



No. 1,531. Vol. XXXV.

FRIDAY, JULY 26th, 1940.

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## OXFORD GUILD & WAR-TIME TOPICS

A stern determination to carry on in face of all the difficulties now confronting ringing associations was manifest in the proceedings of the Oxford Diocesan Guild at Oxford on Saturday. Despite the ban, despite the cancelling of luncheon arrangements at Christ Church, something like seventy members attended and showed their sustained interest in the Guild and their desire to preserve the art of ringing. They discussed a number of points relating to war-time policy, and strong opinion was expressed upon the ban that has been imposed, silencing church bells as a war defence measure, so that they may be solely used for notifying the landing of enemy aircraft or parachute troops. The more this Order is studied the more futile it seems to be, although when framed it was, of course, well-intentioned and thought to be a useful means of rousing the countryside to an imminent danger. The strange thing about the Order is that since its publication nothing seems to have been done to organise the efficient use of the bells as a signal, and there is still no instruction as to what the public are to do when the bells are sounded. As matters stand, there is good ground for the desire of the Oxford Guild to have the ban removed so far as it relates to peals of bells used for service purposes on Sundays, and the Standing Committee of the Central Council might well make representations to the responsible Minister for a reconsideration of the ban. Viewed now, in all its aspects, it seems quite certain that the Order was made without full consideration of its effect or, perhaps, it would be more correct to say, its lack of effect. If it is intended that only a single bell should be used, the ringing of a peal of bells at the customary hours on Sundays could no more lead to confusion than the periodical testing of air-raid sirens at a fixed hour, which, up to recently at any rate, many districts experienced. The Central Council might now compile arguments for a modification of the ban, to place before the Minister of Home Security. At the time the Order was imposed, catastrophic happenings were taking place on the Continent, but we have recovered an even keel since these shocks, and while, at that moment, it would have been unfair to challenge the usefulness of the Order, present conditions may last a long time, and the question of taking up the matter with the authorities may well be considered.

Another war-time subject which the Oxford meeting discussed was one which affects this paper, and it is encouraging to find a representative body of ringers showing so much appreciation of the difficulties with which 'The Ringing World' may be faced before the war is

(Continued on page 350.)

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over. We have already pointed out the need for ringers to give us their continued support, if the paper is to survive the critical times ahead. The continued loss of advertisement revenue and of subscribers could eventually have only one result, and we trust the appeals, made at Oxford, Birmingham and elsewhere will not fall on deaf ears. We appreciate the kindness of those who thus help us to fight the battle, realising that it is the ringers alone who can make it possible for us to keep the flag flying. But the Oxford Guild went further than to use persuasive powers among its members. It has given a generous gesture in the assurance that, if need be, the Guild would be prepared to give substantial financial assistance to keep the paper going. There never was a time when a journal was more necessary to the Exercise, and, looked at broadly, it is the Exercise that should shoulder some of the burden involved in continuing 'The Ringing World.' The assurance of the Oxford Guild is a source of considerable encouragement in the face of personal financial risk, and any promise of this kind is naturally a safeguard against the dangers that may arise in the future.

## HANDBELL PEALS.

BUSHEY, HERTFORDSHIRE.

THE MIDDLESEX COUNTY ASSOCIATION AND LONDON  
DIOCESAN GUILD.

On Wednesday, July 17, 1940, in Two Hours and Twenty-Four Minutes,

AT THE ROYAL MASONIC JUNIOR SCHOOL,

**A PEAL OF GRANDSIRE TRIPLES, 5040 CHANGES;**

HOLT'S ORIGINAL.

Tenor size 15.

EDWIN JENNINGS ... ..	1-2	CHRISTOPHER W. WOOLLEY	5-6
EDWIN A. BARNETT ... ..	3-4	ERNEST C. S. TURNER	7-8

Conducted by ERNEST C. S. TURNER.

PRESTON, LANCASHIRE.

THE LANCASHIRE ASSOCIATION.

On Wednesday, July 17, 1940, in Two Hours and Four Minutes,

IN THE BELFRY OF THE PARISH CHURCH,

**A PEAL OF BOB MINOR, 5040 CHANGES;**

Being seven extents called differently.

Tenor size 15 in C.

*G. ALEC DIMMOCK ... ..	1-2	C. KENNETH LEWIS	3-4
CYRIL CROSSTHWAITE ... ..			5-6

Conducted by C. KENNETH LEWIS.

Witness—Edward Cowperthwaite.

\* First peal 'in hand.'

## HEAVY BELL RINGING.

OLD RECORDS COMPARED WITH RECENT ONES.

To the Editor.

'Dear Sir,—I have read with interest your letters and articles on old timers and heavy bell ringing. I gather the impression from these that ringing heavy bells years ago was far more difficult than now, of which I am sceptical. The fundamentals of bellhanging have changed little in hundreds of years. We have different types of ball and roller bearings now, it is true, but not everyone prefers these. Also the steel stock enables a bell to be 'tucked-up,' but this doesn't necessarily improve the 'go' of the bell; in fact, if overdone, it produces a grindstone effect, and is detrimental. Some of the heaviest peals of bells are still hung in old frames and on plain bearings, and long lengths have been rung on them quite recently.

Also why the assumption that all the old peals were well struck? Have we anyone living who heard them or have we recordings?

It is on a par with the legend that the youngsters of every age are decadent (to their elders), but they seem to face different crises as well as their forbears when they come.

The question of a ringer's 'stance' is a difficult one. We all admire a good style when seen, but some ringers have a good style and are poor strikers, whilst others are vice-versa.

All ringers *should* be good handlers of little bells as well as big. I do not consider that watching a man ringing a practice touch on a big bell he is used to is any criterion of his ability. Plenty can do that. I like to see how they *finish* on a bad going bell of perhaps only 14 or 15 cwt., after a peal of, say, Superlative, especially if the tenor is nice and slow at 'back'! I have seen ringers very impressive in a short practice touch on heavy metal, but not so good on quite a small bell, going bad, during a peal.

'INTERESTED.'

## THE DEVIL AMONG THE BELLS. STORIES OF HIS VISITS TO STEEPLES.

In bygone years the Devil was a very extensive land-owner in England, and he took a good deal of interest in his estates. As you go through the country to-day you can still come across many of the bridges and jumps that he built and the dykes that he dug. In Scotland he made a vast excavation which he used as a store place and called his beef tubs. In Surrey at Hindhead, he had a similar though smaller excavation where he kept his drink. He had a kitchen in North Wales, near Snowdon, and the chimney remains to this day.

In Sussex he undertook vast public works, the chief of which was to consist of a huge trench cut through the South Downs to bring the sea on to the Weald. The object of this, apparently, was to make Crawley into a seaside resort, but, as every visitor to Brighton knows, the scheme was abandoned just before it was finished. It would seem that the Devil's many friends in Brighton put it to him that they would suffer from a rival watering place.

But, spite of all these things, and for all the public spirit he showed, the Devil was never really an Englishman. In outward appearance, perhaps, but not in spirit or in sentiment. This is shown by the fact that he never could abear church bells; they irritated him beyond measure. Usually, when a peal was on, he would, like a sensible fellow, go and take a walk in the next parish; but, at times, when his temper was somewhat frayed or his liver a bit out of order, he would break out in a passion and try by violence to put a stop to what he considered an intolerable nuisance. At such times he showed not only a very regrettable want of care for church property, but a carelessness which amounted to culpable negligence for the comfort and even the safety of the ringers.

One such incident happened about the year 1530 at St. Michael's, Cornhill, in London. The Devil had been up to the City to take the chair at a meeting of the directors of one of the companies in which he was interested. There had been some unpleasantness at the meeting, and tempers were a bit ruffled. When it was over, the Devil walked down Cornhill on his way to Mansion House station to get a train to Victoria, and as he passed St. Michael's the College Youths started to ring Stedman Cinques. That, as the poet said, put the tin hat on it, and he went for the bells and the ringers like a fury.

The account of the incident has come down to us through the writings of John Stow. Stow was a sober and conscientious historian, who did not retail silly and superstitious legends but took care to verify the facts he related, and we may be sure that his account is substantially correct.

