 2015 at
6.00 pm in St Mary's Parish Room, Chiddingfold

Present: The Master, Mike Bale
45 members from 19 towers

During the afternoon the Inter-District 6-bell Striking Competition had taken place at St Mary and All Saints, Dunsfold, with General Ringing at St Mary's Chiddingfold prior to the service at 4.30 pm. This was followed by tea and business meeting in the Parish Room.

The Revd Sarah Brough was thanked for conducting the service; Nick McMahon was thanked for playing the organ; and the Chiddingfold ringers and helpers were thanked for providing the excellent tea.

The Master welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1. Report of apologies received

Apologies for absence had been received from the members recorded below:

Brian Shacklady, Chris Harbott, Chris Robinson, Gerald Norris, Harry Glover, Jan Fowler, John Aronson, Karen Sweetland, Stephen Darvill, Sue Saunders, Val Jolly, Victor Coles, Lynda Coles, Jennifer Meade, Anne Daniels, Andrew Day, David Pearson, Matthew Pearson, Jacqueline Brown, Christopher Brown, Chris Rimmer.

2. Minutes of the 86th Annual General Meeting

It was agreed that the minutes of the 86th Annual General Meeting held on Saturday, 8th March 2014 in St. Peter's Church Hall, Hersham, having previously been circulated to all towers, would be taken as read. The following amendments were noted:

First paragraph line 5 should read: "the Chertsey District book stall" not "the Chertsey book stall";

Item 2, line 2: the year should read 2013, not 2012;

"Any other business" should have been item 9, not item 11.

With these amendments the minutes were approved by the meeting and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

3. Matters arising

Ringling Holiday to the USA: Martin Turner reported that this had taken place with 19 people, 14 of them resident members of the Guild. Despite very cold weather they had had a fantastic time. Martin was congratulated for organising the holiday.

Guild Clothing: this would be taken as a separate item in Any Other Business.

Tower Post Codes: these had not appeared in the new Guild Report. It was agreed that this should be an action for next year. **Action: District Secretaries**

Ringling Roadshow: Jackie Roberts and her team were congratulated on organising a splendid event on 6 September 2014.

4. Election of New Members

There were no new members proposed, and no ratifications of non-resident members elected prior to peal attempts.

5. Annual Report 2014

The Master asked the meeting to stand in silence in memory of the following Guild members who had died during 2014:

John Atkinson	formerly Yorktown
Hugh Channer	formerly Albury
Brian Coatsworth	formerly Horsell (member and tower captain)
Alan Flood	formerly Egham (former Guild Treasurer)
Bridget Gordon	formerly Send
Eric Lee	formerly Godalming and Guildford District Secretary
Anne Parr	formerly Leatherhead (member for over 40 years)
Jenny Pierson	formerly Puttenham
Rita Moore	formerly Grayshott (member and tower captain for over 50 years)
Barbara Yoxall	formerly Pirbright

The Master presented the Report of the Executive Committee for 2014.

Membership had stayed fairly static over the past 4 years, but was still down on what it was at the start of the decade. The Master urged all towers to embrace a proactive approach to recruitment and training, also to try to increase participation in District and Guild events.

The Master thanked Chris Rogers for his work as Treasurer, and in particular for handling the communication relating to the Bridget Gordon legacy. He also thanked Roger Pashley who had been the Guild's Independent Examiner for very many years.

Although there had been fewer requests for financial assistance from the BRF in 2014, the Bell Restoration Adviser still had other responsibilities and the Master thanked John Aronson for his participation. He envisaged a busy year ahead with the interest generated by the legacy.

The Master also thanked Stephen Darvill, Richard Waters, and Dick Crowther for their continued storing of the Guild's stock of ash for stays.

Commenting that bell maintenance was an important part of each tower's custodianship, the Master said that we should not take the current financial health of the BRF for granted, but continue fund raising generally, and for specific projects. Fund raising not only provided financial support, but high profile events such as abseiling down a tower also provided much needed publicity for ringing and the church.

Ivan Saunders continued to support the Guild as one of its 5 Vice-Presidents, as Librarian and convener of the Library Sub-Committee, and in running the Chertsey District Bookstall. The Master expressed his gratitude to Ivan for his hard work and fundraising, particularly in view of his transport difficulties in 2014.

The Master thanked the Central Council representatives: Beryl Norris, John Couperthwaite, Chris Rogers and Anne Anthony, for representing the Guild on the Central Council and serving on several of its committees.

