

# Bristol Rural Branch Annual General Meeting Frenchay 26th November 2011

The Meeting commenced at 18.30 with 37 members present

## Chairman opens the meeting

Chris Greef opened the meeting and thanked the Reverend Stephen Pullin for taking the service, Monica Gibbs for playing the organ and the Frenchay band and helpers for the excellent tea. He also welcomed Hugh Evans the Association Chairman to our AGM.

The Chairman took the opportunity to remember Bill Lampard and Fred Scudamore both long serving and dedicated members of the association and branch over the years who passed away in the last year, a brief silence was held and Chris spoke a short prayer.

## Apologies:

Mary and David Haslum Filton,  
David Powell,  
Wally and Maureen Watkivs, Winterbourne and Frenchay  
June Powell, Abson  
Belated apologies from Glenys Cowie, Alveston

## Approval of the 2010 minutes:

The 2010 minutes were proposed as a true record by Martin Pearson seconded Ruth Welch approved by all.

## Matters Arising

There were no matters arising

## Committee member reports:

### Chairman:

Our Branch programme this year has included a range of activities, ringing and social, designed to appeal to all of our members. The regular monthly practices at towers across the Branch and at Chipping Sodbury provide an opportunity to improve ringing standards and, importantly, also to meet ringers from other towers. We continue to hold training days covering whatever methods members wish to practise: the committee are always willing to receive suggestions. The recent novices training day was particularly well supported and successful, with nearly 20 students and a dozen or so helpers involved, at two towers.

On the subject of novices, we have been running a recruiting drive this year and I am certain that it has produced some successes, both directly in terms of recruitment and indirectly in raising the profile of ringing amongst the local population. Sue Liebow, who has masterminded the campaign for us, will give more detail in her report but on behalf of the Branch I would like to extend thanks to her and her helpers, for the grand job they have been doing.

Our May outing this year saw us in Wiltshire, starting at Colerne and ending at Malmesbury on a very pleasant spring day. Reviving a tradition from the past we had a joint meeting with ringers from the Wotton branch, who hosted the event for us – ringing at Stone, a walk in Berkeley deer park and skittles, buffet and a drink at the Salutation near Ham. We hope to return the compliment next year. Many of the towers in the Branch hosted events for us – monthly practices, a quiz, a barbecue, the AGM, a carol service – thanks to them all.

Finally, I should again like to thank the members of your Branch committee for their hard work over the year and also all those members who help to keep our tradition going.

*Chris Greef* Branch Chairman

### Ringling Master: / Assistant Ringling Master:

#### Introduction

Firstly I will say thank you to everyone who supported ringing in the branch during the last year, especially those who did the organising which allowed me to turn up and know everything would be *organised*. Special thanks to the committee members, Chris, and of course the Assistant Ringling Master Bill who has done lots of the behind the scenes work as well as sharing the running of the practices.

*On a recent cold dark and wet night I went to church and entered, put on a few lights and waited for the other ringers. After about half an hour someone arrived – demanding to know what I was doing in the church. Explaining that I was waiting for the ringing practice, he retorted that there usually wasn't any practice, – the old tower captain had a horrible disease and the new one had gone on holiday!*

Thankfully this church wasn't in the Branch, or even in the G&B association. However the experience is a salutary one; once a practice is known to be poorly attended, it is poorly attended.

My second salutary experience of the year has been that not everyone shares our enjoyment of ringing, though more of this later.

Practices

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Of course, the Rural Branch practices are better attended than the example above – but not always by much.

The 2011 programme as always tried to cover a spectrum of towers and bells.

The 8 bell combined practices at Chipping Sodbury have also continued.

In addition to the normal practices, this year we have joint practices with W-U-E and Bath/Bristol – one well attended and one not so well. Please let me remind you the branch practices are for EVERYONE, of every ability. If you come we will try to accommodate you, whether it be Cambridge, whole pull plain bob, or rounds and call changes – if you ask we can try it.

