

Minutes of the Michaelmas Term Business Meeting, held in St Bene't's Church, Cambridge, on Friday 28th October 2022

Members Present

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

Greg Chu
Lena van Dongen
William Qin
Stella Johnson
Sam Spencer*
Lucy Hennessy*

Sam Johnson
Yanbo Yin
Faustyna Krawiec
Amy Dunn*
Andrew Cooke*
Chris Winkless-Clark

Thomas Haslam
Andrew Roberts
Michael D'Avanzo*
Ben Willetts
Melissa Nash
Daniel Stevens**

*Elected during the meeting

**Non-member

The President opened the meeting at 21:06

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from:

James Ellison
Elizabeth Hopper
Oliver Winkless-Clark
Dima Szamozvancev

Ben Gladwyn
Matthew Wadey
David Richards
Luke Smith

2 Minutes of the Lent Term Business Meeting 2022

These had been accepted as a true and correct copy at the AGM, and have now been signed by the President.

3 Matters Arising

Ringling room sound control at St Andrew the Great

Chris Winkless-Clark reported that some of the increased noise in StAG's ringing room had been due to the hatch between the void and the bells being left open, but that the bells are still very loud in the chamber even with the hatch closed. The steeplekeeper is in the process of sourcing additional insulation to solve this problem. Greg Chu added that the key issue regarding StAG Thursday evenings is that the noise greatly reduces the entire group's ability to hear the calls, making the bells very unpleasant to ring - and, additionally, that although the Guild is unlikely to be able to afford lavish insulation, some degree of additional insulation would go a long way towards improving conditions. Melissa Nash concurred that, at

present, it is very difficult for bands to hear corrections. Chris Winkless-Clark reassured the meeting that a solution is in progress. The President added that the Guild should discuss this matter with the church, though Chris Winkless-Clark pointed out that this insulation will be added to that which is already in place and approved by the church.

Kate Jennings mentioned that the church should also be asked to arrange for the main lights in the ringing chamber to be fixed, as currently evening ringing is taking place with 'mood lighting'. Stella Johnson predicted that this would be raised again at the next meeting.

Guild Library at OLEM

The President began by reminding the meeting of the current situation of the library; namely, that it is happily in-situ at OLEM, but still needs a proper bookcase, and a plan needs to be made in conjunction with the ringing master at OLEM to sort this out. Any help from members interested in the library would be much appreciated. Chris Winkless-Clark suggested that a bookcase had previously been donated, which could be worth investigation; however, Melissa Nash recalled a problem with getting it up into the ringing chamber. Greg Chu clarified that the bookcase being discussed was indeed donated, and is currently in use at OLEM, but that the books are currently not well filed because the shelf heights do not match the book sizes - what is really required is a glass-fronted and lockable bookcase in which to store the valuable books. Jonathan Agg said that he would talk to Richard Smith about making arrangements for this.

Chris Winkless-Clark recalled that at a previous meeting it had been discussed that the bookshelves were underneath the coat pegs, and that while there were plans to move the pegs this has not yet happened. The President agreed that this needs to be investigated, and Ben Willetts pointed out that moving them may require permission from the church and/or diocese, though Jonathan Agg suggested that OLEM being a Catholic church may make this less of an issue. Greg Chu added that it may be worth looking at whether the bookcases are made a permanent installation by being fixed to the walls. The discussion was concluded with a final appeal for anyone interested in helping to work through this to get in touch.

4 Relevant Matters from the AGM

Guild Photo Album

As mentioned at the AGM, the old Guild photo album which was lost for many years has now been found, and is currently being kept at GSM. The current plan is to digitise the book, and give the physical copy to the University Library for safekeeping, where it would also be possible to arrange for viewings on dinner day. Using another photo album started by Max Drinkwater when the original was lost, it should be possible to collate a complete collection of Guild photographs, right from the very beginning of the Guild. Melissa Nash asked whether these are the photographs of the resident Guild taken after each year's AGM - the President confirmed that this is the case, and that these photos used to be taken by professional photographers, so the old photographs also have the names of members laid out nicely beneath each photograph. It shouldn't be too much effort to imitate this for the more recent photographs, provided that there are some volunteers to assist with this (as well as the digitisation process).

The issue of arranging key fobs for access to GSM on SCY practice nights has been resolved since the AGM, as these have recently been issued. The Master reminded the meeting that everyone who has been issued a key should read the associated declaration, and inform Liz Orme that they have read it. There may also be a form to sign at a later stage. Melissa Nash added that the forms administered by the church essentially require you to look after the key as if it were your own - Ben Willetts concurred, explaining that the church is also able to disarm individual key fobs if they are lost, and that the lack of forms received so far is the church's responsibility, and not something for key-holders to worry about.

