

# **Peterborough Diocesan Guild of Church Bellringers Peterborough Branch**

## **Minutes of the AGM held on Saturday 21 January 2023**

**at**

**St John the Baptist Church, Barnack, PE9 3DN**

### **Attended by:**

Deborah Bray, Chris Burgess, Julian Burton, Andrew Christie, Bernie Clapp, Helen Cornford, Jill Cowcill, Alex Dyer, Chris Edis, Nick Elks, Hilary Hardie, Yvette Hazelwood, Alex Heaton, Lottie Jenkinson, Sue Marsden, Mike Mills, Caroline Mould, Barbara Mylott, Joan Parker, Wynne Peterson, John Riley, Chrissie RobertsLewis, Robin Rogers, Judith Rogers, David Teall, Pat Teall, James Thorpe, Helena Thorpe, Angela Whiteway, Nikki Wilmot, Sylvia Upex

### **Guild Representatives:**

Richard Alton, Helen Alton, Cathy Dixon, Simon Dixon

### **1. Welcome**

AD welcomed everyone to the meeting.

He reported that 4 members of the Branch had died in the year and asked for a minute's silence.

Ian Burrows	Barnack
John Denning	Polebrook
Tony Evans	Castor and other towers
John Wilson	Nassington

### **2. Vote of Thanks**

Alex Dyer thanked Canon Margaret Venables and Mike Mills for leading the service today; Charles Cornford for playing the organ; and the committee, especially Hilary, for organising the AGM and the refreshments.

### **3. Apologies**

David Banks, Ronnie Fraser, Steve Fuller, Lorna Foglietta, Sally Hudson, Derek and Sue Jones Julie Nicholson, Julie Pocock, Pamela Pohling Brown, Anne Russell, Michael Smedley, Diana Street, Paul Reed, Jane Robinson, Jane Webb, Elaine Wilkinson, Terry Wright, members from Ginton

### **4. Approval of Minutes of 2021 AGM - 15 January 2022**

Proposed by Hilary Hardie and seconded by Julian Burton. Approved as a true record.

### **5. Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising

**6. Officer's Reports:** All reports are posted on the Branch website and are also appended to these minutes

**Ringling Master:** Please see attached report

**Steward's Report:** Please see attached report

**Event Organiser Report:** HH reported that the Branch Outing planned for August was cancelled due to lack of interest. She had nothing to add to the Ringling Master's report.

**Treasurer's Report and Branch Accounts for 2022** have been posted on the Branch website.

**7. Adoption of Accounts for 2022:** Proposed by David Teall and Seconded by Chrissie RobertsLewis. Adopted by the meeting

**8. Castor Ringling School Report:** HH presented her report, which is on the website and is attached to these minutes. In summary she felt that the School was in good order and that it was continuing to train new ringers.

**9. Election of new members.** The following have been nominated and accepted as new members to the Peterborough Branch:

Rosie Russell (J)	Nassington
Wynne Peterson (J)	Nassington
Jane Tate	Nassington
Tim Mason	Nassington
Olivia Mason (J)	Nassington
Holly Pederson (J)	Castor
Clara Pederson	Castor
Mark Willis	Castor

The above were nominated as a group by Hilary Hardie and seconded by Jill Cowcill, and approved by the meeting. Their welcome packs will be presented at an appropriate practice, depending on when the majority would be present.

#### **10. Presentation of Certificates**

HH reported that the following had rung their first Quarter Peal in the year.

Deborah Bray	Castor
Geoff Bridges	Wittering band, rung at Barnack
Steve C Brown	Castor
Steve Fuller	Nassington
Sally Hudson	Ufford band, rung at Wansford
Matthew Osborne	Wittering band, rung at Nassington

Those at the meeting were presented with their certificates by AD. HH will find a suitable time to present the rest.

## **11. Election of Branch Officers for 2023**

Alex Dyer announced that he would be standing down from his role as chairman. He thanked all the committee members and branch members who had supported him during his years in office.

<b>Position</b>	<b>Nomination</b>	<b>Proposed by</b>	<b>Seconded by</b>
Chairman	H Hardie	A Dyer	C Burgess
Ringling Master	J Thorpe	H Hardie	Y Halewood
Assistant Ringling Master	J Robinson	C Mould	A Heaton
Secretary	Vacant		
Treasurer	A Christie	A Dyer	D Teall
Steward	N Elks	H Thorpe	S Marsden
Press Correspondent	Vacant		
Guild Management Committee Representative	N Elks	H Hardie	C Burgess
100 Club Representative	H Hardie	C Mould	A Heaton
Examiner of Accounts	J Burton	A Christie	Y Halewood
Branch Committee Members (3)	D Bray C Mould H Thorpe	J Burton	A Heaton

The above were all elected, unopposed.

Alex Dyer wished Hilary Hardie every success in taking the Branch forward and thanked her for taking on the role. HH thanked AD for all that he had done as chairman and then took the Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

## **12. Nomination of Guild Officers:**

The Guild Secretary, Helen Alton, spoke to the meeting, but it was not necessary to nominate officers at present.

