

## **Standing Committee Activity January – May 2020**

### **The Standing Committee:**

Clare McArdle (Master), Arthur Reeves (Guild Ringing Master), Stella Tew (Secretary), Tracy Stevens (Treasurer), Mark Eccleston (Archivist and Webmaster), Trish Everett (Safeguarding Officer). The Standing Committee has met several times via zoom since the 2020 AGM and discussed other matters by email as required.

### **Aston Eliminator**

Although it was cancelled, a substantial amount of work had been done to prepare for the eliminator in terms of maintenance. All ropes were replaced with a spare set from St Martin's by a small group of volunteers. Aston's tenor rope was driven to Bristol for a quick turn-around repair and the other ropes were sent for new top ends. They were all back in time for the competition, but in the event will now be put on once ringing resumes.

Aston applied for and received a grant of £400 from the Bell Restoration Fund (BRF) towards other essential maintenance carried out earlier in the year.

### **Social responsibility**

We wanted to make sure that members who could be considered to be in the "vulnerable" group were supported. We sent out general emails asking people to contact us if they were isolated without support, and telephoned all of those who we thought were in this group to check that they had a support network, and if not, offered support.

We have also helped a number of people with getting used to new social media platforms such as Zoom.

### **Henry Johnson Dinner – looking forward**

The HJ Dinner took place on 29 February at the Council House with Gill Postill in the chair. Enjoyable as it was, in recent years, the costs of holding it at the Council House have increased to a level that we feel will affect future ticket prices to the point that it may become hard for the event to break even.

The Standing Committee plus a small group of Guild members met in March (via Zoom) to discuss alternative options. Assuming that next year's dinner can go ahead, given our

current circumstances, it will be held at the Burlington Hotel in the "Horton Suite". It will be jointly chaired (a first for the dinner) by Janet and Steve Horton.

### **Andrew Stubbs**

We were saddened by the death of Andrew Stubbs at the beginning of April. Andrew was taken ill at home and taken to Heartlands hospital. We were fortunate that persistence by one of Andrew's non-ringing friends led to us being able to make contact with him in hospital and ensure that other friends of his were made aware and were able to make contact with him and speak with him in the few days before he died.

John Fielden has been liaising with Andrew's family on our behalf and the Guild will be involved in a memorial service in celebration of Andrew's life, when it becomes possible to arrange it. I would like to thank John for co-ordinating this.

Andrew's funeral was livestreamed on Tuesday 5 May from Perry Barr Crematorium. However, as the transmission had problems, we are seeking a downloaded recording which will be loaded as a permanent file onto the website when we receive this.

With his family's permission, the Guild Archivist has retrieved ringing-related materials from Andrew Stubbs' home. The collection is extensive, mainly comprising loose administrative papers rather than printed books. There are, however, a modest number of printed books, some of which will complete gaps in the Guild Library. There are also a large sequence of issues of The Ringing World: 1959-1997 bound, and 1998-2020 loose. These duplicate our existing holdings and so an alternative home will be sought for these.

The archive papers primarily relate to Andrew's involvement with the College Youths, Central Council and The Ringing World. A listing has been compiled and the Archivist will liaise with representatives of these organisations with a view to relocate, or securely destroy, as appropriate.

### **St Martin's Guild Lockdown Bake Off**

It is unusual for the Guild to raise money for charities outside of ringing, however, the Lockdown Bake Off is doing just that. We are raising money for the Solihull Marie Curie Hospice, in memory of Chris Everett (Trish's husband).

When we realised that all ringing was off from the middle of March, we decided that we should still try to create events where Guild members could "meet". So, we didn't cancel the Guild meeting that would have been taking place on 16 May, we made it a virtual one. And the draw is the Lockdown Bake Off. We hoped that this would lift people's spirits, whilst at the same time raising money for a worthwhile charity, which along with many other charities is struggling to maintain its income.

The Lockdown Bake-Off had great appeal for many members of the Guild, the result of which has been 49 bakes of which 10 were in the junior category. As well as the tremendous effort that went into the baking, by 9 May, an amazing £1,260 had been raised for the hospice for which Trish has expressed her sincere thanks to all involved.

### **Castle Bromwich**

The project to augment and rehang the bells at Castle Bromwich was completed in 2017, and although some issues are yet to be resolved, their Trustees decided to wind up the Castle Bromwich Bell Restoration Project charity, which was formed for the purposes of fundraising for the project.

