



# Oxford City Branch Hugh's News



Produced fortnightly by Paul, Jonathan and Hugh, with a few contributions from other ringers

Monday 4<sup>th</sup> November 2013

(This is the last issue before I go on holiday, featuring the highly successful trip to the Worcester Training Centre - Paul)

## 23 Go Mad In Worcester!

Only a week after the clocks changed, there was a definite sensation that winter was approaching as 23 brave ringers set out early on a blustery morning to make their way to Worcester. We met at the Cathedral - not to do battle with the 48cwt ring of twelve for which this tower is

revered - but to take full advantage of the **Teaching Centre** which resides above the Central Transept but below the main ringing chamber. The first challenge was the 137 steps (one of the youngsters may be able to verify this!), but once we arrived we were made very welcome by the Cathedral Ringing Master, Mark Regan, who described the Teaching Centre as a "play pit" for aspiring ringers. The Teaching Centre has a set of eight *dumb bells* which are connected to a simulator. This allows them to be rung individually using headphones, rung as a peal of eight, or even as the front eight of a mind-bending virtual ring of 22. Broken stays are normally a source of stress and anxiety for both teacher and learner in the traditional teaching environment of a typical bell tower, but they are not a problem here and were almost encouraged, as the dumb bells are fitted with a quick-release mechanism that can be easily reset within seconds.



Soon enough, people had broken off into small tutorial groups, one-to-one handling sessions, and individual practices of anything from ringing a tenor behind to rounds to Bristol Surprise Maximus, while others were being treated to the stunning views of the Cathedral bells in the belfry above, and the Malverns from the top of the Cathedral Tower.

After a leisurely lunch, we moved onto the ring of twelve bells at **All Saints**. For some, this was a completely new experience, and may even have been considered rather daunting for those that have only ever rung on six bells before. However, All Saints have an additional "flat sixth" bell, which makes a light ring of eight available, so after being gently coaxed through plain hunt on higher numbers, some rounds on the back ten, and a reassuring touch of *Stedman Caters* by the more experienced ringers, everyone stood up to the challenge of ringing some rounds on all twelve bells, and were rewarded by the opportunity to observe some of our ringers attempting to stand all of the bells at backstroke.

Fortified by tea and cake, we marched on to **Old St Martin's** in the Cornmarket. The former ring of six have been sympathetically preserved as clock chimes at the top of the tower, and chimed out a replica of our own **Carfax** chimes at each quarter-hour, while we rang out on the new light ring of ten that have been installed underneath. For some, these light bells were a welcome reminder of their home tower, for others they proved to be something of a handful. Nevertheless, further progress was made with plain hunting on higher numbers, and a brave half dozen Surprise Minor ringers rattled off a touch of *Cambridge, Beverley, Surfleet and Bourne* on the front six. Our thanks must go to William Regan who acted as our guide throughout the day, and of course to his father Mark for letting us loose in his "play pit". We have been assured of a warm welcome should any of us wish to return for another visit, so please do let me know if you are interested. **Jonathan Cresshull.**

## Kathy's First Quarter Peal

On Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> October, a quarter peal of 1260 Plain Bob Doubles was rung at St Thomas the Martyr, Oxford in 39 minutes. 1) Kathy Xu, 2) Jonathan Cresshull (C), 3) Katherine A Stonham, 4) Catherine M A Lane, 5) Leon G Thompson, 6) Matthew S Malek. This was Kathy's first quarter peal.



## Service Ringing at The University Church

With a tenor weight of nearly 27cwt, the bells of **St Mary the Virgin** (The University Church) are the seventh heaviest ring of six in the country. They were recently rehung by *Whites of Appleton*, but still require immaculate bell control, as this heavy ring turn very slowly and can be heard clearly across the city. On Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> October, we were privileged to be invited to ring for the evening service, even though we were later informed that there wasn't actually an evening service to ring for! This also gave Patricia O'Neill, who is a regular member of the SMV congregation and was introduced to ringing during the rehanging project, her first opportunity to ring at her "home tower". **Jonathan Cresshull.**

## 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)

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| <b>Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> November</b> | <b>Advanced Practice at Headington (8)</b>  | 8.00pm-9.00pm              |
| <b>Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> November</b>  | <b>Oxford City Branch AGM at Headington. 2.30-3.30 ringing, 3.30-4.00 service, 4.00-4.30 tea.</b>   | <b>AGM starts at 4.30.</b> |
| <b>Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> November</b> | <b>St Giles Advanced Practice (This is to be held at St Thomas' while essential work is going on the church. Please check with John Pusey before attending)</b> | 8.00pm-9.00pm              |
| <b>Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> November</b>  | <b>Advanced Practice at Kidlington (8)</b>  | 8.00pm-9.00pm              |

## Local Practice Nights

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| <b>Mondays:</b>    | <b>St Aldates (6), Garsington (6)</b>                                    |
| <b>Tuesdays:</b>   | <b>Kidlington (8), Horspath (6).</b>                                     |
| <b>Wednesdays:</b> | <b>Headington (8), Iffley (6).</b>                                       |
| <b>Thursdays:</b>  | <b>St Giles (8), Wolvercote (6), Stanton St John (5), Cowley (6).</b>    |
| <b>Fridays:</b>    | <b>Old Marston (6), Wheatley (6), North Hinksey (6) (6.30pm-7.30pm).</b> |

For more details go to the Oxford City Branch website: [www.oxfordcitybranch.org.uk](http://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)

