

Bristol Rural Branch AGM minutes, November 27th 2010

1) Opening

The meeting, chaired by Chris Greef, began at 1823 with 21 people present, 18 from Bristol Rural and 3 from other Association branches.

The chairman thanked Bruce Goodwin for taking the service, David Sansum for playing the organ and Thornbury ringers for organizing the splendid repast.

2) Apologies

Apologies were received from:

Mary and Tony York

Rosemary Morgan

Gill Greef

Richard Sleeman

Terry Almond

Chris offered condolences on behalf of the meeting to Mary and Tony who were still in Australia, following the loss of their daughter, Gillian.

3) Approval of the 2009 minutes

The minutes had been circulated previously.

Approval was proposed by Martin Pearson, seconded by Philip Coward and carried nem con.

4) Matters Arising

None

5) Committee Member Reports

These had been circulated on the website, and were as follows:

Chairman's Report

As usual, we have this year had a Branch programme with a range of activities, both ringing and social, designed to appeal to all of our members. The regular monthly practices at towers across the Branch and at Chipping Sodbury every month provide an opportunity to improve ringing standards and, importantly, also to meet ringers from other towers. We have held several training days covering methods from Plain Hunting up to Cambridge Surprise Minor, but committee members are always keen to hear what particular aspects of ringing you would like to focus on for a couple of hours.

This year's striking competition was held very successfully at Wickwar, outside of the Branch so as not to give any tower team an advantage due to familiarity with the bells. Five tower teams and two scratch teams took part, with Westerleigh being winners and going on to represent the Branch in the Croome Trophy competition. In this they were commended by the Association Ringing Master for their stately ringing, very appropriately as anyone who knows Westerleigh bells

will appreciate.

On more of a social front, our May outing took us to six towers in the Cirencester area and 38 people took part over the course of the day. We also had an outing to visit Great George at the Wills Tower in Bristol and to ring at Christchurch. On our annual trip to ring at Gloucester cathedral for evensong, we were able to take the opportunity to visit 'Crucible', an impressive collection of sculpture in the cathedral, its cloisters and precinct. Winterbourne hosted this year's carol service, Syston ringers hosted the quiz night with questions prepared by ringers from Almondsbury, and Frampton Cotterell ringers organised the barbecue, with help from Westerleigh and Winterbourne. Thanks are due to these towers for their efforts for the Branch and to all Branch members who have helped to organize or support Branch events.

I ought to mention the Far-Cited ringers, who every month visit a couple of towers and have an enjoyable day including a pub lunch. Although quite a few Rural Branch members take part, it is not specifically a Rural Branch event and there are ringers from a number of Branches. However, it is organised by Ruth Welch from our Branch and we pass on our thanks to her for her work.

This year has seen the installation of a new tenor headstock at Bitton, the 50th anniversary of the treble bell at Tytherington and the 100th anniversary of aviation in Bristol, which was celebrated at Filton. A number of Branch towers also celebrated St. George's Day by ringing the bells as part of a national event. It is hoped that this may become a regular fixture, although it will not take place in 2011 because St. George's Day falls in Holy Week.

Finally, I should like to thank the members of your Branch committee for their support and all those members who help in any way to keep ringing alive in the Rural Branch.

Chris Greef

Ringling Masters Report for 2010

I think Chris has covered most of the relevant points that I need to mention in his Chairman's report.

This year started with the cancellation of a training morning due to the unusually wintry weather. However, we have run several successful training sessions during the year. I thought that the Cambridge course at Frenchay in August was particularly beneficial and the students on that morning have had several opportunities to practice the method during the last 2 months. The branch practice at Wapley in September was very enjoyable with a good standard of ringing; the day was sunny so people could wander outside between rings and enjoy the beautiful surroundings. After the practice some of us went to a BBQ that Gary's brother had arranged as a surprise birthday treat.

As we have said before please let a member of the committee know if there is an aspect of ringing on which you would like to have a special practice.

For various reasons I have missed several of the events this year and for these same reasons I have decided to stand down from the post of Ringling Master. I

will try to give my successor as much support as possible next year.
Rosemary Morgan

Treasurer's report for year ending 2010

This year has seen the membership increase from 144 to 149, although due to the age groups, we have a small decrease in subscription income. It is pleasing to note that the junior members have increased by 3. We were pleased to give grants of £300.00 each to Bitton and Filton for new headstocks. As you will see this has reduced our funds to £489.00. Social activities have shown a surplus of £74.00 as well as giving pleasure to ringers and non-ringers alike.