Here is what he says: 'As I have oft heard my father report, upon St. James' night, certain men in the loft next under the bells ringing of a peal, a tempest of lightning and thunder did arise, an ugly shapen sight did appear to them, coming in at the south window and lighted on the north, for fear whereof they all fell down and lay as dead for the time, letting the bells ring and cease of their own accord. When the ringers came to themselves they found certain stones of the north window to be razed and scratched as if they had been so much butter, printed with a lion's claw. The same stones were fastened there again, and so remain till this day. I have

(Continued in next column.)

## LANCASHIRE ASSOCIATION CARRIES ON.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH DISCUSSES THE BAN.

The last monthly meeting, in the Lancashire Association's year, of the Liverpool Branch was held at Halewood on Saturday week. The attendance was much below the average, which was not surprising, for those who support the meetings love their tower bells. However, those who did turn up enjoyed handbells, and some of the more advanced scored excellent touches of Stedman Caters.

The Church Schoolroom had been placed at the disposal of the members, and several touches were rung there before tea.

The business meeting which followed was presided over by Mr. P. W. Cave, an apology being received from the Rev. D. Railton, Rector of Liverpool, for non-attendance owing to indisposition.

Mr. L. L. Gray was elected Ringing Master of the branch, Mr. J. Martin bell adviser, Mr. T. S. Horridge representative on the General Committee, and Mr. G. R. Newton as hon. branch secretary.

The meeting agreed that the Rev. Arthur Scott and Mr. W. H. Shuker should be again nominated as president and hon. secretary respectively of the association.

The branch secretary gave a report of the committee meeting at Rochdale on June 22nd. The most interesting feature of his report was the announcement of the committee's intention to hold the annual meeting and service at Holy Trinity Church, Bolton, on Sept. 28th.

Among several interesting letters read was one from the Vicar of Prescott (the Rev. Oswald L. Martin) asking if the association was taking up officially the question of the use of church towers and bells for observation purposes. He went on to say, 'It is a matter of great importance and one that I think should have the attention of church authorities generally. The ringing of the bells is not a thing which can be done by any amateur and there are other details, such as insurance and a proper behaviour in the tower, which ought to receive attention.'

The hon. secretary reported to the meeting that he had informed the Vicar of Prescott that it was not the association's intention to take the matter up, but that the Central Council had already done so.

A copy of 'The Ringing World,' containing the president of the Central Council's letter, had also been sent to the Vicar of Prescott.

After several members had expressed their views, it was resolved that a letter be written to the president of the Central Council asking him to use his influence with the Minister of Home Security. The opinion of the meeting was that if the president could obtain an interview with someone in authority, it might lead to the lifting of the ban on bells for Sunday service ringing.

It was decided to hold the next meeting at Huyton on Aug. 10th.

## THE DEVIL AMONG THE BELLS.

(Continued from previous column.)

seen them oft, and have put a feather or small stick into the holes where the claws had entred three or four inches deep. One of the ringers lived in my youth, whom I have oft heard to verify the same to be true.'

St. Michael's was not the only church where the bells annoyed the Devil to the extent of provoking him to make reprisals. 'This yere, 1533, uppon twelffe daye in Shrewsbury, the dyvyll appearyd in saint alkmonds church there when the preest was at hygh masse with greate tempeste and darkness so that as he pass'd through the church he mountyd up the steeple in the sayd church teringe the wyers of the sayde clocke and put the prynt of hys claws uppon the 4th bell and toocke one of the pynnaclles away with hym, and for the tyme stayd all the belles in the churches within the sayde towne that they could neither toll nor rynge.'

At Tunstall, in Norfolk, the Devil took advantage of some dispute between the parson and the churchwardens about the bells to step in and carry them off himself. The parson surprised him in the act and pursued him in hot haste and with much Latin, but he got away and dived down with his booty into a hole in the earth, which henceforth was known by the name of Hell Hole.

Generally speaking, however, the Devil's assaults on church bells were failures. He tried to smash them many times, but usually they were inviolate. 'It is said that ye evil spirytes that ben in ye region of ye ayre doubte moche when they here the belles ringen; and this is why the belles ringen whan it thundereth and whan grete tempeste and rages of wether happen, to ye ende that ye feinds and wycked spirytes should ben abashed and flee and cease of ye movynge of tempeste.'

## CHANGE RINGING IN SHREWSBURY.

### THE END OF A FAMOUS SOCIETY.

By J. ARMIGER TROLLOPE.

About 1811 the Union Society proposed to add two trebles to the octave at St. Mary's. They could not, however, raise the full amount, and the balance was made up by the parishioners. The bells were opened on September 2nd, 1811, when a peal of Grandsire Caters, 5,219 changes, was rung by a band which included Samuel and James Lee, Charles Ravenscroft, Robert Lloyd and William Bull. Bull called the bobs and Richard Cross stood out of the band, but on the next day he took part in a peal of Oxford Treble Bob Royal with a picked band made up from several companies.

Stephen Hill rang the treble, James Dovey the eighth, and Samuel Lawrence the tenor. Samuel Moss, from Ashton-under-Lyne, was at the ninth, and the middle bells were rung by men from Sheffield—Henry Grayson, William Hudson, Joseph Grayson, William Booth and Samuel Shirt. Booth conducted. He was then in his twenty-eighth year, a cutler by trade, and the leading man in the Sheffield company, which was taking a foremost part among peal-ringing bands. He was the grandfather of Charles Henry and Thomas Hattersley, who became so well known in the Exercise at the end of the nineteenth century.

Booth probably called his own composition at Shrewsbury, for he had some merits as a composer of Treble Bob Royal; and so had William Hudson, then a young man of twenty years old. Hudson to-day is best remembered in connection with the sixty course-ends of Stedman Triples.

These Sheffield men had the distinction of being the first band to ring double-handed peals on handbells. In 1811 they accomplished 5,088 changes of Oxford Treble Bob Major and 5,000 changes of Oxford Treble Bob Royal; and in 1816 5,280 of Oxford Treble Bob Maximus. Henry Grayson called the Royal, and William Hudson the Maximus. Booth took part in all three peals.

In 1812, the year after the eight bells at St. Mary's Church, Shrewsbury, were increased to ten, a new octave was hung at St. Alkmund's, and the opening peal was 5,280 changes of Oxford Treble Bob Major, composed and conducted by Charles Ravenscroft. James Lee rang the third and William Bull the fourth. Ravenscroft had come to Shrewsbury from Bromsgrove where, in 1787 and 1788, he had called two long peals of Bob Major—10,192 and 12,000.

In 1813, Richard Cross called Treble Bob Royal at St. Mary's and Treble Bob Maximus at St. Chad's, Samuel Lawrence ringing the tenor on both occasions. These seem to have been the last peals in which Cross took part. The blight which had fallen on the Exercise all over the country had badly affected the Union Society, and its palmy days were over. About this time it was dissolved and refounded on less exclusive lines. Other changes were made in 1823, and subsequently, it is recorded, 'the respectable members of the Society gave it up, and bell ringing in Shrewsbury fell into the hands of a low lot whose only motives for ringing were the money and the ale its practice brought them.'

Two letters from Samuel Lee to Samuel Lawrence are extant which afford internal evidence of the decay of change ringing, both in Cambridge and Shropshire, as well as throwing a very pleasing light on the characters

both of the writer and the recipient of the letters. In November, 1817, Lee, acknowledging a letter from Lawrence and 'the present which followed it,' refers to a controversy in which the other had been engaged with some ringers and which evidently had taken a very ranorous turn. Unfortunately there is no hint as to what it was about. Lee then goes on, 'Your conversation and papers revived in a small degree my former love for the Exercise inasmuch that I was tempted to ascend the bell loft of Cambridge and ring a bell in a short touch of Bob Royal. I found I had not quite forgotten it. But whether my want of practice was the cause I know not, but my arms felt so excessively strained that I could scarcely do anything for a short while after.'

