

The Annual General Meeting of the Suffolk Guild of Ringers Saturday 10th April 2010 at 5.45pm in Ixworth Village Hall

1. The Chairman, Philip Gorrod (PJJ) opened the meeting by giving a warm welcome to the one hundred and four members present. He thanked Gill Walker for taking the service and the organist, the local ringers, masterminded by Anita Rose (on her birthday), for the wonderful tea and the Girl Guides who had been serving teas all day.

He thanked Ruth Suggett and Jonathan Stevens for organising the Restoration Seminar at Bardwell during the afternoon, which had been very well supported.

The meeting stood in silence in remembrance of John (Jack) Banks from Bury St Edmunds, Henry Ivings from Euston, Dr David Pearson from Haverhill, David Rutherford from Long Melford, George Salter from Ipswich, Albert Wade from Haverhill, Ruth Wright from Halesworth and Woodbridge and three non resident members who had died during 2009.

2. Apologies were received from 51 members.

3. Election of New Members

Nine people were elected as members of the Guild:

Rowan Patricia Wilson, Bury St Edmunds (Full), proposed by Mandy Shedden and seconded by Ian Holland, Ewan James Gadd, Great Barton (Junior), proposed by Jacky Savage and seconded by Sally Veal, Sue Tyler, Huntingfield (Full) proposed by Jason Busby and seconded by PJJ, Sandra Elizabeth Harle, Leiston (Full), proposed by Cynthia Fittell and seconded by Richard Rapior, Fiametta Buckley, (Full), Beatrice Buckley (Junior), Amelia Buckley (Junior), Edward Buckley (Junior) all from Thornham Magna, proposed by Sylvie Fawcett and seconded by St John Perry, Emma Creasey, Wickham Skeith (Junior), proposed by P J Davidson and seconded by St John Perry.

4. Minutes of the 2009 AGM

These minutes had been published in the Annual Report. Their acceptance was proposed by Peter Harper and seconded by Chris Garner and they were signed as a true record.

5. Officers reports:

Ringling Master: Richard Munnings (RJM) presented the Master's Report as printed in the Annual Report. The acceptance of his report was proposed by Robert Beavis, seconded by Alan Munnings and agreed by the meeting.

Secretary: Mary Garner (MSG) proposed the acceptance of the Secretary's report as printed. This was seconded by Jane Harper and agreed by the meeting.

Treasurer: Keith Ashton Jones (KAJ) explained that his written report was contained in the Trustees Report. It was explained that the Library expenses of £10 was the Guild subscription to the Central Council Library and the apparent disparity in the figures for the Mini Ring was due to the method of accounting which works on the day an item is received and paid for. It will resolve next year and show that it has cost us nothing. RJM proposed, seconded by Diana Pipe, that the accounts should be accepted. This was agreed by the meeting.

Public Relations Officer: Bruce Wakefield presented the Public Relations report as printed. The acceptance of his report was proposed by Veronica Downing, seconded by Alan Smith and agreed by the meeting.

Belfry Advisory Committee: Jonathan Stevens presented his report as printed with one amendment. He explained that Winston Girling had been omitted inadvertently in the report but that his name should appear on the list of Belfry Advisory Committee members. His report was proposed by Jason Busby, seconded by Chris Garner and agreed by the meeting.

Librarian: Gillian Wakefield presented her report as printed. Its acceptance was proposed by Shirley Girt, seconded by George Pipe and agreed by the meeting.

Peal Secretary: Christine Knight thanked Brian Whiting for producing the compositions section of her report, David Salter for allowing her to use his database for checking details and Ruth Suggett for her patience and support during the completion of her report. Her report as printed was proposed by Robert Beavis, seconded by Diana Pipe and agreed by the meeting.

Handbell Trustee: Brian Whiting reported that there had been little demand for the Handbells during 2009, saying that two sets were with members in the NE and the other two sets with him, one of 16 the other of 25. He reported that Winston Girling had complete minor refurbishment on the 16.

Webmaster: Chris Garner presented his report as printed, adding that the email system for contacting members was used mainly for distributing letters from PJG. He explained that there is an email correspondent for almost every tower as well as many individuals. He stressed that emails were always sent as blind copies, that is, ensuring nobody else's address was visible to other recipients.

The acceptance of his report was proposed by Robert Beavis, seconded by Veronica Downing and agreed by the meeting.

6. Trustees' Report: The Trustees for 2009, PJG, MSG and KAJ presented the report as printed. Its acceptance was proposed by Jacky Savage, seconded by Valerie Eagle-Bott and agreed by the meeting.

