Market Weighton, All Saints

The Town

It is believed that the town occupies the site of the Roman station, Delgovitia. The Roman road from the Humber at Brough separates just South of the parish with branches passing through to York and to Malton. Much evidence of earlier settlements is to be found on the surrounding wolds. The enclosure of the surrounding common lands in the 1770's and the building of the Market Weighton canal increased the growth and importance of the town which peaked towards the end of the 19th century with the building of the Selby to Bridlington and the York to Hull railway lines which met in the town. The removal of the railway lines has created some delightful walks in the area and more recent road improvements, including the M62 and town bypass, have greatly improved the quality of life in the town which continues to grow in size. Although there is some local industry a large number of its working population commutes to Hull, Beverley, York and Brough.

The Church

The oldest part of the church, the base of the tower, dates from the late 11th century, and the early English arch was inserted into it before 1200. The earliest entry in the list of prebends of York Minster is 1298 and the earliest date on the list of Vicars displayed in the church is 1347. The church has been enlarged and modified many times including the installation of a gallery which was subsequently removed about 1869. The steeple was removed in 1785 to be replaced with the top brick section of the tower. The bell frame was moved into this section and remained there until 1978/79 renovations. Amongst the interesting monuments in the church is one to William Bradley who weighed 14 lbs at birth and grew to 7 ft 9 ins and to weigh 27 stone. A more recent monument commemorates the baptism of Sarah Andrews who married General Francisco de Miranda, precursor of Latin American Independence.

The Bells

There is a record of the ringers being paid 2s-6d in 1685 upon the defeat of the Duke of Monmouth but no details of the bells until a record of a parish meeting in 1783 which resolved to exchange 3 old bells, valued at £117, for 6 new bells to cost about £206 excluding hanging. £92-4s-6d was actually paid for the bells. William Clarkson and John Hopwood were paid £34 for the frame and T Gardoms £1-10s-6d for the ropes. These 6 bells were cast in 1783 by Daltons of York, the Tenor weighing 9-2-13; one peal was rung on these bells. It was rung for the Yorkshire Association (No. 3580) in 2 hours 55 mins. on 7th May 1932 and was 7 different extents of Plain Bob Minor conducted by Stanley Webb. In 1950 the tone of these bells was judged to be unsatisfactory and, as they were too thin for retuning, they were recast by John Taylor. The cost, including renovations to the tower and oak frame, was about £1000. The original inscriptions were transferred to the recast bells, the Tenor of which now weighed 9-3-6 cwt. The first peal on these bells was rung for the Yorkshire Association (No. 5094) and the Beverley and District Society (No. 16) on 16th June 1951 in 2 hours 53 mins. and again was of 7 different extents of Plain Bob Minor, conducted this time by Philip H Speck. Twenty further peals were rung before the augmentation to 8 bells in 1979. A..number of cracks in the tower masonry had been giving some concern and it was therefore decided to put a concrete ring beam around the tower in the clock chamber and to install a new steel bell frame in that chamber to relieve the stress from ring-ing the bells in the old brick chamber above. To further strengthen the tower the clock chamber louvred windows were bricked up and concrete stitches were inserted across the various cracks. Two new trebles were cast by Taylors and all the clappers were rebushed. The frame was fabricated by Arthur Fidler and the ringers and friends provided the labour to move the bells and old frame and to erect the new frame. New floors and a clock platform also had to be erected. Despite advice from Taylors it was in-sisted that the old bells should retain their canons and that the new trebles should be cast with canons to match. The result is that the existing bells are easy to ring but difficult to strike well, and although they are fairly loud in the ringing chamber their sound is well controlled outside the tower. The first peal or the augmented bells was rung on 3rd February 1980 for the Beverley and District Society (No. 384) in 3 hours, being 5088 Plain Bob Major conducted by David R Smith and rung by the Sunday service band. Since then the rate of peal ringing has increased and a further 45 peals have been rung, making a total of 68 in the tower at the end of 1991.

The following includes details of the bells weight and diameter(in mm) and also the diameter of the wheels (mm).

Treble 3-2-2 600 1440

 I LEAD THE WAY. LAUDATE DOMINUM. (Praise ye the Lord) Taylor 1978

2nd 4-0-2 632 1460

 SEVIUNT EI DE AC NOCTE IN TEMPLO EJUS (They serve Him day and night in His temple) Taylor 1978

3rd 4-0-2 660 1480

 TE DEUM LAUDAMUS (We praise thee 0 Lord) Dalton York Fecit 1783 Taylors Recast 1950

4th 4-2-3 700 1530

 BONUM EST CELEBRARE JEHOVAH (Good it is to praise Jehovah) Dalton York Fecit 1783 Taylors Recast 1950

5th 5-0-12 735 1590

 VOCAMUS. VENITE, VIGILATE, ORATE (We call. Come, be vigilant, pray) Dalton York Fecit 1783" Taylors Recast 1950

6th 5-3-0 770 1640

 IN JUCUNDITATE SONI SONABO TIBI DOMINE (I will ring out with glad sound) Dalton York Fecit 1783 Taylors Recast 1950

7th 7-1-11 855 1690

 LAOS HONOR DEO ET GLORIA IN EXCELS'S. HALLELUIAH (Praise, honour and glory to God in the highest) Dalton York Fecit 1783 Taylors Recast 1950

Tenor 9-3-6 940 1730 A flat

 SOLI DEO GLORIA PAX HOMINIBUS (Glory and peace from God alone) GEO SKELDING VICAR. W BREIGHTON, W VAWSER CH WARDENS 1783 JOHN WILLIAM KNEESHAW A RINGER SINCE 1897, FOR MANY YEARS TOWER-KEEPER THROUGH WHOSE INITIATIVE AND PERSEVERANCE THESE BELLS WERE RECAST AD 1950

As mentioned earlier it is known that ringers existed in 1685. There are other records of them being paid for celebrating victories of Marlborough, the King of Prussia and Nelson. Then there is a gap in our knowledge until 1910 when we have the Sunday service attendance book for the years 1910 to 1917. It appears that there were six regular ringers and two reserves until November 1916 when 10 ringers were given equal status in the register. In February 1915 all the ringers attended a meeting to discuss "*the best means of expressing our sympathy and respect for those of our townsmen who lay down their lives for their country in the great battles that are taking place in France*." It was decided that rather than ring for each individual, half muffled "peals" would be rung if possible when other ringers throughout the country were doing so and that the Vicar would announce the names of the fallen on the preceding Sunday. Two ringers went to war and returned safely. There, is evidence that ringing continued after the war as the first peal on the bells, in 1932, contained two local ringers and indeed some ringers from that period still live in the town. There are no further records until 1968 when Norman Chaddock began the tower history book which is still being maintained. Norman quickly created a young band from the pupils at Market Weighton school where he taught mathematics. Norman and his late wife Elsie left to settle in Invararay in October 1974 but left a ringing legacy which still benefits the tower.

The present band comprises 11 ringers who can ring service touches of Plain Bob Major and two others at the Plain Hunt stage. The band regularly rings Cambridge Surprise Minor and Plain Bob Major for two Sunday services and entertains itself with annual dinners and outings. It is a democratic band, having instituted a few years ago, annual general meetings chaired by the vicar at which its various officers are elected.

Mark J Lane