I will say that my own ringing is not always to the standard I would wish. It was therefore a heartening surprise after a practice with rather more 'crashing about' than desirable; to be greeted by a local dog walker and thanked for the enjoyment we had added to her afternoon in the garden.

In the committee discussions, a number of changes have been agreed to increase interest so let us know your thoughts.

### Royal Wedding

Many towers rang to support the Royal and other special weddings. In one case this was rather too much of good thing for one local lady, and who ascended the tower and interrupted the branch practice with a surprisingly verbal attack. I must admit to being ill prepared for such an occasion.

### Branch Outing

Bill organised another excellent outing – even though he wasn't able to attend it all!

Starting at Batheaston and finishing at Malmesbury, including a good pub lunch at Hilmartin – accompanied by the sounds and spectacle of the Morris dancers, a good day was had by all. On leaving the final tower, I met my second complainant of the weekend. Perhaps we should ask in future royal weddings are not organised on the same weekend as important events such as Branch Outings!

### Striking Competition

Do you remember the unseasonably nice afternoon and lovely cakes in the Abbots Leigh churchyard? And who could forget the test piece mayhem caused by an errant clapper.

### Training

Chris and Gill have organised 4 excellent branch training events, and must enjoy the experience because they have added the association training days to their portfolio!

Steve Coleman took on the daunting challenge of teaching us to be better trainers by training a complete beginner to ring in less than 3 hours – in front of our own eyes. Hopefully this encouraged those of you need to train to start the process after all no trainers equals no trainees.

Initial training is key to developing and retaining new recruits, so hopefully following the success of the recent Abson/Wapley beginner's event we will be able to more for this group in future.

### Recruiting

During 2010 it became apparent to me that the branch was 'sleepwalking towards disaster' in that the number of active ringers in many towers was declining, and the number of new ones recruited not keeping pace with this attrition. After some reading, thought, and discussions the branch committee picked up this problem and have actively been promoting ringing. The strategy was to widely promote knowledge about bells and ringing in order to generate awareness before actual recruiting events. The success enjoyed so far is a testament to their hard work and support of those of you who helped out at the events we held this year. At an early stage it was obvious that to be successful we needed effective relationships with the media and other local groups. To this end a new post of Public Relations Officer seconded to the committee was created, and shortly afterwards filled by Sue Liebow.

Sue has worked very hard at getting our presence to the public, and I urge you to support her by sharing your ringing events, stories, appeals and trivia.

It is clear that the recruiting drive is really just beginning, and that we are certainly not experts yet, however the results are encouraging and we should build on this work to ensure that eventually every tower has a thriving band.

### Thanks

Once again I will thank you for your contribution to the branch and to ringing in general. We enjoy some excellent organisation, a splendid newsletter, fantastic branch teas, and the use of bells and towers. So please continue to support the branch and increase your contribution and make 2012 an even better year.

### Standing Down

If you have made it to this point in the report, you will probably be relieved to read that I intend to stand down at the AGM. My work circumstances will probably change significantly; I do not want this to divert attention from the important tasks of recruitment and training that are developing so well. I also believe that there should be some rotation of Ringing Masters so that new ideas and styles develop. Paradoxically, you don't have to be the best ringer to be the Ringing Master (or tower captain), but it will make you a better ringer. **So thank you for the opportunity.**

### Treasurer:

As this is my first AGM and first year in the position, it has been quite an interesting year. Not only have we been actively recruiting new members, but also with the help of Sue Liebow we have made our presence known in the media and also the social media site FACEBOOK. This has resulted in the recruitment of new ringers to keep the activity of Bell Ringing going.

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I like the rest of the members of the association would like to express our thanks to Sue for her work over the last year. Both the Business Instant and the Treasurers Bank Accounts are positive to the balances of £592.22 and £34.22 respectively. I can report that we have made a net surplus £137 in the year to October 31<sup>st</sup> 2011.