7. Central Council Report

PJG told the meeting that there were two reports on the website. He said that two of the Guild representatives were present, Laurence Pizzey and Richard Munnings. He invited questions but there were none.

8. Subscriptions and Peal Fees for 2011

The GMC proposed that there should be NO CHANGES and that the 2011 subscriptions should be:

Ringling Member	£ 15.00	Associate member	£ 7.00
Ringling Member 65-74	£ 10.00	Non Resident Life Member	£ 7.00
Members 75 and over	Free		
Ringling member in full time education	£ 7.00	Peal Fee	£ 1.00

KAJ explained that since last year expenses were covered comfortably there was no need to consider an increase in subscriptions. The proposal was agreed by the meeting.

9. Proposed constitution changes

The following were proposed by GMC to take immediate effect:

B4 to read: Churches within the Diocese may be affiliated to the Guild on payment of an annual donation of an amount at least equal to a Senior member's subscription.

It was commented from the floor that no reference was made to Senior Members in the Annual Report. The following amendment was proposed by MSG and seconded by John Girt:

B4 to read: Churches within the Diocese may be affiliated to the Guild on payment of an annual donation of an amount at least equal to the subscription payable by a ringing member aged between 65 and 74.

PJG answered a question posed regarding qualification for Affiliation by explaining it was open to all parishes where the PCC likes to be associated with the Guild.

The amendment was carried and would have immediate effect.

D6: revised as follows:

D6 (6.1 & 6.2 to be unchanged.)

6.3 Vice-Presidents elected before 2010 shall hold office for life and shall not be required to pay a subscription.

6.4 A non-member may be elected as a Patron at an AGM. Patrons shall hold office without re-election, but may be removed by a resolution at an AGM.

6.5 (to be deleted)

PJG reminded the meeting that two proposals with regard to LHMs and VPs had been circulated for discussion at each ADM. He reported that the districts displayed a great deal of agreement, that is VPs should keep their office for life but no further ones will be elected, adding that the SE had felt that VPs should not be required to pay a subscription. In reality many do not need to pay but do anyway, but the gesture is there.

The question about the need for a Patron was raised and PJG explained that it presented an opportunity for a non-member to support the Guild, especially financially. Our present Patron is funding a Mini Ring in memory of his father a previous Patron.

The proposal was carried with one against and two abstentions.

D8 Members shall be elected to the following Offices:

Change "Newsletter Editor" to "Magazine Editor", add "Mini-Ring Trustee".

The proposal was carried unanimously.

10. Election of Officers for 2010/2011:

Prior to the elections Maurice Rose explained that two officers had completed their term of office whilst two more did not seek re election. He wished to record the thanks of the whole Guild to all the officers.

Chairman: Philip Gorrod had been proposed by Tom Britten and seconded by Stephen Pettman. RJM asked if there were any further nominations. There were none and PJG was elected unanimously.

PJG said that he had enjoyed the last two years largely because of the excellent team of officers.

Ringling Master: RJM was proposed by Louis Suggett and seconded by Maggie Ross and elected unanimously.

Secretary: PJG explained that MSG had been secretary for five years and was not eligible for re-election. He thanked her for her work and for being a valuable member of the team. He said that Mandy Shedden was willing to stand, proposed by Mary Garner and seconded by Jacky Savage. He invited further nominations, but there were none. Mandy was elected unanimously.

Treasurer: PJG explained that KAJ had been Treasurer for five years and was not eligible for re-election. He praised KAJ's contribution to the team adding that his understanding of money meant that he always put the opposing view before standing down graciously for the business to continue. Gordon Slack, proposed by Keith Ashton-Jones and seconded by Mary Garner, was elected unanimously.

Technical Adviser: Jonathan Stevens, proposed by Chris Garner and seconded by Helen Price, was elected unanimously

Chairman of the Belfry Advisory Committee: PJG explained that this job was separate from the Technical Advisor but was pleased that Jonathan had agreed to do this too. Jonathan Stevens, again proposed by Chris Garner and seconded by Helen Price, was elected unanimously.

Public Relations Officer: PJG reminded the meeting of the stunning success achieved during 2009 with regard to Publicity and was pleased that Bruce Wakefield was willing stand for re-election. He was proposed by RJM, seconded by Gillian Waterson and elected unanimously.

Librarian: PJG told the meeting that Gillian Wakefield had been Guild Librarian for many years during which time the collection had grown a great deal. She had done a great job fielding requests, looking after the archive and keeping it updated. The meeting showed their appreciation with hearty applause. He was pleased to announce that Abby Antrobus was willing to take on this role, proposed by Gillian Wakefield and seconded by Mary Garner. Abby was elected unanimously.

