

**THE 129th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD AT UCKFIELD
ON SATURDAY 10th MAY 2014**

AGM day commenced with ringing at Barcombe, Maresfield and Little Horsted. An excellent ploughmans lunch had been served to just over 40 people and these were joined by a further 40 or so members for the meeting which commenced at 2pm.

The Association Master, Christine Baldock, took the chair and asked members to stand in memory of those ringers who had died since the last AGM:

Trevor Adams, formerly Bolney; Duncan Ball, Colemans Hatch; Lynda Beckingham, Laughton and Ripe; Margaret Binsted, formerly Westham; Harry Conlin, Rye; Molly Elphick, Southover; Mike Gilby, Rudgwick; Sally Mackett, Maresfield; Janet Mann, Worth; Roger Peckham, formerly Keymer; Jean Pike, Shoreham; Alf Pullen, Buxted; Charles Shepherd, formerly Partridge Green; Leslie Weller MBE, West Grinstead; Harold Wood, Billingshurst.

1. Apologies for absence were received from: Sue Gadd, Richard Hutchings, Caroline Taylor, May Littleton, Felpham ringers, Debbie Evans, Colin and Lyndsey Pritchard, Jo Worsley and Twineham ringers, Ian and Angie Hastilow, Nicky Twort, Hilary and Klaus Buell, Colin Squires, Teresa Kendall, Isobel and Keith Murphy, The Alford Family, Rosemary Cox, Rob Lane, Maureen and Chris MacVe, Linda Perkins, Mary Burr, Brian Underwood.

2. The Minutes of the 128th AGM had been circulated. They were approved by the meeting and signed as a correct record.

3. Matters Arising: There were no matters arising.

4. Reports for 2013: The Master gave thanks to Marisa Hayes and Stephen Beckingham for their work in producing the Annual Report and in ensuring it was available to members ahead of the AGM. All were in agreement that the Officers' Reports were taken as read and the Master thanked each of the Officers for their work during the year.

5. Presentation of Accounts for 2013: The Treasurer was pleased to present her 13th and final report to the AGM: Income was slightly up on 2012 with income from subscriptions up and donations of £362. Total income was 10,733.

General administration and officers' expenses were up; the costs of newsletters increased considerably due to some printing costs which have now been resolved and postage had again increased. The newsletter expenses for December 2012 were included in these accounts as the bills had been submitted too late for the 2012 accounts. Soundbow continued to make a profit.

Total expenditure was £13,220 and there was a loss of £2,447. This was due to: the transfer made from the General Fund to the Reg Johnson Fund of £2,491 which covered the expenses of our youth team to attend the National Youth Striking Contest in York.

The total deficit for the year was £6,747: the Library, the Master's chain and other fixed assets had been revalued. The Library had previously been valued at £33,900 and now stands at £20,000; The Masters chain was £8,500 and is now £12,000; and other fixed assets were £5557 and are now £11,657. Total was £47,957 and now £43,657 - a difference of £4,300.

The Reg Johnson Fund received donations of £300. A grant was paid for a student to attend the Hereford course in April 2013. This fund has also paid out towards the young ringers' events and as reported, the Trustees agreed that the £2,491 cost to attend the Ringing World National Youth Contest should be funded from the General Account.

In closing her report the Treasurer thanked the General Secretary, all divisional Secretaries and Treasurers for their co-operation, help and understanding during the year. She was also grateful to D A Clark & Co - the independent examiner.

The Treasurer's report was proposed for adoption by Nick Cant and seconded by Ken Knight. All were in favour.

The Treasurer also reported that the meeting must approve a change to the bank mandate to include a new signatory (Sue Gadd). This was agreed.

6. The Sussex Churches Bell Restoration Fund

a) Report for 2013: Graham Hills added that since January 2014, work had started and finished at Balcombe (and a grant made) and at West Tarring where the costs of work had been wholly met by the PCC.

The report was proposed for adoption by Jack Burton and seconded by Mike Etherington.

b) Accounts: The Treasurer reported an income of £9,307. Donations of £4,604 included £1,000 from Nigel Gale's sponsored cycle ride from Lands End to John O'Groats and the Association claimed Gift Aid on the majority of that £1000 and our thanks went Nigel. This was greeted with a round of applause. The Seaford ringers also raised £40 on their sponsored South Downs walk. Pulborough ringers were able to claim on insurance for the cracked bell and were therefore able to refund the grant given to them. We received legacies in memory of Charles Shepherd and Douglas (Roy) Fuller. Gift Aid of £501 was also claimed.

