

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting, held in the Jane Harrison Room, Newnham College, Cambridge, on Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> May 2023

## Members Present

President: J A Agg  
Master: K P G Jennings  
Secretary: K J Hawkins

John Hutchinson  
Andrew Roberts  
Faris Qureshi  
Oliver Richards  
Amy Dunn  
Johnny Tse  
Jadd Virji  
Dave Richards

Oliver Winkless-Clark  
Stella Johnson  
Greg Chu  
Melissa Nash  
Lena van Dongen  
Samuel Johnson  
Alex Hackett  
Sam Spencer

Lucy Hennessy  
Clarke Walters  
Catriona Agg  
Luke Smith  
Frank King  
Claire Barlow

The President opened the meeting at 14:03

## 1 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from:

Mark Damerell  
Dima Szamozvancev  
Chris Winkless-Clark  
Georgia Denham  
Richard Smith  
Alessandra Learmount

Vivian Nutton  
Christine Nutton  
James Ellison  
Jonathan Shanklin  
Patrick Brooke

## 2 Minutes of the Annual General Meeting 2022

These were proposed as a true and correct copy of the meeting by Clarke Walters, seconded by Sam Johnson, accepted unanimously, and signed by the President.

## 3 Matters Arising

### 3.1 Guild Photo Album

The Secretary informed the meeting that there has been progress on filling in the missing years from the Guild Photo Album, with many thanks to Megan Bardsley for managing to dig several of them out. Photos for the years 2015, 2016, and 2019 are still missing. It would be greatly appreciated if anyone who thinks they might have a copy of any of these (whether digital or otherwise) could forward them on to the committee.

The President reminded the meeting of the plan to digitise the old album (lost in 2002 but recently found) and then deposit it in the University Library for safekeeping. He expressed that it would be good to get all of the recent photographs in one place so that the history of the Guild can be properly preserved.

### **3.2 Minute Book**

The meeting was informed that, while the minute book had become out of date over the Covid-19 pandemic, it is now being updated with the minutes (and, where appropriate, signatures) from the past several years.

### **3.3 Handbells**

As the Guild handbells are currently seeing a lot of use, the committee is considering what steps need to be taken to ensure that they stay in good condition. Stella Johnson offered to transport some handbells to Bernard Stone in Oxfordshire for repair of some of the recent breakages. She suggested that it might be worth designating a set to be kept for special occasions such as the Dinner Touch. The President recalled that this had been done in the past, and would be a step worth considering. Stella Johnson suggested that the Barnett Bells could be the chosen set, with Andrew Roberts adding that these are also good bells for peals (and much nicer to ring than the dinner touch set). It was remarked that, with the number of handbell peals currently being rung, this may contribute meaningfully to additional wear on the bells. Jonathan Agg added that we also need to consider whether the current storage and transport situation is appropriate, suggesting that the new committee come up with proposals to ensure that the bells remain well looked after, and that this would be worth spending money on if necessary.

### **3.4 Update on the Guild Library**

The President reported that the library is still safely housed at OLEM, but that a better long-term storage solution is still needed for the more valuable books. Richard Smith and Paul Seaman have come up with various plans, and the best of these needs to be decided on and then progressed.

### **3.5 ART Award**

The Guild recently won the ART Sarah Beecham Youth Group Award (with many thanks to Lena van Dongen for writing up an excellent application), and consequently now has £500 of prize money available to spend on anything ringing-related. The Secretary suggested that these funds could be used to cover the remainder of Freshers' Fair expenses (as hire of the Charmborough Ring is partially covered by another ART grant), including the stall booking cost, flyer printing, and any other necessary expenditure. Any leftover money could be invested back into the teaching process, for example by using it to book St Clement's for teaching sessions or special practices where the teaching coordinators feel this would benefit learners.

Sam Johnson suggested that, as the Guild is getting short of ART logbooks and will inevitably need more of these next year, it may be worth ordering some more, with Kate Jennings adding that it may be worth waiting to see if ART re-runs a scheme where we had been able to receive free logbooks in the past. Stella Johnson commented that in the past this has only included 10 logbooks, and that we would almost certainly need more than this. Additionally, having too many is not a bad thing, as they do not become out of date quickly (Sam Johnson explained that they are updated, but that none of the changes made are usually major). Greg Chu reported that he has some further progression books which were removed from GSM at the spring clean, and that he would be able to give them to the new Teaching Officer if people would be interested in using them.

