

Bristol Rural Branch Annual General Meeting 2017

St Mary the Virgin Almondsbury 23rd November 2017

11 towers were represented at the meeting of the active 18 towers with members.

1. Chairman opens the Meeting.

Thanks to Revd Philip Rowe, David Sansum for playing the organ, the Almondsbury ringers or the tea and those who provided the cakes.

2. Apologies.

Di and Ian Smith, Edna Cause, Merve Gibbs. About 40 members were present.

3. Approval of the 2016 minutes

The Minutes were approved, Proposed Adam Mead. Seconded Gill Greef.

Matters arising, The secretary was asked to contact the Association treasurer at the 2017 AGM to see if the accounts could be modified to show the subscriptions amount received into the branch and the amount passed on to the Association.

After four email conversations I am afraid to say that I totally failed to get any movement by the Association Treasurer Phillip Twentyman, his stance is the branches collect the subscriptions for the association.

There was a great deal of comment on this from the floor, Martin Pearson the MC rep took the association view whereas branch members believed it should be shown.

A visiting ringer Ruth Beavin who attended the Chippenham branch AGM said that a similar question was asked at that meeting.

The chairman Chris Greef then closed the item as currently unsolvable.

4. Approve the 2016 Accounts.

The 2016 accounts were approved Proposed Val Johnson Seconded. Hilda Shipp.

5. Committee member reports.

Chairman

I must start this year's report with my thanks to three committee members who are standing down at the AGM.

First of all, Tony York is standing down as Branch secretary after being in that role for over 20 years. He has undertaken his duties with great efficiency, passing information on to towers from the Association in a timely manner and generally making sure that the Branch administration is up to scratch. I am personally very grateful to him for his support and for prompting me when things need to be done. But that is not all. During his tenure, Tony also produced the monthly newsletter, nearly 250 editions in total, and built up the Branch website to its current impressive form. Tony handed over the newsletter earlier this year, but I am pleased to say that he has agreed to continue to maintain the website.

Secondly, Alan Coombs is standing down as Ringing Master. His dedication and enthusiasm have been exemplary and his efforts to encourage novice ringers by organizing training, arranging quarter peals, being generally encouraging and so on have been particularly notable. He has also undertaken the lion's share of the work in installing the Branch CCTV cameras at towers for open days and fetes. The cameras continue to be in demand and always attract a lot of interest from members of the public.

Finally, Rachel Parker is standing down as our Public Relations representative. I am sure that Branch members will join me in thanking them all for their contribution to the Branch and in hoping that they will continue to contribute to the ringing in our area.

Bristol Rural Branch Annual General Meeting 2017

Turning to other matters, the annual quiz night at Iron Acton was very well supported again: Chipping Sodbury were quizmasters this year and Mary York's team organized the food. The May Day outing was organized by Sue Elliott: we rang 6 towers, including St. Mark's and Christchurch Swindon, both superb rings of bells. Sadly, we had to cancel the barbeque because the two chefs were on an Isle of Wight ringing trip (surely there must be others who can manage to cook chicken thighs and burgers?). However, to compensate for this, the Branch practice at Dyrham was brought forward to the afternoon, to be accompanied by a cream tea: this proved very popular with hordes of people attending. Even the visitors from Dyrham House next door looked on enviously at the food on offer! The monthly Far-Cited ringers outing continues to be popular, with ringing at three towers and a pub lunch.

Thanks are due to all who helped with tower, Branch or Association events, also to Committee members. The cross-Branch monthly practices continue to thrive providing good opportunities for progression with both six and eight bell ringing. The more basic level training has not been so well supported this year, so we need to continue to find ways to get more early-stage ringers to take advantage of the help that Branch activities can bring to their ringing skills.

Chris Greef

Ringling Master.

RINGING MASTER REPORT FOR 2017

There has been a lot of practice meetings in the Branch this year, plus special training days, most of the practices were well attended but I am afraid some were not.

The BMW (Bitton Mangotsfield and Warmley) practices held monthly are to be cancelled due to insufficient members attending, and so will the Kelston practices on the first Saturday of each month.

However, on a more positive note we started this year off with a training day at Bitton focusing on Triples methods and calling basic touches of Grandsire, Plain Bob and Stedman, and this was well attended and beneficial to those who came along.

The Branch Striking Competition was held at Grittleton, there were 7 teams plus a scratch team, Kay Hodges and Hazel Bridges were our judges and both did a fine job with plenty of compliments to all the teams. Westerleigh came 1st, Wapley 2nd, and Frampton Cotterell 3rd.

In the Association Competition we had 2 teams represent the Branch for the Penn and Croome trophy, In the Penn Trophy the Rural Branch came 7th, and in the Croome trophy it was Frampton who represented us and came 8th.

St Georges day fell on a Sunday this year and each tower was encouraged to either ring a quarter peal or do some general ringing of their own free will.

The Branch outing held on May Day was quite well attended, visiting towers around the Swindon area this year, and thanks to Sue Elliot for arranging this again.

