

Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers East Berks & South Bucks Branch

Minutes of the EBSB Branch AGM at Chalfont St Giles on Saturday 23rd April 2022

The meeting was attended by 20 members representing 12 towers, and Katie Lane (Guild Master)

1. Welcome and Introduction:

The Chairman welcomed Katie Lane, Guild Master, to the meeting. He also thanked local ringers Sylvia, Cathy and Lucy for providing refreshments, Rev. Jenny Tebboth for taking the service and David for playing the organ.

Apologies were received from:

Francoise Allen, Vikki Bulbeck, Ann Davies, Rosalind Garrett-Bowes, Janet Gillard, Roger Lewiston, Helen Riddoch, Mark Riddoch, Tina Ruff, Andrew Simpson, Celia Thomas, Emma Warburton, James White.

2. Minutes of the Half Yearly Meeting held on Saturday 9th October 2021 at Clewer

These had been circulated via the User Group. They were adopted and signed by the Chairman.

3. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising from the minutes

4. Obituaries:

Daphne Hutson (tribute by Jill Glennerster):

Daphne was an extraordinary lady, well loved by all and was a nurse. She started ringing in Sussex in the early 1980's and her first quarter peal was in June 1984, and she rang lots and lots of quarter peals. She rang regularly at Winkfield and Warfield. She supported the church and the towers. She was incredibly thoughtful, very generous and funny, but also very strong-willed. She "wrote off a roundabout" – turned right into it and was convinced that it was the roundabout's fault! She always wore a brilliant bun on her head and rang in a skirt which she tucked between her knees to ring. Even when ringing became physically challenging to her Daphne would still come along to encourage learners. To say we miss her is an understatement.

Peter Legge (tribute from Janet Gillard, read by Robert Newton):

Peter was born in London in 1931, and for the first 30 months lived in a Barnardo's orphanage. He was then adopted by Dr Legge and his wife, who lived in Shrewsbury, along with another young orphan who became his brother. His adopted parents then had a son of their own which completed their family. Peter subsequently attended a boarding school in Shrewsbury where his love of flying became apparent. Upon leaving Shrewsbury College at the age of 18, he joined the RAF training college at Cranwell.

It was at Cranwell that he learnt to fly 17 different aircraft, being proficient in piloting both fixed wing jet fighter aircraft and helicopters. His career in the RAF spanned 19 years during which he piloted a helicopter flying troops in and out of the jungle in Malaya. During his RAF career he married and had a son and daughter, but the marriage ended in divorce.

Upon leaving the RAF he joined Towry Law as a personal financial advisor when, in 1984, he married Elizabeth settling in Eton Wick. During this time Peter took up the hobby of tapestry and cross stitch, making covers for chairs. He also made cross stitch pictures of Dorney and Boveney churches which were framed and still hang in the house to this day.

Upon his retirement in 1995 at the age of 64, Peter and Elizabeth enjoyed travel, visiting places both in England and abroad.

While attending Church in 1997, Peter took up bellringing when the vicar asked if anyone would like to learn to ring the bells for the millennium. He decided to do just that. Accordingly he became a dedicated ringer at St James the Less in Dorney, ringing for Sunday services, weddings and also a number of quarter peals. He also rang occasionally at Holy Trinity Church in Cookham. Unfortunately

he had to stop ringing the bells some time ago due to failing health and died on the 16th June 2021 aged 90 years old.

Peter will be sadly missed by all the bell ringers, his family and all the friends who knew him.

Gilbert Runnicles (tribute by John Davidge):

John only knew Gilbert briefly, teaching him to ring before Lockdown as part of the Fulmer band. Gilbert never got very far but he supported Fulmer not only by ringing but he also ran the choir and chose some very good hymns. He was ringing fairly solidly up until the lockdown but then he developed an aggressive form of cancer and died quite quickly. He is missed by the local ringers at Fulmer.

Lionel (Tony) Timms (tribute by Patricia Newton):

Tony and Hazel Timms moved to High Wycombe from Warwickshire in 1960. Tony joined the band at All Saints High Wycombe and was a valued member of the band for about 20 years. During that time Tony rang 22 quarter peals at High Wycombe. He rang a total of 5 peals, all of which were at High Wycombe and one of which is recorded on a peal board in the tower. His two sons also learnt to ring at All Saints.

