

Biographical Record

Henry Hubbard (1807 – 1881)

Henry Hubbard was born in Norwich on August 25th 1807. He learned to ring when he was about fifteen years old. Initially he rang at one of the churches with fewer bells, but he soon became proficient enough to ring on the higher numbers and was elected a member of the Norwich Scholars within two years of learning to handle a bell and in 1829 he was elected a member of the band at St. Peter Mancroft.

Hubbard rang his first peal, 6680 Oxford Treble Bob Major, at Redenhall on 28th October 1827. Later the same year he rang a handbell peal in the same method. In 1831 he rang a half peal of Stedman Triples on handbells; he rang a peal of 6160 Double Norwich Court Bob Major later the same year. His first peal as conductor came in 1832 when he called 5280 Oxford Treble Bob Major. In 1835 he rang peals of Superlative Surprise Major and London Surprise Major.

Samuel Thurston, who had conducted Hubbard's first peal, died in 1841; Hubbard followed in Thurston's footsteps as conductor and in 1842 he called a peal of Stedman Caters for the Norwich Scholars. He called a second peal of Stedman Caters the following year, using a different composition. On 18th January 1844 Hubbard rang the 11th to a peal of Stedman Cinques at St. Peter Mancroft but he did not conduct it.

Henry Hubbard married his wife, Mary Ann, in the early 1830s. They subsequently had four children: Henry, Mary Ann, Susan and Rachael, who were all born while the family lived in Norwich.

In 1836, Hubbard published his book: *Elements of Campanologia; or an Essay on the Art of Ringing*. It contained information on methods and compositions as well as hints on how to learn the various methods. Many copies were subscribed for before the book was first printed, most subscribers being from the Norfolk area, though C. & G. Mears bought several as did the ringers from Leeds.

By 1851 the family had moved to Witton, Blofield. Hubbard was working as a post messenger at that time and their son had left home.

Hubbard's name disappeared from ringing records in Norwich in the mid-1830s. In 1856 he moved to Leeds in Yorkshire and became an active ringer again. In 1858 a band of ringers from Leeds and Wakefield, plus one from Shropshire, went to Aberdeen to open the ring of eight bells, cast by Warners for St. Nicholas's church. After the other ringers left, Hubbard remained in Aberdeen for a while as an instructor to the Aberdeen ringers. His salary was paid by Aberdeen City Council.

In 1861 Hubbard and his wife were living at 22, Grantham Street in Leeds. All the children had left home and Hubbard worked as a cobbler.

In 1864 there was an unauthorised reprinting of Hubbard's book, with only the title page being different. A third edition was published in 1868, the year in which Hubbard

rang his last peal and the fourth and final edition of the book was published in 1876. In this edition several of Benjamin Annable's compositions were published.

By 1871 the Hubbards had moved again and resided at Grape Street, Hunslet. Ten years later the couple had moved in with their son and his wife and they all lived at 4, Ripon Street, Hunslet. Sadly, Hubbard was asthmatic. At the time of the publication of the last edition of his book he had been ill for some time and unable to work. Later he became too incapacitated to do anything for himself and had to rely on others. In 1881 it was decided to raise a testimonial to him. Jasper Snowdon was the secretary of the organising committee. The money raised paid for an allowance of 5 shillings a week to be paid to Hubbard from April 24th. By a strange co-incidence on that very Sunday, Henry Hubbard Junior rang and conducted a date touch of 1881 Plain Bob Triples which had been composed by his father.

On October 9th 1881 Hubbard died; many ringers were present at his funeral which took place on October 12th at Hunslet church. The funeral was paid for with money from the fund arranged by Jasper Snowdon. In 1882 a headstone was put on his grave, also paid for by the fund; afterwards the balance of the fund – less than £3 - was given to his widow. She lived for another fourteen years, dying at the age of 81 in April 1895; she was also buried in Hunslet cemetery .

This description is based on the account given in John Eisel's book *Giants of the Exercise*, available from [Central Council Publications](#).