Three Districts had entered bands into the Guild 10-bell striking competition at Egham in July 2014, which was won by the Guildford District with a plain course of Cambridge Royal as the test piece. The 8-bell competition in May attracted a full complement of entries and was won by the Chertsey District. The test piece was 288 changes of St Clements College Bob Major. There was no 6 bell competition in 2014. The Master thanked all those who took part in, and supported, the 2014 striking competitions.

The Number Club was an important fund-raiser for the BRF, raising over £497. Thanks were due to Judy Couperthwaite and Martin Turner for administering its activities. Martin was also thanked for his role as Guild Peals Recorder.

There were many ringing achievements in 2014 and the Master congratulated the following: Matthew Pearson of Yorktown for conducting his first peal; Hannah Burton of the Cathedral and Joe Sharp of Crondall for scoring their first peals; the 21 Guild members who rang their first quarter peal; and Alexander Dixon, Toby Shearn, Edmund Mottershead (elected a member subsequently) and Andrea Young who conducted their first quarter peal. Additionally Vernon Bedford had scored his 250th peal for the Guild in 2014, and the Master acknowledged an oversight from the 2013 report in that Chris Rogers had that year scored his 300th peal for the Guild. Congratulations were due to all.

A very basic analysis of the peals rung showed that there were 52 peals rung for the Guild in 2014 and the Master congratulated Martin Turner for ringing in the most peals. The quarter peal tally for the year was 266.

The Guild Web site had been completely revamped again and thanks were due to Roger Tompsett and Jacqueline Brown for their work on this. The Master also thanked Roger for his work as Guild Public Relations Officer.

A successful Guild Dinner was held in February 2014, with 56 members and guests enjoying an excellent evening at the Manor House Hotel, Newlands Corner. This was the first time at this venue for around 40 years. Thanks were due to Margaret Bale for organising that event.

In conclusion the Master thanked all the Guild and District Officers for their hard work and commitment through 2014, also the members of the various Sub-Committees that kept things running in the background. In particular the retiring District Officers needed special mention: Roger Tompsett as Leatherhead District Master, Ray Clements as Guildford District Treasurer, Anne Anthony and Kevin Fox as Leatherhead and Farnham District Executive Committee Member respectively.

Finally a big thank you was due to Louise Booth, the retiring Guild Secretary.

6. Statements of Account 2014

The Treasurer presented the accounts.

General Fund

Income from the proportion of members' subscriptions allocated to the General Fund (40%) had held steady at £2,024. Subscriptions were received from 623 resident members, one more than in 2013, and 9 new non-resident life members. The trend to older membership continued with 6 fewer paying at the full rate, an increase of 16 in those aged 65 and over and

a regrettable decrease of 9 in those under 19. Other income was boosted by a surplus of £229 on the Guild dinner, partly offset by a reduction of £42 in income from peal fees.

Expenditure at £2,020 was £84 more than in 2013. It included a donation of £250 towards the hanging of some of the bells of Christchurch Cathedral, New Zealand, in a temporary tower following the disastrous earthquake of 2011. Otherwise, the main variations from 2013 were increases in the Central Council affiliation fee and in the personal accident insurance premium, the lack of any payment for the Guild website and rather less on room hire for committee meetings. Other expenditure items remained at much the same level as the previous year. The surplus on the year was £459, leaving a year-end balance of £3,172.

Turning to the current year, the Treasurer reported that the recent Guild Dinner had made a surplus of £35 and other income from subscriptions, peal fees and minor items was likely to be around £2,250. Expenditure, assuming no unforeseen items or price increases but allowing for two years' payments for website hosting, would be of the order of £2,180, giving a projected surplus on the year of around £100. There was therefore no need to consider an increase in subscriptions just yet.

Bell Restoration Fund

Income at £9,186 was in line with most recent years, but some £2,250 less than in 2013, when the Fund was in receipt of some exceptional items. The Officers would like to express thanks to the 19 PCCs who donated to the Fund in 2013 and to all Guild members who had again contributed generously to the Fund through tower donations, donations at district meetings, profit from teas, membership of the Number Club, purchase of rope and stays and through Guild subscriptions.

Only two small grants had been made in 2014. These were of £750 to Weybridge and £1,000 to Bramley. At the end of 2014 the fund balance was £55,211. The projection for 2015 was dominated by the expected legacy of around £180,000 from the late Bridget Gordon, but otherwise the Treasurer expected income to be on the same lines as in 2014.