I am now stepping down as your treasurer and would like to thank all those who have supported me during my term of office. I am sure my successor will receive the same help and support. My thanks also to Edna Cause for examining the accounts, which she does with thoroughness and courtesy.

Ruth Welch

MC Rep Report for 2010

1. Replacement to the Form of Service: This is still being worked on by Owen Barraclough.
2. Child Protection Policy: Since the AGM, when doubt surrounding the Government's new legislation and Vetting and Barring Scheme precluded us from making accordant amendments to our Child Protection Policy, the Government has changed and the future of the whole Vetting and Barring Scheme is in question. Our Policy therefore needs no amendment until the situation becomes clear. In the meantime Hugh Evans, as the G&B Child Protection Officer, can be consulted on any difficulties. In particular it is now clear that the blanket CRB clearance of all ringers in any tower is not only unnecessary but also illegal.
3. Trophy Recycling: The Management Committee, mandated by the AGM to recycle the three secondary Best Kept Tower Competition trophies into the existing ringing competitions, decided that the Great Peter Trophy should go to second place in The Nibley Trophy, and that the Littledean & Purton ("plain bearing") Trophy and the Chairman's Baldrick should go to second and third place respectively in The Croome Trophy.
4. Investment Policy: The G&B has more than £50,000 on deposit with the CCLA, a money-market fund which currently yields 0.5%. Since the Bank of England's base rate of interest is unlikely to rise in the near future, at the September MC Meeting Philip Twentyman, the G&B Honorary Treasurer, was asked to research higher yielding deposit accounts with banks and building societies. If a suitable account can be found, much of the CCLA deposit will be transferred to it but without closing the CCLA account.
5. G&B Badges: The previous stock of badges having all been sold, a new batch of 100 in pillar box red and silver will be ordered.
6. Recruitment Week: A suggestion was made at the September MC Meeting that the G&B should hold a Recruitment Week in 2011 in the same manner that the

Bath & Wells DA were in October 2010. It was agreed to discuss this at the Branch Officers' Meeting in March 2011. Having first-hand experience of the Bath & Wells DA Recruitment Week myself, may I add that it was a great success and brought in more than a dozen new recruits in the Bath Branch alone. Incidentally, the Bath Branch is now hastily arranging a "Teach the Teachers" course to support these new learners, something we in the Bristol Rural Branch should perhaps consider doing well in advance of such a large-scale recruitment event being held in the G&B.

Martin Pearson

Secretary Report for 2010

I have had a relatively easy year as secretary, not a lot of documentation received, any which has, is documented on the branch web site under branch affairs. The biggest task each year is producing the annual return for the Association yearly report. Chasing the annual returns is also a long and time consuming activity to have them in by the Association AGM. This year (2011) the annual return forms are already on the web site for printing and viewing, however there may be a couple of changes to make if we elect new members at the AGM. Even though I will have been away for five months this year in Australia the newsletter has been produced on time and the web site has grown and been maintained up-to-date. Input for the newsletter however has been minimal, I owe thanks to those who have made the effort.

Tony York.

The chairman asked if the meeting were content to take the reports as read. This was proposed by Maureen Watkivs, seconded by Steve Crane and carried nem con.

Discussion of the Accounts

The accounts also had been circulated via the website.

It was agreed that £489 was about the right amount for the balance, as it was enough to support an emergency appeal that might arise, but did not constitute pointless hoarding.

The fall in officers' expenses compared with the previous year could be explained by the different cost of the website, as the domain is payable only in alternate years.

The Chairman proposed that the accounts for November 2009 – October 2010 be adopted, and this was unanimously agreed.

Edna Cause, who has been the examiner, is not going to continue as such, so a new examiner must be found. The Chairman asked if anyone present would take it on. No-one offered. Because the year finishes at the end of October and the Association Treasurer needs the accounts to do the Annual Report, the examining should ideally be done in the first half of November. So the new examiner should preferably be someone who is available then.

6) Branch Officer Elections

Chairman Chris Greef was willing to continue as Chairman, so the chair was taken briefly by Ruth Welch while his re-election was proposed by Steve Crane, seconded by Wally Watkivs and carried unanimously.

Ringing Master Rosemary Morgan is standing down. Chris thanked her for her welcome contribution since joining the branch. Gary Crisp was nominated by Edna Cause and seconded by Martin Pearson. There were no other nominations so Gary was elected unanimously.

