



Oxford City Branch Hugh's News

(Produced fortnightly by Hugh Deam and Paul Lucas. All contributions are welcome.)



Monday 18th April 2011

Advanced Practice at All Saints, Hillesden, Bucks. (6) 9cwt.

The village comprises barely more than a handful of cottages and farmhouses spread out over large tracts of land. The beautiful Grade 1 listed church is known as 'the cathedral in the fields' as it adjoins a 100 acre deer park and 5 acres of formal gardens containing fountains, a waterfall, and carp-filled lakes. Unquestionably this is amongst the most stunning of settings for any church, not just in this Guild, but anywhere in the country, and we were privileged to visit on the sunniest of days when everything was seemingly at its zenith, with even the large herd of deer venturing down to espy us. Ringing can hardly get more pleasurable than it is here. There may only have been the bare requisite number of us but we got through Plain Bob Minor, Double Oxford, Single Oxford, and Cambridge very well, it was the Little Bob, and St Clements to a lesser degree, that went awry! **Hugh Deam.**

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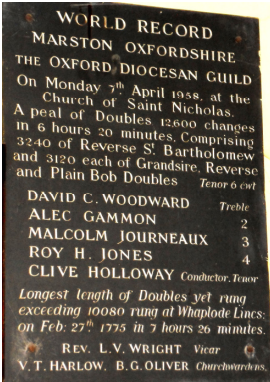
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A Quarter Peal of Grandsire Triples at Old Headington (8).

Rung on Sunday 10th April to celebrate the life of David Lane.

Treble: Clare Fairbairn; 2. Malcolm Fairbairn; 3. Paul Lucas; 4. Katie Lane; 5. Steve Everett; 6. Richard Verrall (c); 7. Jonathan Cresshull; Tenor: Graham Nicholls.

Peal Boards and Tower History.



What a lot of history a bell tower holds within its walls – from the experiences of people long dead, to the living who keep alive a centuries old tradition. The physical evidence on the tower walls tells a newcomer like myself many tales. The peal board is an institution in the bell tower. Events in the lives of both royalty and humble folk too are recorded in peals rung to celebrate weddings and anniversaries, inductions of the clergy and to commemorate the lives of those who have died – the 'war dead', old tower captains, significant people who have contributed to bell ringing traditions. And wins at striking competitions and significant peal achievements are recorded too. For peals are also rung to compete, to challenge, and to break records and set new ones. Specific past events and achievements are marked by the celebratory boards and framed hangings - occasions such as the millennium, royalty passing on, farewells, contributions to the tower and significant peals. Current notice boards celebrate the present events - visitors, special practice sessions and peals to be attempted. For example there is a World Record Peal Board high up under the beautiful timber ceiling at St Nicholas, Old Marston. In white lettering on a black unframed board is this impressive message. This is real history. One of the ringers was Roy Jones, now Tower Captain at Marston. I asked him about it. "The record was held for over ten years", he said, "the ringers were young men, but ringing such a peal again would be difficult because of noise complaints". **Margaret Marsh.**

Advance Practice at Freeland (6) 3cwt. The church dates back to 1869-1871 and is in the Gothic Revival style synonymous of its architect J.L. Pearson, with a north-east attached tower with saddleback roof. The original ring of six bells with 5cwt tenor were cast in 1896, but the 4 and tenor were broken up, and two new bells cast in 2010 by Whitechapel as part of a re-hanging project that now makes this the lightest ring of six in Oxfordshire. We were made exceptionally welcome with refreshments provided for us in the church! **Hugh Deam.**



Dates for your Diary

Full details from Hugh Deam on 07899-871079, or email: hugh.deam@btinternet.com

- Tuesday 19th April (tomorrow)** No Practice at Headington for this week only, due to the band holding their AGM.
- Saturday 14th May** Half Yearly Meeting and Branch Striking Competition at **Kidlington.** (Times to follow)
- Monday 16th May** Stedman Triples Advance Practice at **St Giles (8)** 14cwt. 7.15pm
- Saturday 11th June** Advanced 6 Bell Practice at **Watlington (8)** 24cwt. 10.00am
(The bells are heavy, so only experienced ringers, please)
- Saturday 18th June** Summer Outing to **Shaftesbury** Area. Full details to follow.
- Saturday 9th July** O.D.G. Guild Festival. Details from Katie Lane: kt.catchmole@googlemail.com

Local Practice Nights:

- Mondays:** Cowley (6) (7.30-9.00), Garsington (6), (8.00-9.00), St Aldates (6) (2nd/4th week only).
- Tuesdays:** Headington (8), Kidlington (8), Horspath (6).
- Wednesdays:** Iffley (6).
- Thursdays:** Wolvercote (6), St Giles (8), Stanton St John (5).
- Fridays:** Old Marston (6), Wheatley (6), North Hinksey (6) (6.45-7.45)

Note: Most Practices start at 7.30pm, but before turning up, check the details of the Ringing Times,

Tower Captains and Correspondents, by going to the Oxford City Branch website: www.oxfordcitybranch.org.uk

Any information or photographs for possible inclusion in **Hugh's News** (subject to space available), please email me: paulclucas@hotmail.co.uk