



Oxford City Branch Hugh's News



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

Monday 22nd August 2011

Maiden Bell leaves St Giles!

What an adventure for an old Tenor like me, a 'maiden bell', who hasn't been out of the Tower since King Charles I was on the throne of England. In the tower life was good. We felt secure. My seven sisters and I, decked out in our headstocks, bearings and wheels, exercised three times a week, called the faithful to prayer, rang peals and quarter peals in celebration and respect. All was in service to the Church and rung by hundreds of ringers, most long since dead. We heard John murmuring that good ringers were not coming to St Giles that *my* pitch was out, that we needed new fittings, that the melody and harmony of our performance could be improved by re-tuning and re-hanging. Money had to be raised. Permissions sought. Battles won against the few



who said that the tenor (myself) 'should be preserved intact'. It took time. However the day for removal approached. For a bell like me, cast in 1632, and an entire life spent in service in one place, apprehension is expected when change is imminent. The scaffolding went up, workers disengaged us, rolled us out on trolleys into the sunshine and lowered down on a hoist to the ground. What excitement!. As my 13cwt came downwards on the hoist I saw my newest ringers - my 21st century ringers - John, Heather, Matthew, David, Steve, Andy, Margaret, Susan, Laura, Eleni, Gregor and Andrew - (all strangely dressed) - gaping at me, stroking me, hugging me clicking black boxes at me and finally waving goodbye to all of us as we were driven away (in a carriage without a horse I might add!). Can't wait to tell you about my adventures at Whitechapel Bell Foundry in London! *Margaret Marsh.*



This picture, is a sketch by **Weimin He**, currently attached as Artist in Residence to the University's Radcliffe Infirmary Quarter Redevelopment Project. He drew some other pictures of St Giles before, which appeared in the Ringing World and on the cover of Odd Bob. We just managed to get a message to Weimin to tell him when to come along, in time for him to see the bells while they were still at ground level waiting to be loaded onto the lorry. Estimates of the time of departure kept being revised earlier. We did however manage to have a group of at least a dozen ringers and parishioners gathered to see the bells off, with a good festive atmosphere, at lunchtime on Tue 9th August, but must apologise to those who turned up later in the afternoon, on the basis of earlier estimates of timing, and found that the bells and the spectators had already all gone. Progress is still continuing faster than expected; the tenor had already been tuned on Tue 16th, and Whitechapel have said they are very pleased with the result. Whites took the chance to weigh the tenor when all the fittings had been removed, and their figure was 14-0-20 (but by now it will have lost a bit more

weight, as a result of being tuned!). So it was probably about 15cwt when cast in 1632, before the canons were removed (about 100 years ago). These weights are significantly more than the 13cwt which appears in *Dove* which was presumably just an estimate based on measuring the size of the bell after it was already in the tower. *John Pusey.*

Mini Outing to Tadmerton and Hanwell on Sunday 21st August.

A nicer day, weatherwise we could hardly have asked for, firstly visiting **Tadmerton (6)** which was once a Royal estate of Saxon king Edwyn - the name deriving from a pool frequented by frogs! A spring-fed pool known as 'Holy Well' still exists on Tadmerton Heath, but is only seen by golfers as it is on the golf course and is used to help water the greens. The Norman church was extensively remodelled during the 14th century when the tower was built. The bells are an exceptionally fine six. That our lunchtime destination of the **Lampet Arms** has the distinct look of a railway inn is due to its conception at the time when the burgeoning rail network was confidently expected to pass through here. Then on to **Hanwell (6)** - named after the stream here. **Hanwell Castle** was built in 1498 for Sir William Cope, cofferer to Henry VII, but although described as a castle, this was in fact an ornamentally battlemented Tudor residence with rectangular towers at either corner. The building was demolished, save one tower, in 1770 and then rebuilt as a farmhouse with the medieval church set adjacent. The bells were augmented from a 5 to a 6 in 2009 and are rung from the ground floor. *Hugh Deam*



Dates for your Diary

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

Saturday 3rd September
Tuesday 6th September
Saturday 10th September
Saturday 8th October

Branch 10 Bell Practice at St. Mary Magdalen (10) 10cwt.
Advanced 8 Bell Practice at Headington (8) 7¹/₂cwt
Branch 6 Bell Practice at Garsington (6) 9¹/₂cwt.
Six Bell Method Practice at Iffley (6) 10cwt.

7.00pm-8.15pm
8.00pm-9.00pm
10.30am-11.45am
10.00am-11.15am

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) (out of action until November), 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 inclusion in *Hugh's News* (subject to space available), please email me: paulclucas@hotmail.co.uk