

Minutes of the Guild Week Meeting held in the Common Room, Grey College, Durham, on Sunday 17th August 2014

Members Present

President: R A Smith
Master: R K Flockton

Jonathan Agg	Chris Johnson	Philip Saddleton
Nick Butler	Anita Kirkman	Jonathan Shanklin
James Dann	Trevor Kirkman	Nicholas Small
Max Drinkwater	Naomi Laredo	Luke Smith
John Harrison	Barbara Le Gallez	Nick Sturgess
Christine Hill	Henry Lewis	Richard Underwood
Peter Hill	Brian Meads	Ian Vincent
Robin Heppenstall	Vivian Nutton	Richard Youdale
Andrew Johnson	Martin Press	

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from: Alan Griffin, Dickon Love, Robin Shipp, John Limbach, Chris Rogers, Hugh Pettifer, Chris Northeast, Robin Hall, Martin Bright, Niki Bright, Patrick Brooke, Claire Barlow, Ken Darvill.

2. Minutes of the 2013 Guild Week Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting have been available on the website for some time. They were proposed as a true account by Barbara Le Gallez and seconded by Max Drinkwater. They were accepted *nem. con.*

3. Matters Arising

The photo album that was created in order to replace the missing one is now only missing six or seven photographs. Max Drinkwater agreed to send an email to the global mailing list giving details of the years that are incomplete.

4. New Members

There were no new members to be elected.

5. 2014 (Current) Guild Week

There were no current Guild Week matters. Chris Johnson proposed a vote of thanks to Rod and Karen Lebon for the effort they have put in to organising the current Guild Week and was agreed by the group.

6. Future Guild Weeks

There was much discussion on the future of Guild Week. The end of the week usually suffers so it was suggested that the week could be shortened to four days instead. The number of current students who attend is declining and Max Drinkwater said that the biggest issue for him as a student was the money. It all adds up even cutting out accommodation which is usually the biggest expense. It was discussed whether students would prefer a shorter period, fewer towers so more free time to do other things, and no perceived obligation to be at every one.

Brian Meads asked that, given there were no current undergraduates last year, what do the current students want and why did they decide not to come. Given the lack of undergraduates last year, it was decided at last year's meeting not to yet organise anything for 2015. Richard Smith said that although there had not been a formal consultation with the resident Guild, only informal pub sessions, a questionnaire was undertaken in 2009 but this had not been very conclusive and there was no underlying common theme.

Given the money seemed to be the biggest issue for students, Peter Hill suggested following a model similar to the one followed by Oxford. A church hall is often used for accommodation whilst a few other people use hotels instead. Transport is organised by bus. There are many modern scout halls around which have kitchen and showers and are not that expensive. Their tours seem a more cohesive affair and also include the elusive 30 something generation. Andrew Johnson commented that a mass of people was still needed. Naomi Laredo thought that fewer towers might encourage families to attend. It was not thought that the OUS Guild Week had peals or quarters and, if there were none on the Guild Week, would this decrease numbers? A quick poll indicated that just under half the people present would be less inclined to go if there were no peals or quarters. It was suggested that if people want to ring a peal, then more should be organised during the year instead of during Guild Week. Brian Meads said that he doesn't mind if the peals were rung for the Guild or not. This might help include families in which there was only one Guild member. James Dann said that people often organise peals with others who form a much smaller group. Jonathan Shanklin said that you usually only find out fairly late on who wants to ring in a peal.

John Harrison said that there was still uncertainty about over what changes were going to be tried and by whom. Trevor Kirkman suggested that the President and Master organise something and then invite everyone else along. This approach would be the other way round to the usual when the students just tacked on. The President asked for a poll to indicate whether, if something like this were arranged, people would support this. The majority agreed they

would. It was asked if there was any way to integrate with Guild New Year. Vivian Nutton said that there have been other activities during the week in the past, and that hotel discounts are available if booked early. The peal and quarter peal bands were organised in advance this year and Max Drinkwater felt that this was a good thing. Richard Smith asked whether the undergraduates would feel too much responsibility and noted that the OUS tours were not organised by undergraduates.

