



Oxford City Branch Hugh's News



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

Monday 19th September 2011

A Surprise 'Ace' for Wimbledon!

Despite our best efforts, Richard Verrall is moving to Wimbledon in order to cut down on commuting time in the course of his important role as Pro Vice Chancellor of City University. He has been ringing in Oxford since around 2003, first at Iffley and then, from 2005 at Old Headington as he moved up from a six to an eight bell tower. One of those lucky people who has mastered ringing in middle age, he has progressed in a relatively short space of time to the extent of ringing many advanced Surprise methods. Introduced to Old Headington's "very sound bells" by his friend and neighbour Paul Foote, he has long been a vital part of our ringing team. He took on the Captaincy of the Tower last year, and through him there are now Advanced 8-bell Practices once a month, as well as regular quarter peals. We are proud that his name adorns our new peal board after we rang a quarter peal to celebrate the life of Paul Foote. Richard has vowed to continue to come to Oxford to attend Sunday Service ringing at St Andrews as often as his other commitments allow. We shall do everything in our power to hold him to this! In the meantime we shall miss him, for he is a "very sound ringer", and we wish him well in his next tower. *Wendy Austen.*



(Richard's last Practice 'in charge' at Headington will be tomorrow - 20th September at 7.30pm. Everyone is very welcome!)

Reminder of Ringing Course Reimbursements.

As several Branch ringers are intending to / or are considering to apply for places on ringing courses and bell maintenance courses this Autumn, this would seem a prescient time to send out a reminder that the cost of attending these courses can in most instances be offset by the Branch. If you do attend a forthcoming course, simply inform your Tower Captain / Secretary / Correspondent and they will contact the Branch Secretary and the cost of attendance will be reimbursed after the event. As things stand virtually every ringer in the Branch is within the monetary limit set for subsidising any single ringer during the lifetime of their membership within the Branch for these courses. Since the demise of the Easthampstead Course the subsidy was lowered to reflect the fact that replacement courses were one-day non residential and much cheaper. The subsidy should cover roughly three one-day courses. It is not too late for any Branch ringer already accepted for attendance of the Michaelmas Course to still claim their subsidy through the aforementioned channels. *Hugh Deam.*

St Giles latest...



St Giles's Church was open as usual during St Giles's Fair, and we arranged three hand bell sessions, which seemed to be appreciated by members of the public - even including some of those just passing the porch on the footpath - as well as by the helpers selling tea and cakes. At lunchtime on the Monday, there were actually seven ringers there, and although on eight bells we could only manage plain hunt, we provided some variety for the listeners in the form of a reasonable performance on twelve of rounds and of dodging to cross-change and back. Quarter-peals in hand were attempted on two occasions on the Tuesday, but without success. The St Giles bells have now been returned to Whites after being retuned at Whitechapel, and are about to be shot-blasted to remove surface corrosion (attributed to coal-fire smoke in previous centuries); apparently this should significantly increase the resonance of the sound produced. Postcard-size reproductions of Weimin He's pictures of the bells being removed a month ago were printed in time for the Fair, and are now on sale in the church, at 50p each or £1.50 for a set of four. We still expect the bells to be back in use at St Giles sometime in early November. *John Pusey.*

Margaret's visit to White's on 17th September.

The Tenor was not available for comment this week. It is understood she is very upset at having to leave London and has mixed feelings about a future locked up a tower in the provinces!

Meanwhile at White's of Appleton, the oldest bell hanging company in the UK, work is progressing on the second stage of the restoration of St Giles bells and their fittings. Here five generations of the family have cared for the bells and know their history. Brian White explained how the sandblasting took place and removed years / centuries of debris leaving the bells uniformly bronze in colour. Next, they will be 'grated' or blackened then polished and buffed to minimize the forming of verdigris from the high copper content of the bell alloy. The bell wheels are stacked together, looking proud of their repairs, and awaiting the coating of the oak spokes, the ash base rim and the marine ply shrouding (in lieu of traditional elm) with an all important bat friendly insecticide. In the next newsletter we hope to hear again from the Tenor and her responses to, and observations on the processes of cleansing, protection and reassembly. *Margaret Marsh.*



(Brian White with the wheels from the St Giles bells. Photo by M.M.)

Dates for your Diary

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

Tuesday 4th October	Advanced 8 Bell Practice at Headington (8) 7½ cwt.	8.00pm-9.00pm
Saturday 8th October	6 Bell Practice at Iffley (6) 10cwt.	10.00am-11.15am
Saturday 5th November	8 Bell Practice at Islip (8) 8cwt (This will replace the scheduled Practice at St Giles - for obvious reasons)	10.00am-11.15am
Saturday 19th November	Branch AGM at Wolvercote (6) 8cwt.	From 3.30pm onwards
Saturday 3rd December	10 Bell Practice at St Mary Magdalen (10) 7cwt.	6.30pm-7.45pm

Local Practice Nights:

Mondays:	Cowley (6) (7.30-9.00), Garsington (6), (8.00-9.00), St Aldates (6) (2 nd /4 th 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)

For full details go 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