



Minutes of the Witney and Woodstock Branch AGM

Langford -16th February 2019

Present:

Jean Richards, Andrew Goldthorpe, Lindsey Thornton, Michael Probert, Toby Goss, Tony Crabtree, Neil Ephgrave, Christopher Moxon, Sue Ross, Julie Minch, Hugh Deam, Judy Kirby.

1. Apologies.

Hazel Howarth, Katie Lane, Doug Beaumont, Stuart Gibson, Denise Kemp, Carol McRobbie, Roger Barnes, Katherine Goldthorpe, Grace Goldthorpe, Meg Roberts, Richard White, Michael Douglas, Sue Rhodes, Alison Merryweather-Clarke, Evadne Adrian-Vallance, Michael R D Douglas, Anthony Williamson, Mark Probert, Mel Leggett, Jenny Haviland, Rob Walton, Katie Walton.

2. Chair's welcome and minutes from 2018 AGM

In Hazel Howarth's absence, Andrew Goldthorpe chaired the meeting, welcomed everyone and thanked all members for attending the meeting.

In addition, there were special thanks to Revd. Harry MacInnes for the church service, Tony Crabtree the Guild Deputy Master and Hugh Deam and Judy Kirby from Oxford City branch for travelling to the meeting and to Langford for hosting this year's AGM, especially Denise Kemp and Jane Stevens for organizing the ringing and providing a superb ringers' tea.

Throughout the year there have been no meetings of the full W&W committee and one meeting of a working group on branch bell fund policy.

There were no corrections to the 2018 AGM minutes.

The minutes were then approved and signed. Proposed , Seconded , carried nem con.

Matters Arising:

Branch Bell Fund Policy

The 2018 minutes tasked the secretary with organising a working party to create policy on how the committee disburses branch bell fund monies in future circumstances.

The working party, comprising the Chair, Hon. Treasurer and Hon. Secretary met once to discuss the working document prepared by the Hon. Secretary. This was circulated to the committee prior to the AGM and two comments were received from:

The Hon. Treasurer, querying a draft charity number shown on the document. The Secretary reported that he would remove this from the draft.

The Deputy Secretary queried insurance for members doing self-help, page 4, no. 3. Tony Crabtree advised that the Guild Treasurer can be contacted to obtain extension insurance.

The meeting thanked the Hon. Secretary for preparing the new policy and it was recommended that it be approved. Proposed, Seconded, carried nem con.

3. Ringing Master's Report - Sue Rhodes, Ringing Master

Freeland tower Outing

On Sunday 3rd February 2018 Freeland tower and friends held an afternoon outing to North Oxfordshire and visited three delightful towers at Tadmarton, Horley and Mollington. It was a new experience for a number of our party to ring from a chancel crossing as was encountered at Horley so well done everyone for not being phased! This was Freeland's first tower outing for a number of years but will now be a regular event on our ringing calendar!

LV100

13 Members of our branch rang in a total of 11 ladies' band QPs with members of six other branches to celebrate the centenary on February 6th 2018 of women first getting the vote in the UK

RAF 100

Celebrating the occasion of the centenary of the formation of the RAF, another ladies band QP was rung on the branches newest bells at Black Bourton in celebration of the achievements of women in the RAF including the mother of one of the ringers and Mary Ellis, who at 101 is the last known surviving ATA pilot and another fighter delivery pilot, Molly Rose who lived locally in Bampton for much of her life after the war.

Isle of Wight

Several branch members enjoyed a memorable weekend outing in early April to the Isle of Wight, superbly organised by Michael Probert, during which we rang every ringable tower on the island! A mixed bag of weather but this did not deter us from having some quality social and ringing time.

Witney and Woodstock 6 bell striking competition – Stanton Harcourt

Yet another delightful afternoon / early evening of ringing and cake eating! Judge for the event was Peter Holden from Cirencester who we were able to deposit outside in the sunshine!

