

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting, held in Sidgwick Hall, Newnham College, Cambridge, on Sunday 17th May 2026

Members Present

President: J A Agg
Master: A E L Dunn
Secretary: O M Bennett

Matthew Collier
Samuel Canning
Frank King
August Deeming
Juthika Sarma
Eleanor Marshall
Angus Bradford*
Abby Higton

Joseph Wakeling
Claire Barlow
Chris Winkless-Clark
Weian Zeng
Richard Smith
Katherine Jennings
Schoen Cho
Michael Lucas

Tilly Heaton
Áine Williamson
Samuel Spencer
Melissa Nash
Stella Johnson
Catriona Agg
Cameron Pearson

*Elected during the Meeting

The President opened the meeting at 14:03

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from:

Samuel Johnson
Benjamin Shorter
Kirsten Hawkins
Greg Chu
Charlie Betts
Jadd Virji

Hannah Cargill Thompson
Thomas Haslam
Toby Clifton
Jonathan Shanklin
Samuel Brown

2 Minutes of the Annual General Meeting 2025

These were proposed as a true and correct copy of the meeting by Samuel Canning, seconded by Samuel Spencer, accepted unanimously, and signed by the President.

3 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising

4 Election of New Members

Angus Bradford was proposed for membership by Samuel Canning and seconded by Abby Higton. They were elected unanimously.

5 Cambridge Towers

5.1 St Andrew the Great

Matthew Collier directed those present to the circulated report, noting there was nothing else to add. The Secretary asked when the annual inspection should be completed. The Master informed the room that they were waiting for a new inspection light to be installed by the church and that it was likely to happen in the coming weeks.

5.2 St Bene't's

Chris Winkless-Clark conveyed a message from Samuel Johnson; the bells are still there and that new ropes have been installed since the last AGM.

5.3 Great St Mary's

Chris Winkless-Clark remarked work is carrying on trying to fix the simulator. Samuel Spencer advised the meeting that the simulator does not work at all at present, adding he is in communication with Dave Bagley to try and rectify this. Work is happening behind the scenes to sort out access for tying bells for teaching in the next month and should be sorted by Michaelmas. Ringing continues, and the bells themselves are fine. The Secretary noted that the chimes are back and should be turned off before ringing and accessing the belfry.

5.4 Our Lady and the English Martyrs

Richard Smith announced work on the tower has finished and the scaffolding is all down. Ringing has returned to near previous levels. He added the Guild has been invited back for a practice this term.

5.5 St Clement's

Samuel Spencer acknowledged that the simulator issues at GSM have propagated, with the simulator being slow to strike. This is being actively looked into.

6 Presentation of Accounts

The Secretary presented the accounts as examined on the 13th May by Frank King. The Secretary remarked that this year had been very good financially for the Guild with a surplus of £1637. The higher than average figure is a result of cashing the £400 prize associated with the Sarah Beachman award, which was won a few years ago, and a higher than expected refund from Lucy Cavendish. Additionally, he noted that there are two expenses to go out: a donation to the Ringing World of £50 and subs to the Central Council of around £160. The accounts also do not reflect one person who has yet to pay for the dinner.

The acceptance of the accounts was proposed by The Secretary, seconded by Chris Winkless-Clark, and passed unanimously.

7 Officers' Reports

The reports from the Master, Teaching Officer, and Steeplekeeper, which were circulated in advance of the meeting, are included at the end of these minutes.

The Master said her thoughts were well summed up in the report. She thought we had a good crop of learners some of whom are coming to practices. She concluded by wishing the new committee all the best in the coming year.

Eleanor Marshall noted that some of the aforementioned learners are in the meeting. She added that we should look at running more tasting sessions in future. Stella Johnson suggested maybe later in term, Eleanor suggested they could occur in Lent. Juthika Sarma pointed out that this is what the boot-camps

are nominally for.

The Steeplekeeper gave no additional comments.

8 Election of Officers

8.1 Senior Officers

The Master read out the nominations for Senior Officers, which were as follows:

Position	Nominee	Proposer	Seconder
President	Jonathan Agg	Amy Dunn	Samuel Canning
Senior Treasurer	David Richards	Matthew Collier	Jadd Virji
Accounts Examiner	Frank King	Oliver Bennett	Andrew Cooke

These proposals were accepted with no objections.