We had a special course in May held at Frampton Cotterell run by Steve Coleman with the emphasis on Striking, Listening and Rhythm, and proved very beneficial to all those who attended.

The May branch practice at Syston was not so popular with only 5 coming along, so after 30 minutes it was abandoned.

We held another training day in June at Dyrham, this was for Grandsire Doubles which was more successful.

The Annual ringing at Gloucester Cathedral this year for which we are invited to ring for was attended by just 15, I was unable to attend this year and I would like to thank Matt Johnson for running the afternoons ringing there.

I will be standing down as Ringing Master this year, I have had 3 years and feel it's time for someone else to take the reins.

It has been a pleasure, a challenge, and hard work, and above all that I get the satisfaction of knowing that someone will leave a training day, or a practice meeting a little bit wiser than when they arrived,

Bristol Rural Branch Annual General Meeting 2017

I would like to thank everyone in the Branch for all your support and friendship, and sadly, not only will I be standing down as Ringing Master, but I will also be retiring from ringing altogether.

Alan Coombs.

Ringling Master

Deputy

Sue Elliott

Treasurer

I am happy to report that membership remains healthy. The senior category increased for another year with an additional 7 members, although there was a significant drop in the number of retired members.

Membership

	2015	2016	2017	Variance on previous year
Senior	69	77	84	+7
Junior	12	10	12	+2
Retired	76	76	65	-11
Associate	6	6	5	-1
Honorary Life Member	3	3	3	0
Total	166	172	169	-3

Account balances remain healthy:

the Business instant account at 31 October 2017 stands at £976.64

the Treasurer's account at 31 October 2017 has a balance of £192.71

and the Virgin Money Charity Deposit Account stands at £527.45.

For the 2016/7 year we raised £1990.00 in subscriptions of which £1823.00 was paid to the G&B, with £167.00 being retained by Bristol Rural branch for our funds. This income was boosted by Branch events which contributed £309.50, the most important event for fund raising being the Quiz Night, which with a raffle made £245.25.

We have only made one significant purchase this year and that was for a new television screen for our camera system, at a cost of £159. Therefore, our balances now total £1696.80 compared with £1260.55 at the end of the previous financial year.

Lucy Bailey

4 November 2017.

Secretary

Nothing much has changed this year except perhaps handing over the Branch Newsletter, having produced 242 in my 22 years as secretary to someone else, who happens to be Chris Greef as there were no other takers!

Why? basically lack of input from towers and one person who moaned at what I had put in who is not even a branch member, so it was time to give up.

However since then I have decided that the time has come, I will not be looking to be re-elected, so I would like to thank you all for any support you have given me over the years.

Tony York

MC Representative

As your Branch Representative on the G&B Management Committee I duly attended all three MC meetings held in 2017, and have the following to report:

“Firsts Fortnight”

Bristol Rural Branch Annual General Meeting 2017

The Branch Officers' Meeting in March floated the idea of a "Firsts Fortnight" during which everyone will be encouraged to do something for the first time, no matter how experienced a ringer they are. This could be as simple as ringing at another tower, as complex as conducting a peal of 8-Spliced Surprise Major, or anything in between as long as it's a step forward. Starting in 2018, "Firsts Fortnight" will run concurrently with the Quarter Peal and Peal Festival in October, and there'll be a page on the G&B website where everyone's "firsts" can be shared.

Training Day Fees

Following a bit of confusion about whether the Association could make a loss on this year's Autumn Training Day and the subsequent unexpected increase in the student fee, the MC decided that in future the fees for both the Spring and Autumn Training Days should be the same in any given year, and will set the fees for the forthcoming year with the intention of breaking even. A decision on the fees for 2018 is expected imminently.

Belfry Repair Fund grants

Two towers in our Branch have received grants from the Belfry Repair Fund this year:

- Almondsbury were awarded 10% of eligible expenditure on their major rehang project, subject to a maximum of £5,614.
- Abson were similarly awarded 10% of eligible expenditure on repairing their cracked headstock, and received £40.

Don't forget that the Branch can also award grants for belfry repair projects – just ask one of the Branch Officers.

The Annual Report

Starting with the Annual Report that comes out in 2018, there will be an indication against any tower whose contact is reachable via email through the G&B website. A small change, but hopefully a useful one!

Social Media

You might recall that Hazel Bridges, during her time as G&B Ringing Master, set up a Twitter account for the Association. Unfortunately, this wasn't used at all by either her successor, Will Ruck, or our present Ringing Master, Tom Edgeworth; and consequently, the MC voted by majority to close it down. The G&B has a long record of being slow to embrace modern technology – for instance, it's taken far too many years to set up email contacts for towers – so it's perhaps little wonder that the social media revolution is passing us by. If you have any thoughts on this, do please let me know and I'll be sure to raise them at the MC Meeting next spring.

Martin Pearson, November 2017.

6. Branch officer Elections.

The chairman said that three officers were standing down and would need replacing, the Ringing Master Alan Coombs, The Secretary Tony York and the PR rep a non-elected position Rachel Parker.

He thanked Alan for his three years in office for the outstanding amount of work he had put into the role. He thanked Tony York for his 22 years as secretary and wondered why he was standing down?

