

Biographical Record

Joseph TEBBS (1768 – 1836)

Joseph Tebbs, one of the small group of ringers who pushed the boundaries forward in the early nineteenth century, was born in Leeds, Yorkshire and baptised at St Peter's church (now Leeds Minster) on 23rd February 1768. Joseph learned to ring in Leeds in 1782 and became a full member of the Leeds Youths in 1787. He soon became the principle conductor for the society. Examples of the peals he conducted at this time are a peal of 5632 College Exercise Major in 1789 and 10080 Oxford Treble Bob Major in 1790. Joseph married in 1792.

In 1794 he enlisted in the East Yorks Militia and was excused the normal fines for none attendance at regular practices. He served in the militia in Norfolk and Kent. Whilst in Kent he rang three peals of Plain Bob Major at Ashford (November 1797, 26 December 1797 and 1 January 1798). His regular service in the militia ended in 1800, however he did rejoin for a short period in 1802 when the war with the French resumed.

On his return to Leeds, Joseph once again took up his place with the Leeds Youths. He also renewed his friendship with the Wakefield ringers, especially their leader William Woodhead. He rang several peals at Wakefield and with mixed Leeds/Wakefield bands, including a peal of Union Treble Bobs at St John's Wakefield in January 1807.

The mixed Leeds/ Wakefield band also participated in several ringing matches and tower openings in the early 1800s. Examples include the peal of Grandsire Caters rung on the new bells at St Michael's Ashton-under-Lyme on 14 July 1819; a peal of Kent Treble Bob Royal rung for the grand opening of Chesterfield bells on 22 May 1820 and the winning of a silver tankard for the best ringing at the opening of the augmented ring at Birstall in 1819.

Joseph Tebb's contribution to developing ringing at this time also included producing peal compositions, several of which were published in Shipway's Campanalogia. These included compositions for several of the peals rung by the Keighley band - London Treble Bob Major (1814); New Treble Bob Major (1813) and a false peal of Cambridge Surprise Major (rung in 1812 and commemorated on a peal board in the tower). Other notable compositions recorded in Shipway include a 5579 of Grandsire Caters (rung at Leeds on 25 October 1816) that is made up almost entirely of short courses and Kent Treble Bob Royal (rung at Leeds in 1828) where the tenors course in tittums and come home at each part end.

The standard of ringing in Yorkshire at this time was better than in most of the rest of the country. The first peal of Surprise Royal (Cambridge) was rung at Wakefield on 26 October 1822. Joseph Tebbs was a member of this band. His ability both as a ringer and a composer helped to expand the range of methods being rung in Yorkshire during the early 1800's and the publication of his compositions in Shipway brought them to the attention of many other ringers.

Joseph Tebbs died on 14 February 1836.