*Richard Sleeman* – Treasurer

To see the accounts go to the branch web page: this is a pdf file you can click the web address.

[http://www.bristolrural.co.uk/branchminutes/accounts/Branch%20Acs%202011\\_AGM.xls](http://www.bristolrural.co.uk/branchminutes/accounts/Branch%20Acs%202011_AGM.xls)

### **Secretary:**

This year has been quite busy, in addition to all the usual activities, the newsletter, the web site, the annual subscription collection, collation of all the various member and tower changes. The setting up with the branch treasurer a Face book entry for the Branch, this has not been a success, we only had eight people apply to join, and one of these is an association member but not a branch member. We had the recruitment campaign, which took up a lot of time in branch management considerations.

The high light in my book was the "Train the "Teacher" session which was organised at Frampton, Steve Coleman trained a person who had never touched a bell rope in his life before to ring hand and backstroke and set his bell in two hours.

We ran the first tower recruitment sessions at Iron Acton and Syston church fetes with a fair amount of success, I do not know if they succeeded in recruiting new ringers but it did give focus to ringing in the branch at Iron Acton and Syston.

I would like to thank the branch members who submitted articles for the newsletter it makes its production on a regular basis so much easier.

*Tony York* Secretary

### **MC Rep:**

Well, I've looked right through the minutes of this year's G&B MC Meetings

(all of which I attended, of course) and I'm sorry to say I have nothing at all to report! Everything that I reported as on-going last year is still on-going now, and Steve's email of 25<sup>th</sup> October has covered the only two new items I might have mentioned - the Tower of the Year Competition and Special Courses – which will no doubt be discussed at the Branch AGM under "Association Matters".

*Martin Pearson* MC Representative.

### **Recruitment:**

Sue Liebow gave a précis of her activities during the very busy year, full report below.

### **Publicity Officers Report**

I was co-opted by the Branch Committee in February to support them with the Recruitment Campaign; they had planned for this year. They do say a volunteer is worth 10 pressed men, but no one warned me a simple "let me know if you need any help with the campaign" to Tony York at the Quiz Evening, would open such an interesting and time consuming opportunity for me. It has been a busy few months for us all.

The branch campaign began with Tony asking tower reps to place an appeal in their parish magazines, in February. The Management committee then met on several occasions to decide the best way to arrange the campaign. It was decided to have an Open Day, which would take place on 11<sup>th</sup> June, at St Peters Frampton Cotterell from 11am to 3pm. Posters were ordered and circulated around the Branch. Posters and the Central Council leaflet were sent to all Libraries, Leisure Centres and Senior Schools, via the South Gloucestershire Post Room.

My first task was to establish contact with local magazines, and send them an appeal for new recruits. Then once I had their print deadlines for issues out in May I submitted information about the Open Day campaign, and a copy of the eye catching poster. There was some interest from the initial adverts. I arranged for a small advertisement to go in a newsletter, which would go out to all WI members in the old county of Avon, in May, for £5. Due to a clerical error on their part the advert did not go in, the May issue, so we received a refund and it went in the next possible issue.

Initially we submitted 3 articles to the wider press, the first gained interest from Vicki Klein at BBC Radio Bristol, and we had a short slot on their Sunday morning breakfast show on 27<sup>th</sup> March. Also as a result of the articles in the Evening Post we were approached by a representative of NHK, Japanese Broadcasting Corporation, to find them a band to film practicing for Royal Wedding Day ringing. Coordinating the availability of a band, the film crew and Holy Week meant that we were not able to fulfil their request. Our second article was about the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrated by St Peters Filton. More recently we have submitted information about the planned ringing for The Royal Wedding.

We were also contacted by Researchers at Modern TV, in May, who was investigating an Elizabethan Progress Route, for a programme to be presented by Griff Rhys Jones. We arranged to meet them at Iron Acton, after they had been to Iron Acton Court. Thanks to those Branch Members who came along to ring and talk to the Researchers. Unfortunately we were not chosen, this time!