Grants of £1,000 were paid and £8,000 of grants have been promised to be paid on completion. The surplus for the year was £8,105 and the balance stood at £64,683.

There were no questions for the Treasurer.

Ken Knight thanked Val for her faithful service in 13 years and this was greeted with applause.

7. Election of Officers:

The Publicity Officer had decided to stand down and the Master thanked Kathy Howard for her work, particularly on Soundbow and she was pleased to inform the meeting that Kathy had agreed to continue as Soundbow editor.

Having expressed a wish to stand down as Education Officer, Anne Franklin was thanked by the Master, having served the Association extremely well, improved the range of events available and being a good organiser and teacher.

The Master asked for nominations from the floor: There were no nominations for Publicity Officer. Stephen Beckingham proposed Anne Franklin as Education Officer and this was seconded by Sue Elrick. Anne was welcomed back as Education Officer with applause.

With all other Offices having one candidate willing to stand, these were duly elected:

Master:	Christine Baldock	General Secretary:	Marisa Hayes
Treasurer:	Sue Gadd	BRF Secretary:	Graham Hills
Safeguarding Officer:	Sue Elrick	Peal Secretary:	Alan Baldock
Librarian:	Stella Bianco	Trustee:	Val Atkins

The Master remarked that the new Treasurer, Sue Gadd had had to tender her apologies as she was committed to a Duke of Edinburgh Awards scheme project. Although she had hoped to drop in to the meeting, there had been a change of venue.

8. The Vision for SCACR and proposed rule changes:

Anne Franklin delivered a short presentation on behalf of the Vision Working Group (Val Atkins, Christine Baldock, Marisa Hayes, Peter Wilkinson and herself) and proposed the adoption of the new set of rules as circulated. This was seconded by Stephen Beckingham.

The Master thanked members of the working group for their efforts during the last year, and opened the floor for comment. She suggested that members who had not previously had opportunity to comment at General Committee be given time to speak first.

- a) Sam Tyler asked how Honorary Members (who no longer pay a subscription) could continue to earn the 50 years of paid up membership to achieve the Long Service status. The General Secretary responded that this rule was worded to avoid members moving from the county, perhaps being non-resident members for 10 or so years and then moving back and claim long service. Honorary Members were a very special case which would always be considered to have uninterrupted service.
- b) John Norris identified a number of anomalies and inconsistencies in the rules and asked that they have further attention paid to these. Above all he was sorry to see the removal of a minimum standard and the removal of the election procedure. The General Secretary responded that the anomalies in wording could be addressed during the year. She felt that the SCACR was a membership organisation and as such needed to be open and inclusive to all levels of ringers. The removal of elections meant that a member could join at any time of the year and benefit from membership immediately, this being in line with the majority of modern membership organisations. This allowed new ringers to benefit immediately from SCACR insurance and training events. She responded that a set of guidelines for membership had been discussed at General Committee in 2012 and these were to be updated and circulated to Tower Captains.
- c) Ian Oram asked why the meeting had gone through the process of electing all of the Officers in item 7 when they would not exist under the new rules. The General Secretary responded that we must operate under the existing set of rules until any new rules are adopted.
- d) Jonathan Franklin spoke in favour of the new rules, that there had been no change to the rules in terms of standards for membership and if the meeting chose not vote to take these on, the Association would be taking a step backwards.
- e) Stella Knight asked that the category of Honorary (non ringing member) be reconsidered and cited the example of a non-ringing steeplekeeper who maintained their bells.
- f) Geoff Rix highlighted the preservation of bells from redundant churches and said they we did not currently do this. He was also concerned that there was no proposal process for non resident members, in fact a band of non members could ring peal and submit it as a Sussex peal by paying their peal fees and annual fee. He also felt that the term District could be applied to an area around a location but it was not a suitable word to be combined with an area. He was concerned that there be elected representatives for each District and pointed out that the BRF rules require a duly appointed person to serve on the committee. He suggested that the adoption of new rues be deferred until the next AGM.
- g) Jane Wilkinson spoke saying that the new rules were an enormous improvement and it was inevitable that they would be pulled apart in their first public viewing. She therefore proposed that 'This meeting accepts in principle and with gratitude the new draft rules and asks the officers to bring the final version back to the next Association meeting (not necessarily the AGM)'.
- h) Roy Cox recalled when he was elected that he was given a standard to aim for to be considered for election.