The President suggested that it might also be worth spending some money on teacher training, for example by running another ART Module 1 course. Regardless of what we decide to spend the money on, the Guild should try to make full use of the grant. Stella Johnson added that it would be worth making sure that the details of our successful application are passed on to the new Teaching Officer, in case we decide to apply again next year.

## 4 Election of New Members

The elections of Faris Qureshi to full membership, and Lynne Hughes to associate membership, were proposed by Greg Chu, seconded by Sam Johnson, and accepted unanimously.

## 5 Cambridge Towers

### 5.1 St Andrew the Great

Alex Hackett directed the meeting towards his Steeplekeeper's report, saying that he did not have much to add to it except regarding the recent handbell breakages. He summarised that StAG is in decent shape now that the tenor has a working clapper, and that the key issue remains sound control, as the bells seem to be becoming increasingly loud. The President clarified that this is the sound in the ringing chamber, and the volume of the bells as heard from outside the church remains unchanged. Alex Hackett said that he would continue to work with the incoming Steeplekeeper to address this. He added that the ropes are still doing well, and that though some are beginning to fall low this requires a trivial fix.

The Master reminded those present that ringers should only allow other ringers to enter the church building, as we cannot be responsible for letting in people attending other events which may be happening in the church at the same time as ringing practices. She also noted that the administrators at StAG would prefer for one person to be the point of contact for ringing matters, so all tower bookings and any other communications with the church should go through the Master. Alex Hackett added that any happenings in the tower should be reported to the Steeplekeeper as early as possible to facilitate a quick response, with Stella Johnson noting that this is particularly important if a band undertakes any maintenance themselves in order to continue ringing.

### 5.2 St Bene't's

Sam Johnson reported that the St Bene't's is still there, and that despite some of the ropes getting a little old the bells themselves are fine. He is keeping eye on the rope situation and switching out those which are at risk of fraying, for which purpose there are currently just enough spare ropes. However, more spare ropes will need to be ordered soon, which cannot be done until after a new bursar for the church is appointed. He explained that, with the death of the incumbent, he had maintained a good relationship with the parish secretary, but had lost his point of contact with the clergy. The President suggested that the churchwardens may be a point of contact worth exploring.

Sam Johnson conveyed that everyone at the church was very happy with the ringing during the mourning period, during which two fully muffled quarter peals were organised, and the bells remained fully muffled for all practices and service ringing. He said that he had received nice feedback, and wished for that to be passed on to the Guild. The President commented that it is good to be maintaining such a healthy relationship with the church, and that we shouldn't take for granted being able to do so much teaching and other ringing at Bene't's.

### 5.3 Great St Mary's

Luke Smith explained that although the simulator has been fixed, the power supply has been condemned, with Dave Richards adding that he does have parts with him to attempt a repair. Stella Johnson reported that people are often unsure of what the different wires are, and Kate Jennings added that a troubleshooting guide of some sort would be very helpful, as a few times it has been unclear what the problem with the simulator actually is. Dave Richards said that he plans to make the simulator a more permanent installation than the current jumble of wires, and intends to request a quote for a proper enclosure. He continued that there is now an intercom installed just outside the ringing chamber, which should make communication with the GSM staff in the shop downstairs easier. There are new vicar candidates coming in soon, with one due to take up post in September.

Frank King mentioned that there is a small chance the tower will be out of action for a bit, due to some flaking wood discovered in the void which may need to be remediated. He expects this to either be a trivial fix, or completely impossible, which we will only know once somebody has been to inspect the timbers.

## 5.4 Our Lady and the English Martyrs

The Master commented that the bells are the same as ever, and that there is another Guild practice there later this term. The President added that this is an excellent opportunity to practice handling heavier bells.

## 5.5 St Clement's

The main development at St Clement's is that Lynne Hughes has now taken over as the Ringing Manager, so she is now the point of contact for making tower bookings rather than Barry Johnson. The Master reminded the meeting of her email from Barry discussed at the last meeting, saying that there is a possibility that the Guild could reach an agreement to pay less to book the bells.

# 6 Presentation of Accounts

The Secretary presented the accounts as examined on Wednesday by Frank King. She explained that it looks like we made a large loss this year due to the cheque for last year's dinner expenditure clearing during this financial year. Taking cheques pending at the previous year end into account, the actual surplus for the year is around £1000, most of which is due to Wolfson College charging less than expected for the dinner. The accounts do not include some expenditure which remained pending at this year end, including our Central Council membership fee and annual donation to the Ringing World. Additionally, the Guild has not yet been charged for the new clapper at StAG, so this expenditure should be expected in the next financial year. The Steeplekeeper added that an estimate of this cost can be found in his report. The Master confirmed that we had reviewed the dinner bill with Wolfson before paying.

