

**Minutes of the Guild Week Meeting held in the Lecture Theatre, New Hall School,
Boreham on Tuesday 22nd August 2006**

Members Present

President: C Y Barlow
Master: J E Butler
Secretary: L T W Smith

M D Dawson	B G Meads	N J H Small
P J Earis	R L Melen	J C G Sturdy
S C Farrar	H Muirhead	J R Taylor
A W T Gooch	V Nutton	B D Threlfall
A J Griffin	A H G Parry	M S Threlfall
A R Guy	J E Roberts	I G Vincent
A Johnson	C H Rogers	A S Watt
C M P Johnson	D E Rothera	P K Williamson
B I Le Gallez	H M Rothera	D A Winter
T H Kirkman *	J D Shanklin	R H Youdale
D J Lynch	L D G Simpson	

* Arrived as indicated in the minutes.

The President was in the chair and opened the meeting at 19:32.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from:

P L H Brooke	K L Langley	A F Scholfield
M S Edwards	R S Lebon	A L Smith
J C Hetherington	B D Price	

J D Shanklin apologised for his presence.

2. Minutes of the 2005 Guild Week Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting had been circulated prior to the meeting for perusal by members and as such were not read out by the Secretary.

It was noted that Nicholas Small had been omitted from the list of attendees.

C H Rogers pointed out that in Item 6 the venue for the 2007 Guild Week had been misspelt – it should be Cottingham. He also corrected the spelling in Item 9 of the proposed location for a peal by Guild CC Representatives, which should read ‘Knighton’, and noted an error in the numbering which resulted in skipping from Item 6 to Item 8.

Subject to these amendments, the meeting accepted the minutes as a true and correct record and they were signed by the President.

3. Matters Arising

A Johnson commented that he had written an article regarding the 2005 Guild Week which had subsequently been published in the Ringing World together with the peals and quarter peals rung during the week.

The meeting was advised that the proposed peal at Knighton involving Guild members who serve on the Central Council had not been rung.

There were no other matters arising.

4. Matters relevant to the Guild Week Meeting raised during the academic year 2005 – 2006

The President outlined the reason for including this item in the agenda, stating that it was important for all Guild members to be aware of the resident business of the Guild. She proceeded to briefly mention the following points.

Michaelmas:

- J D Shanklin had been pursuing his investigation into possible restoration work at St Bene't's and had concluded that it was inappropriate to install a 17cwt ring of 10 in the tower.
- L D G Simpson, in his capacity as Steeplekeeper, had requested more grease and had sought advice on cleaning ropes, resulting in a suggestion to put them in the washing machine.
- P J Earis was continuing with his design for a new Guild tie but no design was forthcoming at the meeting.

Lent:

- There was significant discussion about the Guild's entry into the National 12 Bell Striking Competition and it was agreed that a band should be entered if possible. In the end, a band did enter and ring.
- P J Earis gave a report on his activities as one of the Guild's Central Council Representatives and also made known his opinions of the Council.
- Concern was expressed about freshers being unaware of the regular annual Guild events which made organising their diaries rather difficult. It was agreed that the officers should compile a list of these events.

In response to this last point A H G Parry recommended publishing Guild events on Campanophile.

AGM:

- The Auditor had made the observation that the Guild's handbells were costing approximately £200 per annum but their income did not cover this. This issue was to be discussed by the Committee.

S C Farrar suggested diverting handbell peal fees to the handbell account.

- There was further discussion about the Guild Library, which is currently located in the Pendlebury Library and in C M P Johnson's room in St John's College. The main issue to address is that the latter location will not be available indefinitely, so it is desirable that another location is found.

At this stage C H Rogers pointed out that the current Librarian is uncertain of her duties. It was agreed that this be rectified.

- One of the Guild's photograph albums is missing and thorough searches for it in likely locations have proven fruitless

A Johnson commented that when he was Secretary the photograph album was full, and so speculated that the missing album contains photographs from 1988 onwards. He also mentioned that B D Price has a 1945 photo that he is willing to donate to the Guild.

J C G Sturdy suggested making digital copies of the photograph albums, but H M Rothera did not think this would be possible due to copyright issues.

A R Guy warned that washing bell ropes with detergent removes their natural lubrication and that it is therefore necessary to use fabric conditioner to prevent this. S C Farrar enquired about the dandruff implications of this idea.

5. Election of New Members

The following were elected to life membership of the Guild, proposed by S C Farrar and seconded by J D Shanklin;

Rebecca Woodgate (Christ's, 1987)

The following were elected to life membership of the Guild, proposed by B G Meads and seconded by C Y Barlow;

Elizabeth A Griffith-Jones (New Hall, 1961)

John G L 'Bill' Griffith-Jones (Trinity Hall, 1960)

All were accepted nem. con.