Both the "rounds and call changes" and "the method" were won by Witney tower, well done to them. It would be really nice to see these events with increasing numbers of

ringers, it is all about taking part and the experience of ringing at different towers is invaluable so let's see if 2019 can be a record year for entries.

Social evening – Black Bourton

A big thank you to the ringers from Black Bourton for hosting the annual social in July. A splendid meal followed by a very competitive game of Aunt Sally! A great time was had by all and thanks also went to the pub for putting up with the rowdy ringers!

Witney and Woodstock branch outing

Yet again Mr Probert was out in full force and organised a great outing to Northamptonshire visiting 6 towers with an excellent lunch stop at "The Cromwell Cottage"

The day was slightly complicated by one of the clappers breaking at Duston, which was on the original itinerary, but the tower captain had already found a replacement tower at East Haddon so we felt a donation towards the repair was in order.

Another great day out, thank you Mr P!

Quarter Peal and Peal successes

This has been a bumper year for QPs in the branch mainly down to Alison Merryweather-Clarke who has organised a 100 ladies' band QPs (not all in the branch but a significant number) with 60 ladies celebrating women's suffrage and equality in democracy.

It has been an amazing achievement and I have enjoyed being a member of some of the bands! There have been other significant achievements for many members of the branch including: Evadne Vallance, Sue Ross, Robert Walton, Toby Goss, Fiona Methley, Richard White, Zoe Monkley, Lucy McGregor, Michael Probert, Neil Ephgrave, Julie Minch, Marysia Hermaszewska, Andrew Goldthorpe, Katy Walton and probably a few more that I haven't mentioned (so apologies if I have missed anyone out)! Well done to everyone who has contributed in any way and I look forward to another year of ringing and celebrating my actual 60th birthday ringing a QP in Melbourne (one of many I'm sure).

Thank you for the support that I have received over the last two years and I hope to be able to contribute to a role again in the future but for now holidays are taking precedence so I feel that someone else should be taking on this role and good luck to whoever that will be!

4. Treasurer's Report – Jean Richards, Hon. Treasurer

The branch accounts for 2018 show a current balance of £2,795.09 and a surplus of income over expenditure of £55.01.

Our income from subscriptions was up by £39 from 2017 (i.e. 13 more members).

The branch outing generated a surplus of £7.

The branch increased its donation from £125 to £150 to each of the two ODG bell funds. The branch also made a one-off donation of £200 to the Friends of St Mary's, North Leigh, towards the cost of repair. These donations were the reason that the surplus in 2018 was noticeably lower than in 2017.

There were no other significant outgoings in 2018.

Very low interest rates meant that we continued to receive only a small amount of interest.

My thanks to Mel Leggett for acting as the Independent Examiner for the 2018 accounts.

Balance Sheet

Opening Balances:

Current Account	£1912.60
Deposit Account	£760.80
Cash float	£66.68
Excess of income over expenditure	£55.01
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	£2,795.09
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Closing Balances:

Current Account	£2014.40
Deposit Account	£764.57
Cash Float	£16.12
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	£2,795.01
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5. Secretary's Report – Andrew Goldthorpe, Hon. Secretary

In February, Freeland tower and friends held an afternoon outing to North Oxfordshire which visited Tadmarton, Horley and Mollington on a cold and wet winter's day. It was a new experience for some to ring from a chancel crossing as was encountered at Horley. A varied and wide-ranging repertoire from call changes to Cambridge was rung on the first Freeland tower outing for a number of years.

Several branch members enjoyed a memorable weekend outing in early April to the Isle of Wight, superbly organised by Michael Probert, which rang every ringable tower on the

island. The ringing ranged from Original Maximus and Grandsire Cinques to the quirky and double clapping three at Swanmore.

In June, the branch 6 bell striking competition was hosted superbly by Stanton Harcourt. Although they were unfortunately unable to enter a team, Jane Eagle laid on a fabulous ringers' tea for the competitors from 5 local towers. Peter Holden from Cirencester did an excellent job judging with Witney winning both competitions. The following month, Hazel Howarth organised the annual Ducklington outing during which 13 ringers and friends rang in four Oxfordshire towers. July also marked the branch summer social at Black Bourton at which the first peal was rung on the brand-new ring of six including tower captain David Harding.

