



Oxford City Branch Hugh's News

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

Monday 5th October 2015



Charles Smith Announces His Retirement from Ringing

After three decades of dedicated service to bell-ringing Charles Smith, (formerly of St. James, Cowley, then St. Leonard, Eynsham, and latterly St. Mary's, Witney) has had to call time on his ringing career due to the potentially disabling cumulative effects on his thumb joints. Hopefully we will still get to meet up occasionally at social functions as he is setting about re-learning other activities that he can do solely left-handed. Besides his support for our ringing, Charles has long been a keen participant in the social asides such as darts, aunt sally, bowls and skittles.



Charles began ringing in 1984, his teachers being David Pullin and Roy Goodwin, both of Iffley. A diligent record keeper, Charles has been able to supply me with accurate information as to his ringing stats. A grand total of 693 quarter peals rung at 36 different towers includes his first quarter on 26th

September 1986, the first of 84 on the Cowley bells and 391 at Marston. He scored three peals, two at Marston and one at Cowley. For several years the nature of his work meant that most Saturdays were work days from afternoon onwards, thus precluding the opportunity to make the all day outings that we have undertaken. Nonetheless, my records show that he joined us on some fifty events, from 1998, when he walked from Eynsham to Bladon to join us at the midpoint of our outing, through to this year on our Spring outing to Hampshire. Besides Oxfordshire and its neighbouring counties, Sussex (twice), Hampshire (twice) and Cambridgeshire have also contributed to a grand total of ten counties where Charles has rung with us. Independently, he has also rung at towers in Somerset and Devon. Charles has asked me to pass on his thanks to all those who have helped him with ringing down the years and been so welcoming to him. I think it safe to say that we all in return wish Charles well for the future and would like him to know that we owe him a profound debt of gratitude. **Hugh Deam**



Charles ringing at Swalcliffe in 2014

A Ringing Outing to Aylesbury (8) and Chinnor (6) – Saturday 3rd October

During the 16th century, Aylesbury was in the ownership of Thomas Bullen, with county town status conferred by Henry VIII in 1529 whilst he



was still in the 'honeymoon' period of his fateful relationship with Bullen's daughter, Anne. During the Napoleonic Wars, Hartwell House was the residence of the exiled king of France, Louis XVIII. The document of acceptance of the French crown was signed by Louis in the library of the house. His wife, Marie Josephine, died at Hartwell in 1810 and was buried in the churchyard, thus becoming the only French queen to be buried on English soil. The 13th century parish church and its location, St. Mary's Close, bear the hallmarks associated with an abbey or cathedral. To look at the interior of the church today it is hard to imagine the dilapidated state it had fallen into by the 19th century, with the roof leaking, three fire engines housed in a chapel, and the local



regiment injudiciously storing their gunpowder here. The church briefly hit the national news in 2013 with the discovery of an ear in the churchyard. The area having been cordoned off for a day or so, the forensic examination determined it to be a pig's ear. Thankfully, we managed to keep the standard of ringing above anything that could be described in terms of a porcine lobe. After a busy session of ringing at Chinnor that encompassed seven different methods, the majority of our party decamped to the Village Centre for lunch. Staffed by volunteers, the centre celebrated its twentieth anniversary this year and a template for other such community based hubs across the country. Adam Clayton, the bassist with the rock band U2 was born in Chinnor, and the former senior BBC weather forecaster, Bill Giles has lived in the village for many years, so the long range forecast could well have been for a beautiful day and so it transpired on what was a celebration of the mysterious ways of ringing. **Hugh Deam**



A Ringing Morning at Stanton Harcourt – Saturday 26th September

On a glorious late summer morning, we gathered at St Michael's Church, Stanton Harcourt for an enjoyable ring on their 6 bells.



The Tenor weighs 11 cwt, and we had no trouble turning it in to Plain Bob Minor and St Clements. We also rang Stedman, and a number of other Doubles methods, including Greenford Little Bob Doubles - which proved marginally interesting!

The morning was only slightly marred by the fact that when Judy arrived at Stanton Harcourt, she discovered a big nail sticking out of the front off-side tyre of her car! Thankfully our 'knight in shining armour' Antony Williamson came to the rescue, and changed the wheel for her and – after a bit of a late start – normal service resumed as planned! **Paul Lucas**



Dates for your Diary

Full details from Hugh Deam at: hugh.deam@btinternet.com or mobile: 07899-871079

Saturday 17th October

Practice at Freeland (6)

3.00pm-4.30pm

Saturday 31st October

Witney & Woodstock Branch Practice at Woodstock (8)

10.30am-12noon

Saturday 14th November

Branch AGM at Horspath (6) (more details of times to follow later)

2.30pm onwards

Saturday 21st November

Practice at Iffley (6) (Followed by a ringers Planning Meeting for 2016)

10.30am-12noon

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@hotmail.co.uk