6. Guild Week Survey : President's Report

The President reported on the survey she had circulated prior to Guild Week. Its purpose was to gauge people's opinions on Guild Week and she was pleased with the level of response. The consensus was closer than expected, and in general people were pretty happy with Guild Week. The President continued to summarise the key findings from the survey:

Question 1 – What do you hope to get out of this Guild Week?

People looked forward to meeting old friends and forming new friendships, building on these by spending time walking, going to the pub and eating together. Visiting new areas and places was popular, as was sampling the various local beverages. Members welcomed the opportunity to ring handbells and to ring methods of a greater complexity than those that one normally has the chance to ring during the year.

Question 2 – What have you enjoyed most about Guild Weeks you have attended in the past?

The mixture of different generations was considered as a highlight by undergraduates and older members alike - this is helped by the transport arrangements. People also enjoyed socialising with intelligent people with a sense of humour.

Touring pleasant countryside and visiting rural churches was an important feature and was preferred to visiting urban towers. At this point, J D Shanklin speculated that this may be due to the abundance of trees in rural churchyards. The occasional 'days out' were remembered fondly, such as the trip on the Settle-Carlisle railway and the visit to Lundy Island. A particular highlight was being navigated, Ockelton-style, down a river. The availability of a choice of evening activity was appreciated.

Question 3 – What has irked you?

Poor striking was a common irritation. Although striking is not expected to be perfect as Guild Week is classed by many as a holiday, it was appreciated that standards needed to be at a reasonable level to ensure the ringing is enjoyable and not embarrassing.

Pushy ringers were also indicated as an annoyance, particularly those who persistently ring things outside their capabilities, leading to poor striking. Tenor grabbers were frowned upon, especially those who are not as good as they think they are. Less experienced ringers have often felt disheartened because they have not been given the chance to ring things that would enable them to progress.

Long drives to just one tower were not appreciated, even if it were a 12 bell tower or a particularly rare or good tower. Overcrowding was recognised as a frequent problem. Gentle concern was expressed about the predictability of Guild Week. Reference was made to a previous year when J H Fielden wrote a (fairly accurate) report before the Week had actually occurred.

Question 4 - What are your thoughts about placed bands?

Although there were mixed feelings about this issue, there was almost universal disquiet about this becoming normal practice. It was realised that most members are sensible when catching hold, but ringing masters needed to be prepared to intervene should a band prove to be inappropriate. Younger ringing masters sometimes found this difficult to do with more senior members. There was agreement that some placing can be useful at times, such as to give help to weaker ringers, when the bells are particularly difficult or heavy, or on higher numbers. The difference between delegating a band of ringers and telling them exactly which bell to ring is significant.

Question 5 – Comments

It was suggested that a space could be included on the booking form for people to indicate any method requests, and also that ringing masters could advertise the next few touches to enable people to plan ahead. The task of organising Guild Week was recognised as a very large job – suggestions had been received to split the task because of this.

The President proceeded to give some recommendations for the future success of Guild Week, after first stating that Guild Week is not 'broke'.

People who come on Guild Week are often getting the best ringing of their year and are keen to ring well-struck touches of methods within their capabilities in a relaxed atmosphere. Too much fierceness in running the touring ringing is not appropriate. In general, the striking is felt to be good enough; however, it does on occasion fall below levels that most people find acceptable. Those who seek a higher standard can opt to ring in a greater number of peals. Ringing masters

need to be sensitive to the needs of less experienced and out-of-practice ringers – letting them attempt things to extend their capabilities, but not allowing them to push their luck.

The scheme of having longer sessions at each tower, with overlaps, was recommended, along with two alternating ringing masters per day. More peals and quarters could also be used to reduce overcrowding, tower availability permitting.

Opinions on this discussion were then sought from the floor.

P J Earis thanked the President for her work on this matter. He stated that he was very much in favour of band placing, but did not wish there to be a prescribed set of rules – the decision on how to run each tower should be left to the relevant ringing master. He indicated that attendees of Guild Week have a broad spectrum of likes and abilities which contribute to the diverse nature of the week. He was concerned that several generations were missing on Guild Week, particularly in the 25 – 50 age range. This should be addressed in order to provide a better representation of the Guild family.

The President agreed with the problem of the generation gap. S C Farrar was also concerned that Guild Week could die because of this. D A Winter enquired if this gap had always been a feature. A S Watt said that we would have to accept it, but it could in part be addressed by providing Bed & Breakfast information on the Guild Week letter, which may be more attractive to families.

