



Oxford City Branch Hugh's News



Produced fortnightly by Paul, Jonathan and Hugh, plus contributions from other ringers.

Monday 27th May 2013

(Please note: There's no practice at Headington tomorrow - 28th May. They are holding their AGM)

Russian Orthodox Bells in New Marston, Oxford

On Sunday 19th May, six branch members, from St Giles, Old Marston, and Headington, visited the Russian Orthodox church of **St Nicholas the Wonder-Worker** in Ferry Road, New Marston, where four bells newly cast in Russia, and still looking shiny today, had been installed by Whites of Appleton, late in 2012. The heaviest bell weighs 132lb, i.e. just over 1cwt. The pitches of the bells resemble the top four notes of a diatonic eight, though not tuned in accordance with the 'equal temperament' now

normally used in European music. The tower is too narrow to allow ringers to climb up close to the bells and sound them by ropes attached to the clappers, as they would do in Russia, so the bells are sounded from the ground floor by means of an Ellacombe apparatus. The church's bell ringer, Sergey Tochlin, explained to us that Orthodox tradition prescribed in great detail how bells should be used. One of the standard patterns which he demonstrated was 12131214 repeated. The basic unit of timing depended on how long it took for the resonance of the heaviest bell to die away, so the pace was quite fast on these small bells. *John Pusey.*



Practices at Lower Heyford (6) and Somerton (8) on Saturday 18th May

The weather may not have automatically qualified as being *Summum bonum*, but for those of us who were huddled around the porch at **Lower Heyford** church on an abortive visit here barely more than twelve months ago, at what was the beginning of a summer of sullen skies, the scene felt as top-drawer as one could ever realistically hope to encounter. For many years characterised by the sound of F-111 jets and ancillary aircraft, and local roads peppered with military vehicles, in recent times the villages along the banks of the River Cherwell and Oxford Canal have regained their previous unruffled character. **Somerton** is home to one of England's few remaining turf mazes, constructed as a labyrinth of concentric circles. This part of middle England was long favoured by recusants, and it may well be that given the iridescent surroundings religious differences became somewhat parergon. The church is impressive inside and out, with detailed effigies in the Fermor Chapel particularly resplendent. The bells are rung from the ground floor, but are far easier to handle than might be expected, being the embodiment of orotundity and a highlight of most any ringing outing. We would very much like to express our appreciation for the warm welcome we received at both towers, and the augmentation of our group by our host at Somerton. *Hugh Deam.*



Lower Heyford



Somerton

Dates for your Diary

Full details from Hugh at: [hugh.deam at btinternet.com](mailto:hugh.deam@btinternet.com) or Jonathan at: [jonathan at cresshull.co.uk](mailto:jonathan@cresshull.co.uk)

- Saturday 1st June** Practice at Yarnton (6) 22cwt, 4.15pm-5.15pm and Bletchingtondon (6) 8cwt, 5.45pm-6.45pm (Grandsire and Plain Bob Doubles/Minor upwards. *Please note slight time alteration*) (Can you email Hugh if you plan to go along.)
- Saturday 8th June** Grandsire and Plain Bob Doubles/Minor Practice at N. Leigh (6) 9cwt 10.30am-12.00noon
- Saturday 29th June** All day Summer Outing to East Hampshire in the Alton area. (Full details soon)
Holybourne (8) 6cwt. Chawton (6) 6cwt. Lunch at The French Horn, Alton. Alton (6) 6cwt. Herriard (6) 7cwt.

Local Practice Nights

- Mondays:** St Aldates (6), Garsington (6) (No Practices at the moment).
- Tuesdays:** Headington (8) (*Note: Changing to Wednesdays soon!*), Kidlington (8), Horspath (6).
- Wednesdays:** Iffley (6).
- Thursdays:** Wolvercote (6), St Giles (8), Stanton St John (5), Cowley (6).
- Fridays:** Old Marston (6), Wheatley (6), North Hinksey (6) (6.30-7.30).

For more details go to the Oxford City Branch website: www.oxfordcitybranch.org.uk

Any information or photographs for inclusion in *Hugh's News* please email me: [paulclucas at hotmail.co.uk](mailto:paulclucas@hotmail.co.uk)