Later in the summer, branch members were saddened to learn of the passing of Steve Goddard, 1958-2018, former Branch Ringing Master and Bampton ringer. In 2007 he was in the team that rang the first full peal on the refurbished Bampton bells after the lengthy restoration. Steve had fought off cancer in his mid-thirties but wasn't able to on its return. A commemorative half muffled quarter peal of Grandsire Triples was rung on Bampton's bells on the evening of Tuesday 4th September, and many other quarters and full peals have been rung in memoriam on very many towers all around the country.

Michael Probert organised the branch outing to Northamptonshire in October, with 18 attendees visiting 6 towers. This was made slightly complicated by one of the clappers breaking at Duston, which was on the original itinerary but the tower captain had already found a replacement tower at East Haddon so we felt a donation towards the repair was in order.

A peal of Grandsire Triples was rung at Witney to mark the 775th anniversary of the dedication of St Mary's when King Henry III, on September 8th 1243, granted to the people of Witney two deer from the Royal Forest of Wychwood – the original Witney Feast.

October found Combe tower captain Anthony Williamson organising with Guild Deputy Master Tony Crabtree an enjoyable and instructive Towers and Belfries Course featuring bell maintenance and rope splicing at three Oxfordshire towers.

The year ended with several towers and their recruits from the Ringing Remembers initiative Ringing for Peace to mark the centenary of the Great War armistice, which included eight 15 year old Air Cadets ringing rounds on 8 at Witney.

The branch continues to ring many Quarter Peals but some of the more significant include:

Thirteen members of our branch rang in a number of ladies' band Quarter Peals with members of six other branches to celebrate the centenary on February 6th of women first getting the vote in the UK.

Celebrating the occasion of the centenary of the formation of the RAF, another ladies band Quarter Peal was rung on the branch's newest bells at Black Bourton in celebration of the achievements of women in the RAF, including the mother of one of the ringers and Mary Ellis, who at 101 is the last known surviving ATA pilot, and another fighter delivery pilot Molly Rose, who lived locally in Bampton for much of her life after the war.

We also had the privilege of ringing 1260 All Saints Doubles at Yarnton to commemorate the centenary of the death of Private William James Cox 35024, a Yarnton ringer who died aged 28 on 24th March 2018 while on active service with the Royal Warwickshire Regiment, 2nd/7th Battalion. He is remembered with honour at Pozieres Memorial, France.

Personal Milestones included Evadne Vallance rang her first Quarter Peal, Andy Goldthorpe, Sue Ross and Rob Walton rang their first Quarter Peals inside, Andy Goldthorpe rang his first Triples and Caters Quarter Peal's and first peal, Toby Goss rang his first triples inside, Fiona Methley (aged 15) rang her first St Martin's Doubles, and Richard White celebrated his 40th anniversary of election to the Guild by conducting a Quarter Peal at St Mary Magdalene, Woodstock, which also celebrated the reordering and re-opening of the church. Katie Walton rang her first away from cover, Julie Minch her first major inside, there were first insides for Lucy McGregor and Zoe Jordan also Zoe's first as Mrs Jordan. Marysia Hermaszewska saved up her first Quarter Peal to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the day the first lady peer entered the House of Lords by ringing a Quarter Peal with Witney's own lady peer, The Right Honourable The Baroness Cox, of Queensbury.

Freeland rang a number of celebratory Quarter Peal's starting on the 11th May to celebrate the wedding of two Freeland ringers, Zoe Monkley and Matthew Jordan the following day. On 7th September a Quarter Peal was rung to celebrate the engagement of Mark Probert and Melissa Dee. On 21st September a Quarter Peal including 10 m/p/v was rung to celebrate the 65th birthday of Michael Probert and Michael continued his celebrations the following day by ringing a Quarter Peal of Superlative Surprise Major at Witney. It was his and Neil Ephgrave's first in method and also marked Alison Merryweather-Clarke's 600th Quarter Peal.

