

Biographical Record

Reverend Canon Cyril Walford Osborn Jenkyn (1874 – 1933)

Represented the Oxford Diocesan Guild on the Central Council
from 1906 to 1933 and attended 24 meetings

Cyril Walford Osborn Jenkyn was born in East Garston, Berkshire on 8th April 1874 the son of W. O. Jenkyn who was the Vicar of East Garston from 1870 to 1901.

He attended Marlborough College, then moved on to Trinity College, Cambridge, where he obtained a B.A. in 1895 and, among other things, became a member of the 1st Rowing Eight. He attended Wells Theological College, becoming a Deacon in 1897 and a Priest the following year. In 1898 he also married Mary Beale. He achieved his MA in 1900.

Cyril Jenkyn learned to ring at East Garston and Lambourn as a boy, in about 1886, and so it's no surprise that his name became synonymous with heavy-bell ringing and took his first steps in change ringing under the tutelage of William Woodley. He rang his first peal, Grandsire Triples, while up at Cambridge for the Cambridge University Guild. In all he rang about 400 peals and conducted about 40 of them.

He became Curate at Waltham St. Lawrence and after, while still a curate, moved to Witney from 1899 – 1910 where he became fully involved with the local community and organized activities for the local youth, also finding time to undertake a camping tour of Palestine.

Upon the death of Rev'd F. E. Robinson in 1910, he became the second Master of the Oxford Guild and moved to Caversham knowing that he needed to be nearer a more convenient centre to continue this role.. He acquired a post at the public girls' school, Queen Anne's in Caversham, as Chaplain and teacher of church history and while serving here also found time to be Chaplain to the Caversham Freemasons' Lodge, President of the Caversham Nursing Association and a member of the Reading Leander Club. He also served on the committees of Reading University, Royal Berkshire Hospital and the Reading Tuberculosis Dispensary Care Association as well as serving as a locum minister in the Reading area between 1915 and 1919. He remained Master until his untimely death at 59 in 1933.

Cyril Jenkyn served as an Army Chaplain in Flanders and was awarded the Military Cross in 1916 for fine and gallant work helping to rescue wounded soldiers under fire. It was during this time that he suffered a gas attack from which he never fully recovered.

While Master his life was described as one 'of ceaseless activities' and there were few Saturdays in a year when he wasn't attending Meetings, Quarterly Practices and otherwise helping the progress of ringing (details not given in his CC Biography). Lest anyone should think that his ringing duties took priority, his made it clear that spiritual demands were his first thought.

On Easter Monday (17th April) 1933 he spent the day with his wife and sisters at his birth village of East Garston. The newly augmented ring of 10 had been hung at St Nicolas, Newbury. He went to the tower and rang in a touch of Grandsire Caters, then excused himself to go outside and listen to how the bells sounded. Having walked no further than a few yards he collapsed on the pavement. It was here he was found by one of ringers he had recently been ringing with who happened to be an ambulance driver. All attempts to bring him round were in vain. Although in outward appearance a strong and fit man, the gassing he had received in Flanders had taken its toll.

His funeral took place in East Garston but ringers came from all over the country to pay their respects. The reports of the funeral make amazing reading and in local newspapers, somehow, the journalist has managed to list the entire congregation, which filled and overflowed the little church; listed all the people who had sent flowers (over one hundred) and made reference to all the memorial services in the Reading and Newbury area in his memory.

Jenkyn was also no mean craftsman and produced a beautiful, working model of a bell which is still kept for demonstrations and lectures and resides in the care of the current Master. It is known as the Master's Bell.

He was a well-loved man and will be remembered as much for his geniality as much as for his ringing works.



Tributes appeared in The Ringing World in 1933 on pages 249, 265, 502