5 Relevant Matters from the Guild Week Meeting

Since the meeting Brian Meads has volunteered to organise the 2023 Guild Week in Essex, on the usual dates in August. The Master explained for new members that Guild Week is five days spent away ringing with Guild members past and present, and that recently there has been a strong presence of current students. This summer's Guild Week was a great opportunity to get to know some of the older Guild members, as well as being a very fun event overall.

Melissa Nash asked whether it had been decided if the student accommodation was to be in a B&B again, or revert back to camping or a hall as had been the case pre-covid. The President reported that this is still being investigated, and that any suggestions or particularly strong opinions would be taken into account in the planning.

6 Election of New Members

The following were proposed for membership by Sam Johnson, seconded by Greg Chu, and accepted unanimously.

Sam Spencer (Downing)
Lucy Hennessy (Trinity Hall)
Michael D'Avanzo (Jesus)
Ka Chung Tse (Trinity)
Thomas Tweedley (Girton)
Kevin Ashmore (Hughes Hall)

Andrew Cooke (Pembroke)
Laura Araujo de Freitas (Corpus Christi)
Amy Dunn (Emmanuel)
Taylor Kennedy (King's)
Tyentyen Chen (Wolfson)
Oliver Richards (Peterhouse)

7 Cambridge Towers

St Andrew the Great

Melissa Nash summarised the situation at StAG as one light fixed, and one light broken. The Master reminded those present that there is an iHub event taking place in the church at the same time as StAG practices, and that we are not permitted to let members of their group enter the church, nor are they meant to let us into the church. There have been issues in the past when ringers have let in people not affiliated with our group, and have gotten into trouble with the church, so be mindful of this when opening the StAG door and encourage any non-ringers to contact someone from their group who can let them in.

St Bene't's

Sam Johnson reported that the ropes are showing signs of wear, and hence that he is looking into sourcing some new ones, and meeting with Jonathan Shanklin soon for his assistance with splicing. The rope on the 4th is particularly stretchy, but there is a plan in place to have this solved hopefully before next Friday, depending on whether time can be found to do the work before then. Stella Johnson suggested that the work could be delayed until after the SUA striking competition, remarking that it could lead to some very 'entertaining' ringing - however Sam confirmed that it will probably be fixed sooner rather than later, as the bell is presently not nice to ring.

Great St Mary's

The President remarked that Great St Mary's remains available to the Guild, and are a lovely ring of bells. There have been two stays broken in consecutive weeks however these are now both fixed, and additionally the simulator is available for the Guild to use. Chris Winkless-Clark enquired about issues with the simulator, which Jonathan Agg explained should be resolved by additional reflective tape on the wheels. Stella Johnson added that not many students know how to use the simulator, and that it might be worth giving some instruction to anyone interested. Chris also recalled that there had been some hardware issues when students has attempted to use the simulator in the past (which Dave Richards was

able to resolve), though Jonathan Agg suggested that if there were issues with the computer in GSM then a personal laptop with a copy of Abel installed could be connected to the simulator instead.

OLEM

These are beautiful bells, and a good place to practice handling - the Master reminded the meeting of the Guild practice here on November 9th, from 6:30 to 8:00.

St Clement's

Chris Winkless-Clark noted that these seemed nice when he rang there recently, and that since the last meeting additional sound insulation has been installed so that the bells are no longer deafening inside the chamber. Sam Johnson added that a simulator has recently been installed, along with a video feed to see the bells moving from the ringing chamber. The President suggested that the Guild should come up with a plan to make the best use of the bells for teaching purposes, however the Master explained that the main concern is the cost of tower hire (and that this had already led to the recent learners' practice being held at GSM rather than at St Clement's). It was suggested that the Guild should talk to Barry Johnson about this, as Clement's is the best place to teach in Cambridge, and it would be a shame for cost to remain a barrier.

8 Diary Dates

SUA, Friday 4th to Sunday 6th November 2022 - This will be a weekend of open ringing, striking competitions, and socialising, with the final schedule due to be published soon. Stella Johnson and Melissa Nash asked that those who are planning to attend join the WhatsApp group, and fill out the google form so that the right amount of food can be prepared.

University Sermon, Sunday 6th November 2022

OLEM Practice, Wednesday 9th November 2022, 18:30 to 20:00

London Outing, Saturday 19th November 2022 - This year's outing is being organised by Jadd Virji, with a full itinerary of towers confirmed (including Aldgate, Bishopsgate, St Giles Cripplegate, Clement St Danes, and Hart Street), and further information to be sent out by email soon. Attending students usually travel into London by train on the morning of the outing - Greg Chu suggested that this will likely be the train arriving at Liverpool Street Station at 9:15, as the first tower begins at 9:30.