## **13. Discussion/nomination of Branch events and programme for 2023**

The ringing master proposed that the following should take place in 2023:

8 bell practices each month at Castor  
Striking workshops  
Ringing for evensong at the cathedral  
Afternoon tea and ring (Diana Street has kindly offered to organise this, again)  
Tour – timing of the tour to be reconsidered

Ringing for the coronation was discussed and guidelines will be issued in due course.  
The Guild will hold a training session on how to post and link events on BellBoard.

#### **14. Address by visiting Guild Officer**

Simon Dixon addressed the meeting concerning changes to the branch boundaries and to the rules. Draft documents have been posted on the web site and members are asked to consider the options that have been suggested and make comment via the Chairman or Guild representative (Nick Elks). HH and NE will be attending a Guild wide meeting to discuss the proposals to be held in early March.

The meeting closed at 4.30pm.

#### **Attached Reports:**

##### **Ringling Master's Report January 2023**

This year can be summarised as a year of post-pandemic recovery. With restrictions lifted, those who wished, have been able to re-establish their ringing friendships and regain some of their ringing confidence.

##### **Practice Nights:**

The pattern across the branch reflects, so I understand, ringing nationally, with continued slow loss of practice nights and active towers but this counterbalanced with developing centres of activity attracting ringers from further afield. This year Easton on the Hill and King's Cliffe reported that they had not been able to re-establish their practice nights after the pandemic and these details were sadly removed from the branch website. The establishment of a practice night at Wittering has been a pleasing step in the other direction.

##### **Quarter peals:**

St Mary's Peterborough remains a centre of activity ringing, by my count 22 quarter peals including opportunities for many firsts - a first QP, a first inside to doubles, a first as conductor. St Mary's ringers have also been active in supporting quarter peal ringing at Glington, Barnack and Nassington, including two first quarter peals for members of the Wittering band. The Cathedral was just a step behind with 17 quarter peals this year including 2 first quarter peals of surprise major, first quarter and first peal of Stedman Caters.

The branch lost 2 stalwarts of local ringing this year. We lost a real gent in Geoffrey Gent with St Mary's Peterborough, Glington and the Cathedral remembering him with quarter peals. And Tony Evans was also lost to us. Tony augmented the bells at Castor to eight and established the

Saturday morning ringing school there. He was remembered with quarter peals rung at St Mary's, Castor and the Cathedral. We also lost John Denning a former member of the Warmington band and they rang a QP in his honour recently.

Will Bosworth my incredibly talented assistant ringing master left Peterborough to take up a job in Dublin and the Cathedral marked his departure with a quarter of Little Bob Maximus.

In May a peal of Cambridge Major was rung by branch members with Guild support at St John's in Peterborough to celebrate the arrival of their new vicar Michelle Dalliston who is also wife of the Cathedral Dean. As Ringing Master I responded to requests for help from Warmington to ring extended touches of Cambridge Minor. I was also pleased to score a quarter peal of bob minor at Warmington including a fully recovered ex-branch secretary Sylvia on the treble. I was particularly pleased as our previous attempt ended prematurely, and was the first time that I had conducted someone into an ambulance in quite that way.

### **Across the borders with Guild collaboration:**

In February I attended the Guild meeting for branch ringing masters to exchange ideas, celebrate successes and recognise common problems. It is fair to say that there are a significant number of people across the Guild who have their doubts about whether the borders between branches, as they are currently drawn are working in the interests of local ringers. Whilst redrawing these borders is a slow process that may or may reach any conclusion there is no need to wait we can forge ahead not respecting the borders wherever they happen to be drawn May also saw a successful Beyond Bob Minor workshop which was a collaboration between myself and Guild Officers, this was an opportunity taken up by a small number of branch members and took place over the border at Wadenhoe, borders were not respected!

### **Striking events:**

In April and June I put on a 2 striking workshops that included branch members using the electronic sensors and computer simulator at St Martin's in Stamford, because after all, borders should not be respected. April's physical striking workshop at Cotterstock had to be cancelled because I caught covid. Even covid brought some positives as well as the tragic losses. Born out of a desire to maintain our skills during lockdown the Guild established online training sessions. I have twice this year continued this idea and delivered evening online training sessions on ringing theory related to Beyond Bob Minor with virtual attendance including but not limited to branch members - because in a connected world borders make even less sense.

We returned to the real world with a rearranged striking workshop at Cotterstock in September and we put four branch members through their paces.

In November a quarter peal was rung at King's Cliffe. Thank you to the branch steward for meeting me ahead of this to check, at the request of King's Cliffe, that their bells were fit for the attempt. Some nuts were replaced then 6 nuts rang a nicely struck QP as a striking workshop event.

### **Warmington's Eight Bell Project:**

A large number of branch members have collaborated well to help the Warmington ringers take their first steps into 8 bell ringing. This sort of focused practice arranged around a ringing need rather than a geographic location is clearly very popular.

**Cream tea:**

Diana Street again organised a Sunday afternoon cream tea, with ringing at Yaxley, Fletton and Stanground...all 3 towers across the Guild border!