Sheila George (nee Clutton) wrote a few personal words about Tony:

He was one of the kindest and gentlest men that I have ever come across. I actually met him in my early teens before I started ringing. It came about after I lost my school hat. Tony found the hat by chance in Desborough Avenue and saw the name tag. He said to his wife. "There's a ringer up the tower called Clutton." As I used to go up the tower with my father, Tony handed me my hat. Despite the difference in our generations, that was the start of a friendship that lasted all his life. Tony & Hazel were godparents to both my girls. Both of them adored Tony & Hazel and always looked forward to their visits to Handy Cross farm, where Tony was head cowman. He used to take them over regularly to see the animals and this was a highlight of their childhood. Tony retired in 1990 and moved to Marlow and passed away on 9th March aged 96.

Stan Barlow (tribute by Ken Darvill):

Stan's death in March was a great shock to all. He learnt to ring in the mid to late 1990's and supported Beaconsfield and was very much liked by those who ring at Penn. He enjoyed the more relaxed atmosphere at Penn. He got on well; he would talk to all the ladies and call them "lass". It was a joy to see. Stan was ambitious to ring as much as he could, but as a lot of us find things we learn in mid-life are quite difficult to pick up and yet he faced the challenge. He is missed very much. Unfortunately he had not rung much for about five years due to back problems and other health issues. It was a great pity because he was fun to be with. Stan also audited the Branch accounts for a number of years so was an officer of the Branch.

William Butler (tribute by Ken Darvill):

We remember Bill Butler although he had not been a resident Branch member for a long time. He learnt to ring in 1946 at Clewer and died in October 2021 at the age of 91.

Bill became one of the real characters of ringing, not just locally or within the ODG but nationally as well. He held prominent positions within the Central Council and his wisdom was much respected. He wrote many books, not just on ringing but also on historical things and about Thatcham where he lived for most of his life. Bill was EBSB Branch Secretary from about 1954 but moved to the Newbury Branch in the late 1950's.

In 1969 Bill's first wife, Audrey, died leaving him with three children aged 11, 7 and 4 years. He looked after the children, held a full time job and kept his ringing going and many other things. This typifies his whole life. One wonders how he could have fitted so much into his life. At one time he was one of the most prominent peal ringers in the exercise, ringing very many peals at Thatcham often in complex methods. We remember Bill, as does the ringing exercise in general, with affection and respect.

Eileen Stevenson (Slough) was also remembered but at her own request no memories of her were shared.

A minutes' silence was observed in memory of these people.

5. Officers' Reports:

a) Ringing Masters (Matthew Johnson):

Covid restrictions prevented practices taking place in the first part of 2021. As restrictions lifted it was great to see local towers supporting each other with making checks, steeple keeping, wedding and service ringing.

The first Branch event was the 6-bell competition that took place at Penn in August and was won by High Wycombe. Congratulations to all teams that managed to enter a band.

We were unable to run the Lorna Newton contest last year but are pleased that it is running this year – a friendly competition between different towers in the Branch.

The first Branch practice was at Hughenden before the work started on the tower roof. We look forward to returning there later this year when the work has been completed. Saturday practices have been at a mixture of times – mornings, afternoons and evenings with an average attendance of about 12 and we have been able to ring methods from Plain Hunt and Grandsire to methods such as Double Norwich and Stedman Caters. A weekday practice at Turville was particularly well attended. In November Amersham stepped in at short notice to host the Guild 10-bell Contest (because of the cracked tenor at Aston Clinton) which EBSB won, and will be representing the Guild at the Tewksbury Shield in May.

2022 is the Platinum Jubilee year. Many towers rang in February to mark the anniversary of the Queen's Accession and many are planning to ring over the Bank Holiday in June.

Thanks to all for support, particularly to Vikki Bulbeck as Deputy and to Patricia Newton as secretary for organising the towers.

b) Young Ringers Organiser (Peter Jasper):

Bucks and Berks Young Ringers have been incredibly active as always. There has been a practice on the first Sunday of the month since they have been allowed with 10 to 15 children plus about 4 adults attending. About 75% of the children are EBSB members. They had an outing to London ringing at St Mary Abbots' Kensington and other towers in Westminster, joint with the Surrey Association. They represented this half of the ODG in the South East England Contest in Essex where they came 3rd in the 8-bell competition. It shows the strength that an 8-bell band was entered whereas Winchester & Portsmouth Guild, Surrey Association, Hertfordshire Association, Middlesex C.A. & London D.G. and Sussex were not able to enter an 8-bell band. They are hoping to enter an 8-bell band for the Ringing World National Youth Contest which is in Exeter this year but they are currently one ringer short. If there are any ringers under the age of 18 at 31st August this year who are not already on the list, please let Peter know.