i) Louise Pink remarked that the W& P Guild have a probationary category for insurance purposes followed by election as a full member.

j) Margaret Bennett remarked that she was always keen to have new ringers elected to ensure they have insurance. She was assured that learners under instruction were covered by their instructor's insurance.

k) Godfrey Fitzhugh suggested that the rules be accepted in principle, perhaps considering a probationary category for insurance.

l) Ruth Brown commented that unambiguous rules were desirable but the need for flexibility meant that the two really do not go together. She felt the proposals were excellent and a degree of ambiguity was acceptable. It was encouraging to see the changes which had already taken place and she urged the meetings to accept the new rules without delay.

m) Tony Wood asked the Officers to address the fundamental problem of the bureaucracy and elitist perceptions.

n) Nigel Gale said that he had been concerned by the working group's earlier proposals and was pleased that comments had been taken on board and a more evolutionary approach had been taken.

He felt that the principles were correct, whilst the terminology may not be correct. He was concerned that there would be a loss of momentum if the meeting voted to revise next year. He suggested that any rules would not be perfect for everyone and that they were good enough to take forward.

o) Elaine Farrow remarked that they had been presented as draft rules and would like to see them worked on for another year before being formally adopted.

p) Pat Aylward urged the meeting to give them a try.

q) Jo Woodliffe felt that waiting for whole year was far too long.

r) Graham Hills asked that the rule regarding non-resident peal ringers was revised.

s) Moya Hills asked that a standard for membership be noted in the rules.

t) The General Secretary then read out the proposal from Jane Wilkinson (see above) which was seconded by Geoff Rix: A show of hands indicated the motion was carried and there was discussion as to when the next rules should be proposed / adopted.

u) Paul Wells proposed that the rules are approved before the next round of ADMs and this was seconded by Roy Cox and agreed by the meeting. It was very much the will of the meeting that the work get underway and the Master said that the officers would do their best.

v) Anne Franklin asked who would undertake this work as she felt that the Vision Working Group had done all it possibly could.

w) Nick Cullen agreed that the members of the working group be given a rest and a small team of 'nit pickers' for want of a better word be assembled and the meeting was in agreement. He said that it was clear that the principles of the draft rules were agreed by the meeting and the work of the group has already brought us a long way.

x) There was some query over the format of the existing Committees. Anne Franklin had already gone a long way to forming a Training and Recruitment Team - made up of volunteers who were willing to participate in this area of activity. Anne was advised that, under the current rules, the Education Committee was encouraged to co-opt these members to continue the excellent work already started.

9. The Forthcoming Programme of Events was discussed with more events being added to the website.

Teaching Ringing Seminar	Friday 20 June at Hurstpierpoint
Fun Striking Competition and Treasure Hunt	Saturday 12 July at Alfriston
R W National Youth Contest	Saturday 5 July at Worcester
Ringing Roadshow	Saturday 6 September at Newbury
Essex Trophy 10-bell Competition	Saturday (tbc) September
Annual Social (Shuffleboard)	Saturday 25 October at Pulborough
Annual Ringing Course	Friday 31 Oct- Saturday 1 Nov

10. Any Other Business

- a) Ian Oram remarked that Margaret had books for sale.
- b) Colin Brown advised the meeting that St Leonard's Aldrington would probably be closing in a few weeks time and the future of the ring was unknown.

11. The Master gave thanks to the team led by Clare Cullen for such a superb spread at lunchtime. She also thanked the incumbents of all the churches for the use of their bells today and urged as many members as possible to attend the ringing and worship led by Father Martin Onions at the Holy Cross. It was then time to express the Association's gratitude to Val Burgess for serving as Treasurer for 13 years. Val was presented with a bouquet of flowers and greeted with warm applause.

12. Presentation of 50 Year Certificate

Roy Cox was able to collect his certificate marking 50 years as a member of the Association.

The meeting closed at 4pm and was followed by general ringing at the Church of the Holy Cross and a service attended by over 40 members.