8.2 Junior Officers

The Master then read out the nominations received for Junior Officer positions:

Position	Nominee	Proposer	Seconder
Master	Oliver Bennett	Amy Dunn	Greg Chu
Secretary	Matthew Collier	Oliver Bennett	Kirsten Hawkins
Assistant Master	Samuel Canning	Samuel Spencer	Samuel Johnson
Steeplekeeper	Hannah Cargill Thompson	Chris Winkless-Clark	Amy Dunn
Teaching Officer	Abby Higton	Melissa Nash	Joseph Wakeling
Librarian	Aine Williamson	Samuel Canning	Michael Lucas

These proposals were again accepted with no objections.

9 Diary Dates

Guild Week, Sunday 23rd August to Friday 28th August 2026 - The President relayed an update from John Hutchinson stating there is still space in the hotel and an email is forthcoming about interest for quarter and peal attempts. The President affirmed that it is shaping up to be a lovely week with some nice ringing and countryside. He encouraged people to attend for as much or as little as they like.

OLEM Practice, Wednesday 27th May 2026 - It would be good if some non-student members could attend to make up numbers, as students are likely to be busy with exams.

Alternative Dinner, Wednesday 17th June 2026 - This year the alternative dinner is being organised by Samuel Spencer and will take place in Parker's Tavern. Samuel reminded those present of the deadline to sign up being a week Tuesday.

Youths vs Guild Rounders, Sunday 21st June 2026 - This is likely to be on Jesus Green around lunchtime.

EDA 12 Bell Practice, Saturday 13th June 2026 - This is provisionally to be held on this date at GSM.

10 Any Other Business

10.1 Central Council Membership

Richard Smith gave an update on the Central Council, in light of proposed changes to membership types. He informed those present that the Guild had previously paid a small amount to the central council. However, there has been a large increase in fees this year from 40p to £1 per member, which for us would mean around £160.

He described the Guild as having, in his opinion, three options. Option one being to continue as we are paying around £160 a year, with in his opinion a further fee increase unlikely for at least a decade. The second would be to declare a slightly lower membership number, adding that the way we measure membership may be an overestimate and the CCCBR guidelines would allow for a lower number. If the number of members were reduced we would lose a representative. Richard indicated that it would be him stepping down as he is an ex-officio member so would still have the right to attend meetings, just without voting rights. The third option is to change membership category. The CCCBR have introduced a new membership category "associate member" designed for societies that do not collect annual dues like ourselves. We would lose a representative under this option but the crucial difference is a reduction of fees to £0.40 a member, saving around £100 a year.

Richard indicated he had a preference for the first option, paying a higher fee of £160 a year. He indicated that in his opinion, the Central Council does good work and paying the higher fee shows our support. He thought that we should not reduce our engagement and maintain two representatives.

Samuel Canning asked how the £160 figure is justified.

Richard confessed that the CCCBR have not made a very good case for the increase. He went on to say they work to a budget of around £10,000 a year most of which gets spent on administrative costs so additional revenue could be spent on more worthwhile endeavours.

Samuel asked for further clarification on how we reached a number of 160 active members.

The Master informed those present that she had counted those who came to the annual dinner, rung a performance or attended Guild week in the last year. The figure she came to was around 120 so 160 seems reasonable to account for additional members who just attend practices.

Stella Johnson asked if the Central Council listens to representatives, and that we could have more clarity on what they spend their money on.

Richard confirmed that he would push on this matter, affirming that he believes they do good things with the money.

Melissa Nash asked what the main difference between the two classes is.

Richard stated he believed it was the message it sends by switching type. The Secretary said the main material difference was number of representatives and cost. He also added that he doubts the Central Council would be shocked if we changed membership type as this new category was created specifically for societies like the Guild. Richard argued that the Guild is a special case due to our significant alumni engagement.

Claire Barlow asked Richard if he would be concerned in going to one representative. Richard reiterated that it would be him who loses voting rights, and he would be personally okay to do so, should the Guild wish to reduce to one representative.

Eleanor Marshall asked about the affordability of continued high fees. The Secretary explained that we only charge £15 for life membership so at a rate of £1 a year within 15 years we would have spent the entire membership fee. The President added that the fee used to be much lower and more affordable.

The Secretary encouraged people to come to a decision on what to do. Catriona Agg proposed we stay with £160 for now so that we can have time to get the opinions of the wider Guild. This motion was proposed and passed.

10.2 Frank King

The President congratulated Frank King on his 50 years of service as University Bellringer and congratulated him on the receipt of the Etheldreda Medal. The President led a vote of thanks for all the work Frank has done over the years both for the Guild and the wider university.