Chris Johnson commented that people who have organised past Guild Weeks often have intimate knowledge of that part of the country as it is then easier to organise and avoid unrewarding towers. Jonathan Shanklin had organised Guild Week in Nantwich, and said he wasn't hindered by not knowing the area well. He stated that much can be organised by obtaining an association report for the area although this would mean less knowledge about the go at the towers. Ian Vincent suggested that the towers and the accommodation could be split between people to ease the load. Trevor Kirkman said that local knowledge would make it easier to twist arms etc. He would like a commitment from the undergraduates so efforts could be made to find a church hall so as to find a suitable location and go from there.

Richard Underwood raised the topic of the timing of Guild Week and whether the undergraduates would prefer a different week in the summer. The need to avoid the bank holiday weekend was brought up and earlier in the summer would likely increase the chance of clashing with family holidays. The average stay during this year's week is 4.6 nights and, from a poll those present, only one person would be less inclined to come if it were not a full week. Brian Meads suggested holding it from Friday to Tuesday whilst Jonathan Shanklin suggested Thursday to Monday in order to avoid Friday traffic. Nicholas Small raised the point that it would then eat into two weeks as happened with the Guild Week in Cornwall. About half of those present were in favour of keeping Saturday to Friday. It was noted that there would always be a spread of opinion and dichotomy of views so some people were always going to disagree. Vivian Nutton commented that it might depend on where the week was being held as this would affect travel times and most of the people live to the south of Birmingham and east of Taunton. Chris Johnson spoke of a Guild Week that was organised by Brian Price which moved about during the week. Richard Smith suggested a shorter duration but adding an adjunct for those who wanted to stay for longer. Following a poll, thirteen people would like the duration to be shortened and five did not. A shorter week would mean fewer opportunities for people to come. James Dann said that not too many changes should be made at once and Peter Hill said that since the people we want to target aren't here, there is a danger of repeating ourselves.

Max Drinkwater felt that September would be better for undergraduates as many are often undertaking placements in July/August and Peter Hill noted that September would interfere with school time but would be cheaper. James Dann agreed that he would prefer September. Although none of those present would want it to be moved to September, if more undergraduates were to attend then it might be agreeable. A poll showed that six people would be less likely to come if it were in September. Chris Johnson wished the minutes of this meeting to be sent to the resident Guild to get their feelings on the matter and that many of the points raised are important for consideration in a smaller group.

John Harrison commented that emphasis should be placed on better informing people about what exactly Guild Week is. It seemed agreeable to put the undergraduates in the driving seat but be careful not to put the onus of organising on them. It was decided to keep the date for now but be willing to move it if sufficient notice is given. Richard Smith volunteered to be in overall charge of the 2015 Guild Week and would ask for local knowledge as appropriate. Consultation would occur with the resident Guild and the results of this will be made available as the end of October along with an outline of the plan including the dates and location. It was also agreed not to do anything about the 2016 Guild Week until after the results of the consultation.

7. Diary Dates

The London Outing will be held on Saturday 29th November 2014.
The Guild Dinner will be held on Saturday 14th March 2015.

8. Any Other Business

Evensong at GSM is to move forwards from 6.30pm to 5.30pm for a trial period from the beginning of November. This means that it will clash with the quarter peal slot at Bene't's so further discussions will take place about this nearer the time about the clash. Vivian Nutton commented that the President had put forward a number of proposals in the run up to the AGM and enquired as to the situation since then. The President commented that he felt the job of the President was to provide support and enable the resident Guild to do what they want to do. Changes have already been decided on with regard to training new recruits. The cycle outing will be an afternoon affair in central Cambridge and have a larger emphasis on teaching. In general, it is intended to have more focussed teaching sessions on the simulator at GSM which are a much nicer and easier to ring peal of bells than Bene't's, which is where teaching currently occurs. Nicholas Small will help put the relevant people in contact concerning a joint meeting with the Cambridge district ringers to improve relations. Jonathan Shanklin suggested that termly updates be sent to the global mailing list to keep members informed.

The meeting was closed at 21:23.

R K Flockton