6. Election of New Members

<i>Tower</i>	<i>New Member</i>	<i>Proposed</i>	<i>Seconded</i>
Black Bourton	Deborah Hextall	David Harding	Rebecca Harding
Ducklington	Jennifer Pratley	Roger Barnes	Hazel Howarth
Freeland	Matthew Jordan	Zoe Jordan	Andrew Smith
South Leigh	Christopher Moxon	Alison Merryweather-Clarke	Sue Rhodes
Stanton Harcourt	Keith Hickson	Jane Eagle	Nigel Eagle
Stonesfield	Anne Pounds	Lindsey Thornton	Jenny Haviland
Tackley	June Collier	Judy Hewson	Alan James
Witney	Janet Briggs	Andrew Goldthorpe	Michael Probert
Witney	Kenny Wilkins	Andrew Goldthorpe	Julie Minch

Wootton	Maria Young	Mel Leggett	Alan Hillsdon

The election of new members was agreed by those present at the meeting.

7. Election of Officers

All officers were willing to continue except for Sue Rhodes (Ringing Master) and Neil Ephgrave (Deputy Ringing Master).

Members of the committee are:

Position	Name	Proposed	Seconded
Chair	Hazel Howarth	Chris Moxon	Julie Minch
Hon. Treasurer	Jean Richards	Julie Minch	Michael Probert
Hon. Secretary	Andrew Goldthorpe	Chris Moxon	Julie Minch
Ringing Master	Toby Goss	Andrew Goldthorpe	Julie Minch
Deputy Ringing Master	Alison Merryweather-Clarke	Andrew Goldthorpe	Neil Ephgrave
Branch Rep.	Vacant		
Branch Rep.	Michael Probert	Julie Minch	Neil Ephgrave
Assistant Secretary	Lindsey Thornton	Andrew Goldthorpe	Chris Moxon
Webmaster	Andrew Goldthorpe	Chris Moxon	Neil Ephgrave

The election of new officers was agreed by those present at the meeting.

8. Donations

Ringing Master's Honorarium – waived by Toby Goss.

Jean Richards proposed that the Branch repeat their donations of 2018 and give £150 to the Oxford Diocesan Guild Bell Restoration Fund and £150 to the Oxford Diocesan Bell Fund.

Jean Richards confirmed that the Branch had sufficient funds for these donations.

9. Branch Practices / Training

The Ringing Master, Toby Goss, stated that branch practices would continue in a similar format to last year with the addition of some special practices e.g. based on one method or ringing up / down etc.

10. Programme for 2019

Dates and some provisional arrangements were agreed for the following events. Ringing Master/ Secretary will organise.

6-Bell Striking Competition: Saturday 8th June 2018 at Combe. It was suggested that, as last year, towers not usually active within the branch be approached to try and encourage more participation.

Social Event: Saturday 20th July 2018 – Northmoor to be approached, to be preceded by "Firsts Fortnight".

Branch Outing: Saturday 19th October 2018 – area tbc by Toby Goss. Michael Probert offered to assist in the organisation and was thanked.

Quiz Night: circa January 2019 - tbc

Next AGM: 15th February 2019. To be hosted by South Leigh.

11. Any other business

Tony Crabtree, Guild Deputy Master, reported:

- The re-hang of Broadwell bells is proceeding with Andrew Nicholson, bell hanger of Bridport instructed. The original five have been supplemented by a redundant pair of bells obtained by Tony for the scheme, which is just waiting for a treble to be donated.
- The bells are to be re-hung 20 feet lower, with new sound control, and are to be rung from the ground floor with a 13ft guide frame.
- There has been a DAC meeting and the faculty application is to be sent off any day.
- A legacy is paying for the re-hanging which is hoped to be completed by Christmas.

Julie Minch proposed a final vote of thanks to the committee.

The meeting closed at 20:45.

Andrew Goldthorpe, Hon. Secretary