Four years later Lawrence sent Lee the circulars which had been printed to advertise the long peals of Kent Treble Bob Maximus and Stedman Cinques rung at St. Martin's, Birmingham, in 1820, and Lee, replying, says, 'Accept my best thanks for your kind letter with your notices of the truly herculean task in which you have lately taken a part. I suppose with you that it will stand for some time an untouched dish, perhaps for ever. I had no idea that Birmingham could boast so good a set of change ringers.' There are one or two quotations from the circular in the above. Lee then extends a welcome to Lawrence should he be able to visit Cambridge. 'You will find a good peal of bells here. The ringers are very far inferior to your Birmingham friends, they ring Bob Royal, Treble Ten, and Caters, but rather in an inferior style.'

That was in 1821, when John Bowtell, Charles Day, John Sanders, Peter Spenceley and the other men who had put the Cambridge Youths among the leading peal-ringing companies were either dead or had long since retired, and only the dregs of a fine band were left.

It was the same in Shrewsbury. 'When you see your Salop friends,' wrote Lee, 'pray remember me to them. I saw them in the summer. Change ringing seems to have deserted Salop entirely.'

The existence of the Union Society of Shrewsbury seems to have come to an end with the retirement of Richard Cross. For some time it had been on the down grade, and its ending appears to have been abrupt. It was not merged into the very different class of men who thenceforth did what ringing was done in Shrewsbury. Some relics of it survived until the closing years of the nineteenth century. A Mr. P. Cross, probably a descendant of Richard Cross, had in his possession an upright silver drinking cup which had formed one of a set presented to the society by a member, and another was owned by a Mr. T. Morgan, who also had a set of thirteen handbells. Mr. Morgan's father was the last survivor of the society.

### SHREWSBURY ABBEY CHURCH.

#### RINGING UNDER DIFFICULTIES.

To the Editor.

Dear Sir,—In Mr. Trollope's interesting article on ringing in the Midlands, he states with reference to Shrewsbury Abbey Church that since the ringing gallery was removed in 1814 the bells apparently have never been rung. However, they used to be rung quite a lot for special occasions, etc., and the following, which was told me by the late Mr. George Byolm and other old Shrewsbury ringers, may be of interest.

After the ringing floor was removed, ringing took place in the low chamber immediately under the bells. This was so low that it was possible to reach up and touch the clappers, and the noise when ringing was deafening. Also the place was full of beams and trusses

(Continued on next page.)



**DEATH OF A VETERAN FARNHAM RINGER.**

We regret to announce the death of Mr. Henry Prior, of Farnham, Surrey, which took place at his home on July 6th, six days before his 81st birthday. He had resided in the same house for 24 years, and until three or four years ago, when his health began to fail, was a regular ringer at Farnham Parish Church. Bellringing was his life's hobby in fact, which he took up at the age of 18. He could boast that for 34 consecutive years he never missed ringing for Christmas morning. He took part in a peal of Grandsire Triples on December 23rd, 1922.

Mr. Prior was the son of the late Mr. and Mrs. G. Prior, of Northbrook, near Bentley. As a young man he worked on the land and later became a jobbing gardener, an occupation which he maintained until the middle of last year. From 1898-1913 he was sexton at Blackmoor Parish Church, where he had previously been a ringer. Five sons and daughters, seven grandchildren and one great-grandchild are left in bereavement, and another son, Mr. Alfred Prior, of Rowledge, died two months ago.

The funeral took place at Green Lane Cemetery on the following Wednesday, conducted by the Vicar of The Bourne (the Rev. Æ. H. Hudson). The ringers present included Mr. C. W. Denyer (representing the Farnham District of the Guildford Guild) and Mr. and Mrs. S. Meadows (representing St. Andrew's belfry).

**SHREWSBURY ABBEY BELLS.**

(Continued from previous page.)

supporting the bell frame and the rope sight was very bad; the 6th man could not see 5 or 7.

When they had got a good band together they frequently rang 'the old six-score' of Grandsire Doubles non-conducted with 4-6-8 covering. At other times they rang rounds, 'Queens' and 'Tittums,' and the conductor whistled each time as a signal for them to go to 'Queen's,' then to 'Tittums' and back to rounds. Owing to the noise it was no use trying to do any conducting.

Some 35 years ago, as the tower was considered unsafe for further ringing, the old frame was taken out, and the bells are now hung on deal beams and are chimed with a chiming apparatus.

While on the subject of the Abbey bells, it may be interesting to note that they were originally cast by Oldfield, of Nottingham, in 1673, since when they have all been recast at various times. At present they are: Treble and 2nd, Thomas Mears, 1825; 3rd, John Taylor, 1884; 4th, John Briant, 1812; 5th, C. and G. Mears, 1846; 6th, A. Rudhall, 1745; 7th, John Warner, 1877; tenor, A. Rudhall, 1713. Considering they are such a mixed lot, they are a fine eight, the diameter of the tenor is 51½ inches and she weighs approximately 23 cwt. in D.

Prees Green, Prees, Salop.

E. V. RODENHURST.

**CHURCH BELLS AS ALARMS.**

UNWORKABLE IN PRACTICE.

To the Editor.

Dear Sir,—Already we have, in the air raid siren, an efficient means of warning the public of impending danger. What is the objection to a standardisation of signals throughout the country? Four different signals, the warbling note, short blasts, and long blasts would give a code to cover three different emergencies, all to be countermanded by the long sustained note. Any sirens not capable of producing these four codes should be replaced by appliances that can. So would uniformity of warning be achieved, and church bells freed from a use to which they never should have been put.

I have made enquiries over a large area, but have yet to hear of one church at which arrangements have been made to ring to notify air-borne invasion. Can it be that there is no intention on the part of the authorities to formulate a scheme? Has the ringing Exercise been hoodwinked into a state of complacent acceptance of an order which is unworkable with any degree of efficiency?

Take the case of your last week's Birmingham correspondent. He stated that no arrangement as to procedure at his church had been made, and although most of us realise that warning by bells is a slow method notifying only a small proportion of the population, as against the almost instantaneous warning of the whole of the community by sirens, he mentions his agreement with the Order. I wonder if these supporters of the restriction have considered how the scheme can be worked, or how few people in the country are actually within the sound of a church bell.

I feel that a firmer stand by the Exercise against the senseless action of ceasing ordinary ringing would have effectively quashed the scheme when it was seen how unpractical the idea is, and your report of Lord Mottistone's appeal for raising the ban gives me pleasure to know that there is a desire, at least in some quarters, to have a continuance of regular ringing.

'NEMO.'

**CALL CHANGES AND CONSECUTIVE FIFTHS.**

To the Editor.

Dear Sir,—I wonder if the Rev. Mr. Drake will mind my pointing out to him that what he says about Call Changes and Consecutive Fifths is tripe of the tripiest and bilge of the bilgiest. He may, perhaps, think at first that this is a somewhat harsh judgment, but I feel confident that when, in the dim future, he knows what consecutive fifths are, he will fully acknowledge both its justice and its charity.

'MUSICIAN.'

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.....

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## BELFRY GOSSIP.

His friends will regret to learn of the illness of Mr. Jesse Puplett, of Hopewell, Colehill, Wimborne. Mr. Puplett was formerly a member of the band at All Hallows', Tottenham.

Mr. Fred Nye, of Bagshot, Surrey, who is well known among members of the Guildford Diocesan Guild and the Sonning Branch of the Oxford Diocesan Guild, is, we regret to say, confined to bed with illness. His friends will wish him a speedy recovery.

To-day is the one hundred and eighth anniversary of the first peal of Double Oxford Major, which was rung at St. Giles', Norwich, by the Norwich Scholars, and conducted by Samuel Thurston. Double Oxford Minor is one of the oldest of six-bell methods. The Major was produced by Shipway and first published in his 'Campanalogia' in 1816. The method has many good qualities, but is marred by the excessive amount of 5-pull dodging before and behind.

James W. Washbrook was born at Oxford on July 27th, 1864. His is one of the greatest names in the history of the Exercise. As a heavy bell ringer, conductor and composer he was outstanding. Among his greatest feats was to turn in the 57 cwt. tenor at Wells Cathedral to a peal of Treble Bob Royal at a time when the bell was not going too well. At different times he held the records for conducting the longest peals of Double Norwich Major, Grandsire and Stedman Caters, and London Surprise. He was the first man to ring two tower bells to a peal.