10.3 150 Subcommittee

Chris Winkless-Clark reminded those present that in 3 years' time the Guild will be 150. Following the SCY's celebration for their 300th anniversary, he thought it would be a good idea to have some informal chats about plans for the 150th. He suggested the main thing to organise was perhaps a slightly bigger dinner at a nicer college perhaps Trinity or St John's. He added that booking for these would likely need to be further in advance than a normal committee can handle hence the purpose of the subcommittee. At the time of the meeting the work-group consists of Chris, Katherine Jennings and Samuel Spencer. Chris added that if anyone had any strong ideas it would be good to have those conversations as a group.

Melissa Nash remarked that it is important to involve students as much as possible. While it is good to have alumni help, we should still seek input from incoming students.

Claire Barlow suggested that there should be a clause making current officers part of the committee.

Katherine Jennings suggested a more student led approach with an overarching alumni presence. Adding that dinners can be hard to organise for big events like this.

Chris added that it would be a lot of work for the Master, and that we should let the new Master do as much or as little as they want.

The President quoted Patrick Brooke, who said it was a lot of work during the centenary year.

Samuel Canning suggested a 15000, which would need a lot of advanced planning.

The President also suggested a wider effort to conserve and extend the Guild history.

10.4 Lundy Trip

Katherine Jennings offered to, in conjunction with James Tan, look at organising a Guild trip to Lundy in 2029. For a big group it would need to be done far in advance, with estimated prices being around £200 for accommodation and £100 for the boat, subject to inflation.

10.5 Thanks for St Clement's

Samuel Canning proposed a thanks for the continued use of St Clement's, and the continued support of Lynne Hughes.

10.6 Closing Remarks

The President thanked Claire Barlow for their much appreciated efforts in booking the room for the meeting, and once again thanked the outgoing committee for their work over the past year. With no further business, he closed the meeting at 14:53.

O M Bennett

Appendix: Officers' Reports

Master's Report - Amy Dunn

The Guild has had a successful year, like many of the previous, packed with many events – both ringing related and otherwise! Since last year's AGM, the Guild has scored 52 quarter peals and 14 peals, including first QPs for Marlene Schaff, Schoen Cho, Charlie Betts, Abby Higton, and Cameron Pearson; first peals for Matthew Collier and Oliver Bennett, as well as firsts as conductor for Oliver Bennett and Juthika Sarma – apologies if I have missed anyone! Thank you to the SCY for being so welcoming, and allowing many students the opportunity to progress their ringing on higher numbers, as well as to St Clement's for the opportunity for practices and quarters there.

Last Easter term saw tower bell ringing continue until quiet period necessitated a switch to handbells (or an earlier arrival at the pub). We entered a band into the Ridgman contest, held in Boston, where we came 3rd by 0.2% ringing Yorkshire Surprise Royal. Post exams, there was an outing to Norwich, organised by Samuel Spencer, with an eclectic mixture of towers, and Kate Jennings organised Alt Dinner at Bill's. May Week saw the traditional rounders match against the SCY, where (in keeping with tradition) the Guild lost, as well as a quarter peal rung by a band of graduands. August had plenty of ringing with a very enjoyable Guild Week organised by Chris Winkless-Clark around Birmingham and Worcester.

The new academic year brought us to the Freshers' Fair, with new learners signing up in full force, attracted by the bells of the Charmbrough mini ring. The ART University Recruitment Package helped us to fund this and we had over 200 new ringers and several existing ringers sign-up. Teaching, as further described in Eleanor's report, has continued throughout the year, and it has been a delight to see the progression made with many learners now joining us at regular practices. We have also used St Clement's for intermediate practices providing dedicated time to focus on rounds and call changes, or other skills including ringing up in peal. Thank you to everyone who has given up their time to help with organising and teaching over the last year.

Michaelmas also gave us the Freshers' Cycle Outing, organised by Samuel Canning to Trumpington, Haslingfield, Foxton and Harston; and SUA in Oxford; the London Outing organised by Samuel Spencer, and Christmas Dinner planned by the anti-curry officers Eleanor and Abby and hosted by Chris and Stella to bring the term to a close.