Frank King reminded the Secretary and Senior Treasurer that the accounts also need to be submitted to the Proctors in a timely fashion. However, Stella Johnson clarified that because our year end is early, the Proctors also require a set of accounts for the year up to September 30<sup>th</sup>, which clearly cannot be submitted until Michaelmas term. The Secretary recalled that this was indeed done in Michaelmas term last year.

The acceptance of the accounts was proposed by Stella Johnson, seconded by Alex Hackett, 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 did not have much to add to her report, only reiterating that the Guild has had a good year (the first fairly normal year since Covid), and one that she has enjoyed. A full account of the year can be found in the Master's Report.

The Teaching Officer again didn't have much to add to her report. She commented that while it was great to have lots of learners at the start of the year, this led to a problem with the number of available teachers struggling to keep up with the number of learners. Although this issue tends to alleviate later on in the year, it remains something for the incoming committee to keep in mind.

The Steeplekeeper commented that, other than amending his report to include mention of the recent handbell breakages, he had nothing more to add. The Assistant Master also did not have any comments for the meeting.

# 8 Election of Officers

## 8.1 Senior Officers

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

Position	Nominee	Proposer	Secunder
President	Jonathan Agg	Greg Chu	Jadd Virji
Senior Treasurer	David Richards	Kirsten Hawkins	Lena van Dongen
Accounts Examiner	Frank King	Ben Gladwyn	Kate Jennings

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	Secunder
Master	Kirsten Hawkins	Greg Chu	Jadd Virji
Secretary	Lena van Dongen	Kirsten Hawkins	Greg Chu
Assistant Master	Sam Spencer	Stella Johnson	Melissa Nash
Steeplekeeper	Amy Dunn	Alex Hackett	Stella Johnson
Teaching Officer	Lucy Hennessy	Kate Jennings	Lena van Dongen
Librarian	Andrew Cooke	Lucy Hennessy	Alex Hackett

These proposals were again accepted with no objections.

The following officers were co-opted, with the approval of the meeting:

Position	Nominee
Webmaster	Ben Gladwyn
Address List Keeper	Nicholas Small

## 9 Diary Dates

*Ascension Day Ringing, Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> May 2023* - several people are needed to ring handbells at St John's College before their midday service. Anyone interested in helping out should get in touch with the Master. Kate Jennings added that it is important to remember that the dress code is smart wear.

*University Sermon, Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> May 2023* - as always, it would be good to see as many people as possible at this extra service ringing.

*OLEM Practice, Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> June 2023*

*Cambridge District 6-Bell Striking Competition (Little Eversden), Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> June 2023* - the Guild usually enters a band (and this year there is an additional open category), so anyone interested in competing for the Guild should contact the Master.

*Ridgman Competition (Towcester), Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> June 2023* - Kate Jennings has already organised a band for the competition, and Jadd Virji is in charge of organising any practices before competition day.

*Rounders Match vs. the Cambridge Youths, Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> June 2023* - as well as the rounders match, there is also a picnic on Jesus Green beforehand. Kate Jennings added that if there is enthusiasm we will enter the Cardboard Boat Race again this year, and that as someone has already agreed to host the cardboard we just need people to help gather cardboard and build, as well as some victims for the Cam.

*Guild Week (Essex), Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> to Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2023* - the President summarised this event as five days of ringing with the wider Guild community, with plenty of opportunities for intensive practice. Clarke Walters asked whether there was a recommended location for accommodation, to which

Catriona Agg answered that this is the White Horse in Braintree. Jonathan Agg said that the organisers would be very happy to answer any questions people may have about the arrangements.

## 10 Any Other Business

Melissa Nash proposed a thanks to the outgoing committee, and wished good luck to the incoming officers. This was received with a round of applause.