Deputy Ringing Master Bill Liebow was nominated by Gary Crisp and seconded by Arch Andrews. There were no other nominations; Bill was elected unanimously.

Treasurer Ruth is standing down after many years in the post. She was thanked by the Chairman for her sterling work. Richard Sleeman had indicated that he was willing to take the job on in the absence of other contenders. He was nominated by Gary Crisp and seconded by Maureen Watkivs. Other contenders were there none so Richard was duly elected.

MC Rep Martin Pearson was willing to continue. He was proposed by Wally Watkivs, seconded by Edna Cause and unanimously elected.

Secretary Tony York had said he was happy to continue. There were no challengers – clearly no-one felt they could do the job half as well as Tony. He was nominated by the Chairman and re-elected.

7) New Members

Frenchay	Charlie Beaves	Junior
Thornbury	George Collett	Retired

They were elected en bloc.

8) Association Matters

Hugh Evans, Philip Twentyman and Mark Davies are willing to continue as Chairman, Treasurer and Peal Secretary respectively.

Steve Coleman is standing down as Ringing Master, after 13 years in the post. Hazel Bridges of the Cirencester Branch is willing to stand. Martin Pearson proposed that the Branch nominate her; Chris Greef seconded; there were no objections.

Steve Coleman is happy to continue as Secretary, a function he has until now fulfilled in honorary capacity.

The Chairman asked that the meeting agree to nominate all the above. This was agreed unanimously.

9) 2011 Programme discussion

The proposed programme had been distributed via the website and took the same form as in previous years.

The Chairman asked that each tower should check whether proposed dates were acceptable and to tell Tony York as soon as possible if anything needed to be altered.

St George's Day Steve Coleman pointed out that this, normally April 23rd, has been changed, along with that of other saints, to May 2nd because of the timing of Holy Week. They could therefore all be celebrated on the May Day Outing!

"Branch Event" June 4th. This was as yet unspecified.

Suggestions included:

A railway trip

Walking/driving around Clevedon

A canal boat trip (Martin Pearson pointed out that there are a some towers near the Kennett and Avon Canal, east of Bath.)

A joint event with a neighbouring branch. Alan Pidgeon thought that his branch, Wootton might be amenable to a skittles match.

It was decided that there was sufficient time to allow the Branch to ponder these things, and reconsider nearer the event.

Training days For several years the four training days have proceeded inexorably around the four sections of the Branch. This has meant that each section had a training day at the same time each year. (Though they are open to all branch members, and others, the local twig is given first choice of subject) Enthusiasm is not always overwhelming, so it was felt that increasing the number to five might be excessive. Chris Greef suggested carrying on with four dates, but altering the allocation. There were no objections.

10) May Day Outing Area

The Chairman asked for suggestions. There were none, so he suggested the Chippenham area, and asked the Ringing Master and Deputy to organize 5 or 6 towers and a pub.

11) Tower Expenditure/Work

The Chairman asked if any towers were contemplating work requiring funding. Ruth Welch said that Filton need new headstocks on 1 and 2, but that they were applying to the Association for help with that. Steve Coleman observed that an application had not yet been received, and that it would be best done by early January because of the impending increase in VAT.

12) Recruitment

Several towers have lost members recently, and many manage to muster fewer ringers than bells at practices and on Sundays.

Ryan Price succeeded in attracting four new (adult) ringers to Mangotsfield by writing an article in the Evening Post. He would be glad of help with training them on Wednesday evenings.

Steve Crane was asked about Almondsbury's strategic plan for publicising ringing in the area. The intention initially is to raise awareness of ringers and their activities.

Gary Crisp told of a branch in the Midlands which spent four months on general profile-raising, then two months on recruiting followed by intensive training for a week, during which the trainees learnt to handle a bell and inexperienced trainers were able to gain confidence.

Martin Pearson commented that Bath and Wells Association had a successful recruitment week in October, about which he can get details. He also reported that Mangotsfield Village Festival would like to have a mini-ring in June 2011 (?11th). That could be good publicity.

Chris asked Gary and Martin to pool their information ready for a committee meeting in the New Year, after which a proposal could be put to the branch.

13) Combined Meetings with adjoining Branches

Steve Coleman assured the meeting that the Forest branch, as a near neighbour, would be happy to consider joint meetings.

14) Any Other Business

None

15) The Chairman closed the meeting at 1925.