Report Editor: PJG thanked Ruth Suggett for producing an excellent report and handbook. She was proposed by Veronica Downing, seconded by Louis Suggett, and elected unanimously.

Webmaster: PJG thanked Chris Garner for his work, saying that the website was regularly cited as comprehensive and up to date. This received hearty applause. Chris, proposed by Kate Eagle and seconded by was Maggie Ross, was elected unanimously.

Magazine Editor: PJG thanked Carol Girling for her work over the past few years. Alan Stanley, proposed by Mandy Shedden and seconded by Sue Freeman, was elected unanimously.

Peal Secretary: PJG thanked Christine Knight for keeping the records so efficiently. She explained that the job was quite bitty but that she had routines, which enabled her to keep everything up to date. Christine, proposed by Mary Garner and seconded by Gillian Waterson, was elected unanimously.

Handbell Trustee: Brian Whiting, proposed by Stephen Pettman and seconded by Helen Price, was elected unanimously.

Mini-Ring Trustee: PJG thanked Brian Whiting for all his work during the year, including writing a manual, taking bookings and moving the ring around the county. Brian, proposed by Stephen Pettman and seconded by Helen Price, was elected unanimously.

11. Election of Trustees

MSG proposed, seconded by John Girt that the chairman secretary and treasurer be the trustees. They were elected unanimously.

12. Appointment of Independent Examiner

Larking Gowen was proposed by Keith Ashton Jones to be appointed as Independent Examiner for 2010. This was seconded by Philip Gorrod and carried unanimously by the meeting. When asked KAJ said that the examination of the accounts was done for nothing but that a token of appreciation was given.

13. Election of Central Council Representatives

PJG explained that these elections were for the posts in 2011, 2012 and 2013.

Rev Lawrence Pizzey said that he had been a member of CCCBR since his election by the Guild in 1969. This received great applause. He thanked the Guild for having provided him with the privilege for so long. He explained that the Central Council has changed much in that time, with a great deal of work being done by committees. He had served on the committee for Peal Analysis for twelve years. There are many very experienced ringers who are on CC but also a great number of ordinary ringers. Their names do not appear in peal columns and they have no particular expertise as conductors, but are people who genuinely reflect the ringers both in this country and abroad. He repeated how privileged he had been and said that he was standing down now. John Girt endorsed what he said about CCCBR and added that Lawrence had been extremely modest about his contributions.

David Salter, proposed by Glenys Fear and seconded by Winston Girling, and Stephen Pettman, proposed by Philip Moyse and seconded by Tom Scase, were standing for re-election. Alan McBurnie, proposed by Kate Eagle and seconded by Chris Garner, and Veronica Downing, proposed by Hugh Spink and seconded by Jason Busby, had expressed willingness to stand. He invited other nominations. There were none. The four nominees were elected unanimously.

14. Mini Ring

PJG explained that Brian Whiting had taken custody of the Mini Ring in August 2009.

Brian told that meeting that since then it had been out to eight different venues, there had been five before.

He had received bookings for eight events so far this year. Last year rang the first peal was rung which took place at Kimberley Hall.

PJG added that this was an interim ring. Matthew Higby had promised the new ring (Vestey Ring) for this spring. Bishop Nigel has agreed to dedicate it when it arrives, at present negotiations are continuing between George Vestey, the Bishop and the Cathedral to find a suitable date, hopefully a Sunday evensong in July or August. He added that after that time there will be a second hand one for sale.

The question was posed as to whether registry offices were aware of its availability. PJG replied that it was going to wedding fair in Halesworth and that it is something to encourage when the new ring arrives and has a large logo on display.

15. Child Protection – update

PJG explained that John Girt had filled this post as a temporary measure during last year. A new person will be appointed at the next GMC meeting.

16. Guild Library - update

Gillian Wakefield, outgoing Librarian, addressed the meeting. She said that it had been a tremendous privilege to have custody of the valuable books and artifacts. The collection had grown over the years as generous donations were made by the families of ringers past and present and £50 a year had enabled her to buy appropriate publications as they became available. She thanked Ruth Suggett for her initial contact with the Office Manager at the Bury Record Office and MSG for her help setting up a meeting with the archivist along with herself. The AV items have been deposited at the Bury RO to be sent to the East Anglian Film Archive for conservation. It is these items that will deteriorate most rapidly and will need transferring to appropriate media in order to be heard and viewed. The remainder had been placed temporarily at Ipswich before being moved to Bury when space becomes available. The Bowell Papers are already at Ipswich and will remain there since Bowell was an Ipswich Bellfounder. The Ringing Worlds date back to the 1930s and have been referred to on a number of occasions. Everything is on long-term loan and remains the property of the Guild. The two handbells from Stradbroke remain in the care of Gillian & Bruce Wakefield.

