

Bristol Rural Branch Annual General Meeting

Coalpit Heath Saturday November 27th Minutes of the Meeting

The Meeting commenced at 18.15 with 28 people present

1. Chairman opens the meeting

The Chairman welcomed the members to the meeting. He thanked Mike Swain for taking the service, Monica Gibbs for playing the organ and Mary York, Julie Shackleton, Kathy Mills and Monica Gibbs for providing the excellent tea.

The Chairman asked the assembled members to stand for a minutes silence for Ken Weekes HLM of Rural Branch who died after a long fight with cancer, and Denis Jones a ringer at Frampton Cotterell who died unexpectedly at the end of October.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Margaret Gorley, Mary Taylor, Kit Derrick, Bert Ferris and Arch Andrews.

3. Approval of Half Yearly minutes at Tytherington in May 2004

The minutes of the half yearly meeting were accepted by the meeting.

Proposed Sue Jay Seconded Don Haskins, carried unanimously.

4. Matters Arising

G & B badges will be ordered by the association, but it has not happened yet. There is some discussion about which badge as there have been possibly three different designs since the association started.

5. Committee member reports (for all reports see the end of the minutes)

1. Branch Chairman
2. Branch Ringing Master
3. Treasurer (Not received yet)
4. MC rep
5. Secretary

6. Branch officer Elections.

The Chairman, Treasurer, MC rep and Secretary were willing to stand again and were re-elected unanimously, the Chairman with the proviso it was probably his last year as he has held the post since 1997.

The Ringing Master and Deputy have given up their posts, the chairman asked for nominations for these positions from the members present, there were no nominations: the chairman then decided the posts would remain vacant until the half yearly meeting in May, we will then see if there is any one to take on the positions. In the interim it was proposed that Tower Captains would run the branch meetings when they occurred during the year at their tower, with help from experienced ringers when required. The meeting accepted the chairman's proposal without a vote.

Henry Taysom proposed from the floor a vote of thanks to the outgoing ringing Master Fran Johnson and his deputy Arch Andrews, this was carried unanimously.

7. New Members

Wally Watkivs Retired Winterbourne
Proposed Chris Greef Seconded Edna Cause Carried.

8. 2005 Program

The date of the branch dinner was incorrect and should read 22nd January not 15th it should have been on the 15th but the Ramada Grange Hotel could not take us on that day.

See half yearly minutes 2004 for reasons for original date change.

This does mean the meeting at Almondsbury on the 22nd will move to an afternoon meeting.
14.30 – 16.00

No other changes were proposed.

There was a short discussion on the branch striking competition at Bitton, would the front six or the back six be used, the consensus was the front six would be the preferred option.

One additional item, which the branch secretary is looking at, is a Branch open day in June, see AOB item.

9. May Day outing

The only proposal was the Worcester area; this was proposed by David Powell and seconded by Henry Taysom. Henry agreed to organise the May Day outing.

10. Branch Dinner

This as stated on the 2005 program will be on the 22nd of January at the Ramada Grange Hotel Winterbourne. We had hoped to have a board ready with the menu for circulation but this was not possible, the information will be circulated with the December/January newsletter. A show of hands of people interested to attend was promising.

11. Best Kept Tower Competition

Agenda item just to remind people if they wished to enter; the information has been circulated to tower contacts.

12. Association Assets.

A long discussion took place about three of the G & B assets.

1. The Masters Chain of office which has been gathering dust since 1966.

The assembled members after a discussion suggested the following

- a. The chain should be on view at the AGM at Fairford to see what we are talking about.
- b. It should not be put away for another 40 years.
- c. The existing chain should be worn by the ringing master and updated to the present day with the incumbent's names.
- d. A replica should be produced and worn by the Association Chairman.

2. The Simulator

The branch members had no view on this and have gone away to think about it.

3. The G & B Cockney Handbells. (Should the Association sell these bells?)

After considerable discussion in which the chairman read extracts from Steve Coleman's notes on the subject, with input from Fred Scudamore who was the person who is supposed to have made the lightning raid to retrieve the bells, which Fred denies, and says was all agreed and in order, with which we all probably agree. It was proposed by Mary York and seconded by Felicity Hemmett that the handbells should be kept as a G & B asset

The members present voted unanimously to keep the handbells as a G & B asset and not sell them.

13. Quarter Peal Week

On the agenda to remind members that we only rang 4 quarters in Rural Branch which really was pretty poor? Sue Jay suggested someone should be responsible for visiting the towers and engendering some enthusiasm for each tower which is able to ring a quarter. The meeting left it at that, I will put it on the agenda for the half yearly meeting in May.

14. AOB at the Chairman's discretion

2 items were submitted in writing

1. An open day in rural branch this year, which the branch secretary is willing to organise. It was agreed June would be a good month if other branches were

not doing something similar. I have checked the ringing world web diary and Saturday June 11th looks clear for this part of the world so I will input this date onto the branch program. Will all towers check for events on their church calendar on this date?

2. Child Protection Act

The Secretary has circulated the G & B proposed procedure to all towers. If you have points of issue please send them to the G & B secretary with a copy please to the branch secretary. It was agreed not to discuss it at the meeting as it was too big a subject.

15. Chairman closes the meeting

The chairman thanked the members for attending and their patience at the length of the meeting. The meeting closed at 19,42 and further ringing took place.