The Chairman said he was happy to continue. Proposed Linda Gittings Seconded Mary York.

We then came to the Ringing Master position, and after a lot of discussion the following was agreed.

Ringing Master, Sue Elliot Proposed Chris Greef.

Assistant, Matthew Johnson. Proposed Gill Greef Seconded Hilda Shipp.

Lucy Bailey Treasure was willing to stand gain Proposed Martin Pearson Seconded Mick Lewis.

Martin Pearson MC rep willing to stand again Proposed Gill Greef. Seconded Matthew Johnson.

We then came to a new secretary, the Chairman proposed Linda Gittings Proposed Chris Greef. seconded Sue Elliott, All in favour.

Bristol Rural Branch Annual General Meeting 2017

Branch Web Site

The chairman proposed a new position of Web master for the branch web site, Tony York has agreed to take this position if it was an elected position, he felt that any changes made would be limited if he had to seek permission if not an elected officer. Proposed Chris Greef.

All in favour of the new branch officer post.

There were no takers for the PR vacancy, it was left in abeyance.

Twigs

Sue Elliott proposed that Julie Scudamore became the Twig for Far West the towers are Bitton, Warmley, Syston and Mangotsfield.

7.

The chairman introduced two new members to the Association 40 year club.

40 Years' Service

Gary Crisp Frampton

Dave (Arch) Andrews Thornbury

New Members

The following 9 new members were proposed

Mrs Becky Cox (Senior) Filton David Haslum Filton

Mr Jonathan Duerr (Retired) Martin Pearson Keynsham

Miss Allison Harvey (Senior) Martin Pearson Keynsham

Mr Caleb Jefferis (Junior) Adam Mead Almondsbury

Miss Madeleine Jefferis (Junior) Adam Mead Almondsbury.

Miss Catherine Newey (Senior) Frenchay Chris Greef

Mrs Julie Newey. (Senior) Frenchay Chris Greef.

Mr Elliot Hardwick (Junior) Bitton Julie Scudamore

All Proposed by Gill Greef Seconded Mary Taylor.

8. Association Matters.

Firsts

1. The Firsts Fortnight

And at the request of the Branch Officers of all the Branches at their annual meeting, next year we'll be having a "Firsts Fortnight." It will take place at the same time as the quarter Peal and Peal Festival with more details later. But the aim is to encourage everyone to progress in at least one way no matter what they already ring. So, we're hoping for as many members as possible to do something - no matter how small - that they've never done before.

For example, they might:

Ring a bigger bell than normal;

Ring a smaller bell than normal;

Lead for the first time;

Ring their first call changes;

Ring a bell down;

Ring a bell up;

Have a first go at ringing up or down in peal;

Call, "Stand;"

Ring their first go at plain hunt;

Call, "Go Bob Doubles;"

Ring tenor behind;

Bristol Rural Branch Annual General Meeting 2017

Ring a new method;
Ring a touch of 8-spliced surprise major;

Nominations

The branch is happy to endorse the current association officers who willing to stand again for further year 2018.

Special Courses

The following courses are available ask your tower captain or a branch officer/Twig if you feel you would like your tower or the branch to organise one.

Listening and Striking
Starting to put right courses
Ringing up and Down in peal

Tower Maintenance

Malcolm Taylor is willing to arrange maintenance session in your tower.

9. 2018 Program.

The 2018 program was discussed there were no major changes, these changes will be made I will then circulate when made to all towers.

10. May Day Outing Area.

Gill Greef suggested South Herefordshire, this was the only suggestion the Ringing Master will organise

11. Tower Expenditure/Work.

There is work currently in progress and planned at Almondsbury, Adam Mead gave a resume of progress. Almondsbury will receive a grant from the G & B in excess of £5000.

The next major job is to 1/8 turn the bells as they are quite worn, it is a 1/8 turn as they have already had a ¼ turn the cost will be around £48,000.

Paul Smith gave a resume on work at Iron Acton and possible work at Doynton. At Iron Acton the bells are said to be going better and currently the clappers are out being rebushed.

At Doynton we learnt that the antibell church warden has retired and a new churchwarden is interested in the bells. The diocesan bell advisor Mike Hansford has been to assess the situation.

He believes the frame is in a very poor state, I will make no comment on that other than the branch made several approaches to the incumbents over the years to inspect the tower and bells and were refused in every case by the then church warden.

12. Tower of the Year Competition.

There were no takers for 2018

13. Hold a Tower Captain Meeting.

This will be organised in late February or March

14. AOB.

Bitton Training day 6th January, Sue Elliott

The training will be Cambridge and treble bob minor and Major.

CCTV Cameras. Tony York

With Alan Coombs stopping his involvement in branch ringing we will need volunteers for installing the cameras when requested.

The chairman said this could be discussed further at a later time.

Bristol Rural Branch Annual General Meeting 2017

15. Chairman closes the meeting.

The chairman thanked the members for attending the meeting, and closed the meeting at 18.22

Approx 40 members attended the meeting.