Regarding the Ringing Worlds in recent years these have been donated by St Mary's Woodbridge, which will no longer be practical. Should the Guild wish this collection to be desirable it will need to consider how it will be carried out. She thanked her husband and Mary & Chris Garner for the morning spent in depositing the archive at Ipswich.

Finally she expressed her delight that Abby has taken over as Librarian and hoped that she has as much fun as Gillian has with the care of the collection, and a feeling of pleasure that the library is in good hands at the RO.

17. Guild History – update

PJG invited George Pipe to talk about the book he is writing about the history of the Guild. George told the meeting that he was getting on quite well with the project and was keen that it would appeal to a wide range of people. He plans to include 30 chapters, the first 6 leading up to the establishment of the Diocese of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich and the formation of the Guild in 1923. Others would be about ringers and towers in various decades, VE & VJ days, handbell ringing, famous ringing families, the Millennium and the Guild today and looking to the future. In all about 100 photographs will be included. He hopes it will be published by the end of 2010.

When asked about size and cost he was unable to give any indication but said that he had a friendly printer. A show of hands indicated that many would buy a copy. George jokingly added that signed copies would be £5 extra!

18. Guild Magazine

Alan Stanley talked about the first issue of the Guild Magazine. He said that there was an editorial team who were hoping that the magazine would fulfill the needs of new and experienced ringers alike, forming a key part of communication in towers both to encourage and report on things happening in the Guild. He stressed that the team was keen to hear from members. They had discussed the possibility of defraying some of the expenses with advertising. He asked if anyone might be able to assist there.

Some discussion followed complimenting the impressive style and questioning the quantity produced. It was explained that the greater number of copies was to enable a wider distribution, e.g. clergy, churchwardens, in the body of the church and so on.

PJG said that the GMC had agreed to underwrite for a year, but could not continue without considering increasing subscriptions or getting advertising.

Further comments were made about printing out copies from the web, but it was felt that the good paper copy was important and helped keep members in touch, especially those who were unable to attend the tower regularly.

PJG asked members to send any ideas to the editorial team.

19. Guild Social Event – Ringsfield 20th November 2010

PJG reminded the members of the great success of the Guild Social at Hadleigh last June. This year the NE are organizing the Guild Social on November 20th centred on Beccles and Bungay.

Ringling in the afternoon will culminate with a meal and quiz night at Ringsfield. Tickets from Julie Rapor, price £7.50.

20. Any matters arising from the minutes of the 2009 AGM not already covered

There were no further matters arising from the 2009 AGM.

21. St Edmund's Clapper competition

Three teams were about equal in second place; the winners were Offton raising £300.

22. Date and Venue for 2011 AGM - SE District

Peter Harper, Chairman of the SE District invited the members to Henley on 30th April 2011.

23. Any Other Business

(i) Veronica Downing offered to sell a pair of silver earring and a silver charm which were left from the fundraising for the restoration at Chediston, the proceeds to go to the BRF

(ii) Ian Holland from The Norman Tower thanked the Guild for their financial support to augment from 10 to 12. He was hopeful that it would take place in 2011.

(iii) Ruth Suggett said that there were wooden items for sale, turned out of the old headstocks at Ixworth.

(iv) RJM reminded the members about the Guild Striking Competitions on 15th May.

(v) Please let RJM if you wish to ring in a peal on 20th November, St Edmund's Day. Radio Suffolk are keen to have more peals than ever rung, especially as it falls on a Saturday.

(vi) Alan McBurnie told the members that the concession for reclaiming VAT on repair work for churches is due to finish in 2011. He advised the membership that a Petition against its finishing was available on the Government website. He was seeking the approval of the membership to inform them of its existence through the e-mail system.

There was lively discussion, during which it was reiterated that that Petition was not on the Guild website, and that the zero-rated new building works was set to continue.

Richard Coe proposed that the email system could be used, with discretion, to advise members of items of importance to ringers in general. This was seconded by Robert Beavis and carried by the meeting with twelve against and five abstentions.

(vii) The Ringing Master was asked whether there were plans for ringing on St George's Day

(viii) Peter Harper emphasised that mid week ringing was open to everyone. It took place monthly, the second Tuesday, an hour before and after a leisurely lunch.

(ix) Gillian Wakefield said that she had paintings and cards for sale in aid of the Guild.

(x) Sally Munnings said that she has one Guild fleece for sale, suitable for a large child.

Mary Garner
Secretary