

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held in the Boys Smith Room, St John's College on Sunday 2nd May 2010

Members Present

President: C Y Barlow
Master: J A Agg
Secretary: F R W M Manners

J R Ansell	M L D Drinkwater	R T Backhouse	P J Earis
J E Butler	R Shipp	C M P Johnson	F H King
M S L Jordan	R A Smith	L D G Simpson	T K Beadman
C C Shearer	G R Harris	P L H Brooke	

The President was in the chair and the meeting opened at 1400.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from:

L T W Smith	J D Sherwood	C H Northeast
R O Hall	S C Walters	A Johnson

2. Minutes of the 2009 AGM

The minutes had been circulated in advance. They were agreed by the meeting to be an accurate record and were signed by the President.

3. Matters Arising

The President raised the issue of the photo album. No progress had been made in acquiring scans of the missing photographs. The President and P J Earis both suggested that, if a list of what was absent existed, it would become easier to track down copies. R A Smith said that old albums might be in the UL or the Guild Library; the President confirmed that they are not in the Guild Library. The President asked the incoming officers should investigate this further, with help from the outgoing officers. C M P Johnson opined that attempts to locate the old photo album should be focused on the Galloway household, which was agreed by all.

The President then pointed out that the rule change suggested by S C Walters at the 2009 AGM had not been discussed at the Michaelmas Business meeting, nor voted upon in the Lent Business meeting, as was originally agreed. She suggested the same plan for this year. P L H Brooke suggested it be discussed in Lent and voted on at the next AGM, to avoid frightening freshers, which was universally agreed. A very brief discussion of the proposed change followed.

The President also reported that she had not yet negotiated with the Societies Syndicate about using the money in the St John's account for expenses concerning the St John's project, as she had been waiting until these funds were needed. C M P Johnson said that they might be needed relatively soon, and the President agreed to deal with the matter promptly.

The issue of recruitment of junior members was briefly raised. The Master thought that the Guild was broadly reaching its target audience; C C Shearer and the Secretary agreed. All agreed that the Freshers' Fair remained a worthwhile recruiting ground, despite its faults.

4. Relevant matters from the Lent Term Business Meeting

There were no matters arising.

5. Cambridge Towers

There was nothing to report concerning Great St Mary's or St Andrew's. R T Backhouse informed the meeting the St Bene't's were still there.

C M P Johnson recapped the history of the St John's Project. He reported the progress in five areas highlighted by the College Council in March 2009:–

- I. A copy of a draft agreement concerning the control and extent of ringing at the tower – based on the agreement in force at Lincoln – had been sent to the Dean, who, being on safari with the choir, had yet not replied.
- II. L D G Simpson had produced a sketch of a sound-control scheme for the tower, and subsequently an acoustic engineer was consulted, who had produced a somewhat complex preliminary report. C M P Johnson said this needed further discussion, but was in hand, and not the rate-limiting step.
- III. The council wanted independent advice on the structural impact of ringing on the tower. Hugh Hunt, from the University Engineering faculty, has a lot of experience in this area, and his assistance had been recruited. R A Smith explained that the natural frequency of the tower had been accurately calculated in a crude experiment, but the q-factor and effective mass of the tower would only be found by a more sophisticated procedure that involved installing a dumb-bell of sorts. This step had been delayed owing to other demands on Hugh Hunt's time, but C M P Johnson was optimistic that it could happen this term. R A Smith further clarified that these data would not only answer the question of whether the tower might be structurally damaged by ringing – which he thought extremely unlikely given current knowledge – but also the impact tower sway would have on their ringability. The results so far were promising.
- IV. Two quotations for installing a ring of bells had been made, but accurate costings for the necessary structural work on the tower did not exist. C M P Johnson said that once the data mentioned above had been collected, these would be straightforward to calculate.
- V. No concrete steps had been made towards finding possible benefactors for the project, though informally some had expressed enthusiasm.

R T Backhouse stressed the importance of the being able to ring at the tower regularly. C M P Johnson said that this would form part of his discussion with the Dean, and pointed out that this would depend to a degree on the effectiveness of the sound control. He also mentioned the possibility of a simulator. R A Smith cited the example of Cripplegate, where the sound control could be shut off, making the ringing almost inaudible outside the tower. R Shipp suggested working out a minimum requirement for guild ringing at the tower to be practical; the President agreed this was necessary. P L H Brooke said the guild should consider how much it could ring there without overburdening its ringing resources.

C M P Johnson remarked that, realistically, the issue could not be put before the Governing Body of John's this academic year, but was optimistic that it could be in Michaelmas Term of next academic year.

The secretary left the room at 1450 and returned at 1452.

6. Election of new members

No new members were elected.

7. Presentation of accounts

J E Butler pointed out an accounting error in the Towerbell account. The Secretary agreed to bring an amended version to the Michaelmas Term Business meeting.

The Master pointed out that the cost of new tail ends at St Andrew's did not appear on the accounts. The Secretary said the guild had probably forgotten to reimburse someone for them; probably himself. He said he would investigate the matter.

The loss made on the Alternative Dinner was questioned. R T Backhouse explained the difficulty in accurately costing the event; the Secretary stated that it was not policy to deliberately subsidize it.

The Master suggested that the Guild Week surplus be used to subsidize the next Guild Week, which has been remarked to be too expensive. The Secretary expressed concern that, although no-one set out to make a profit on the Dinner or Guild Week, without accidental profits on these events the guild would make an overall loss. J E Butler thought that profits from one year should not be linked to subsidies for the next, but suggested that more of the surplus go toward reimbursing some of the contributions for the same year. R A Smith proposed that the new officers liaise with this year's Guild Week organizer on the subject, with no prescription that money be transferred from last year to this; this met with universal agreement.

