



RNGB AGM Oxford Outing - Saturday March 2nd 2019

As this visit was postponed from last March, due to 'the beast from the east', it was second time lucky for the RNGB spring outing. The weather this year however was much more welcoming, with the Saturday sandwiched neatly between the February heatwave and Storm Freya.

Wantage (St Peter and St Paul 8 21-2-15)

The outing started in this busy, market town, with ringing at the town centre church. Approximately 25



regular members attended and for those with time to spare, the outside market had a good selection of not only the traditional type of stalls, but also those selling artisan bread and local eggs of different types etc.

Incidentally Wantage was also the birthplace of King Alfred the Great, who established the Navy back in the 880s to protect against Danish

Raiders attacking the coast; his statue now stands in the marketplace.

Opposite the church, in the grounds of a local museum, was a statue of Sir John Betjeman, who lived in the town for several years. He wrote poems about the local area and one was entitled Wantage Bells, which he wrote for the wedding of his daughter Candida, for which the bells were rung. A hand-written copy of this poem can be found in the ringing chamber.

As the bells were considered heavy and a little more difficult to ring, more straightforward methods such as Plain Bob Triples, Grandsire Doubles and Grandsire Triples, plus St Clements were attempted.



Childrey (St Mary the Virgin 8 12-0-4)

The second tower was down a narrow road passing a picturesque duckpond, with the church sitting overlooking miles of picturesque Oxfordshire countryside.



The bells were a downstairs ring, approached from an outside west door, with a well-placed bench outside for those waiting to ring to either sit or stand and chat.

The bells were pleasant to ring and methods such as Stedman Triples, Little

Bob Major, Lincolnshire Surprise were rung, as well as Plain Hunt and Call Changes.

The church itself dated from 995 AD and was home to some renowned brasses; those in the chancel, for example,

commemorated persons connected to the local manor or rectors appointed by them.



Stanford in the Vale (St Denys 8 8-1-17)



A very good lunch followed at The Horse and Jockey in the village, where scampi and chips seemed the popular choice. Then a short walk to the 14thC church, set back from the village green. The church itself was in a large churchyard, much of which was being maintained as a wildflower area, with grass cutting taking place at different times of year to promote different species of flowers. Inside the church was an unusually large squint, plus on the wall a plaque commemorating the life of Reverend George Henry Proctor, curate of the Parish, who died of a fever at Scutari in 1855,

when he was assistant Chaplain to Her Majesty's Forces in the Crimea.

The bells were approached by a steep ladder and trap door, and after members signed the Health and Safety book, ringing comprised of not only Rounds and Call Changes, but also Grandsire Doubles with 2 tenors, Plain Bob Triples, Stedman Triples, a plain course of Kent Major plus a half course of Lincolnshire Surprise.

Faringdon (All Saints 8 17-1-7)



The last tower was situated just off the Market Place and the ringers accessed by a side door on the south aisle (with a loud door bell audible in the ringing room for those arriving late!). Just inside the inner south aisle door was a small display case housing a cannon ball from the Civil War. Faringdon House, situated just behind All Saints, was a Royalist garrison and was besieged by the Parliamentary forces in 1646. The large cannon ball was found in the belfry, when the tower was being cleared to re-hang the bells in 1926. The oak from the old bell frame

was used to make the case (the smaller iron ball on the left and the musket ball on the right were found locally).

The ringing room was situated beyond an informal meeting area known as The Loft and shared its space with the overhead wires from the church carillon and the old market bell.

The final ringing of the day included some Plain Hunt, a plain course of Bob Major, plus some Grandsire



Triples, Single Oxford Triples, Cambridge and an unsuccessful touch of Double Norwich.

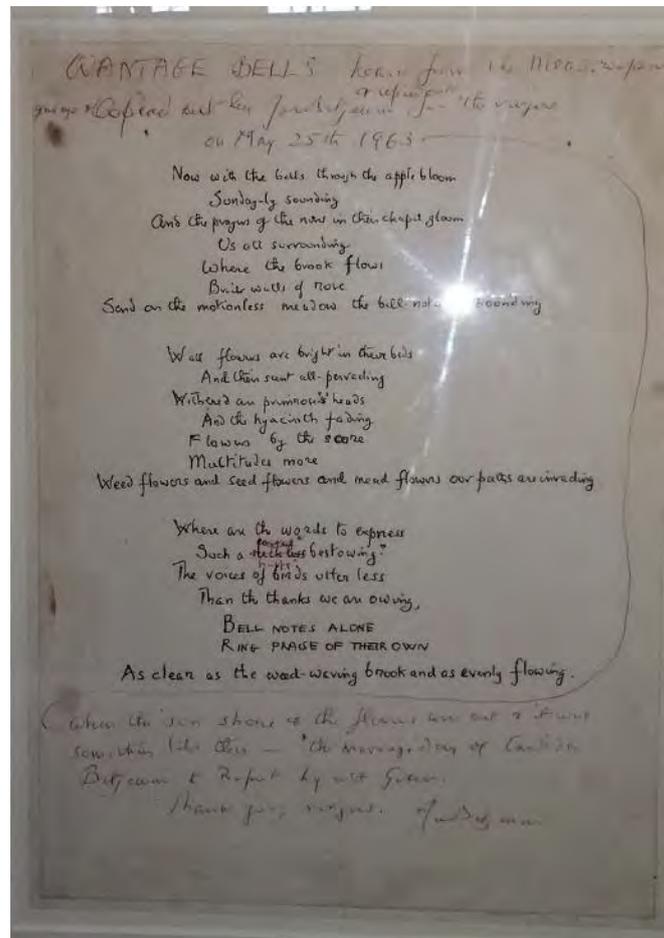
This was followed by a short, informal service in a very pleasant (and warm!) meeting room adjoining the church, a shared tea with some excellent food and closed with the AGM, finishing at around 6.45pm.





Many thanks must go to John for organising a very enjoyable spring outing in a delightful part of the country and to Anna for organising the ringing and ensuring all went as smoothly as possible at each tower.

HG



John Betjeman's hand-written poem Wantage Bells