

Suffolk Guild of Ringers Belfry Advisory Committee

Minutes of the Committee Meeting held on Friday, September 27th, at Cedar Cottage, Broad Street, Orford at 7.30p.m.

Those present: Winston Girling (chairman) Alan Moulton (honorary technical advisor) David Greenfield, Dr Stuart Harrison, Chris McArthur, David Moyse, John Pereira, George Pipe, Michael Rolph, David Salter and Dr Bruce Wakefield.

Apologies were received from: Chris Nunn, David Webb and Neville Whittell.

The chairman thanked everyone for attending and grateful thanks were given to Stuart and Susan Harrison for inviting the Committee to hold the meeting at their home.

Minutes: The Minutes of the previous meeting held on May 31st 2002 had already been circulated to members and were agreed and signed.

Matters arising: David Salter asked if the matter re the quarter-peals on bells classified as unringable had been reported to the management committee and if so, what had been decided. Winston Girling said that the committee had recommended that the tower directory in the annual report needed fundamental reassessment and updating, including a category of 'Unsafe to ring' where bells should not be rung under any circumstances. A disclaimer should be included, advising that the classification shows the condition only at the time of inspection, and all clergy with unsafe bells should be informed, so that they are not put in a difficult position with requests to ring.

The Belfry Advisory Committee then discussed at length the above recommendations and felt that as the present classification is a national one, used for statistical purposes, it was best not to alter the present layout too much. The inclusion of a disclaimer did not meet with any enthusiasm either. A suggestion that Porch Cards be re-issued, blue for ringable bells and red for unringable, would mean that on all unringables steps could be taken to deliver these personally to either the incumbent or person in charge to discuss the present state of the bells. Winston Girling and Alan Moulton will recommend any minor changes to the tower directory at the Management Committee Meeting on October 19th 2002.

District Reports

North East: Michael Rolph reported that work is will start at **Rendham** shortly. David Salter has been asked to resolve problems with the 5th at **Redgrave**. David Greenfield said that a new tower keeper at **Barsham** will sort out problems re loose wheels, and he will attend at **South Elmham** with David Moyse to carry out some general maintenance which is necessary there.

North West: Alan Moulton, Winston Girling, the architect and others attended at **Ingham** for a trial ring. A report will recommend limited ringing because of frame problems and also some doubts about the integrity of the upper tower, which the architect requires to be closely monitored each time the bells are rung. Help is also needed to clean out the tower and exclude pigeons. Stuart Harrison pointed out the need for wearing good dust masks to prevent the likelihood of disease whilst cleaning towers.

South East: Chris McArthur said that new ropes had been fitted at **Kettleburgh**, and more work was needed on the tower at **Wickham Market**, where it would most likely

be 2003 before ringing recommenced. John Pereira said that at **Stutton** new ropes have been ordered and that **Bramford** are still out of action. Winston Girling said that all the bells have now had the crown staples removed at **Easton** and the crowns are drilled ready for independent clappers. Work at this tower by Alan Moulton and helpers is progressing slowly. George Pipe said he had visited a Benefice Jubilee Weekend at **Marlesford** headed by Father Edwards to encourage people to come forward to learn to ring. 11 turned up and the publicity was first class – a very good atmosphere. The Benefice are keen to have a ring of bells at **Parham** and the problems associated with this potential project are clearly being tackled positively and it was a very encouraging weekend. Winston Girling reported that the single bell at **Darmsden**, near Needham Market, had that day been replaced in its turret following restoration.

South West: Winston Girling reported that a test ring had been carried out at **Sudbury All Saints**. The bells went quite well but there were problems with the 7th headstock which had rotted internally because of rainwater dripping from the tower roof. Recommendations are that this bell should only be the subject of limited ringing. Also he had been to **Boxford** and **Edwardstone** with Carol Girling and a day had been spent checking and tightening the bells.

Technical Advisor's Report: Alan Moulton said that quotes had been obtained at **Worlington, Laxfield, Parham and Thurston**. The Dedication has taken place at **Mendham**. George Pipe also commented on **Mendham**. He would like the Committee to send congratulations on their impressive display of photographs and PR exercise. Winston Girling said that he would deal.

Date and Place of next Meeting: 7.30p.m. Friday, 7th February 2003, by kind invitation of Dr Bruce Wakefield at 'Wheatley' Haugh Lane, Woodbridge, IP12 4NJ - maps will be supplied.

Any Other Business: Alan Moulton said that he has had a discussion with George Pipe over **Fressingfield**. The incumbent has been contacted and English Heritage are apparently insisting on retaining and strengthening the existing wooden bellframe which is patently inadequate. This is despite sound advice to the contrary. The outlook on this project is not good therefore because of the doubts which exist about the viability of making the present two-tier frame work. Stuart Harrison pointed out that architects apparently all have a manual on bell frames which **insists** on preservation at all costs!

The Meeting closed at 9.05p.m.

Winston S. Girling
chairman