

Durham University Society of Change Ringers

Michaelmas Term – AGM

4th December 2022 – Teaching and Learning Centre

Meeting started at 12.05

Registration of attendance

- Miles Baker
- Matthew Black
- Cian Tempest
- Phil Hughes
- Lynne Hughes
- Ion Forbes
- Fred Bone
- Jeff Ladd
- Nigel Gale
- Astrid Gale
- Frances Haynes
- Mary Pickstone
- Roy Meady
- Joanna Franklin
- Katherine Stonham
- Michael Williams
- Alex Pym
- Phil Rogers
- Gwen Rogers
- Brian Spurling
- Judith Moreton
- Mary Bone (visitor)
- Elizabeth Barton
- Alex S. Riley
- Rob Griddle
- Josie Criddle
- Rachel Wells
- Rachael Sanderson
- Izabelle Bimson
- Kate Nye
- Richard Bimston
- Andrew Booth

1) Apologies for absence

- Elizabeth Hopper
- Colin Monson
- Brian Crawley
- Rachel Mallet
- John Maddams
- Andrew Richards
- Matthew Pearson
- Oliver Rice
- Oliver Hughes
- Dennis Eliston

2) Approval of the minutes from the previous meeting

Yes

3) Reports by the officers

a. Master – Miles Baker

It's been a good year, with a lot of recruitment. We did the mini ring outside the SU, which we've done in the past, but worked quite well this year. Got many people into St Oswalds for the freshers' practice. there are 4 new learners regularly attending practices. There are also 3 new freshers who had rung before regularly attending practices. Done lots of tours and the society is generally in good health. Practices are well attended with around 15-20 every week. We are now having some ringers attend Nics on a Wednesday to ensure everyone gets ample rope time to improve. Pub attendance is generally high averaging 90% most weeks. Sunday ringing is well attended with 8 bells being rung most weeks. Many of us also socialise over brunch afterwards. There have been several trips and tours this year: Birmingham YCRA event in January, York day tour in February, Summer tour to West Yorkshire and Lancashire in June, Southern District of County Durham tour in October, Manchester NUA trip in November, Darlington and surrounding area Dinner Day Tour in December. Notable pieces of ringing by the current society include: 5152 Spliced Surprise Major (23m) and multiple other handbell peals, 5040 Minor (2m) – first undergraduate peal for over 10 years including 4 first pealers, Multiple quarter peals with 3 first quarter pealers. There have been several notable socials this year: Two bar crawls in Epiphany term, one in Easter term and one in Michaelmas term, Pancake Day social in March, Dinner in December, Games night in December. All have been well attended by current members. We also did the ART course, which was quite helpful, and they funded quite a few things including the mini ring, banner for freshers' fair and transport.

b. Life Members' Secretary – Rachel Sanderson (on behalf of RS and Elizabeth Hopper)

DUSCR births this year have included:

- Harriet Emily Croxall (16th November 2022) - daughter to Katherine (nee Crabtree) and Stephen Croxall
- Felix Arthur Crabtree (30th March 2022) - daughter to Ellen (nee Dew) and Christopher Crabtree
- Peter Leo Bardsley (2nd November 2022) - son to Megan (nee Corless) and Oliver Bardsley

There was no DUSCR life tour this year - previously Andrew Richards had offered for 2020, but unfortunately circumstances have prevented this tour from happening! He is unfortunately now unable to organise for 2023, so volunteers are welcome.

c. Peal Recorder – Fred Bone

Since my last report (and including last year's two Dinner weekend peals, but not yesterday's) the Society has rung eight peals, of which four were on handbells, all conducted by Alex Riley. As a result, Alex is now the Society's leading handbell conductor, with 9. There have been

significant changes to the leading handbell ringers list. This time last year we had David J Marshall on 9, Malcolm Johnson on 8, and three people on 6. None of these have rung handbell peals recently. Alex is now the joint leading handbell ringer, on 9; Oliver Rice has rung 8; and James Town has rung 6. Watch this space, as the saying goes. There have been no changes at the top of the tower bell “leader-board”. The Society’s peal total is now 268, of which 30 have been on handbells. Of particular note is the handbell peal rung on 11 June, of 23-spliced Surprise Major, the first 23-spliced for one of the band, first 23-spliced in hand for two others, and first 23-spliced as Conductor. It was also the Society’s first 23-spliced on handbells and only the second of 23-spliced for the Society. Also worthy of note is the peal at Brancepeth on 21 June, with three first-pealers. The last time a Society peal included three first-pealers appears to have been in June 1996 (also at Brancepeth)

d. Central Council Representative – Phil Hughes

Hello, I’m Phil Hughes, the representative for DUSCR on the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers.

The annual meeting took place in September at Nottingham Trent University, and it was a pleasant change to get back to a meeting held in person again after the last two were held remotely.

As usual, there were presentations of reports from the Executive and various workgroups. The one of most relevance to DUSCR is the “Young ringers – Universities and Colleges” workgroup, and their report mentioned that ART had been assisting with providing training for how to teach new ringers. The workgroup was also engaging with the Young Change Ringers Association as a key group for getting the message across about any opportunities that are available and to encourage young ringers to join their university or college societies. However, there were still concerns that the majority of potential student ringers were not being reached, and the university ringing website was one area that was on the agenda for updating.

