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STEDMAN.

It is just ten years since the ringing Exercise united in doing honour to the memory of Fabian Stedman by restoring the tower and bells of St. Benet's Church, Cambridge, with which he was so closely associated in the days when he was playing a leading part in the early development of change ringing. Stedman was reputed to have been born in 1631, and until 1931 no memorial marked his great contribution to the art. His name had lived through the centuries because of its application to the method of which he was the author, but beyond that there was nothing which singled him out above other of the early founders of change ringing as we know it to-day.

In 1931 the bells on which Stedman rang at Cambridge were hanging more or less derelict in the frame which was there even before Stedman's days; the Saxon tower was cracked through shrinkage of the subsoil, and generally the condition relating to the bells was one of neglect. The idea that Stedman's tercentenary should be marked by a complete restoration of the tower and bells was seized upon with enthusiasm, and ringers, not only of the British Isles but also those living in distant lands, readily joined in providing the funds to carry out the work. Never before had the Exercise subscribed so universally and so liberally to any project as it did to this scheme.

Ten eventful years have passed since the setting up of the memorial. Researches have led to the discovery of certain new facts about Stedman. The most significant is that he was not the author, as was so long supposed, of 'Tintinnologia,' the first known book on change ringing. But he sponsored its publication and 'put it on the market,' and in that way the work of Richard Duckworth, an Oxford University man, was brought to the notice of the ringers of that day. Whether it would have appeared in print without Stedman's help it is idle to speculate, but Stedman, although he did not actually write the book, was responsible for its appearance, and for that alone he placed the ringers of the period in his debt.

His contribution to the art, however, went much further than that. Ten years later he wrote 'Campanologia,' which incorporated the advances in methods made during the interval and in which the method which bears his name appeared for the first time. It is curious, looking back over the generations of composers who have come and gone since then, that no other method distinguished by the author's name has really survived the acid test of practice. It is not chance. Stedman has lived because of its appeal and, as an odd-bell method,

(Continued on page 578.)

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will retain its popularity as long as ringing lasts. It was, of course, only as a five-bell method that it was practised in Stedman's time, and it is a coincidence that the first two peals of Triples, both in Norwich, were rung just one hundred years after his birth—in 1731. The 210th anniversary of the second of the peals is on this very day. It was rung at St. Michael Coslany on December 5th, the first having been rung, and hotly disputed, at St. Peter Mancroft five weeks before. There is no definite proof that either of these were true, although there is little likelihood that they were, and the first peal of Stedman Triples known to be true was rung by the College Youths on December 4th, 1803. Long before that date, however, the method had been extended to nine and eleven bells, and peals of Caters and Cinques had been rung.

There is a certain amount of speculation as to Stedman's association with ringing after his term of office as Master of the College Youths in 1682. One can hardly imagine that it was the end of his ringing career, but as far as research has gone his name does not appear again in connection with the art. But Stedman left his mark upon ringing as few other men have done. What would we not give in these days for some personal details about him? What manner of man was he? We can all conjure up visions to fit our own conjectures, but that is as far as we can go. Stedman, however, remains a very intimate figure in ringing, picture him how we will, and now at the moment of so many anniversaries of the man and his method, it is well to recall something of what is owed to him by the thousands to whom this method has given so much pleasure to ring.

HANDBELL PEALS.

GREAT BADDOW, ESSEX.

THE ESSEX ASSOCIATION.

On Wednesday, November 19, 1941, in Two Hours and Thirty-Six Minutes.

AT 3, BELL STREET,

A PEAL OF BOB MAJOR, 5050 CHANGES;

*HIRZELL EDWARDS 1-2	ARTHUR H. EVERETT 5-6
*ARNOLD BRUNTON 3-4	GEORGE GREEN 7-8

Composed by J. R. PRITCHARD.

Conducted by A. H. EVERETT.

* First peal on handbells.

ENFIELD, MIDDLESEX.

THE MIDDLESEX COUNTY ASSOCIATION AND LONDON
DIOCESAN GUILD.

On Sunday, November 23, 1941, in Two Hours and Forty Minutes.

AT 24, SUFFOLK ROAD.

A PEAL OF KENT TREBLE BOB MAJOR, 5120 CHANGES;

MRS. J. THOMAS 1-2	ISAAC J. ATTWATER 5-6
JOHN THOMAS 3-4	*FREDERICK G. SYMONS 7-8

Composed by J. REEVES.

Conducted by JOHN THOMAS.

* First peal of Treble Bob 'in hand.' The 50th peal rung together by Mr. and Mrs. J. Thomas.

OXFORD.

THE OXFORD UNIVERSITY SOCIETY.

On Saturday, November 29, 1941, in One Hour and Fifty-Seven Minutes.

AT NEW COLLEGE,

A PEAL OF MINOR, 5040 CHANGES;

Being one extent each of Reverse and Double Bob, and five of Plain Bob. Tenor size 15 in C.

