



**Belfry Advisory Committee
Minutes of meeting at Chediston
11 June 2009 at 7.30 pm**

Ringling and a look at the bells took place before the meeting at St Mary's, Chediston. Hospitality and refreshments were provided for the meeting by Veronica and Graham Downing.

Present

Jonathan Stevens (JS) (Chairman), Winston Girling (WG), David Greenfield (DG), David Moyse (DM), John Pereira (JP), John Taylor (JT), Bruce Wakefield (BW)

Minute Secretary: Suzanne Stevens.

In attendance: Carol Girling (CG).

1. Welcome

JS welcomed members to Chediston and thanked Veronica and Graham Downing for their hospitality.

2. Apologies for absence

Richard Coe, Chris McArthur, Alan Moul, Chris Nunn, Michael Rolph, David Salter, Neville Whittell.

3. Minutes of the 2 February meeting (previously circulated)

These were agreed and signed as a true record by the Chairman.

4. Matters arising from the minutes

4.1 JS reported that Chris Garner, Webmaster, had set up a BAC members' area. Possible uses were to put on the minutes before they were approved by the next meeting and reports on towers but not drawings as too large. Members felt this would be useful and would await details of how to access it. Simon Cottrell's report on how to make a project happen is not on the website as it is very frank. Anyone wishing to have a copy is directed to JS and he will provide it for them.

4.2 Re Whitechapel's comments about not having to grout in beams, WS expressed concern. JS stated that it is at the Technical Advisor's discretion but that grouting in is still preferred. JT pointed out that Brian Morton wants beams bolted and wondered if he were on side. JS said that Brian Morton is on the DAC where he has as much influence as the DAC Bells Advisor.

- 4.3 BW reported that at Woodbridge the problem of ladies not being able to pull off the treble on occasion has been solved by them wearing flat shoes. It appears that higher heels make it difficult.

5. Correspondence

JS reported that a letter had been received from the South West District, thanking the committee for all the work they had done at All Saints, Sudbury. WG said that it had been a very successful operation which was helped by JS's new headstock which fitted perfectly first time; headstocks generally do not do so.

6. Technical Advisor's Report (Jonathan Stevens)

I have been kept fairly busy.

February 28 saw me visit both **Ixworth** and **Long Melford**; **Ixworth** to find the remedial works had not been completed satisfactorily and **Long Melford** to meet Robert Lant and to review their project prior to preparing a report suggesting the best way forward.

March 7th I conducted a test ring and inspection at **Brome** and prepared a report for the parish. I returned, with Michael Rolph on May 21 to do much that I had recommended such as tightening the clappers and freeing and oiling the ground pulleys. Having got into the church this visit, I recommended that the parish re-make the ring ground floor,

March 10 I attended a site meeting at **Dennington** with the Architect, Alan Hughes, Ole, the Builder and the Treasurer. This was a useful meeting although I failed to get Alan to describe how he envisaged balancing the sound with his proposed two tier arrangement.

March 19 another visit to **Ixworth** where the bell-hangers had sleeved the off-centre holes in the bells and fitted adjustable crownstaples to get the striking correct. This they had managed.

April 1 revisited **Fressingfield** with Stuart Armitage of the Morton Partnership for a test ring and to inspect the final stage of bell-hangers' remedial works which included moving the treble to the redundant pit in the top frame. This work was satisfactory although the louvres still need more boarding if the bells are to be balanced outside.

April 4 I conducted the test ring and inspection at **Chediston** where the work was first class apart from some odd-struckness, particularly on the fifth. I returned when the bell-hanger had sought to correct this and helped him sort this out.

April 25 saw me as part of the team at **All Saints, Sudbury** completing the re-hanging of the seventh on a new wooden headstock and conducting a test ring.

May 15 Back to **Chediston** with the sound-meter following complaints from some neighbours.

May 20 with Bruce at **Woodbridge**, replaced the broken pulley on the sixth and fitted split pins to crown stapes where they were missing.

I am tomorrow at **Stradbroke** to advise on reducing the volume of nine and ten in the ringing chamber and next week hope to adjust the striking and check over the bells at **Marlesford**.