A J Griffin recollected how he became a regular Guild Week attendee as a result of ringing with the Guild when there was a Guild Week local to him. Perhaps others might be similarly persuaded to return to active Guild membership. The President agreed, suggesting that we contact members living in the area being visited.

D J Lynch commented how Cambridge ringers are on the leading edge of the Exercise and wondered how their innovations could be made accessible and be utilised on Guild Week.

J C G Sturdy described a possible hybrid system of band placing whereby a touch is announced, people come forward, and are either placed or turned away.

H Muirhead pointed out that ringing masters do not always know everybody's ringing capabilities which makes it very difficult on their part.

With respect to A S Watt's comment, B G Meads stated that Guild Week is primarily for members and families would not be very involved. This was greeted by general discussion on this issue, with several examples being given of families being involved on Guild Week.

(T H Kirkman arrived at 20:13)

H M Rothera felt that involving families on Guild Week might be necessary in order to attract people in the 25 – 50 age range. However, as A Johnson pointed out, the character of the week would change if families were present all week. S C Farrar said that partners were in fact welcome, even though they did not feel this to be the case. A R Guy noted that it is the convention of the Guild for the week to be members only and that there would be issues with too many children being present. J D Shanklin was concerned with towers becoming too overcrowded if families were present. The President finished this discussion by recommending that this matter be dealt with on a case-by-case basis, in discussion with the organiser.

7. 2006 Guild Week

B G Meads welcomed T H Kirkman into the room and mentioned the following points.

- The Guild Communion would take place the following morning at 7:30am in the school chapel. Trevor Kirkman was to be the celebrant.
- Ringing at Saffron Walden on the Saturday morning was to be cancelled due to lack of numbers, with Great Waltham substituted in its place.
- The visit to East Bergholt's practice night on the Thursday had been confirmed with the local band.

A J Griffin spoke in recognition of the significant amount of work involved in organising a Guild Week. He went on to mention his first attempt at gaining entry to the school – his in-car satellite navigation system had brought him to the exit barrier. This was duly bypassed by a rather unorthodox method utilising a jump lead.

A J Griffin thanked Brian Meads for all his work in organising this Guild Week and also thanked Nicholas Small for once again organising the transport arrangements. Both votes of thanks were followed by a round of applause.

8. Future Guild Weeks

2007 –

C H Rogers said that he did not have much to add to his comments from the 2005 Guild Week Meeting. He mentioned that one-and-a-half hours ringing had been booked at York Minster for the Sunday afternoon and that it was essential that a high standard of ringing was maintained there. This will mean that the methods will be kept simple and bands will be placed. Major towers in the area have been applied for and others will be fitted in to suit. Food and accommodation will cost £37 per person per night, based on a minimum of 30 people in residence. There will be additional costs to cover tower fees and organisational expenses, bringing the price to over £40, but it was hoped that this would not deter people from attending. Facilities for camping are also available. The dates were confirmed as Saturday 18th – Saturday 25th.

2008 –

J D Shanklin spoke about the week he will be organising in North Wales, based at Northop Agricultural College. Correspondence with the college was proving difficult due to holidays, and the current state of play was that a quotation was being sought. It was expected that an affirmative response would be received from the college, and that the price would be higher than the 2007 Guild Week. Those attending the week would be advised to bring their passport.

2009 –

The President informed the meeting that Christine Northeast owns a flat in Penzance, Cornwall (as many are aware) and is very keen to organise the towers for a Guild Week in the area, provided that she has assistance for other aspects. The meeting deemed this to be an acceptable proposal.

J D Shanklin expressed concern that the flat would not be large enough to accommodate the Guild.

A W T Gooch raised the issue of transport – it is very busy in Cornwall in the summer. A H G Parry agreed that this could prove to be a problem. B G Meads noted that as holidaymakers tend to congregate in the coastal areas, transport between the inland towers should not be affected. He also suggested only driving at night.

Future years – Australia was suggested as a possible venue. There were no other suggestions.

9. Michaelhouse, Cambridge

The President started by describing the current situation at St Andrew the Great. It is not classed as a Guild tower as such, because the Church do not encourage of the ringing of the bells and are concerned that Guild activities should not interfere with their ministry. The only regular ringing is the weekly practice on Thursday evenings during term time, with peals and quarter peals being attempted on an occasional basis.

The situation has led to an alternative home for the Guild's activities being sought, with Michaelhouse (St Michael's, united with Great St Mary) on Trinity Street being proposed as an ideal venue. Frank King is dealing with this project and has already made progress. A survey was carried out by Dr Hugh Hunt from the Department of Engineering, which has found that the tower is structurally suitable for housing a ring of bells. Two old wooden frames exist in the belfry and may have to remain in situ for historical reasons. A preliminary report has been submitted to the Diocese and their opinions on this project are awaited. If a positive response is received then a proper survey will be conducted.