William Cooter, who died on July 28th, 1912, at the age of 87, was for many years one of the most prominent of London's ringers. He called the first true peal of Stedman Triples ever rung on handbells. That was in 1854. J. W. Washbrook called the first rung outside London.

On July 29th, 1785, William Shipway, a young man from Bath, Somerset, arrived in London. Shipway afterwards wrote one of the best text books on ringing that we possess.

## HONOUR FOR THE REV. E. V. COX.

### RECOGNITION OF HIS WORK FOR BELLS AND RINGERS.

Mr. E. V. Cox's many friends will join us in congratulating him on an honour which has just been conferred on him. On Friday last he was installed as a Prebendary in the Cathedral Church of St. Peter at Exeter. The Bishop, in offering him the prebendal stall, referred to the great debt which the diocese owed him for the work he had done in connection with bells and ringers.

## GOOD STRIKING.

### AN OLD EPITAPH RECALLED.

*To the Editor.*

Sir,—As the value of good striking has been mentioned in 'The Ringing World' so often, the following will show what interest was taken in the old times to attain a high standard of ringing:—

Skilled in the mystery of the pleasing peal,  
Which few can know and fewer still reveal,  
Whither with little bells or bells sublime,  
He split a moment for the truth of time,  
Time oft he truly beat till he at length o'ercame,  
Yet still this tribute long preserves the name

Of Robert Selwyn.

The above epitaph was on a tombstone in Painswick Churchyard and was unfortunately broken during the restoration of the church in 1879 and never replaced.

It is recorded that Robert Selwyn was the only bachelor who took part in the long peal of Grandsire Caters, 12,312 changes, in 7 hours and 44 minutes, on May 5th, 1817. All the rest lived to a great age. Giles Mansfield lived to be nearly 100, and, although bedridden, took part in an excellent course of Grandsire Triples on handbells double-handed on his 97th birthday, the writer taking part. Giles Mansfield's performance must surely be a record,

WILLIAM HALE.

The Leigh, near Gloucester.

## BELLS OVERSEAS.

*To the Editor.*

Sir,—I can add to the list of bells in the Colonies, Cape Town and Durban. At the suburban church of Woodstock, about a mile from the centre of Cape Town, there is a light ring of eight, and when I left, 14 years ago, they were in good order; a young band, with the help of two or three old ringers, were then ringing Grandsire Doubles, and had made a start in Bob Minor. At Durban rings of ten and eight were installed about 20 years ago, and change ringing was practised in both towers.

W. C. BARRETT.

Home of St. Barnabas, Dormans.

The places that we mentioned in our footnote to the letter which appeared in our issue of July 12th were towers where there is the possibility of ringing being obtained by the casual caller. We are not aware of the existence of any regular bands at other places which have since been mentioned, although we sincerely hope there may be. There are, for instance, several towers in and around Boston, U.S.A., but ringing would only be possible by the previous collecting of a band that would have to be called together, if it is still practicable, from a wide area.

## OXFORD DIOCESAN GUILD. SUCCESSFUL WAR-TIME MEETING AT OXFORD.

### Ban on Bells Debated.

At the annual meeting of the Oxford Diocesan Guild at Oxford on Saturday, the difficulties that might beset the continuation of 'The Ringing World,' if the present conditions are prolonged, were envisaged by a number of speakers, and a resolution was passed promising substantial financial help if it became necessary.

'Carry on' was the keynote of a successful meeting, which, robbed of the opportunities of ringing and even of dining in the famous Hall of Christ Church, was nevertheless extremely successful. Despite transport problems and the stress of war work, which kept many away, there was an attendance of some 70 members, representing all the three counties covered by the diocese. The service in the Cathedral was really inspiring. The preacher was the Rev. Dr. B. H. B. Atlee, the Rector of Holywell, and his address will not soon be forgotten by those privileged to hear him.

At the business meeting in the Chapter House the chair was taken by the Master, Canon G. F. Coleridge, who was supported by the Deputy Master (the Rev. C. E. Wigg), the hon. treasurer (Mr. A. D. Barker) and the general secretary (Mr. R. T. Hibbert).

Before the business began, the Master, in a few happy words, said how pleased he was to see so many present. It proved that the spirit of the Guild was strong and sound. On the proposition of Mr. A. D. Cullum, seconded by Mr. E. G. Foster, the reports of the four officers were adopted.

### OFFICERS' REPORTS.

In his annual report, written before the ban had been imposed on church bellringing, the Master (Canon G. F. Coleridge) said: We entered the year 1939 full of hope and expectation that the Guild would pursue its wonted course and make definite progress all along the line. Little did we expect that before the last quarter of the year was entered we should be involved in a terrible war which is calling forth all the energies of our people, not merely to preserve for ourselves the right to live in freedom, but to prevent an end of all civilisation in Europe reduced to slavery and ruled by brute force and tyranny. The calling up of many to don uniform, as well as innumerable volunteers for all kinds of service at home, must in many cases deplete our bellfries. 'What can we do?'—one answer only is needed—'We will do our best by personal endeavour to man the ropes for Sunday services.' That must be our steadfast endeavour. I look to every member of the Guild to do his utmost in this respect.

Looking back over the year, we have specially to deplore the passing away of several who have proved themselves worthy members of the Guild. I only mention two known to me by near residence and as holding important offices in the Guild, Mr. L. Joyce and Mr. A. J. Wright, who died on March 18th and October 31st respectively. Mr. Joyce, churchwarden of St. Mary's, Reading, not only made himself responsible for the rehanging and improvement of St. Mary's bells, but took a very prominent part in ringing them. The Reading Branch has indeed cause to mourn the loss of its chairman, and the Guild the loss of one of its trustees. Mr. A. J. Wright served for years as treasurer of the Guild finances, taking an active interest in its affairs till failing health compelled his resignation.

Mr. F. Sharpe, Launton, at the request of the Berks Archaeological Society, is busily engaged in writing an invaluable work on the 'Church Bells of Berkshire.' The first part with precise details of every bell hanging in some three dozen churches, in alphabetical order, Abingdon—Buscot, is now in print and makes fascinating reading for all bell lovers. The remaining part will appear in due course and will be found to be full of information and interest. The Guild is to be congratulated on having a member so competent to write on the subject as Mr. Sharpe: his work when finished will undoubtedly be acknowledged as one of the very best of the many county bell histories.

### FINDING RINGERS FOR LONDON CHURCHES.

The Rev. C. Elliot Wigg (Deputy Master), in his report, said: It was a matter of personal regret that in 1939 I was not able to attend the annual meetings of four of the branches. At the ten annual and six quarterly meetings at which I was present, attendances and general keenness seemed to be well maintained.

At the beginning of the war I sent out letters of enquiry to the branch secretaries, asking for their observations on the extent to which the work of the Guild was being affected by such things as the black-out. Most of them replied to the effect that their towers were carrying on as well as possible in the circumstances, and that Sunday ringing at least was being maintained in most cases. It is to be hoped that the difficulties of getting far afield nowadays may encourage an increase of combined practices on a small scale, arranged between closely neighbouring towers. Such a plan has been followed in this district since the war, and has so far worked very well. Many towers will be facing the difficulty of depleted bands, as men are called away to serve their country in the Forces. Here then is an opportunity to recruit new members for the belfry from among the boys and girls or women of the parish. The number of children in our diocese has been vastly increased by the evacuation scheme. It is possible that useful material for the belfry might be found amongst these new arrivals. If a number of children from the Metropolitan areas became interested in ringing during their stay in the provinces,

this might prove later to be a partial solution to the notorious difficulty of finding ringers for the London churches.

