

**Minutes of the Lent Term Business Meeting held in St. Bene't's church, Cambridge  
on Friday 25<sup>th</sup> January, 2008**

**Members Present**

President: C Y Barlow  
Master: L T W Smith  
Secretary: T K Beadman

R T Backhouse	R E Brown
J E Butler	D F Hagon
P L H Brooke	E R Russell

C M P Johnson arrived as indicated.

The president was in the chair and the meeting opened at 21.05.

**1. Apologies for Absence**

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Apologies were received from:

P J Earis  
L D G Simpson  
J Suett

**2. Minutes of the Michaelmas Term Business Meeting**

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The minutes of the Michaelmas term business meeting were read out by the Secretary. The meeting accepted the minutes as a true and correct record and they were signed by the President.

**3. Matters Arising**

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Since the webmaster's election last meeting, the website had not been kept up to date and various complaints had been made. It was suggested that the website could be changed to give a number of people authority to update it. This was considered a good idea and the webmaster would be informed of the decision.

It was noted that the ropes in St. Andrew's have not yet been cleaned. The steeplekeeper would be reminded that this needed doing.

The President explained that an EGM had taken place on November 11th 2007 and that the minutes from this will be discussed later in the meeting.

**4. Election of New Members**

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There were no new members to elect.

C M P Johnson entered.

**5. Michaelhouse**

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The President updated the meeting on the present position on the project to install bells in Michaelhouse.

An EGM had been held in Michaelhouse on 11 November. 16 Guild members were present; apologies had been received from a further 17. The Domestic Bursar of Caius and the Michaelhouse Manager were in

attendance. Following extensive discussion, the Guild voted that it was in principle willing to take this project forward. However, the following three issues were highlighted as matters of immediate concern.

(i) The tower contains a listed oak frame, which is unsuitable for use with a new ring of bells and can be neither removed nor altered in any way; the new frame needs to be either above or below it. If below, a ringing gallery would need to be installed since the bells would be hung in the existing ringing chamber. Earlier discussions had however indicated that Michaelhouse Trustees would not be willing to install a ringing gallery above the South door. The proposal under discussion was therefore to install bells above the existing frame: there is just room for a 7cwt ring of 8 between the frame and the timbers which form the tower structure.

The feeling of the meeting was that the installation of a ringing gallery should be revisited. It was agreed that this would make the project very much more appealing in many different ways, including ease of installation as well as the satisfactory operation of the tower.

(ii) The tower is surrounded on all sides by parts of Caius, and they are understandably concerned about potential noise.

(iii) Future-proofing. The Guild is only too well aware that putting up the money for providing or restoring a ring does not guarantee that the church will remain bell-friendly.

With Michaelhouse, the situation is potentially even more fragile. Michaelhouse is a church but not in the usual sense. It is a multipurpose building, without regular Sunday services, committed to serving various groups in the community. The Church urges caution about assurances for the future operation of Michaelhouse, governed as it is by the terms of the Michaelhouse Charitable Trust: 'reaching out to a wide proportion of the Cambridge community'. The current regime wishes to include ringing in the weekly programme - but if this were to conflict with other activities then the trustees would need to balance the needs of ringers against other users. This might compromise our ability to maintain a regular programme of ringing.

Following the EGM, the President had taken soundings about all these aspects, and anxieties about the feasibility and wisdom of proceeding with the project had increased rather than subsiding. It has been made clear that there is no possibility of a gallery being installed, so the project would be sub-optimal from the outset. Caius remains anxious. Assurances cannot be provided about the status of ringing in the future operation of Michaelhouse.

However, a new dimension has now been added to the Cambridge tower situation.

St John's College celebrates its 500th anniversary in 2011. The new Master, Professor Christopher Dobson, has observed that original conception of the chapel tower was that it would contain bells. At the start of this term, the President and Dr Johnson held a preliminary meeting with him to discuss installing a ring of 10, and the response was encouraging. Dr Johnson has also spoken with the Dean, who is not in principle opposed. Assurances over sound levels and sound control are naturally required, though the technical aspects of achieving appropriate sound levels are not expected to be difficult. For the project to go ahead, it would need to be accepted by the College, and a major donor should be identified. However, there would appear to be a fighting chance of success.

If St John's does seem to be a possibility, then the Guild needs to be in a position to make a strong contribution. This would not be the case if Michaelhouse has gone ahead.

There was discussion of whether it would be prudent, under the circumstances, to set the Michaelhouse project into abeyance, and to indicate our support for St John's. The meeting agreed to do so. The Michaelhouse Committee will be asked to assist with the process.

## **6. Other Cambridge Towers**

P L H Brooke updated the meeting about the progress being made to install a new ring in St. Mary the Great. He explained that the project was still moving forward and that a proposal had been put to the DAC.

## **7. Librarian's business**

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The librarian explained that over the summer he had updated the guild library catalogue, identifying missing books and duplicates. The president thanked the librarian for all his hard work.

It was decided that a message would be sent to the global email list to ask if anyone has the missing books. Duplicates of useful books would be kept in case any went missing. However, it was decided that the guild should consider selling duplicates of valuable books. The president suggested that it shouldn't be the guild's responsibility to preserve valuable books and we should consider giving them to the University Library. C M P Johnson suggested that it would be useful to know which bell ringing books are already in the University Library, and that the Pendlebury Library also wants rid of the guild books that are currently kept there.

The librarian also stated that he had received some requests of new books to be added to the library. It was agreed that a list of candidate books would be sent round and suggestions would be made as to which books we should buy.

## **8. Diary Dates**

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Attention was drawn to the diary dates on the agenda. The master stated that five guild members were going to the OUS dinner on the 2nd February and encouraged members to attend ringing for the university sermon the following day. He also explained that details of Charlie Moule's memorial service on the 9th February had been sent round and he was seeking members to ring a peal on that day at St. Andrew's to celebrate Charlie's life.

The joint outing with the OUS will take place on the 16th February and it will be in St. Albans. Ringing will take place at 3 towers and the master encouraged people to attend.

A memorial service for David Kendall will take place on the 7th March, and details will be sent round soon.

Finally, the master explained that the annual dinner will be held in Queens' College on the 15th March and John Loveless had been confirmed as the guest speaker. C M P Johnson will be speaking as the past master.

## **11. Any Other Business**

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The president explained that at the EGM, the meeting had been informed that Olive Barnett, Teddy's widow, had offered his set of 17 handbells to the Guild. They were a gift to Teddy from the Revd W. Pearson, and are in good condition. The EGM agreed with gratitude to accept the gift, and the bells are now in Cambridge. It was suggested that they might be used for the Dinner Touch.

The master asked if all the handbell sets need insuring because they are not all used. It was decided that the cost of adding the extra set of handbells onto the insurance policy would be investigated and then a decision would be made. It was suggested that a set could be sold, however this idea was not met with enthusiasm because the sets have a lot of history associated with the guild.

The date of the AGM was announced as Sunday, 4th May 2008.

With no further business, the President closed the meeting at 22:04.

T K Beadman  
C Y Barlow (5. Michaelhouse)