8. Master's Report

The Master said that the year had gone well; numbers had remained healthy; and a lot of good ringing had been done. He mentioned in particular that four quarter peals had taken place at Great St Mary's, and thanked the Youths for their helpfulness on this and in general, encouraging future officers to take advantage of it.

The President thanked the Master and other officers for their work throughout the year.

9. Steeplekeeper's Report

The Steeplekeeper reported that several attempts had been made to make St Andrew's a seven-bell tower, including breaking the stay on the treble and the clapper on the tenor; but that both had been fixed. A new padlock was bought for the spider, and new tail ends put on all the ropes: he thanked L T W Smith, R A Smith and all others who helped with splicing them.

He said that St Andrew's were in good general condition; Bene't's had deteriorated slightly; and the handbells were in a similar condition.

R A Smith questioned this last point, saying that he thought one set was being repaired. The Master said that Winston Girling was currently quoting on the cost of repairing the Barnet set, and asked the meeting how much they were willing to pay for this repair. P J Earis said he had confidence in the repairer, who works on a not-for-profit basis, and thought a sensible repair should cost about £350 – £400. P L H Brooke asked where this money would come from. J E Butler suggested that busking with handbells at Christmas could raise that kind of sum painlessly. A motion to spend up to £400 on the repair without further consultation was proposed by L D G Simpson, seconded by P J Earis and passed, with R T Backhouse opposed.

R A Smith raised the question of why any of the handbells are insured. The President made the point that putting uninsured handbells in the care of student members would place an unfair burden of responsibility on them. P L H Brooke suggested that all but one set of handbells be kept in secure places, and the remaining set only be insured. R A Smith suggested the guild self-insure, by explicitly putting money aside each year into a sinking fund. J E Butler argued that the most likely causes of loss or damage would probably be classified as negligence and hence not be covered by the existing insurance anyway. P L H Brooke agreed with R A Smith's suggestion, provided the number of sets of handbells in circulation was also kept to a minimum.

The following motion was proposed by F H King, seconded by R A Smith and passed *nem. con.*:

- I. A sum – initially £120 – shall be placed annually into a sinking fund, from which insurable damages to the handbells should be paid.
- II. The present insurance will not be renewed.
- III. The secretary should keep track of the whereabouts of all the guild handbells, and ensure that a minimal number are in circulation at any one time.

9b. Webmaster's Report

The Webmaster reported the following changes to the guild website throughout the year:–

- I. The front page was now driven by blog software, allowing the Master and Secretary to update it themselves.
- II. A list of former officers &c. was compiled and put on the website.
- III. Moving the guild's hosting from the SRCF to Mythic Beasts was under consideration.

P J Earis suggested an email to the global list to appeal for information to fill the gaps in (II). R A Smith asked for a system to be introduced to guarantee that the location of the Thursday practice be reported up-to-date on the website; L D G Simpson said he would look into this.

10. Election of Officers

The Master took the chair, and the Secretary read out the following Senior Officer nominations:–

President

C Y Barlow

Prop. C C Shearer

Sec. J A Agg

Senior Treasurer

P L H Brooke

Prop. C C Shearer

Sec. F R W M Manners

Auditor

F H King

Prop. L T W Smith

Sec. T K Beadman

With no other nominations, all were duly elected unopposed.

The President resumed the chair, and the Secretary read out the following Junior Officer nominations:-

Master

C C Shearer

Prop. J A Agg

Sec. R T Backhouse

Assistant Master

M L D Drinkwater

Prop. F R W M Manners

Sec. J A Agg

Secretary

G R Harris

Prop. R T Backhouse

Sec. M L D Drinkwater

Librarian

J R Ansell

Prop. M L D Drinkwater

Sec. F R W M Manners

Webmaster

L D G Simpson

Prop. F R W M Manners

Sec. R T Backhouse

Steeplekeeper

M S L Jordan

Prop. J A Agg

Sec. M L D Drinkwater

With no other nominations, all were duly elected unopposed.

The Secretary informed the meeting that R O Hall had stepped down as the Guild's CCCBR representative, and that, with insufficient time before the AGM to take nominations, the committee would meet afterwards to make an appointment. R Shipp had offered to take up the post: he explained to the meeting that he had been on the Bell Restoration committee for some time, now being its chairman; that he had at some point resigned as representative of his former constituency, but remained on the committee as an honorary member; and would be happy to represent the guild in addition to his existing roles on the Council. The President thanked him for this offer.

A motion commending his appointment to the post to the committee was proposed by C M P Johnson, seconded by R A Smith and passed *nem. con.*.

11. Diary Dates

C C Shearer said that the Alternative Dinner would be held on 17th June in Pembroke, and that there was a University Sermon on 23rd May. J A Agg said that the Ridgman competition would be held on 19th June. F H King said that honorary degrees were being awarded on 21st June, and asked for volunteers for that. J A Agg further said that Guild Week would be held in the week 21st – 28th August.

12. Any other business

F R W M Manners commented that it would save the future Secretary's time if the guild were able to bank online. This would almost certainly involve scrapping the requirement that cheques over £500

carry two signatures, but he claimed the additional security risk this posed was minimal. P L H Brooke agreed, provided it was ensured that the account couldn't go overdrawn. F R W M Manners proposed the following motion, which was seconded by P L H Brooke and passed *nem. con.*:-

To attempt to put the guild bank accounts online, including the ability to make payments online, even if this involved dropping the requirement the requirement for two signatures on large cheques. The Secretary and the Senior Treasurer would be authorized to access the guild bank accounts in this way.

P L H Brooke proposed a further motion, seconded by F R W M Manners and passed *nem. con.*, that any payments of over £500 would nonetheless require the authorization of the Senior Treasurer.

With no other business, the meeting closed at 1555.