“In recognition of the invaluable support that the Guild and its members have given to the project, we would like to make a grant of £11,000 from the remaining funds in the project.”

I’m very pleased to say that the grant has been received and a letter of thanks was sent to the Castle Bromwich Bell Restoration Project.

### **Ringling Activities**

Ringling is, by its nature, a practical activity and hence this prolonged period away from the bell tower may have suggested that our purpose as a Guild was negated. However, the officers quickly took the view that it was important that the Guild thought carefully about its role, not least as a way of keeping the ringing community together. Thus a structured programme of theory sessions has been established both on a Wednesday evening at 7pm, advertised as a Guild activity, and a Saturday morning 10am Birmingham School of Bellingring (BSoBR) session. We took the decision that we would not limit participation, and hence both sessions are open to anyone interested. Interest has been healthy at all sessions held, with a variety of different presenters covering a broad range of topics. These have included:

- How our minds and memory works
- An introduction to Plain Bob Doubles
- How to learn methods
- Place notations
- Bobs and Singles: what are they and how do they work?
- What is place notation?
- Coursing – what is it and how do you use it?

All of the resources have been uploaded quickly onto the Guild website as presenters have generously shared their resources for all to access in the future. An enormous thanks to those who have planned resources and hosted training.

The Guild has further hosted a social event, a well-received quiz night. We will look to host further such events in the near future.

Looking ahead, it is difficult to effectively plan for how we will return to ringing when so much is unknown and out of our control. However, be reassured that the Guild will be looking forward to promoting an exciting return when it is safe to do so. In the meantime, we will continue hosting training sessions each Wednesday evening and Saturday morning. Our next event in the calendar is due to be on Saturday July 11<sup>th</sup>, with the annual walking tour organised by Mike Dodson. It will obviously depend very much on Government guidance as to what we will do on that day, but continue to protect the date in your diary. If it is possible, we will engage in some form of walk that day or alternatively organise something appropriate online.

### **Guild website**

The website has had an overhaul: minor tweaks to existing sections and more major work with the addition of new subject areas. There is now a 'Teaching' area, and we have started to upload documents which have supported the regular Wednesday and Saturday Zoom training sessions.

We will shortly get in touch with all Tower Contacts to ask them to check the details recorded in the 'Towers' section. This information can quickly become out of date and we'd appreciate members' support in checking details are accurate.

If anyone has any comments, or suggestions for further improvement to the website, then please let the Webmaster know.

### **Guild Distribution Lists**

As you will have noticed, we have been trialling alternative means of circulating emails around the Guild. Sincere thanks are due to Richard Grimmett who built a bespoke membership and circulation list some years ago which he has maintained since. However, at this stage we are working to establish a method for distribution which is more aligned to the [smgcbr@gmail.com](mailto:smgcbr@gmail.com) account which you will have seen all officers use over recent months. We want this to have the capability for Guild members to unsubscribe from emails whilst remaining on our membership list. It also needs to be an accessible system for those involved in Newsletter and Guild training and theory sessions to use.

Latterly we have been using both a contacts list linked to the gmail account and most recently a Google Group ('Guild Members' smgguildmembers@googlegroups.com). We will need to trial this further, however, as some people may have email accounts that throw out mails sent to multiple addresses as they could be spam. We will therefore need to test this further and ask some members, who may have problems, to add this google group as a Safe Sender/ Safe Group in their settings.

Thank you for bearing with us on this.

## **Treasurer Report**

### **a. Bell Restoration Fund (BRF)**

- Out - Aston £400 as per Guild Master report.
- In - £11,000 Castle Bromwich as per Guild Master Report

Total BRF Funds £23,234

### **b. General fund**

We now have two factor authentication on the Guilds Bank Accounts. When I now make an internet payment it requires another authorised signatory to authorise the payment.

I have the forms to add Stella Tew as a signatory.

### **c. Member Support during Covid 19 Lock down**

As per Guild master's report –a few members accepted the offer of our help with shopping, with Guild officers using their own funds to make the purchases, given the implications of lockdown and visiting banks. We then asked the Guild members to reimburse with a cheque made payable to the Guild. The Treasurer can confirm that all cheques have been presented and have cleared. All deposits and reimbursements reference the members' names and Covid 19 for audit purposes.

### **d. Membership**

Thank you to all members that have paid their subscription, the Treasurer will be sending reminders to those that are outstanding.

### **e. Other**

Hand Bell Insurance has been renewed.