Sam Johnson suggested that it should be a priority for the Guild to push for more people learning how to teach, as currently he is doing a lot of the teaching and it might be better to have some more of the younger Guild involved. He suggested that some of the good ringers who have done a little teaching in the past could make an effort to help out more in the future. Greg Chu pointed out that one of the main reasons why Sam is always at teaching is because nobody else has access to the belfry keys at GSM, which is necessary for tying the bells. Jonathan Agg suggested that the Guild could work on the logistics of this with the SCY officers. Sam Johnson reiterated that the main problem is that of a shortage of teachers. Melissa Nash also suggested that another set of keys to the tower itself could be useful for occasions when the Master is busy. The President added that we should consider how the facilities at St Clement's fit into the picture, though Sam Johnson explained that due to the limited space they are not ideal for the early stages of teaching bell handling. However, once learners are able to handle, exposure to different bells early in the teaching process is beneficial, so perhaps Clement's could become more useful in later terms when learners are progressing on to rounds and called changed. It was also mentioned that there may be upcoming initiatives to join up the teaching of ringing across Cambridge, which the Guild should look out for.

Kirsten Hawkins proposed that we are going to add Lena van Dongen as a signatory on the Guild accounts, and that we are going to change the address on the accounts to the Senior Treasurer's address. This proposal was seconded by Dave Richards, and all were in favour.

Kate Jennings reported that she had received an email regarding a peal board with a connection to the Guild. This summer will be the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of a Guild peal at Chale on the Isle of Wight, and the local churchwarden (who themselves has a connection to Cambridge) is very keen to explore the possibility of the Guild ringing a centenary peal. Chale has 6 bells, a good pub, and there is a 5-bed cottage in a neighbouring village where ringers could be accommodated (or alternatively in the aforementioned pub). There are several suggested dates which would be appropriate, including August 15<sup>th</sup> (the actual anniversary of the original peal), the slightly later bank holiday weekend, or September 16<sup>th</sup> which is Isle of Wight day. She appealed to anybody interested to get in touch, with the President adding that lots of early Guild Weeks were on the Isle of Wight, and that this sounds like an opportunity for a nice long weekend away. Frank King added that any peal rung would count as an overseas peal, in case this garners additional interest.

The President thanked Claire Barlow for her 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 14:47.

K J Hawkins



## Appendix: Officers' Reports

### Master's Report - Kate Jennings

I'm happy to report, like many other Master's reports before me, that the Guild has had a very successful year, packed with many events! There were also many firsts for people in the Guild (in hand and/or tower), including first QPs for Andrew Cooke, Lucy Hennessy, and Sam Spencer; first peals for Greg Chu, Andrew Cooke, Lena van Dongen, and Kirsten Hawkins; and first as conductor for Greg Chu, Kirsten Hawkins, Andrew Roberts (in a peal), Sam Spencer, and Oliver Winkless-Clark - apologies if I have missed anybody!

The remainder of Easter term after the 2022 AGM was busy, especially during May Week. We had a contingent who entered the Ridgman contest at King's Lynn and the EDA 6 bell striking contest. The traditional rounders match against the SCY took place too (which we traditionally lost). Chris Winkless-Clark and Jadd Virji organised Alt Dinner this year at Cote and the Guild went to the Trinity Hall June Event to celebrate the end of term.

In July, the students went to Blackpool for Guild Holiday, organised by Chris Winkless-Clark. We did some ringing, although a large part of the holiday was spent at the theme park and building sand forts at the beach. At the end of August, many students went to Beverley for a fantastic Guild Week. Thank you to Alan and Marj Winter for organising such a great week!

Michaelmas term was very busy at the start because we had many sign ups after the Freshers' Fair. As usual, we are very grateful to be able to hire the Charmborough Ring for this as it does wonders for recruitment. This year, we are also thankful to ART for launching a package for universities, including money for hiring a mini-ring as well as places on an ART course. 7 students took part in this course midway through Michaelmas term which boosted confidence in teaching many new learners. In addition to new ringers, we have had freshers who are existing ringers come regularly to StAG and Bene't's practices, with three of them taking on the challenge of being in the dinner touch for the Annual Dinner. The Assistant Master organised the cycle outing which took us from St Ed's to Horningsea and Jadd Virji organised the London Outing in the City of London - thanks to both for arranging these! We went to a formal at Peterhouse, made possible by James Ellison and Oliver Richards who booked us in. The SUA took place in Cambridge this year and was very successful largely due to the efforts of Melissa Nash and Stella Johnson. Students from other unis seemed to enjoy the weekend, especially the ceilidh. The final event of Michaelmas was Christmas dinner during which we served dinner to 20 people. Thank you to Ben Gladwyn and his housemates for letting us take over their kitchen for the evening.

Ben also organised New Year at his home in Maidenhead. This gave three of our ringers the opportunity to ring at Windsor Castle. There were QPs and tower visits, as well as a lovely day spent in Windsor.