### THE SECRETARY'S NIGHTMARE.

Mr. R. T. Hibbert (secretary) reported as follows: The year 1939 opened very favourably for our Guild, and everything went swimming along as it ought to do for two-thirds of the year, when this terrible upheaval started in Europe. I must admit that for a few days I thought the bottom had been knocked out of everything, including 'The Oxford Diocesan Guild.' However, realisation soon made things clear that work must go on as usual, and all over the three counties of Berks, Bucks and Oxon our members made up their minds to keep ringing going, especially 'service ringing' as near as possible to normal times.

I attended the annual meetings of all the branches, but I must say that getting home from the ones held at the end of the year was almost a nightmare.

Sixty-five peals were rung during the year, comprising several twelve-bell peals; several 'Surprise Major'; Stedman Caters and Triples, Grandsire Caters and Triples, and some good performances of seven-method Minor peals. A noteworthy and unusual peal was the one of Doubles at Little Missenden, in 12 methods, with 41 changes of method. A pleasing fact was that many young ringers scored their first peal.

As one of the old school, I feel I must congratulate the men of East Hagbourne who scored the first peal of Stedman Triples rung by their own Sunday service ringers. More power to their elbows (and brains). It was in 1886 that a local band at Hagbourne first rang peals of Grandsire Triples without outside help, and since that time change ringing has never slipped back.

I again beg all members to use every endeavour to keep the Oxford Diocesan Guild well up amongst the leaders of the Exercise.

### FINANCE.

The hon. treasurer (Mr. A. D. Barker) reported that the general funds of the Guild amounted to £252 16s. 5d., of which £96 4s. 4d. was in the Restoration Fund. Several branches had failed to send in their contributions before the accounts were closed. Illness and war service have prevented some branch secretaries from complying with the rules.

The year, which began with a balance in hand of £98 7s. 10d. on the general account, ended with £80 18s. 5d. in hand. The branches contributed £60 15s. 3d., and other receipts amounted to £11 11s. 4d. The expenses, which included £3 10s. transferred to the Restoration Fund, amounted to £89 16s. In the reserve fund is a balance of £75 13s. 8d., and in the Restoration Fund £96 4s. 4d. Only one grant was made during the year, namely, £6 6s. to Coleshill.

In proposing that the officers should be re-elected, Mr. E. G. Foster said that no Guild could be better served than they were, and the election was carried by acclamation.

It was decided to hold the annual festival at Oxford in 1941 if it is at all possible. Miss Vera Robinson said that to carry on was the basis on which they should work, and this view was re-echoed by her seconder, Mr. H. Sear, and other speakers.

Grants of five guineas each in aid of restoration work at Cholsey and Yattendon were ratified on the proposal of the Rev. St. George Edwards and Mr. R. A. Post, seconded by Messrs. T. Trollope and A. D. Cullum.

### MEMBERS WITH THE FORCES.

The General Committee recommended that no member of the Guild who is serving in H.M. Forces shall have his name deleted from the Guild Report on account of his annual subscription not being paid, and this was agreed to on the proposition of Mr. T. J. Fowler, seconded by Mr. H. Barnett.

Mr. W. Birmingham proposed that members of other guilds or associations serving in H.M. Forces and stationed in the diocese be enrolled members of this Guild on payment of sixpence. To this an amendment was moved by Mr. E. G. Foster that after the word 'enrolled' the resolution should read 'free members of this Guild for the duration of the war.' After a debate, in which Messrs. Cullum, Barker, Post and Paice took part, the amended resolution was carried.

The Deputy Master explained his efforts to compile a list of the towers and bells in the diocese, with an account of all the peals rung on them, and asked the support of the meeting to get it printed. On the proposition of Miss Robinson, seconded by Mr. R. A. Post, the sum of ten guineas was voted for the purpose.

It was agreed that the annual report for the year 1940 should be printed in leaflet form and without the names of the members and the rules of the Guild.

The election of 95 new members was ratified.

Among the correspondence read were two letters from incumbents of parishes in the diocese asking if something could be done to lift the ban on ringing, especially for Sunday services. The matter was debated and it was decided to ask the Editor of 'The Ringing World' to use all his influence to invoke a strong protest from ringers and the bell loving public to try to get church bells used again, and to let all the other associations know that the Oxford Guild protests very strongly against this useless and unnecessary order.

### 'THE RINGING WORLD.'

Mr. W. Collett asked the meeting to consider seriously the future of 'The Ringing World,' and begged members and ringers all over

(Continued on next page.)

## HANDBELLS AT SCHOOL.

### GIRLS' PROGRESS AT MALVERN WELLS.

At the Abbey School, Malvern Wells, Worcestershire, is a self-taught band of young ladies who have made excellent progress with handbell ringing. Miss Brenda Richardson (daughter of the late Rev. H. S. T. Richardson) sends us the following information upon the achievements of this enthusiastic little company:—

Dear Sir,—Some of your readers may be interested to hear of the activities of the handbell band at the Abbey School, Malvern Wells. The average age of the band is fifteen, and the youngest member is thirteen.

During the summer term the band have rung several 720's of Bob Minor. Those taking part were Monica and Dorothy Richardson, Hazel and June Weall, Janet Peet, Margaret Eastwood, Joan Thomas, Patricia Peel, Anne Harper and Eve Beddow. Several touches of Bob Major (with the tenors parted) have been rung, and five members can now ring a good plain course of Bob Royal. Oxford Bob Minor, Double Bob Minor and Grandsire Doubles are practised, while the more advanced members ring Kent Treble Bob Minor.

Friday mornings at the Abbey are eagerly awaited, and 'The Ringing World' is read with interest. The articles for beginners and those on proof, etc., are much appreciated.

Nearly all the band belong to the Worcestershire Association, and many of the members have joined their home guilds as well, and have been practising tower bells during the holidays.

The band is entirely self-taught, 'Rope-Sight' and 'Standard Methods' being constantly in use as reference books.

BRENDA M. RICHARDSON.

## OXFORD DIOCESAN GUILD.

(Continued from previous page.)

the country not to give up taking the paper because their names could not appear in the list of peals. After many suggestions, Mr. A. D. Cullum moved and Canon Coleridge seconded, 'That this meeting would assure the Editor of substantial financial help if it becomes necessary, and asks all other guilds and associations to do the same thing.'

The Hon. Treasurer asked the meeting to authorise him to invest £50 from the Guild's funds in National Defence Bonds, and this was agreed to on the motion of Mr. E. G. Foster, seconded by Mr. W. J. Paice.

Votes of thanks to the Dean and Chapter, the preacher and organist were carried with applause.

The Master then declared the meeting closed, and as the lunch in the hall had been cancelled by the Christ Church authorities, the members arrived at their various home destinations much earlier than is usual after an Oxford Diocesan Guild festival at Oxford.

## OXFORD, 1940—AN IMPRESSION.

'There's old Tom Tower'—'And all the towers and spires.' With what feelings of joy did we see once again the sunlit towers and spires of Oxford.

In trains, frankly rather overcrowded, but dead up to time, we had slipped through the beautiful countryside—sunny, peaceful, prosperous, to all appearance—to our annual festival.

'How peaceful this place is,' whispered someone as we waited for the service to begin. Then what shouts of praise as we sang of our bells—now, alas! silent—and their work in the service of God.

The Rev. Dr. B. H. B. Attlee preached an inspiring sermon on hope—'We are saved by hope.' Our Christian faith gave us grounds of hope for our civilisation, our nation, our enemies and ourselves, for we should despair of no man, like those to whom St. Paul wrote, who had been 'with no hope and without God in the world.' We could now rejoice in our salvation.

The preacher referred to the agenda of the coming business meeting as an act of hope: 'Place of the festival for 1941,' 'Proposal for publishing an inventory of the church bells of the diocese'—as if no shortage of paper, nor other hindrances, could cramp our actions. 'Carry on in hope.'

And the service ended with the Te Deum as an act of thanksgiving. The thought of hope was carried on by the chairman in his opening words at the meeting, and rang through the business meeting, attended by some 68 members, representing 36 towers.

It was echoed by one of the oldest members present in the words of the poem enclosed:—

'Faith will never alter,  
Britain never falter,  
Ours the way to end the fray,  
And peace to follow after.'