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We have used display space across South Gloucestershire Libraries, initially to promote the Open Day, then to advertise subsequent events, and promote knowledge and interest in Bell Ringing. Thanks to Sue Jay and Bill Liebow for their help in preparing material and photographs for the display. Our events have also featured on the plasma screens in the Libraries. After the initial articles we have also been fortunate to have other articles in The Evening Post, The Forest Edge, The Boundary and The Week in for the Key sham area. Many of these articles have been linked to events within Church Communities such as the Wedding of a past local Ringer at Bitton, and The Curate at Warmley moving on. By ringing quarter peal(s) to celebrate the event, I was able to send in an article which mentioned bell ringing, but caught wider interest. Thanks to Steve Crane for a very informative article in Almondsbury Parish magazine, about the Open Day. The Branch Open Day was a success, "Tony York Branch Secretary said visitors had gone up to the ringing chamber and watched a band ringing, then had a go themselves, before going up to see the bells. After this they came into the Church to watch a DVD, have refreshments and see a model bell. There was also the opportunity to try handbell ringing. Visitors had come from across the Branch, which covers from Bitton in the East, Thornbury in the West. Filton in the South and Tytherington in the North. We were also pleased to welcome a visitor from Cape Town. " A quote included in the report of the event.

Subsequent events followed, Open Tower at Abson on 23<sup>rd</sup> July. Stands at Fetes in Iron Acton and Syston. A Stand at Frenchay Flower Show, this was situated right outside the Village Hall, where refreshments were served, proved to be a good opportunity to raise awareness of bells and bell ringing, and direct people to the Tower to find out more and get signed up. We have also supported Frenchay to advertise their 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary Exhibition at Frenchay Museum, from Sept, and provided Branch display material to use in it

A damp but enjoyable Day was spent at Westerleigh Village Day in August. Lots of interest, but I was very thankful to Linda and Adrian Gittings for their gazebo, a few people took shelter and we used these opportunities well, as you would expect!! Martin Blanchard reported a lot of interest in the Tower and one new recruit.

We need your help, to keep us informed of what's going on in your community, any special events celebrations or other special occasions, even if you are going to publicise them yourself. Also I have started a "meet a ringer" slot, initially in the Branch Newsletter, so if tower reps can let us have information of any more senior branch ringers we could approach to interview that would be great. My thanks to Derek Rosser Almondsbury and Bert Ferris Westerleigh for being my guinea pigs.

If anyone has contacts in Scouts, Guides or Duke of Edinburgh could you please let us have details, so we can make contact and see how we can network. Any other ideas for publicity please let us know.

I must congratulate Mangotsfield on their appeal, which went out earlier in the year, they had an excellent response, and as a result of the volume of new recruits, other local towers have new members.

My thanks to the Branch Committee, and you the members for your support and encouragement with the campaign. A special thank you to Tony York for his guidance and patience, this role has been just what I needed to use my skills and enable me to feel and be part of something worthwhile.

*Sue Liebow*  
November 2011

The Twigs had been asked for input on the number of recruits in their Twig area,  
I only had one input from Linda Gittings

Results for the East is:-

Abson - 4 learner's (3 basic and 1 more advanced) The 3 basic are not members of the branch as yet as they have not reached the required standard.

Westerleigh - 2 both are basic learners neither are yet members of the branch

Wapley - 0

Pucklechurch - 9, (4 are Pucklechurch members and 5 are Yate members) The Pucklechurch members are basic level and not yet members of the branch.