Lent term was equally busy. Ben and his housemates let us make a mess of his kitchen again for Pancake day. The Joint Outing with the OUS took place in the Rugby / Coventry area this year and was organised by Chris Winkless-Clark. Around 25 people took part over the day! At the end of term, we had the Annual dinner which saw the return of the Loving cup. The dinner thankfully went very smoothly and I am very grateful to both the Secretary and the President (amongst many others) for their help with the dinner. Around 100 people attended with even more taking part in events over the weekend. Chris Winkless-Clark organised the ringing for the weekend, which included a QP made up of learners who had all been taught by the Guild.

Over the Easter break, we rang in London to celebrate the Oxford-Cambridge boat race. Although Easter term has only just started, we have been doing lots of ringing, such as ringing for the Mere's Benefaction service at Bene't's.

## Teaching Officer's Report - Lena van Dongen

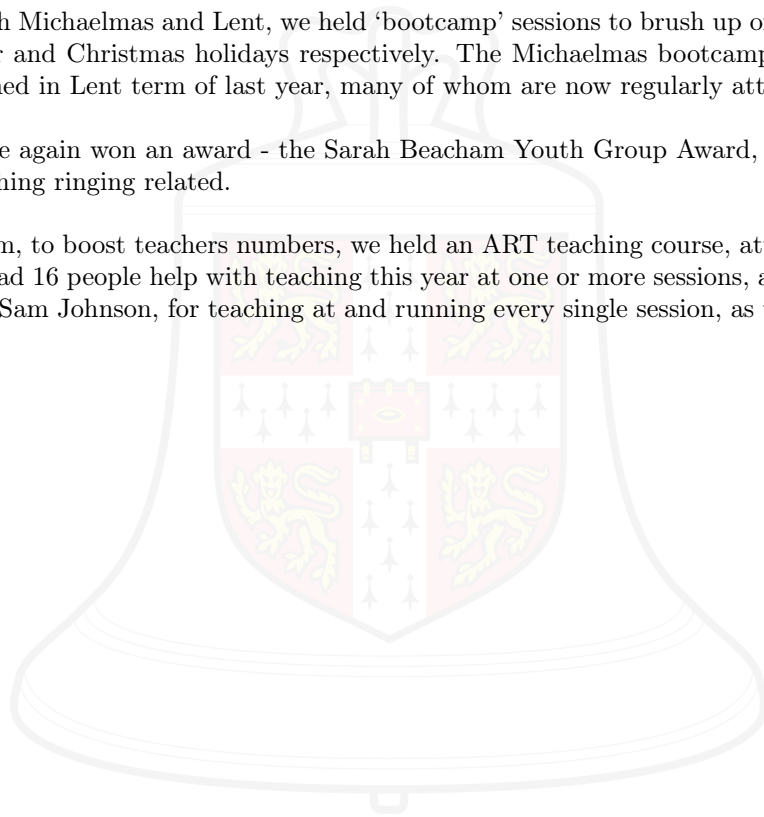
We have had another great year in teaching! The year started off strong with a very successful Freshers Fair, once again helped by the Charmborough Ring, where we had around 130 people signing up to the learners mailing list, 32 of which came to our 'Have a go' sessions the following weekend. Throughout Michaelmas we also had new learners coming to teaching sessions, and towards the end of Michaelmas we had around 10 regular learners. In Lent term we continued to have interest from new people, as well as having many regular learners continuing from Michaelmas term.

We have had teaching sessions three times a week for the first two terms, and now twice a week, with a continued equal focus on hand and towerbell ringing. We also strongly encourage learners to come to the regular practices alongside this, so they can benefit from ringing with other people as much as possible. This had given our learners the opportunity to make vast improvements, with a number having achieved their Level 1 Learning the Ropes, and now working towards rounds and calls and Plain Hunt in tower and touches of Plain Bob in hand. In particular, Andrew Cooke rang his first quarters in both hand and tower at the end of Lent term, and has now even rung a handbell peal!

At the start of both Michaelmas and Lent, we held 'bootcamp' sessions to brush up on ringing skills from before the summer and Christmas holidays respectively. The Michaelmas bootcamp session was aimed at ringers who joined in Lent term of last year, many of whom are now regularly attending practices.

In January we once again won an award - the Sarah Beacham Youth Group Award, winning £400 to be used towards anything ringing related.