*ELEANOR J. MCNAIR

WILLIAM L. B. LEESE

(Somerville) 1-2

(St. John's) 3-4

JOHN E. SPICE (New College) 5-6

Conducted by JOHN E. SPICE.

* First peal of Minor. This is the first handbell peal of Minor and the first peal in more than one method for the society; all the band are resident, junior members of the university. Also the first university peal in which a lady has taken part.

PRESTON, LANCAS.
THE LANCASHIRE ASSOCIATION.

On Saturday, November 29, 1941, in Two Hours and Ten Minutes,
IN THE BELFRY OF THE PARISH CHURCH,

A PEAL OF SPLICED TREBLE BOB MINOR, 5040 CHANGES;

Being seven extents in seven methods, viz.: (1) Duke of Norfolk and College Exercise (Treble Bob); (2) College Exercise and Norbury Treble Bob; (3) Sandal, London Scholars' Pleasure, Kingston and Oxford Treble Bob; (4) Sandal and Oxford Treble Bob; (5) London Scholars' Pleasure and Kingston Treble Bob; (6) Kingston and Oxford Treble Bob; (7) London Scholars' Pleasure and Oxford Treble Bob.

EDWARD COWPERTHWAITHE ... 1-2 | C. KENNETH LEWIS ... 3-4
CYRIL CROSBTHWAITE ... 5-6

Conducted by C. K. LEWIS.

There were 44 changes of method. First peal of Spliced Treble Bob Minor by the association. First peal of Spliced Treble Bob Minor by all the band 'in hand.' Rung after meeting short for Major.

BIRMINGHAM.

THE ST. MARTIN'S GUILD FOR THE DIOCESE OF
BIRMINGHAM.

On Saturday, November 29, 1941, in Two Hours and Thirty-Four Minutes,
AT THE TAMWORTH ARMS, MOOR STREET, CITY,

A PEAL OF STEDMAN CATERS, 5017 CHANGES;

Tenor size 19 in A.

FRANK E. PERVIN ... 1-2 | ALBERT WALKER ... 5-6
FRANK W. PERRINS ... 3-4 | GEORGE F. SWANN ... 7-8

*GEORGE E. FEARN ... 9-10

Composed by GABRIEL LINDOFF. Conducted by ALBERT WALKER.
Referee—Bernard C. Ashford.

* First peal of Stedman on handbells. Rung in honour of Mr. James George's 88th birthday. The band thank him for his kind hospitality after the peal, which should have been Stedman Cinques, but they met one short.

AYLSHAM, NORFOLK.
THE NORWICH DIOCESAN ASSOCIATION.

On Sunday, November 30, 1941, in Two Hours and Six Minutes,
AT 4, FAIRLEIGH TERRACE,

A PEAL OF BOB MINOR, 5040 CHANGES;

Being seven different extents.

JACK N. A. PUMPHREY ... 1-2 | ALBERT ROUGHT ... 3-4
WALTER C. MEDLER ... 5-6

Conducted by WALTER C. MEDLER.

ENFIELD, MIDDLESEX.

THE MIDDLESEX COUNTY ASSOCIATION AND LONDON
DIOCESAN GUILD.

On Sunday, November 30, 1941, in Two Hours and Thirty Minutes,
AT 24, SUFFOLK ROAD,

A PEAL OF GRANDSIRE TRIPLES, 5040 CHANGES;

HOLT'S ORIGINAL.

MRS. J. THOMAS ... 1-2 | ISAAC J. ATTWATER ... 5-6
JOHN THOMAS ... 3-4 | *HAROLD HOWSON ... 7-8

Conducted by JOHN THOMAS.

* First peal of Triples.

CELEBRATING FATHER'S BIRTHDAY.

The three small sons of Mr. David Vincent, of Hale, Cheshire, stole a march on their father, and while he was away at business every day taught themselves to ring changes on handbells. They also induced their mother to join in, and when they 'broke the news' to father a few months ago they were able to ring courses of Bob Major.

It has not, however, been quite so easy to keep them going, school homework and other diversions making it difficult to catch them all in the right mood at the same time. But the boys celebrated father's birthday on November 21st, when the following were rung:

A course of Bob Major: P. David 1-2, Gordon G. 3-4, John J. 5-6, Mrs. Vincent 7-8; a course of Grandsire Caters: P. D. 1-2, G. G. 3-4, J. J. 5-6, father 7-8, Mrs. Vincent 9-10; 108 Bob Major: P. D. 1-2, G. G. 3-4, father (conductor) 5-6; 240 Bob Major: Father (conductor) 1-2, G. G. 3-4, J. J. 5-6, Mrs. Vincent 7-8. P. David is aged 8 years 6 months, John J. 11 years 10 months, and Gordon G. 14 years 3 months.

We shall look forward to hearing of a peal attempt before long.

MEMORIES OF WELLS.

SOME PEALS RECALLED.

To the Editor.

Dear Sir,—I enjoyed reading your article on the peal at Wells Cathedral 50 years ago, also the letters you have published. They brought back to me a lot of pleasant memories of the time I resided there. That was a splendid photo of the west front; the photographer, whoever it was, made a good picture of it, showing up the tower wherein I consider is the finest and heaviest peal of ten in England.