Officers Reports

Chairman:

Chairman's Report 27th Nov. 2004

As usual for this Branch our officers put together a very diverse, busy and demanding programme of activities for the past year. It is my impression that our support for such a programme has diminished considerably this year on both the ringing and social fronts. I ask myself, are the repeated events that we undertake year in year out becoming a little stale. Do we need some major changes to rekindle our previous enthusiasm? If you have any suggestions for improvement please inform the secretary.

Having set the scene I will now make a few comments mainly on some of the non ringing events that we repeat every year. I will leave the Ringing Master to report on the actual ringing events.

The carol service held last December at Bitton with music provided by the Bitton Sextet gave us an excellent start to the Christmas Festival. The music and the historical introductions provided for each carol were first class. Unfortunately the congregation was a little on the thin side compared with the similar event held the previous year at Mangotsfield.

The annual dinner in January was held once again at Henfield Golf Club. Our guest speaker was Victor Hewlett vicar of Dyrham, Doynton, and Wick. Unfortunately attendance was very poor this year with only 31 members and friends. Next January the Dinner will be a week earlier Jan.15th to avoid clashes with other functions and it will also be held at a new venue, Winterbourne Grange. Hopefully this will attract better support.

The quiz night was held in March at a new Venue Westerleigh Village Hall. This was well supported with the demand for alcoholic drinks exceeding supply. The overall winners were Almondsbury who by tradition will be organising next years' event.

Westerleigh ringers have been extremely active throughout this year which brought the 700th anniversary of the dedication of their church to St. James the Great. Two notable achievements on the ringing front were a full peal on the anniversary day 16th April and the establishment of a tune ringing handbell band that performed at the Celebration service and on many more occasions since. Well done Westerleigh ringers particularly Martin Blanchard who with the help of Alan Pidgeon got the handbell team up and running.

The Mayday outing this year was centred in the area around Sidmouth. There was insufficient support for the hire of a coach. However sufficient ringers and friends travelled by car and despite a broken stay it was a very good day out. Thanks to the organisers.

Dyrham was in the lime light in June when the 300th anniversary of Dyrham House was celebrated with a full Peal. Unfortunately only two branch members were available to take part in this peal. Although the peal was rung on a Friday afternoon, the lack of enthusiasm for peal ringing within the branch is highlighted here.

June also saw the introduction of a new striking competition for young ringers. Henry Taysom worked hard to select and practise a branch team for this event, unfortunately with no avail as two of the team dropped out without notice the day before the competition. Despite this the overall competition was a great success and no doubt will be repeated by the G & B Association next year when we must try again.

On a more solemn note I have to report that two of our members passed away this year. Firstly Ken Weeks from Warmley who had been courageously fighting cancer for several years and who was a Life Member of our Association, and Den Jones of Frampton Cotterell who suffered a ruptured aorta and passed away in Frenchay Hospital after an operation to attempt a repair. Den learnt to ring quite late in life as a result of our recruitment drive for the Millennium.

I would like to thank on behalf of the Branch all those who generously gave their time to organise and execute last years programme.

On the ringing front you will hear shortly from our Ringing Master Fran Johnson supported by Arch Andrews who has assisted with the ringing programme.

Bryn Shackleton

Ringling Master

The ringing within rural branch this year has followed a very similar pattern to previous years, and as such I will only try to remind everyone of the highlights of the ringing in 2004. A low would have to be some of the attendances at practices, 8 at Pucklechurch, though still provided a good evening for those there. In May the branch outing ran well, leaving a very wet South Gloucestershire we entered a dry Devon and enjoyed good ringing and company all day, with an excellent lunch at the Bawd Inn. Many thanks to Arch and Helen for doing all the ground work, and making my personal choice of location a very successful branch outing.

The BBQ at Tytherington proved successful yet again, my thanks to everyone who came that evening.

Dyrham provided its usual twilight ring by torchlight.

Stroud was an excellent evening, both in the tower with a wonderful welcome from Lawrence, and in the Ram at Woodchester afterwards.

The evensong ringing at Gloucester Cathedral is a tale in itself. I must admit to becoming a little short tempered over the arrangements and re-arrangements ad infinitum, but we rang and several people enjoyed the Cathedral atmosphere, including several firsts.

Quarter Peal week came and went, topless and bottomless (ask Fran) ,four quarters were achieved including several firsts.

The most recent occasion of note was the handling and listening event at Thornbury two weeks ago with Steve Coleman. As always Steve provided interest and humour and people learnt things without even realising, a really good couple of hours.

This report concludes my two years as ringing master and I thank everyone for their support over the period. I have enjoyed the time immensely and although at the moment I think new ideas and people will prove the best option for the branch, I would never say never again.

Thank you all

Fran Johnson.

MC rep (Henry was very brief)

I have attended two meetings.

The branches are being asked for their thoughts on a number of G & B assets.

The Masters Chain of Office

The Association Simulator

The Hockney Handbells (it is proposed they are sold)

This is an agenda item and will be dealt with later on the agenda

The only outstanding issue was covered in the matters arising above.

Henry Taysom

Bristol Rural Branch AGM Saturday November 27th

Page 4 of 5

Treasurer

Secretary

During the last two years producing the newsletter has been relatively easy as the ringing master has been a regular contributor, thank-you Fran.

I may have problems during the next few weeks keeping the Rural Branch web page going due to a change to broadband which means I will loose my 50mb of web space with my current dialup supplier. I will also have to find a new supplier for my web-space which is under way but not yet set in concrete.

Finally every tower must do something special each year only if it is your Christmas meal; it would be nice if during 2005 every active tower in the branch sent me an article. I may start emailing tower contacts saying what is going on!

Tony York