The Master added that GSM is very keen to install a ring of bells at Michaelhouse and they could be made very available to us. However, as they have insufficient funds to fund the work, the Guild will have to provide the money. She concluded by saying that if this project goes ahead, it will prove to be very beneficial to the Guild.

General discussion ensued on the location of the church. B G Meads enquired about other possibilities in the city, and also about augmenting St Bene't's to a ring of 10 bells. J E Butler replied by stating that the officers had considered several options, such as St Paul's on Hills Road, but had deemed Michaelhouse to be the best. A ring of 8 bells is proposed for Michaelhouse, with 10 bells being possible, but too cramped in the ringing chamber.

S C Farrar pointed out that he had recently made attempts to have a ring of bells installed in Jesus College chapel. Discussion with Taylor's showed that a light ring of 10 was possible. It was disappointing to note that the College did not take this matter any further.

A H G Parry suggested transferring the bells from St Andrew's to a new location. J E Butler replied that the situation with the Church could change in the future, so it would be best to leave the bells in their current location.

C M P Johnson outlined the history of the attempts made to install a ring of bells in the tower at St John's College. There had long been an intention to install bells in the tower, however the tower's fabric was not sufficiently strong to support a ring of bells. B D Threlfall had designed a structure to house the bells – this would effectively be a 'tower inside a tower'. The proposal was brought to the Governing Body, but was objected to by a fellow who lived in rooms opposite the louvers. The motion was turned down by 26 votes to 25. The objecting fellow has now moved to rooms elsewhere in college and several fellows are very keen for the proposal to once again be brought forward.

J C G Sturdy advised that a useful contact for the Michaelhouse project would be Simon Kershaw, who is heavily involved in the Diocese. C H Rogers announced that he was delighted at the news of the project and wished good luck to those involved.

10. Diary Dates

The key dates for the year were provided on the agenda, with dates for the 2007 Guild Week being clarified in Item 8.

The Master spoke about the 2007 Annual Dinner, which is to be held in St John's College. The price will be similar to that in 2006, and two peal towers have already been confirmed – Our Lady and the English Martyrs and St Neots. She also added that the Southern Universities Association meeting is to be held in Cambridge over the weekend of 27th – 29th October.

11. Any Other Business

P J Earis reported on the 2006 Central Council meeting in Leicester. He noted that the Guild's other representative, S C Farrar, was not in attendance. It was the first meeting chaired by the new President, Derek Sibson, a Guild member. No substantial motions were proposed this year, and the only one of relevance to the Guild was that annual subscriptions had been increased.

P J Earis went on to outline his views and observations of the Council. He felt that there were problems with its age profile, structure and democracy, specifically mentioning the elections for honorary members which tend to be rather undemocratic. P J Earis described the various committees and their structure and business. Some committees could be classed as being relics – notably the Redundant Bells Committee whose last involvement in a project falling within its remit was about 10 years ago. P J Earis had moved that this committee be reviewed. He also spoke about his involvement with the Methods Committee, his views on its chairman, and its chairman's commitment to the objectives of the Council.

P J Earis finished by stating that he reports on his Council work at each Guild meeting, and invited questions from those present. A brief discussion followed regarding the Council's views on worthless methods.

S C Farrar notified the meeting that he is a member of the Public Relations Committee with special responsibility for university societies. His main work during the year was to re-design the front-page of the Central Council website. Although a suitable page was produced, the Council rejected this due to the fact that he had received help from certain sources.

P J Earis gave notice of a future prize for university societies. The nature of this is to be announced in the next few months.

S C Farrar commented that now he is living away from Cambridge he is no longer in touch with the resident Guild activities, and he should perhaps no longer be one of the Guild's Central Council representatives. He announced that he will stand down at the end of this triennium.

C H Rogers pointed out that the editor of the Ringing World is seeking articles about university societies and encouraged us to provide these. S C Farrar advised arranging for an article to appear in an August issue to attract freshers. The Master suggested putting together a report on Guild

Week with plenty of photographs. She promised that Freshers Week would be fun and busy, but realised the need not to overdo things.

The Secretary announced that he had a supply of the Guild merchandise with him on Guild Week, and anybody wishing to purchase anything should see him. The Master added that the stock of badges had been found in 12 Victoria Street – their whereabouts had previously been unknown.

J C G Sturdy offered to organise a walking tour in Ireland if there was sufficient interest, with peal towers being available if desired.

With no other business, the President closed the meeting at 21:03. This was greeted with a round of applause.