Dyrham - 0

### **Branch officer Elections:**

With the standing down of the Ringing Master Gary Crisp all the other committee members were willing to stand again. The Chairman Treasurer Secretary and MC rep were re-elected proposed Sue Jay seconded Linda Gittings, all in favour. Bill Liebow was proposed as the new ringing master proposed Sue Jay seconded Rosemary Morgan all in favour. Steve Crane of Almondsbury was willing to stand as deputy ringing master and was proposed by Don Haskins one of the branches Honorary Life Members, seconded by Phillip Coward, all in favour.

The Twigs who were present were happy to stay in post.

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Publicity Officer.

The chairman made the point that Sue Liebow was co-opted onto the committee for this role; he would like it to stay a co-opted position as making it a formal position would mean we would probably have to find a replacement officer if Sue stood down.

Sue was happy to continue in the co-opted position.

### **New Members**

The chairman welcomed all the new members to the branch including the eight new un-attached members from Keynsam, a tower not in the G & B. He made the point that should the Keynsham tower become associated with the Gloucester and Bristol Association (they are currently in the Bath and Wells Association) in the future, the tower would be very welcome in the Rural Branch.

See AOB items.

Almondsbury:

John Cole, Senior  
Jane Goddard, Senior  
Amy Hatton, Junior

Bitton:

Tim Goodwin, senior

Filton:

Nicholas Moller Senior  
Mrs Janet Moller Senior  
Thomas Moller Junior

Olveston:

Rodney Williams Senior  
Dean Gardiner Junior

Wapley:

Miss Sarah Llewellyn

Warmley:

Mrs Christine Hussey Rtd.,

Unnattached:

Christopher Illing Junior  
Benedict M'Caw Junior

Catherine Illing Senior

Tim Illing Senior  
Emma Nichols Senior

George Colbourne Retired

Peggy Nethercott Retired  
Richard Pannett Retired

The new members were proposed as members of the Association and the branch by Rosemary Morgan Seconded Linda Gittings All in favour.

The Filton new members were presented with Association Badges as they were present at the meeting by the Branch Chairman.

### **Association Matters:**

The branch members endorsed the Association officers who are willing to stand for re-election at the AGM in 2012.

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The Chairman briefly discussed the new 'Tower of the year competition' which it is proposed replaces the old 'Tidy Tower Competition'

Secretary to put the rules on the branch web site for viewing, by branch members.

Should you have any comments on this let the Chairman or Secretary know.

This will be discussed at the Association Branch Officers Meeting in March next year before being introduced.

<http://www.bristolrural.co.uk/gandb/Rules%20for%20Tower%20of%20the%20Year%202011.doc>

### Special Courses available

Steve Coleman conducts a special bell handling course on request. We asked him to conduct one at Frampton earlier this year when he taught a nonringer to handle a bell and set his bell in two hours see details on the branch web site.

<http://www.bristolrural.co.uk/gandb/Teaching%20Bell%20Handling%20Course%202011.doc>

Copy web addresses into your web browser. These are both pdf files you can click the web address.

### 2012 program discussion:

The question was asked if the times of the Summer afternoon branch practices might change from 14.30 - 16.30 to 16.00 – 18.00.

It was proposed by Mary York and seconded by Rosemary Morgan they stay as they are, the meeting was in favour of this. We spent time discussing specific items on the branch program.

The first was the Branch event on February 11<sup>th</sup>, the consensus was quiz night again this year 2012, the 2011 winners were Almondsbury so following precedent would be asked to organise the Quiz, Mary York has agreed to help them with the refreshments if required.

The venue was suggested as Iron Acton Village Hall which will cost £48.00 for the big hall. and the bar area.

Note: this will move to February 18<sup>th</sup> the hall has been booked for this date.

The Queen's Jubilee:

This was discussed, as no decision was reached the branch committee will decide when the branch will ring to celebrate the jubilee.

Nibley Trophy:

There is no firm commitment on what this will be this year, the decision was deferred until more details are available.

The Olympics 2012:

A discussion took place that 08.00 on the 27<sup>th</sup> for 3 minutes was not that sensible,

Towers might like to make their own decisions on this and ring during the day.