In Michaelmas term, to boost teachers numbers, we held an ART teaching course, attended by 7 ringers. Overall, we have had 16 people help with teaching this year at one or more sessions, and a special thanks has to be given to Sam Johnson, for teaching at and running every single session, as well as doing all the ART assessments.





## Steeplekeeper's Report - Alex Hackett

While my predecessor had kindly wished me a less eventful year, this has not *quite* played out this way this year, but nevertheless much has gone wrong, much has been fixed and much as been achieved. An annual inspection was conducted during the summer as usual, and for this I owe thanks to Chris, Sam and Melissa. Baring a few loose bolts, primarily on stays, and a missing oil cap on the clapper of the 6, which was found and refit, nothing of any note or alarm was found. Furthermore, the lights in the tower now work properly, allowing work to take place there much more easily now, provided one remembers to turn it on before climbing the tower.

Indeed, all was well up until the point during Michaelmas where the repaired tenor clapper failed. I began the process of sorting a replacement from Taylor's, although it was certainly not done quite as quickly as it could have been with the failure happening right near the end of term. Given the wrought iron nature of the clapper, it would have been ideal to replace like with like, but sourcing a WI replacement at a reasonable price proved very challenging. I owe much thanks to Jonathan Agg, Richard Smith and many others for helping to put me into contact with Andrew Mills, who was able to source, after much searching, an appropriate, near original age WI clapper. Many thanks to Stella, Chris and Melissa for helping me transport the old clapper across town, and to Jonathan and Catriona Agg for storing the clapper at theirs until Andrew could pick it up. Eventually, the new clapper arrived and was fit by myself and Andrew, much to the delight of everyone, not least of all Jadd. We did this on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of Feb. The costs incurred were £350.00 for the wrought iron clapper and £85.00 for the new centre bolt, as the old one had been corroded beyond the point of repair. Andrew reserved the right to charge for labour, given that he transported to clapper to Cambridge and helped me fit it, but doesn't seem to have exercised that right as of yet. In fact, we still have not received the invoice. I requested that it be sent to Downing C/O Kirsten, so it would be ideal if it arrived ASAP. As of right now, we are still following up and will try to have an update send out to the new committee as soon as possible.

The second issue that has arisen at StAG relates to the sound control. StAG's main internal sound control is simply the air gap between the belfry and the void. There are thick carpets up at the belfry, covering over the trap door, the wooden panel that is to be lifted off and back onto the hatch to access the bells. Unfortunately the noise from the bells is getting increasingly louder and louder in the ringing chamber, to the point that it has become a problem, with almost unhealthy noise levels while ringing, and of course difficulty in hearing calls, corrections etc. I'm concerned that this will inevitably lead to a quarter (or worse!) being lost as a result of this. Having investigated the void & belfry, I cannot easily identify the cause of the sound problem. As a mitigation, I would suggest that when anyone is up in the tower, to ensure that the hatch to the belfry is covered over completely before leaving. My suspicion is that there is probably a hole in the floor of the belfry, or perhaps even just a large crack in the wood. I will be very happy to assist my successor in doing the annual StAG maintenance, (provided that this happens before, you know, I move abroad...) and hopefully we can make some progress in solving this issue. The stopgap for the time being is just my suggestion that bands select an especially loud conductor for their quarter/peal attempts.

Finally, regarding StAG, it was raised to me by Sam Johnson that the ropes on the 5 and 6 are falling a little bit low, and that he and others that are somewhat less, vertically challenged, than myself are finding themselves catching above the sally while ringing these bells. This will be a trivial adjustment to raise these ropes slightly when doing the maintenance, and it will provide a good opportunity to show the incoming steeplekeeper how to adjust/replace ropes when and if needed. In addition, the stay bolts are, in general, prone to coming loose relatively frequently. If you are ringing at StAG and notice that a stay feels particularly loose or strange, please do let the steeplekeeper know, since it is really an extremely quick and easy fix in most cases.

For an update on the handbells, all the sets (not including Stone Age Bruce, which remains in my possession and will be handed over to the new steeplekeeper when convenient) remain accounted for and in good condition. A great deal of impressive handbell ringing has taken place this year, and without intending to exclude anyone, I would like to draw attention to Andrew Cooke's first peal in hand back in April, as well as the first guild (handbell...) peal on water, back in March, running where the water-board quarters of last year walked, congratulations all!

There isn't much more to present here now, only to note that I will hand over the records and such to

my successor, including the ceremonial splicer when convenient.

