Heminqbrouqh, Blessed Virgin Mary

The church is unusual in many respects. For a small village to possess such a magnificent church is unusual. As a building it is unique. The reasons for its importance go back to the time of the Norman conquest when William gave it to the Priors of Durham. It was a richly endowed Rectory and, under a licence given by Henry VI in 1426, the Priors of Durham established a college here. It remained collegiate until its suppression by Henry VIII in 1534. During that time enormous alterations were made to the church fabric.

In the church are examples of the architecture of every period from the 12th to the 20th century, the earliest being at the Eastern end of the nave. The church is cruciform with a central tower, North and South transepts, nave, aisles, chancel and vestry, mainly built in the 13th century. The unique 126 foot spire was built between 1416 and 1446 on the existing 63 foot high tower, thus providing the church's remarkable and famous feature. Internally the church is equally impressive as, among its many features are a tub shaped font of 1180 and the oldest miserichord in England which dates from around 1200.

The woodwork also provides much interest from its pulpit (1717), carved pew ends (16th to 18th century) contrasting with the work of Kilburn (1950) in forming the war memorial chapel, which also features a modern armed forces memorial window by Harry Stammers (1946). There is also excellent 19" century stained glass in the west window.

Following four years of substantial restoration work (costing in excess of £400,000) there is now in the North transept the top section of the spire which, because of its dangerous condition, was renewed in 1989. Within the same area is a finely carved limestone table and a 15th century stone cadaver.

All in all a most interesting church which thoroughly justifies its inclusion in "The Beauties of England and wales", a book published in the 17th century.

Bell ringers at Hemingbrough are very visible as the ropes descend to floor level and the ringers "perform" at the cross between the nave and the chancel. The six bells are housed in a 13th century belfry with five bells cast by E Sellars II of York being in-stalled in 1730 and a sixth (the treble) added in 1907. The five bells were made from recasting four bells which were probably two hundred years old in 1730. Change ringing commenced in 1907 thanks to the competence and enthusiasm of the Vicar at that time. The Rev. W.P. Wright (Vicar 1905-1915) had been training local young men in readiness for the six bell peal. During that first week, following the installation of the treble, nine 720's were rung with the help of experienced ringers from Selby Abbey. Although 720's on handbells had been rung by local ringers, the very first 720 op the tower bells by local ringers was not achieved until 23rd October 1907. Since that date the Tune family and the Terry family have featured prominently as campanologists. It is remarkable and worthy of note that, for a period of at least thirty years, six villagers rang the bells twice each Sunday, attempting and usually succeeding to ring 720 before the service. These ringers were three brothers Matthew, John and Edwin Tune, who rang with Arthur Hudson, Gus Hatfield and George Terry. On one notable occasion in 1949 a 720 was rung by members of the same (Tune) family:

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Treble | Winnie Burt | Daughter of E D Tune |
| 2 | Bernice Tune |  |
| 3 | Edwin Tune |  |
| 4 | Geoff Burt | Son-in-Law of E D Tune |
| 5 | Thomas Tune | conductor |
| Tenor | John Tune |  |

Treble - Winnie Burt (daughter of E D Tune) 2nd - Bernice Tune 3rd - Edwin Tune 4th - Geoff Burt (son-in-law of E D Tune) 5th - Thomas Tune (conductor) Tenor - John Tune

The connection with the Terry family continues with a nephew of G.C. Terry, namely William T Stoker who has been a ringer since 1946 and also responsible for the tower for many years. "Yog" Stoker, as he is widely known, has spent hundreds of hours training young ringers in his determination to keep the bells ringing, experiencing many of the frustrations that this can create. Currently he has seven trainees and is optimistic that a local band will be ringing methods regularly again before long.

The inscriptions on the bells are:

2nd - INVOCO DEUM

3rd - IN ALTISSIMIS

4th - SOLI DEO GLORIA

5th - TE DEUM LAUDAMUS

Tenor - CUM SONUM MEMENTO MORI

The peal is in F# and the tenor weighs 10-1-15 Cwt.

Geoff W Burt