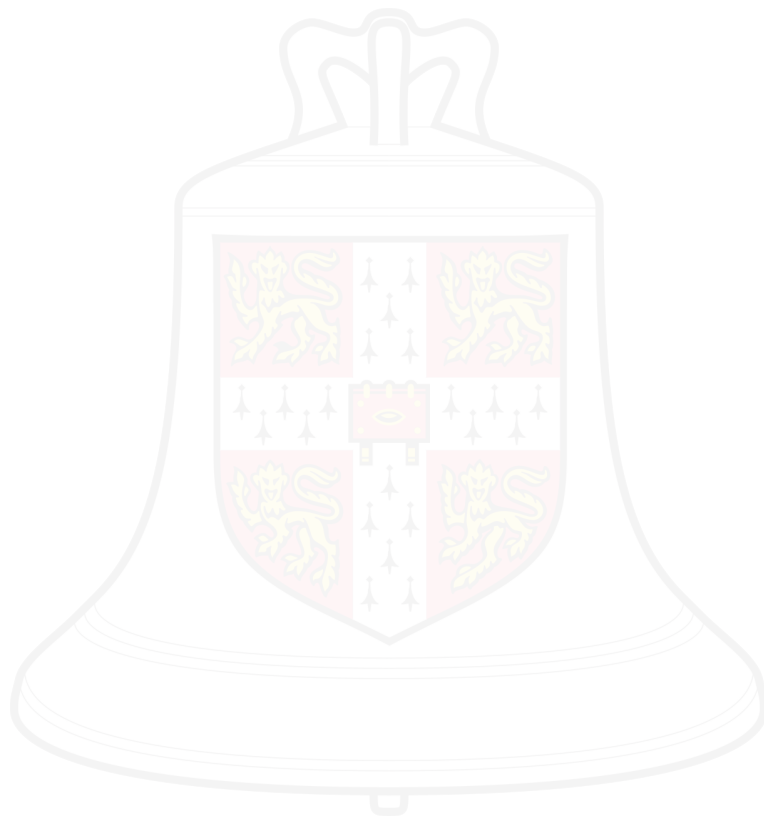
New Year was hosted by myself this year, in Saffron Walden, for a long weekend of ringing, muddy walks and slightly ridiculous board games. The socials continued throughout the year with pancakes, restaurant trips and craft nights thanks to Matthew, Eleanor and Abby as curry and anti-curry officers respectively. The Joint Outing was organised by Oxford this year, and after an early train, we enjoyed a day of ringing around Nottingham (and the trams)! We also scored a quarter with an all-female band to celebrate International Women's Day.

At the end of Lent term, we had the Annual Dinner at Lucy Cavendish College, and I am very grateful to the Secretary and President (among others) for their help with the dinner. The weekend of ringing included 3 peals and 9 quarters, as well as the Dinner Touch. I would like to thank the Dinner Touch band for the hard work and effort they put in practising for it, especially to Oliver Bennett and August Deeming for whom it was their debut performance.

Over the Easter break, we rang at Fulham to celebrate the Oxford-Cambridge boat race, and celebrated 50 years of Frank King being the University Bellringer. Despite the fact that term started only a couple of weeks ago, ringing is in full swing with Mere's Commemoration ringing, and weekly practices. This thriving year would not have happened without the rest of the committee. Oliver, Samuel, Matthew, Abby and Eleanor – thank you for your hard work, and thank you to everyone else who organised socials or outings during the year and I wish the incoming committee all the best.

Teaching Officer's Report - Eleanor Marshall

This year has seen the continuation of the Guild's rising popularity amongst people new to the ringing. We had over 200 new ringers sign up at the Freshers' fair, a 25% increase on last year's 160, due to the mini-ring and the incredible efforts of everyone who volunteered to teach. Almost 60 people attended the have-a-go sessions in Great St. Mary's and we have had a healthy group of learners this year. Many of the learners have now attended regular Guild practices, with some becoming familiar faces. We have worked to train up new teachers, many thanks to Samuel Johnson for running 'teaching the teachers' sessions and ART for providing M1 courses to current students. Thanks go to everyone who has helped teach this year, with over 50 hours of Guild teaching by nearly 20 different teachers, and especially to Amy Dunn who has taught at almost every session.



Steeplekeeper's Report - Matthew Collier

Despite having some big milestones such as the first Guild peal at StAG since 2015, it's been an uneventful year for the bells. In Michaelmas a small crack in the stay of the 7 was noticed, but this has been monitored and does not seem to be an issue. The new lock nut on the 3 is also holding much firmer than the previous installation.

We had planned to carry out the annual inspection within the last couple of weeks, however the church realised the belfry inspection light was not working and have requested we wait until it gets replaced to carry out the inspection. We had a quick look at the bells on Thursday and all seems to be in order. We will carry out the full inspection as soon as possible.