What if we could not lunch in Christ Church Hall? What if we could not ring in all the towers of Oxford? The day will come, in God's good time, when victory will be acclaimed by peals throughout the land.

M. V. R.

## HOIST WITH HIS OWN PETARD.

OR THE BITER BIT.

The man who told me this said it was a true tale. It may be so, and if it isn't, it ought to be. It concerns a man who died many years ago well known and highly respected, whom we will call Harry Smith because that was not his name.

In his young days Harry Smith was a member of an enthusiastic band, who were very anxious to score the first peal of Treble Bob in their tower. They had had several attempts and another was fixed for a certain date. It so happened that a very skilful company in a nearby town had arranged to go for Stedman Triples on the same day, and, being short, invited Harry Smith to make one. In those days Stedman Triples was a very high-class method and Harry was keen to ring a peal of it; but what was he to do? He argued it out like this. If he turned the Stedman down they could easily fill his place and he might never get another invitation. But he was indispensable in his own company, and if he told them he could not ring they would have to postpone their attempt. So he decided for the Stedman.

But things did not work out quite as he hoped and expected. The members of his own band said several things about him, most of them worse than the others, and, compassing heaven and earth, got another to take his place. He felt very hurt at this. They did not, he thought, appreciate his position, for he really did want to be in the first peal of Treble Bob, and did not want it rung without him. So he called round one evening at the George, when he knew the verger was sure to be there, and asked him if he would like to earn an honest half-crown.

'What's up?' asked the verger. 'What dirty work have you got in hand?'

Harry looked offended. 'Don't be a fool,' he said. 'They are going for a peal on Saturday, and all I want you to do is to turn off the gas, in a fit of absent-mindedness, after they have rung about an hour. I want you to do it by mistake. I distinctly do *not* want you to do it deliberately.'

The verger sighed deeply, lifted his eyes to heaven solemnly, and then winked. So that was that.

But still things did not work out quite as Harry hoped and expected. First he got notice that the peal of Stedman was off, and he reflected rather sadly that he might after all have stood in the Treble Bob and saved his half-crown. But it could not be helped, and on the day he went round to hear the start of the peal. He did not, of course, go too near the church, but it so happened that he ran into one of the band.

'Hullo! Harry,' the latter said. 'I've been looking for you everywhere.'

'What do you want?' asked Harry.

'Well,' said the other, 'we are one short and we want you to ring.'

'After what you've been saying?'

'We didn't, and anyhow it don't matter.'

Harry really did want to ring in the Treble Bob, so telling the other he would be round in a minute he set off to find the verger. He went to his house, but he wasn't there. He went to the George, but could not find him. Neither was he at the King's Arms, nor at the Red Lion, nor at the Angel, nor yet at the Six Bells; and at last Harry had to give up the search as a bad job and go to the steeple where the others were impatiently waiting for him.

'After all,' he said to himself, 'the verger's got some sense. He must have known I was only joking.'

They started to ring and soon settled down into some most excellent striking. Never before had they shaped so much like getting a peal. They rang a quarter-peal and as they approached the end of the first hour Harry began to feel nervous and to wonder what would happen; but it passed and the ringing still went on.

'I knew he had got some sense,' thought Harry, and gradually his fears evaporated. Two hours they rang. Two hours and a half. Two hours and three-quarters. Three hours. They were approaching the end of the last course and—out went the light!

Harry Smith was the first out of the tower and down below he met the verger, who greeted him warmly.

'That was a bit of luck,' he said. 'I'd clean forgot all about your little plan, but fortunately I happened to remember just in time. So I may as well have that half-crown.'

What Harry Smith said is not reported. As Wordsworth remarks, there are 'thoughts that do lie too deep for tears!'

## BOURNEMOUTH VICAR'S TRIBUTE TO RINGERS.

To the Editor.

Dear Sir,—I am sending this short line to 'The Ringing World' to express my own deep appreciation of our ringers at St. Peter's. I am so glad to think that during these first months of the war it has been possible for the bells to sound, and I have been cheered not only by the sound of the bells, but also by the quality of the ringers.

In St. Peter's belfry we have had the advantage of the help of St. John's, Surrey Road, ringers and other members of the Christchurch and Poole companies. All this service has been deeply appreciated, and now that the bells can no longer be rung I should like your members all over the country to know, through the medium of your news, how deeply one person at any rate values the witness of the bells and the quality of his ringers.

HEDLEY BURROWS, Vicar of St. Peter's, Bournemouth.



**CALL CHANGES.**

THEIR USE IS JUSTIFIED.

*To the Editor.*

Sir,—It was not my intention to enter into the call change argument, but merely to challenge the indirect suggestion made by the Rev. Herbert Drake that call changes had made East Anglian ringing inferior to that of any other part of the country.

My challenge was very neatly side-stepped in a few sentences, and Mr. Drake goes on to further his argument with a lot of theoretical talk, but no concrete facts upon which to form an opinion.

I prefer to base my opinions on results which I have seen. I know many excellent ringers, whose training included call changes, and I have assisted in teaching several youngsters by that method with good results, and I see no foundation for Mr. Drake's anti-call change theories.

I should be interested to hear the views of some of our leading instructors, and I am sure they would like to hear more of Mr. Drake's 'other ways' of teaching. If 'some hundreds' have learned by them, Mr. Drake is certainly a prince amongst instructors, because at the rate of five per year it would take 20 years to teach 100, and as 'none of them is a bad ringer,' we are to assume they have all stuck to ringing, which in itself is a remarkable achievement.

Mr. Drake's arguments are not convincing, and I consider the present is a most inopportune time to advance them.

When we are able to make a fresh start, there will be a great many, like myself, who will be glad to ring call changes, if necessary, and will be glad to use them to help build new bands.

Judging by past results, we shall have every justification for doing this.

J. E. BAILEY.

**AN OPPOSITE VIEW.**

Sir,—So much has been written about 'call changes' that one seems to be incited to lose sight of the true position. Without reference to what has been said, may I be allowed to state:—

(a) Call change ringing as practised in the West is quite a different affair from 'half-pull' ringing. There is no treble rest and the bells run round in monotonous regularity. There is no 'beat' nor rhythm. Each ringer sets a fixed eye on one rope, or if he rings by ear, hangs his head and gazes to the floor. There is no intelligent rope sight, and only the mind of the foreman is really working. Even so many 'call change' ringers are first-class strikers.

(b) There is no 'running' down or hunting up in call change ringing. When a change is called one bell holds up, the other cuts in and 60 changes occupy 15 minutes as a rule. There is no flexibility, nor movement of any bell in a course at all, and rope sight from a 'hunting' point of view is ignored. There is nothing dynamic about the performance, indeed it is almost completely static, and if a young ringer is led to become proficient as a call change ringer he is likely to become a poor 'placer' of his bell when hunting.

(c) Scientific rounds are different from call change rounds, because the pull is at back and not at hand, and it is almost true to say that if rounds are much practised the call change habit of pulling at hand will develop.

The way of bringing young ringers along is by cultivation of rope sight by hunting, and the practice of half-pull work as early as possible. Dodging should be practised in many positions up and down before any plain course is attempted. The call change ringer never looks at the ropes as a whole like the method ringer has to do, and if call changes be practised a different sort of change should be called. A well-known ringer in the West while training a band used a series of such call dodges and the effect outside was really pleasing.

I could ring call changes fairly well at an early age, and I do emphasise that this static method is not good for the development of the dynamic, ever-changing half-pull ringing, where quick intelligence of rope sight is the all important factor.

What the average outside listener thinks is another matter; the ordinary person is generally unable to distinguish how many bells are used in the Bow Bells time signal of the B.B.C.; the Queens positions pass unnoticed. I think, however, that there is appreciation of the rhythmic cadence when Stedman is well struck. 'We don't do it that way.' Mr. Tyler, of Henfield, once said to a very keen and humble static ringer, and that is the whole story.

FREDK. C. SMALE.

Oakfield, Station Road, Okchampton.

**CALL CHANGES HELP TO PRODUCE GOOD STRIKING.**

Dear Sir,—I have read with interest the recent articles in your paper dealing with the points 'for and against' the use of call changes, and while I myself am no call change enthusiast, I should like to say how valuable I have found this type of ringing in teaching beginners.