However the fact that the olympic torch will be travelling from Bath to Bristol along the Bitton road on the 23<sup>rd</sup> might occasion some ringing locally and across the branch.

Event August 25<sup>th</sup>:

This is still open to comment and discussion no decision was made.

May Day Outing Area:

Only one area was proposed the North Devon/South Somers border near South Molton Discussion took place that this meant about one and a half hours travel to the first tower. It was suggested that the first tower with coffee could be a lot nearer than the intended area.

Steve Crane assistant ringing master to investigate and organise the day.

### Tower Expenditure/Work:

Frenchay may be having a screen installed. As this work does not involve bells and fittings the association will probably not be able to give a grant.

This was the only tower raised.

### Association Badges:

The branch secretary made the point that Association badges now cost the branch £4.00 each. Giving them to newly elected members could become expensive. When it was first proposed we gave badges to members who came to the meeting at which they were elected they were only £2.00. It was agreed we should stop giving the badges to Senior and Retired new members who should purchase them if they required one.

Sue Jay proposed we should continue this for newly elected juniors this was seconded and approved by all.

Martin Pearson also proposed an A5 size certificate is given to all newly elected members, seconded by Sue Jay. All in favour.

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The branch committee will investigate a suitable certificate.

### **Annual Subscriptions and the Annual report:**

The secretary proposed we change our subscription and tower information collection from January February and March of each year to October November December each year.

This creates the problem that in 2012 we will need to collect subscriptions twice once at the beginning of the year and also at the end of the year to get our collection in step with this routine. (It will only happen in 2012 and afterwards would always be in October November and December). The *raison d'être* for the change is to allow the collection of tower information and changes as near to the publication date of the annual report as possible. Collecting the information as we do at the moment tower information can be up to 2 years and 3 months out of date when using a branch report.

Proposal seconded by Martin Pearson and carried by the meeting.

Sue Jay asking if we have to have all the annual reports that are issued, could we not save some cost if we only had the reports that were actually required in a tower. The secretary reported this has been addressed, on this years annual return there is a box to say how many reports a tower would like to receive, if you fill in the relevant box you will only get that number of reports.

There is also a further new box asking if your tower/church has a kitchen or a toilet available, this information will be included in the 2012 annual report if you provide the information.

### **AOB at the chairman's discretion:**

The Chairman allowed an AOB from Abson tower raised by Mary Taylor.

Mary would like to know if would be possible for a further day time practice to be organised at a tower in the branch. She thinks this is necessary as the Abson Wednesday morning practice and coffee has become heavily over subscribed.

A discussion took place on this on its merits. Should it be an eight bell tower or six, which day should it be, what time, would it reduce the numbers at Abson on a Wednesday. In general the meeting thought it would not, would the people who go to Abson in numbers also turn up at the second tower. Alan Pidgeon made the point that Abson works because of the mix of people who go, the friendly interaction and camaraderie that exists there.

No decision was reached, Mary (Talor) is to canvass the people who go to Abson and the members present representing their tower should go back to their tower and canvass views on perhaps having a daytime practice. All to report back to the committee on the outcome.

### **AOB Keynsham:**

Martin Pearson briefly gave information about Keynsham becoming part of the Association and the tower joining Rural Branch. Keynsham would belong to both Associations. Keith Scudamore said that there is a precedent Abbots Leigh which has membership of the Bath and Wells Association and Chew branch and also the G & B Bristol Branch. I have checked the annual reports for the G & B and Bath Wells and it only pays affiliation fees to the G & B.

Chris Greef already made the point in the new members agenda item that we welcomed the Keynsham members to the branch, and would not have any problem in having Keynsham tower in the branch, but this is an association matter not a branch issue. Following on from the Keith Scudamore comment there could be a case for this to happen.

### **Chairman closes the meeting:**

Chris Greef thanked the members for attending the meeting and closed the meeting at 19.57