The Independent Examiner had approved both sets of accounts and the Treasurer proposed that they be adopted. The proposal was seconded by Rod Pierce and agreed.

6a Bridget Gordon Legacy

The Treasurer reported that Bridget Gordon, formerly of Send, had left a legacy of approximately £180,000 to the BRF. Although the final winding up of the estate was still some way off, he expected that the Guild would receive the bulk of the legacy money before too long. After much discussion, the BRF sub-committee had decided to hold a competition, inviting bids for substantial projects such as a new ring of bells, or seeking to reduce the tower sway at Holy Trinity Guildford. Stage 1 would comprise expressions of interest in carrying out significant projects, and these had to be submitted by 14 June 2015. The Executive Committee would evaluate these and inform those submitting them by the end of July whether they should proceed to Stage 2 – detailed proposals.

A paper setting out the details and criteria for bids had been circulated to those present and would be placed on the Guild website and an article prepared for The Wey magazine.

Action: PRO

The question of whether thanks could be conveyed to the family was discussed. Ivan Saunders had contact with the family and would investigate this. **Action: Ivan Saunders**

Whilst acknowledging that this legacy was an excellent opportunity, the Master stressed that those smaller projects not qualifying for a share of it would still be considered for a BRF grant in the usual way.

7. Election of Officers 2015/16

As only one nomination for each post had been received, it was proposed by Beryl Norris, seconded by Ann Pierce and agreed that the nominations be taken 'en bloc'.

<u>Post</u>	<u>Nominee</u>
Master	Mike Bale
Secretary	Margaret Bale
Treasurer	Chris Rogers
Bell Restoration Adviser	John Aronson
Independent Examiner	Roger Pashley

The nominees were proposed by Judy Couperthwaite, seconded by Jenny Heyworth and elected.

8. Formal Guild Events 2015

a) There would be three training opportunities during Holy Week:

- a Belfry Maintenance course would be held in the area around Guildford – tower to be confirmed;
- a workshop on Tower Captaincy and Running a Practice would take place in the Education Centre at Guildford Cathedral on Tuesday 31st March;
- a course run by Malcolm Loveday on the process used by the DAC (Diocesan Advisory Committee) for reviewing major tower projects, also including faculties.. This course would also take place in the Education Centre on 31st March.

The Master encouraged members to sign up for these courses and advised that details would be posted on the Guild website. **Action: PRO**

b) The 8 bell Striking Competition would be held on the morning of Saturday, 9th May at Banstead and the 10 bell competition was scheduled for the morning of Saturday, 4th July at Farnham. Both of these competitions would be inter District.

c) Following the success of the recent Guild Dinner, the Master anticipated that another one would be held in February next year..

9. Any other business

a) **Cheque Signatory.** Chris Rogers proposed that Margaret Bale, as new Guild Secretary, replace Louise Booth as a signatory on the various Guild accounts. John Young seconded the proposal which was carried.

b) **Guild Clothing.** Margaret Bale reported that she was in negotiation with a new company, Top-Stitch, which was prepared to offer clothing with the Guild logo 'on demand'. This would be available via a link from the Guild website, and more information on how to order would be available shortly.

c) **Essex Trophy.** Jackie Roberts expressed disappointment that the Guild had not entered this competition in 2014, and offered to organise it. The Master thanked her but advised that Richard Burton had agreed to do this. The 2015 competition would be hosted by the Guild and be held at St Nicolas', Guildford on 12th September.

d) **Chertsey dumb bell.** Malcolm Loveday reported that there was now a new dumb bell installed at Chertsey, which was proving very useful for training new recruits. This was the first such construction in the Diocese.

e) **Magna Carta: Striking a blow for democracy.** Malcolm Loveday reminded members that 15th June was looming. A number of towers had already organised some special

ringing and he encouraged everyone to take part. He reported that 4 new treble bells would be added at Thorpe Church as a chime, following a generous anonymous donation and support from the Magna Carta fund. They would be cast at Whitechapel and hung at the end of July. It was planned to name the bells as follows:

- 1 Elizabeth II (currently awaiting royal approval);
- 2 King John and the Barons – Strike a Blow for Democracy;
- 3 Stephen Langton (Archbishop of Canterbury);
- 4 Adam Abbott (of Chertsey Abbey).

As there was no further business, the meeting closed at 6.58 pm.