I am in charge of a large band of ringers, the majority of whom are young boys and girls, and I have found in every case that after they have learnt to pull a bell and to ring in 'rounds,' the practising of call changes has given them that extra confidence in handling their bells, which most beginners seem to need. Call changes have, too, helped tremendously in producing good striking, because each learner could hear the sound of the bell he or she was ringing for several blows, with the result that when they commenced change ringing on the bells, they had learned to listen, and there was no real bad striking. They were remarkably quick in getting used to the

idea of 'half-pull' ringing, which I think goes to show that call changes are a valuable link between rounds and change ringing.

If it had not been for the use of call changes, our ten bells might have remained silent on a Sunday for a considerable period, but while my pupils were going all out with change ringing on the practice nights, they were ringing the ten bells to call changes Sunday by Sunday and getting great pleasure out of it. The band has often been congratulated on the good striking and music which it has put over on a Sunday.

On one occasion I was outside the tower while my band was ringing the ten bells to call changes, and I am bound to say that the striking and music were really grand.

O. L. ASHBROOK.

Isleworth.

**A SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENT.**

Dear Sir,—The controversy over call changes recalls to me an incident which took place some years ago when I was staying in a country district of Yorkshire.

The village church had five fairly heavy bells; there was a long draught of rope, and the bells went badly. The ringers were keen on their work and rang call changes not very well, but perhaps as well as most bands would have done on those bells.

They told me that a visiting band had once done some change ringing on their bells, but they knew nothing whatever about it. I showed them how they could produce some variety by dodging, and that was all one could do in a single lesson. The general opinion not only of the ringers themselves, but also of a group of villagers outside, was that this 'new' way of ringing sounded much better than the old way.

R. O. STREET.

Glasgow.

**CASE TOO STRONG TO DEMOLISH.**

Dear Sir,—Though I am all in favour of the introduction of a little light reading in 'The Ringing World,' I think most of your readers will agree with me that Mr. Drake as a comic writer is a dismal failure. Before we have quite recovered from his efforts on 'Rows and changes,' he tries to take us on another wild goose chase about call changes. Is he really trying to be serious? If so, how can he, a self-confessed had striker, presume to offer advice on how to obtain good striking? And how can he, who admits he cannot recognise the tune of the National Anthem, presume to speak on behalf of musical people?

The case for the use of call changes in instruction has already been proved to be far too strong for Mr. Drake to demolish it.

Bath.

J. FRANK SMALLWOOD.

**R. EVERGREEN CRITICISES PARSON DRAKE.***To Mister Iditer.*

Dere Zur,—I 'ave read, as best I can, my specs bein' broke, a lot o' to-do in your paper lately about call changes and Parson Drake.

Well, thinks I, if you could vind room vor it, I'd kinda like ta criticise 'im a bit if you da unnerstand what I do maun.

Now I've ringed a goodish bit in me time all over the place. Done a bit along o' the call changers out west and these yer splaced zurpizes up Lunnon an' all sarts a ringing, good, had an' half dacent all over the show.

I listened to and ringed in zum call changes wi' the Devonshire byes an' rale injiyed and I ringed zum Stedman's Triples out Suffolk way wi' Parson Drake an' didn't injiy it.

Until I read this yer letter o' 'is I cudn't onnerstand why the feller cud never kape in 'is place, but now I do zee. Ec onwy shifted quarter o' the way the vust stroke an' then got issel right in about your strokes. Why dang me, time ee was got right the zix was over an ee 'ad ta start gittin' 'issel right vor the next 'un. Noo wonder ee cud never kape 'issel noowhere. Thicky feller Bailey knowed a bit about 'un I reckon, be what ee wrote.

The bit what zurpized I most were Parson Drake zaying as 'ow Parson Law James tayeched 'im to ring. They allus telled I Parson Law James done a wunnerful lot a good vor ringing.

Now, Mister Iditer, zur, us do injiy radin yore paper a mighty lot, but it do git a bit gutty at times to git Parson Drake's argymts over nuthin' continually dished up at us. Kape 'em for thicky Council mating you do 'ave onct a yer.

They must be a grand gurt lot o' bells they be 'aving out Liverpool, an' what a shame thicky church got burned down in New Forest. Us must zend thicky Parson a bob or two towards a noo un. Wonder 'ow 'ee come to ketch alight?—Your'ne Respekfully,

R. EVERGREEN.

Lower Ditchwater Varm, Waterditch. Zunday.

**HANDBELLS IN CHURCH.**

While the ban remains upon the ringing of church bells, handbells are regularly rung before the services at Darley Dale Church, Derbyshire. The ringers are fortunate in having a set of handbells and a suitable belfry for handbell ringing, which is open to the nave of the church. The handbells are rung before each Sunday service, partly as an incentive to the band to keep together until the tower bells can be rung again. The ringing has consisted of rounds on 10 bells, Grandsire Triples, Bob Minor, Grandsire and Stedman Doubles in the way of change ringing, and it is much appreciated by the congregation.

## BELLS, METHODS AND BEARINGS.

To the Editor.

Dear Sir,—There must be hundreds of little villages where hang a peal of bells, but where there are no local ringers. What condition are these rings going to be in by the time we can resume activity again?

It means that without a steeplekeeper the gudgeons of many bells will be coated with red rust and will be practically unringable, if this war lasts for a long period.

I suggest that Masters of all associations approach the Bishops of their dioceses with a view to *instructing* (not requesting) all incumbents to have their bell fittings oiled and greased. Almost every diocese has a church magazine and the instruction to all parsons could be inserted in this paper.

The only diversions of ringers these days are handbells and talks, and we have much time now to examine our successes and failures as far as progress is concerned, for without progress our art would soon fade out. And I am reminded of Mr. J. E. Bailey's question of a few weeks back on why East Anglian ringers favour even bell ringing. Look at it how you like and as far back as you like. I think I am right in saying that whatever method on any number of bells you may desire to ring you can be almost certain of attaining your desire in East Anglia.

Where change ringing is practised in a tower in the Eastern Counties you may be sure of, at least, three of the standard methods being rung. Go to some other parts of the country and you find one method only, year in and year out. I refer to Grandsire. East Anglian ringers are invariably taught on an even number of bells, from four upwards. The steps to Bob Major are gradual and simple. And after Bob Major how much longer is it before a ringer can grasp Treble Bob, and after Treble Bob how far is it to Double Norwich?

I say, and always have said, it is better to learn Plain Bob first. The lowest number of bells you can practise Grandsire on being five, it becomes bewildering to a learner when he is put on to Triples. One extra bell at a time is ample. And what do you find in towers where nothing but odd bell ringing is practised? Dozens of tenor-men who have no desire to go further than 'blowing.' There is no need for me to state why progress is retarded in odd-bell method towers. In the whole of Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex I doubt whether you will find a dozen men whose only abilities are 'blowing.'

A lot of bands get hold of Grandsire pretty quickly and they are all keyed up to try Stedman and then the fun begins. It's a bigger job going from Grandsire to Stedman than from Bob Major to Treble Bob. A bigger job for the bob caller and a bigger job for the conductor. Many struggling Stedman companies abandon the method and have to be content with Grandsire, and what was once a budding change ringing band is broken up, solely owing to lack of progress.

Personally, I like to hear a touch of Grandsire or Stedman on any number of bells, but I think these methods are *overdone*. I remember one Sunday morning, when ringing for service, there was about seven minutes before tolling-in time and our conductor suggested a bob course of Stedman Cinques. I took courage and said to him, 'I've never heard a *plain* course of Stedman Cinques. Will you oblige?' He did and I can truthfully say I thoroughly enjoyed it. Lots of readers will know why!

One more little matter. The latest craze is ball bearings. The bell-founders love them and the ringers humbly submit. So far no one has openly voiced his firm opinion on this so-called 'advancement' in bell hanging.

I speak from experience and I dare to suggest that 90 per cent. of ringers are against the hanging of bells in ball bearings.

