

Keith Beale – why I am standing for election as Master of the Association.

TRADITIONAL AIMS AND VALUES DRIVING FORWARD IN THE MODERN AGE

Lifetime resident of Somerset, at the age of nine I learnt to ring at Holy Trinity, Taunton and for the 58 years since have resided and rung in the Taunton, Bridgwater and Dunster Branches of the Association at various times serving as Branch Secretary, Assistant Ringing Master, Ringing Master and General Committee Representative and leading groups for Training and Educational Courses.

I am currently Tower Captain of Halse and Ringing Master of the Benefice of Milverton with Ash Priors, Fitzhead and Halse with responsibility of ensuring ringing at two of our towers each Sunday and on Festivals all four towers with at least two ringing simultaneously.

I firmly believe that the Association should always have as its' priorities the advancement of ringing for church services, the provision of training and education and the involvement of all members at all levels of bellringing.

As Master I would be pro-active in driving the Association forward in the modern age utilising all social media and electronic communication facilities to keep all members informed of ringing matters and advertising our aims etc. for recruiting to the wider public.

I would seek to introduce the ability for the Association to report to its members directly by e-mail thus cutting out the antiquated system of the General Secretary sending information to a Branch Secretary and/or General Committee Representative for forwarding to Branch Towers for forwarding to Tower Members. This would be achieved by new members completing a membership application form stating name, postal address and, if appropriate, e-mail address indicating desire to receive Association and Branch information by such means. Existing members also opt in.

In recent years there have been three important matters brought to an AGM by the General Committee which, in my opinion, have not been properly dealt with before such AGM.

Firstly – Bell Maintenance Contacts. An important and very worthwhile service to maintain our bells in a good condition. It appears that upon the suggestion being brought to the General Committee no thought was given to the need to provide proper sufficient insurance arrangements to provide necessary cover for those members carrying out any work or providing advice and for the Association. As Master I would have ensured all of this was dealt with before presentation to the AGM.

Secondly – Merger of Association Bell Fund and Edna Grabham Education Fund. The presentation made to the AGM did not make clear the advantages or disadvantages of the merger so the proposal of the General Committee did not pass, mainly, I think, on emotional grounds. As Master I would have insisted on more preparatory work advising members well in advance of the AGM of the pros and cons.

Thirdly – Education Budget. Training and Education is of vital importance and I would hope that all members wish to do what they can to advance this. It seems the General Committee had little, if any, idea as to what they had agreed in the budget for this year and that there was unspent surplus from the previous year. The revelation that we are now paying cash to learners was certainly news to me and to General Committee Members I have spoken to. Other members I have spoken to do not agree with paying cash to learners. The absence of any readily available budget details at the AGM was, to my mind, unbelievable!

As Master I would ensure full budget details are discussed at General Committee and the budget agreed by Committee made available to all members well before the AGM so that sensible informed discussion can ensue if necessary.

I can only re-iterate that Training and Education is a priority to me and I believe the Association should have a budget for this.

Other matters:-

Association Striking Competitions – should be kept as originally intended. The 6 bell for a Sunday Service Tower Band and the 8 bell a Branch Band but with the tower and method chosen both being within the capability of every Branch – perhaps the method being the choice of each band with the touch a minimum number of changes thus making it fully inclusive of each Branch.

Annual Report – all ringing in the Association is important and should be reflected. Perhaps inclusion of details of quarter peals of significance to us should be included. After all we have peal details probably of lesser interest to members than some of the quarter peals rung. Also I feel the charge for publishing peals is well above the actual cost and could perhaps be altered to make a lower charge where, say, at least half the band are resident ringing members of this Association.

Membership – when elected a ringer becomes a ringing member of the Association not of a particular Branch. If resident in and/or being a regular ringer at a tower in the Association the ringer should be classed as a resident ringing member and may then choose to join any or no Branch.

I feel the time has come to elect me as Master a person willing to pro-actively drive the Association forward in this modern age, effectively and comprehensively deal with Association matters and at all times remember that this Association relies upon you, its members, to deliver its objects and aims.

Thank you for reading this and I seek your support!

Yours sincerely,

KEITH BEALE