**Eight bell practice:**

Throughout the year the eight bell practice at Castor on the first Friday of every month has continued. Nominally known as the branch practice, this has attracted supporters and learners across borders from neighbouring branches especially Rutland, as well as neighbouring Guilds especially Lincolnshire. Branch members including graduates of the Warmington eight bell project have benefitted from this support to develop in bob major as well as surprise major including spliced. The practice has supported the method choices of the national project nick named "project pickled egg" by favouring the core seven surprise major methods, hello Cornwall and Lessness and ironically, given our sources of support, it was goodbye to Rutland, Lincolnshire and Pudsey Surprise Major.

**Ringling for the Queen:**

2022 will forever be remembered as the year we rang for Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. In June it was in celebration of her Platinum Jubilee. By September we were ringing again in memorium, and for the Proclamation of King Charles. Amongst ringers there was a great deal of organisation and running up and down stairs changing configurations of muffles.

Peals were rung at Castor and The Cathedral and the following all rang:

St John's Peterborough

St Mary's Peterborough

Thornhaugh

Wansford

Wittering

Yarwell

Barnack

Maxey

Polebrook

Marholm

Sutton

Water Newton

Ufford

Nassington

Bulwick

Fotheringhay

Glinton

Easton on the Hill

Oundle

Warmington

Cotterstock

For those whose focus is to keep the maximum number of bells ringing, this represents a significant achievement. It is recorded on BellBoard for posterity and the Guild has collated a summary of activity across the diocese to enter into Guild records

### **Peterborough Branch Steward's Report January 2023**

For those who might not be sure about what the 'Branch Steward' does, the role is to support towers with help and advice regarding tower maintenance, and provide help where possible with inspection of bell fittings and general preventative maintenance. I try to concentrate my limited resource on helping towers where there is no active band, or where the ringers are not sure or able to do maintenance themselves.

It is important that the bells are well looked after - neglecting to check them regularly can lead to bells becoming unringable.

During the past year, the following has taken place or has been planned:

Polebrook - preparing and repainting of the frame is needed - a work party has yet to be organised

Maxey - preparing and repainting the frame is needed - a work party was organised but for one reason and another it did not happen. Hopefully it will at some point this year.

Kings Cliffe - a full inspection was undertaken of the bells and fittings, a couple of missing wheel nuts were located and replaced, otherwise they appear to be in good condition.

Cotterstock - they have been inspected a couple of times, with a few loose nuts being tightened.

Peterborough St Mary's - the go of the fifth bell was not deemed to be right with unusual feedback through the rope. Some loose nuts on the wheel were tightened and this resolved the matter.

Peterborough Cathedral - some sound management has been undertaken with the installation of large tubes underneath the front six bells. This has balanced out the sound so that all of the bells are now clearly audible from within the ringing chamber - previously the trebles were drowned out by the tenors.

A Hawkear installation has also been undertaken at the Cathedral - this consists of a microphone above the bells, a sound recording machine, and software analysis of the recorded sound generates data tables and graphs which can help ringers understand and improve upon both collective and individual striking.

Yarwell - I have provided advice of the specification of new ropes, and these have been purchased and fitted. There is also an initiative in place to augment the bells from four to five - faculty is being gained and then fundraising will need to take place.

Branch funds have grown to a point where the Committee felt better use of some of the money could be made by disbursing it in the form of small grants for maintenance. We have put in place an application procedure whereby towers can apply for grants of up to £100 at a time towards the cost of maintenance projects. Thus far two grants have been approved, one for Yarwell towards new ropes, the other to the Cathedral towards the cost of the sound management work.

Nick Elks - Branch Steward

### **Castor Ringing School Report January 2023**

1. It's been a busy year. During 2022 we have held sessions on most Saturday mornings, apart from specific weekends over Christmas and New Year, Easter and in August.
2. For a good part of the past year, we implemented a number of Covid precautions, with all ringers wearing masks, sanitising between rings and ensuring appropriate ventilation in the ringing chamber. We have been able to gradually relax these precautions, whilst ensuring suitable ventilation at all times.
3. We continue with the progression from handling through rounds and plain hunt to various methods. The learners from 2021 have progressed, and we now have a cohort ringing Bob Doubles. Some have now rung their first QP. Further new ringers have joined us over the past year, and most weeks we manage to hold handling sessions alongside those ringing rounds and progressing.
4. With a number of our previous tutors and helpers unavailable, we have recruited some new and returning helpers, so for most weeks we have sufficient experienced ringers to give our pupils a solid band for methods. Thank you to all those experienced ringers who give up their Saturday mornings to support us. It is much appreciated by the learners.
5. Chris Burgess has been the School Administrator for a number of years, as well as a regular tutor teaching handling. Chris stood down as Administrator at the School AGM in November 2022, where I expressed my thanks to him for undertaking that role. I hope he will continue to be a much-valued tutor for many years to come. Terry Wright has taken over as Administrator.

Hilary Hardie,  
Head Tutor  
January 2023