StAG Surprise Major Practice, Saturday 26th November 2022 - This practice will be a great opportunity to develop the Guild's Surprise Major ringing, and is to be well supported by experienced Guild members. Any particular method requests (especially for anything unusual) should be sent to Kirsten Hawkins.

The Master mentioned that the University of London Society of Change Ringers' annual dinner will be taking place on the same day.

Annual Guild Dinner, Saturday 18th March 2023 - to be held at Wolfson College.

Guild Week, Saturday 19th to Wednesday 23rd August 2023 - to be held in Essex

Chris Winkless-Clark added that the annual joint outing with the Oxford University Society of Change Ringers will take place on February 18th 2023, and will be around the Rugby/Coventry area. Any help with transport from people able to drive would be much appreciated, and Chris will be in touch with further information in due course.

9 Any Other Business

The Master opened a discussion of the future of the Loving Cup at the Annual Guild Dinner. She explained for the benefit of new members that during the handbell touch, a cup containing various alcohols is passed around the room, and Guild members bow to one another and drink from the cup. This practice was stopped at the previous dinner due to the Covid-19 risk posed by sharing the cup, however it needs to be decided whether the tradition should be reinstated, whether in a modified form or as in pre-covid times. After liaising with Wolfson College (who are hosting this year's dinner) they would be happy for us to have a Loving Cup, but would not advise on whether it would be appropriate given the continuing public health situation. She added that having a Loving Cup would lead to a small price increase for those with drinking tickets (probably around £1 per person).

Andrew Roberts thought that it we shouldn't lose the tradition, and Melissa Nash agreed that there was always the option for those who are uncomfortable taking part not to drink from the cup. Kate Jennings queried how some people not drinking would work, but Melissa explained that every year (even pre-covid) there are some members who don't drink, but only bow and pass the cup on. Stella Johnson agreed that she likes the bowing tradition, but personally doesn't see the point of taking the risks of sharing a cup, though added that not being a drinker may alter her opinion. She summarised that it would be a shame to lose the tradition entirely, and even if drinking from the cup is retired we should at least keep the bowing aspect. The President added that another benefit of the Loving Cup ceremony is that it keeps everyone quiet while the handbell touch is being rung.

Another issue raised by Andrew Roberts was that at the previous dinner sufficient explanation of the ceremony may not have been given, as ringers from the OUS and UL sitting nearby had been very confused. It was confirmed that an explanation had been given, but agreed that it could be done even more obviously in future years.

The President suggested that the overall mood of the meeting was that the Loving Cup should return in full, so long as there is an option not to drink from the cup, and there was a general sense of accord. Chris Winkless-Clark pointed out that many members not resident in Cambridge or not present at the meeting would likely be in favour of keeping the cup. Jonathan Agg confirmed this to be the case, as it is a strong Guild tradition (as the covid was the first occasion where the ceremony did not happen in full).

Ben Willetts queried why the Loving Cup would be so expensive, to which Melissa Nash replied that the price can vary based on whether the college charges corkage for any alcohol purchased by the Guild independently, or whether the college's own alcohol would need to be used. The President also mentioned that the recipe may be difficult to scale up or down due to the quantities of brandy, port, and wine involved. Greg Chu asked whether a non-alcoholic Loving Cup had been considered, and the Master suggested that a Loving Cup of fruit punch rather than alcohol would bring down the price. She said that she will email Wolfson's conference manager to ask about the details of arranging a Loving Cup, and what the price would be for the different options available. Melissa Nash wondered whether it would be worth investigating if paying corkage for independently purchased alcohol could be cheaper than acquiring it from the college, and Chris Winkless-Clark added that it may be worth altering the recipe to make it cheaper. Jonathan Agg said that the recipe can vary from year to year, and Stella Johnson recalled that James Ellison had tried mixing some different proportions of the alcohols previously, so perhaps he could be consulted. Chris Winkless-Clark suggested that diluting the other alcohols with a greater proportion of wine would make it cheaper, but admitted that this could upset the ratios needed for a good recipe.

The President asked the meeting if they were happy with the extent of the discussion, and there were no objections.

Andrew Roberts asked the meeting whether somebody else would be willing to take over the running of service ringing at St Bene't's on Sunday mornings while he is not ringing - the Master suggested that someone could be nominated each week from the ringers who attend, though it may be better to have a plan arranged in advance. Andrew suggested that Sam Johnson could delegate the task if he was there at the start of ringing, as he runs the ringing at Bene't's outside of term time, however Sam pointed out that this would require him to be there on time. Stella Johnson suggested that Jonathan Shanklin may

be happy to run the ringing. Sam Johnson said that he will make sure that someone is nominated to run the ringing each week, and the matter was decided to be resolved.

With no further business, the President closed the meeting at 21:40.

K J Hawkins