This matter is, I consider, an important one and many ringers are now beginning to realise it. We are the men who have to do the pulling, and if we consider that bells run better on plain bearings, then let us up and say so and make a general protest against bell bearings.

'DORKEN.'

### THE LATE MR. W. A. CAVE'S PEALS.

To the Editor.

Dear Sir,—In addition to the associations shown, the late Mr. W. A. Cave rang in a few peals for the Middlesex County Association, including one of Cambridge Surprise Maximus at St. Mary-le-Bow, Cheapside, on February 27th, 1926, and one of London Surprise Major at St. Matthew's, Upper Clapton, on February 27th, 1929. By a strange coincidence, both of these peals were rung on the same day of the year. He also rang in a peal of Cambridge Surprise Major by a band of 'Williams' at St. Mary's, Ealing, on February 22nd, 1936. It is possible that these peals are included in the totals published, as the list was sent, by request, to Bristol some time ago.

C. T. COLES.

## HINTS ON HANDBELL RINGING.

### FIRST STAGES FOR THE BEGINNER.

When you have learnt how to ring 1-2 to a course of Grandsire Triples, the next best thing, if the conditions of your band will admit it, is to learn how to ring 3-4 to a course. That is not how bands as a rule do actually go to work. Usually, when a man starts on 1-2, he keeps to that pair until he is able to ring them satisfactorily to touches or even peals. No doubt, so long as the same four men can meet and practise together it is, for their immediate purposes, better for each to stick to his own pair, but in the long run it is not a very good thing for the ringer of the trebles.

A man who has learnt double-handed ringing on 1-2 usually finds it difficult to adapt himself to the altered conditions when he attempts to ring 3-4 or 5-6, and not seldom this disability lasts for years; so much so that many people think it is a harder thing to ring an inside pair than to ring the trebles. That is not necessarily so. It is usually a question of which pair the man has started with. So if your aim is to be a really competent handbell ringer, when you begin do your best, consistent with the interests of your band, to get as much practice as possible on all four pairs.

Write out another full course of Grandsire Triples and draw lines, one black, the other red, along the paths of the third and fourth. Do not imagine that this is taking too much unnecessary trouble. As we explained in our issue of December 15th last, the task of pricking changes is not a difficult one or a monotonous one. If done in the right way it has its own interest, and it will fully repay any trouble taken.

When you have drawn the lines along the two paths, study them as a whole in the same way you would study a single line if you were 'swotting' up a method to ring in the steeple. You will find that for the greater part of the course the two bells, 3 and 4, course each other, and the rules for ringing them are the same as those you used when you rang the trebles. But just as in the tower, the work of the third consists of plain hunting with certain exceptions, so here the work of the third and fourth consists of plain hunting (with one bell striking between the two) and certain exceptions.

Directly the bells go into changes the third makes third's place, the fourth strikes one blow in fifths, and the two are in the position to follow one another in plain hunting. This they do until the third, hunting down, has to dodge 4-5. But as, when the third is dodging in 4-5 down, the fourth has to dodge in 6-7 down, the relative positions of the two are unaltered, and it is quite easy to treat the works of two as one, watching the position of that which strikes first and striking the other at an interval of one blow.

All this is quite simple and, indeed, obvious, but we stress it because almost the whole art of double-handed ringing consists in being able to combine the works of the two bells, and to ring them as if they were one. If you learn to do this with 3-4 in Grandsire Triples, you

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have begun to learn how to do it in Stedman Triples or Double Norwich Major.

At the next lead end the two bells are in 6-7 and they dodge together. Here take careful note of which bell should come away first from the back. You know, of course, that in the plain course it is the third, but when, later on, you are attempting a touch or a peal, you will not necessarily know so easily, and if you are not alert you can easily change your hands—one of the pitfalls into which the handbell ringer can most easily fall, and without himself or his companions noticing it until too late.

The plain hunting continues (with a dodge in 4-5 and 6-7 up) until the end of the last lead but one, and now we have some work entirely different from what we have had up to now. The third leads, the fourth turns it and leads, and then the treble turns the fourth. Your two bells hunt up until they strike in third's and fifth's. Then the fourth makes third's place and the third dodges in 4-5 up, so that they strike together thus—0143000. And now the fourth returns to lead while the third hunts up behind. This parts the two bells; they no longer hunt with one blow between them, but are parted in coursing order by the treble and the bell-in-the-hunt. Why this happens you can learn by studying the articles on coursing order which we printed last September, and it will help you with your handbell ringing if you study those articles.

Note carefully how, after the fourth has made third's place, your two bells get parted wider and wider as one goes to lead and the other hunts up behind. First they strike next each other; then there are two blows between them; then four; then five (as the fourth finishes its whole pull on the lead and the third strikes its first blow behind); then four; and now the pair begin to come together again until they meet and cross in 4-5. They strike together first at handstroke (4-3) and change and strike 3-4 at backstroke, after which they separate and get wider and wider apart until the third leads and they begin to come together again and meet in 3-4.

Then the third makes third's place, the fourth dodges in 4-5 down, and the two fall once more into the plain hunting with one blow between them. The special point to notice is where the two cross each other's path and how they do it—at handstroke or backstroke. This is one of the important things in ringing two handbells, whatever they are.

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## NOTICES.

**LEEDS AND DISTRICT SOCIETY.**—A meeting will be held at Drighlington on Saturday, July 27th, at 6.30 p.m. All towers are expected to send a representative to discuss the society's future.—H. Lofthouse, Hon. Sec., 8, Wortley Road, Leeds 12.

**WINCHESTER AND PORTSMOUTH DIOCESAN GUILD.**—Alton and Petersfield District.—The quarterly meeting arranged for July 27th at West Meon is cancelled.—C. E. Bassett, Hon. Dis. Sec., 32, Charles Street, Petersfield, Hants.

**LINCOLN DIOCESAN GUILD.**—Northern Branch.—The meeting of the Grimsby District, which should have been held on Saturday, July 27th, at Burton-on-Stather, is cancelled.—H. Mingay, Hon. Dis. Sec., 394, Wellington Street, Grimsby.

**ANCIENT SOCIETY OF COLLEGE YOUTHS.**—The next meeting will be held at the Coffee Pot, Warwick Lane, E.C., on July 30th, at 8 p.m. Handbell ringing from 7 p.m. and after the meeting.—A. B. Peck, Hon. Sec.

**SURREY ASSOCIATION** (North-Western and Southern Districts) and **GUILDFORD DIOCESAN GUILD** (Leatherhead District).—A joint gathering will be held on Saturday, August 3rd. Ringers may meet at Boxhill S.R. station at 3.30 p.m. to walk through Norbury Park to Leatherhead. Service in Leatherhead Church at 5 p.m. Tea, followed by handbell ringing and social evening at the Duke's Head, at 5.30. If wet, handbells available in Leatherhead Church belfry from 3 p.m. Names for tea to Mr. Arthur Dean, 24, Church Walk, Leatherhead, by Tuesday, July 30th. All members are requested to give this venture their fullest support. All ringers heartily welcome.—G. W. Massey, A. T. Shelton, and A. H. Smith, Dis. Hon. Secs.

**EAST GRINSTEAD AND DISTRICT GUILD.**—We hope to see you at the Church Room, Hartfield, on Saturday, August 3rd, for handbell ringing, and to decide on future arrangements. Please do your best to come along and help keep the guild alive.—C. A. Bassett, Assist. Sec.

**HERTS ASSOCIATION.**—Watford District.—Meeting on Saturday, August 10th, at the Institute, Bushey, at 3, for social gossip and handbells. Open to all interested in ringing.—C. H. Horton, 53, Aldenham Road, Bushey. City 4270.

**LANCASHIRE ASSOCIATION.**—Rochdale Branch.—The annual meeting will be held on Saturday, August 10th, at St. James' Church, Milnrow, at 7 p.m. Members, please note date and place. Handbells will be available.—Ivan Kay, Hon. Sec.

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Printed for the Proprietor by the Woodbridge Press, Ltd., Guildford, and Published by the Rolls House Publishing Co., Ltd., Breams Buildings, London, E.C.4.