The next practice is on 1st May at Slough. There is no minimum standard and anyone under 20 ish is invited to join what the Ringing World Editor says is the most fun young ringers group in the country.

6. Treasurer's report and 2021 Account:

The assessed accounts and Treasurer's report had been circulated in advance. Michael Bayley noted that because last year we did not collect the £3 part of the subscription that is retained by the Branch there was a £236 deficit. He thanked Ros Garrett-Bowes for her help and for acting as Deputy Treasurer as he moved out of the Branch in January just as the subs were being collected.

Approval of the accounts was proposed by Michael Bayley and seconded by Robert Newton and accepted nem.con.

7. Election of New Members:

The following had been nominated for membership of the Guild:

Louise Gill (Chalfont St. Giles)
Ann Clark (Chalfont St. Peter)
Jane Fletcher (Chesham)
David Smith (Cookham)
Grania Wright (Fulmer)
Mark Riddoch (Hambleden)
Sam Boughton (Hambleden)
Simon Hewitt (High Wycombe)
Kat Gaska (Lane End)
Tony Howe (Old Windsor)
George McBride (Winkfield)
Emily Larcombe-Wordham (Wraysbury)
Daisy Wordham (Wraysbury)

The following had been nominated for re-election to the Guild:

Robyn Elderfield (Chalfont St. Peter)
Frances Mathew (Chesham)
Tom Davies (High Wycombe)
Jane Fowler (Lane End)

The following had been nominated for election to EBSB Branch only:

Simon Smith (Bray)
Charlotte Smith (Bray)

All were elected unopposed.

8. Election of Officers:

The following were nominated en bloc (by Peter Sippitt) and seconded (by Michael Bayley). There being no further nominations all were elected nem.con.

- a) Chairman – John Davidge
- b) Ringing Master – Matthew Johnson
- c) Deputy Ringing Master – Vikki Bulbeck
- d) Secretary – Patricia Newton
- e) Treasurer / Membership Secretary – Rosalind Garrett-Bowes
- f) Newsletter Editor – Patricia Newton
- g) Young Ringers Organiser – Peter Jasper
- h) Branch Representatives on the Guild General Committee (3) – John Davidge, Jan Galloway, Angela Darvill

9. Appointment of other Managers:

The following were nominated en bloc (by Robert Newton) and seconded (by Jan Galloway). There being no further nominations all were elected nem.con.

- a) IT Manager and b) Webmaster – Ken Darvill
- c) Independent Assessor – Peter Blower
- d) 100 Club Manager - Margaret Carlyle

10. Report and Accounts of Fundraising Committee:

The assessed accounts and Treasurer's report had been circulated in advance.

Angela Darvill noted that the committee had continued to meet – initially by conference call and more recently in person. Marmalade and other preserves, sweat shirts and polo shirts have been sold. A healthy sum of £1500 was donated to the OD Bell Fund. A recent stall at Beaconsfield raised £150, and a stall has been booked at the Beaconsfield Country Fayre in August. Prices of the preserves have had to be raised to cover the increased cost of jars.

The adoption of the accounts was proposed by Robert Newton, seconded by Angela Darvill and accepted nem.con.

11. Any Other Business:

100 Club: Margaret Carlyle noted that with the increased membership price the number of members joining had gone down but the amount collected had stayed about the same. Last time a donation was made to the OD Bell Fund it was £660 and it will be about the same next time. No donation was made last year because the 100 Club was put on hold during the pandemic.

Guild Master: Katie Lane expressed her thanks to EBSB saying that it was a brilliantly organised branch and with her OD Bell Fund Trustees hat on she thanked us for our fund raising.

Lorna Newton Contest: Jill Glennerster asked if there was still a wooden spoon presented because she had been asked to say that there should not be. A comment was made that the wooden spoon was presented at the final and it was an indication that the receiving band had done well to get through to the final. A vote was taken to decide whether we should continue to present a wooden spoon. 11 voted in favour with just 1 vote against.

The draw was made for the second round of the competition. Some bands had not yet rung their first round heats, the deadline for which is not until 2nd May. The results of the draw were:

Beaconsfield	vs	Wraysbury or Old Windsor
Clewer	vs	Dorney/Hitcham (combined band)
Marlow	vs	Turville/Hambleden (combined band)
High Wycombe "B"	vs	Cookham
Bray or Winkfield	vs	Amersham or Lane End

Details will be circulated after 2nd May.

Patricia Newton
April 2022