The forward plan for 2023 was then presented, and an important part of this is a project to look ahead to what ringing may be like in 2030. There’s a good article about this in the Ringing World published on the 7th October, but the message seems to be that there’s going to be too few people. This is one area where DUSCR, with its active element of life members, can contribute to run events to encourage our current students to carry on ringing after they leave Durham.

Other things mentioned in the forward plan included work to develop branding and marketing for ringing, and the ongoing work to set up a National Ringing Centre in Northampton. There was also a report on progress with the new mobile belfry that’s going to be available to hire, and it was even possible to try this out at the roadshow on Sunday.

The meeting went on to consider two motions. The first involved changing the way that the annual subscription for affiliated societies is calculated. Under the old system, the number of

members that a society has was used to calculate the number of Central Council Representatives. The subscription fee under the new scheme will simply be the number of society members multiplied by 20p. The motion was amended and then passed with one abstention. The membership of DUSCR as reported to Central Council is around 110 so the new subscription fee will be £22, which is much lower than the £40 that was paid under the old rules. The thinking behind this change is that it would allow progress to be made towards a possible reduction in the overall number of members of council, as was recommended in the 2017 CRAG report, although during the discussion it became clear that this didn't seem to be the wish of the Council at present.

The second motion was for the implementation of changes to the rules and standing orders of Central Council that were recommended by the Governance Review from earlier in the year. I wasn't aware of anything in the proposals that would have any detrimental impact on DUSCR, so supported this motion as well. It was passed with 6 abstentions.

So that is a short summary of the meeting, but if anyone wants more detailed information then please ask. The meeting papers are available on the Central Council website, and the minutes of the meeting should also be published there in due course.

4) Questions to the officers

RS: From 110 members, that figure was plucked not entirely from thin air but certainly from "not the thickest" air. How should we calculate the number of members we have? I thoroughly welcome any advice on how to calculate the number of members we have. As the fee is paid by the current society, it also makes sense in terms of finance to have a more accurate figure.

PH: I thought this might come up. Having a look at the rules of central council. For clarification, it does refer to how we should do this.

PH proceeded to read S1.1 from the Standing Orders of the Central Council of Bell Ringers, which are given below:

For the purposes of the Rules the membership of a bell ringing society at any time (its "Society Membership") shall be defined with reference to the preceding calendar year (or that society's equivalent membership year) as follows :-

a) where a society has a membership subscription, its Society Membership shall be the number of its members paying (or exempted from paying) membership subscriptions;

or

b) where a society has no membership subscription, its Society Membership shall be the number of its members who either :-

(1) appeared on that Society's membership list, received one or more member notices from the Society and are considered by that Society to be participating members; or

(2) attended at least one event (including meetings, practices, peal attempts, dinners and other gatherings of members) organised by that Society.

PH: I can ask the existing life secretary how best to manage our membership list.

Mary Bone: He's right in asking how should consider our membership list. There are thousands of people who are not active but would like it known that they are members, such as Colin Monson. Bear the less active in mind. There are many boring and tedious ways of doing this, so a 'best guess' is as good as we've got. If Cambridge suddenly declared they had 50 members, measures can be taken to inspect their membership list. So look at some lists, but take a best guess.

Phil Rogers: we had this conundrum, and we could do it either on the numbers at the annual dinner, or by the numbers on the mailing list. I can't remember how we did it, but those were the two ways of doing it.

5) Election of officers

a. Life Members' Secretaries

Rachael Sanderson and Elizabeth Hopper re-elected on a general aye.

Proposer: Michael Williams

Seconder: Lynne Hughes

b. Peal Recorder

Fred Bone re-elected on a general aye.

Proposer: Michael Williams

Seconder: Richard Bimson

c. Election to Central Council

We are encouraged to elect our rep once every 3 years. Due to uncertainty regarding whereabouts in this cycle in 2022 AGM fell, Phil Hughes' continuation was decided by general aye.

6) Any other business

PR: After Oxford Uni rang at St Pauls Cathedral, the master was spoken to, and indicated that we would be welcome to ring a QP at the Cathedral. It would have to be on a Saturday afternoon before evensong. If we were to do it, we would need to ensure the correct members were present. It would help to have a few locals at St Pauls.

Lynne Hughes: Vernet-les Bains, which I'm coordinating. Jeff has a ring of bells which he can answer questions about. Make your own arrangement for accommodation and transport. We will do some ringing and generally have a nice time. If you have any other ringing friends, bring them along. Send me an email if you're considering going. The dates are Friday 8th to Sunday 10th of September, though we expect people to arrive Thursday 7th and perhaps go on the Monday. Phil and I may be bringing our own campervan with the intention of going on into Spain. As Jeff is a DUSCR member, they are our bells so it would be great to ring them.

Jeff Ladd: two points. If people want to arrive early or stay later, you can ring bells whenever you feel like. For accommodation, I don't do recommendations as it becomes a minefield. There are some hotels, plenty of self-accommodation and plenty of campsites. I'm happy to pass comment, but not to recommend from scratch.

RS: There have been enquiries about a life tour. Perhaps Lynne's France trip could become the life tour. In any case, for the next AGM, can people think about whether they would like to organize a life tour?

Next year's dinner date will most likely be on the same weekend next year, so Saturday 2nd December. This is provisional and will be confirmed at a later stage.

Meeting closed at 12.30