WS commented that JS must be complemented on his persistence in the Fressingfield project which now had the bells being able to be heard everywhere in the ringing chamber, and to a much better standard outside.

7. District Reports

7.1 North East

DM said that it was good for DG and he to be at the meeting. Often the meetings are too far for them to travel, and last time the weather had made it impossible.

Reydon has no lightning conductor and the church will not assist as they feel it is too expensive. There are new regulations about buildings over a certain height and lightning conductors. JS stated that Ecclesiastical Insurance's view is that a church must either have no conductor, or it must be a good one. JS asked if anyone carried out maintenance at Covehithe and DM confirmed that no-one does.

Wrentham; DG reported that Alan Moulton looked a year ago and was concerned about tower sway. DM went up recently, and there is a split in the tower that you can put a hand through. Channels in the roof are blocked and water is overflowing.

7.2 North West.

Bacton. WG reported that the ropes and pulleys need attention. WG to do splicing and to turn pulleys, which are solid.

Cotton. There are birds in the ringing chamber. 7 barrowloads of sticks have been taken out. They are possibly interested in making it birdproof. WG is going next week to have a look. Floor is still unsafe as the trap in the middle has not been repaired. There is a problem with the 5th. Needs sleeving and pulley or roller if no height for pulley. WG will try that.

Mendlesham. JT reported that Alan Moulton had inspected the 1612 frame. He has stopped the ringing there except for weddings and funerals. It is not the PCC's highest priority at the moment.

7.3 South East

Woolverstone. JP reported that the three are ringable but have to get Rector's consent before ringing. Best to go through JP. They are chimed for weddings.

Felixstowe. BW reported that they have been quietened down and are now pealable.

Ufford. JS reported that he has adjusted the striking on the 7th. There are no new headstocks as yet.

Debenham. JT reported that the tenor had slid on its gudgeons and chafed on the Hastings stay. Taylors have machined the clapper and it is fine now.

St Lawrence. JS reported that this project needs to be assessed for safety and access to bells.

7.4 South West (sent by Alan Moulton and Chris Nunn).

Bardwell. It has been slow progress at Bardwell, but the five old working bells and the service bell are up the tower in the frame with their headstocks on, but waiting for wheels. The three new bells may not yet be cast through a mix up over inscriptions. The clock floor is in and the bell-frame floor is being fitted.

Brent Eleigh. They have a derelict three they would like to restore.

Nowton want to chime their six.

Woolpit. The tenor is cracked and a rehang is planned.

8. Grants

- 8.1 Grant Protocol; a flow chart showing the process of obtaining a Suffolk Guild of Ringers' grant was circulated. It is on the Guild website.
- 8.2 Heritage Lottery Fund. There is a new leaflet on how to get one of their grants, and it features Bardwell.
- 8.3 Applications. None.

9. Routine Maintenance

JS explained the distance between installations and the people who use them; most ringers are unaware of the necessity for regular maintenance or how to carry it out. He asked for ideas as to how to promote the concept more successfully than in the past. Members suggested having seminars as either Guild or District events (with different towers which have different bearings), being raised at the Guild Management Committee (GMC), checking that towers know that they can ask for assistance or training, putting a piece in the next Guild Newsletter. CG said she would do so.

10. Sound Control

JS would like a list of where places have sound control in place. Members suggested: Stowmarket, Grundisburgh, Felixstowe, Orford and St Peter's, Sudbury.

11. Update on list of work done in previous bell restorations

David Salter had sent a message to the committee to say that the list was still progressing.

12. Any other business

- 12.1** A message had been received from Ruth Suggett about a talk at Bardwell on 11 July 2009 by Peter Hayward of Hayward Mills Associates about Heritage Restorations. Entrance free.
- 12.2** **Guild Social** 27 June 2009 at Hadleigh. This was an event for which Guild members had asked, but only 32 tickets had so far been sold. Need more support for it to be a success.

13. Action List

None.

14. Date and venue of next meeting.

Thursday 1 October 2009 at Fressingfield. 7.00 pm ringing, 7.30 pm meeting.

The meeting closed at 8.50 pm.