In 1913 the late Mr. C. F. Winney spent Christmas with me, and I well remember we only had six for early ringing. I rang the tenor of the back six and called two six-cores of Grandsire Doubles. That was Winney's introduction to Wells bells.

They were not always hung as they are now. The tenor was on the left just inside the ringing chamber door. The usual tenor man was a powerful man, a blacksmith, by name Steve Slade. He usually had three to help him. It is said that a hollow place was cut out of the wall behind the box to give him room to bend. It may be true, the hollow place is still there.

I can remember when the bells were being rehung, and seeing them hauled around the city on lorries before being taken up into the tower. A photograph of the bells on the lorries, and of the ringers, taken at the west front door after the procession, is still hung in the practice room.

I began to be interested in ringing about the time the first peal was rung on them. A pint bottle of oil with the corks cut to allow the oil to drop on the bearings was hung on each side of the tenor. It was all gone by the time the peal was finished. Washbrook was afterwards engaged as instructor. He used to take the students at the Theological College in the afternoon and the local ringers in the evening, and that was how change ringing was introduced into Wells.

Some time later Washbrook came to Wells and rang a peal of Double Norwich Major at St. Cuthbert's. During his stay some of the local ringers got their first peal of Grandsire Triples, after which they were invited to supper at his house by our leader, the Rev. A. Coode, and we had the pleasure of seeing Washbrook tap off some change ringing on the piano. He gave us some Triples and Caters, and finished with a touch of Double Norwich.

As to the number of peals rung on the bells, there have not been a lot. I expect I have rung more than anyone else. I have had the pleasure of taking part in seven, six of Caters and one of Triples rung on the back eight in 3 hours 28 minutes, conducted by myself. The peals of Caters were conducted by such well-known ringers as A. Walker (Birmingham), W. Cave and J. Burford (Bristol), F. E. Dawe (London), and J. T. Dyke (Chilcompton).

One incident stands out clearly in my memory after a peal of Grandsire Caters on May 8th, 1920. It was a splendid peal from start to finish. Three of us locals were in it. I had arranged it to commemorate the jubilee as Bishop of the Right Rev. W. H. Stirling, D.D.

Just before starting Mr. Cave told me that Mr. J. Carter had composed the peal specially for Wells Cathedral bells. It is a very musical composition of 5,039 changes. After the peal two of us missed the rest with the result that we went to one place, the rest to another. As we went into the room a gentleman was talking, and this was what he said, 'I was motoring into Wells from Bristol. On reaching the top of the Mendips leading down into Wells I heard your bells. It was a lovely evening so I stopped the car and listened to them until they stopped, which was just over an hour. I know nothing about bells or bellringing, but I have never listened to anything so beautiful before. Had the ringing continued I should have still stayed and listened.'

He must have heard the last part of the peal. We thanked him for his kind remarks, had a 'cup of tea' with him and left.

34, Union Street, Stourbridge, Worcs.

W. FARLEY.

WEST HAM TENOR.

To the Editor.

Dear Sir,—I have seen peal reports giving the West Ham tenor as 26 cwt., but I have been informed on one occasion, I believe by the late William Pye, that when the 15,120 Bob Major was rung in 1737 the tenor was not the present one, but much lighter. Is this correct?

With reference to the late Mr. Driver ringing the tenor at Leytonstone, if my memory serves me, he rang the treble to a course of Doubles with 'Minormania' standing behind him. A. PRIOR.

12, Wallwood Road, Leytonstone.

[The original tenor by Samuel Knight at West Ham was recast by Mears, but the weight was approximately the same. It is usually given as 26 cwt.—Editor, 'The Ringing World'.]

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‘CLAVIS CAMPANOLOGIA.’

A KEY TO THE ART OF RINGING.

The Exercise owes much to the men who have written about the art of ringing. From the publication of the ‘Tintinnologia’ in 1668 down to the time of Jasper Snowdon and the work of men still living, there has been a steady succession of books which have preserved and spread a wide knowledge of change ringing throughout the belfries of the country. In quality as well as in style these books differ considerably; some are far more valuable than others, but among those which have proved most useful and which have had the greatest influence, a very high place must be given to the ‘Clavis.’

‘Clavis Campanologia, or a Key to the Art of Ringing,’ was published in the year 1788. It was written during the eventful years when men’s rivalries and the clash of personal ambition had largely regrouped the leading London companies, and had led to the dissolution first of the Society of London Youths, and then of the ‘ancient’ Society of College Youths; and it appeared almost exactly at the time when the division of the London Exercise between the two societies of Cumberland and College Youths, with one or two lesser and subsidiary companies, had been stabilised in the form it was to keep for over a century.

Towards these changes the book itself was an important, if indirect, contributory cause. William Jones, the chief author, had been more active than perhaps any other man in the formation of bands got together from different sources with the consequent frequent migrations of leading ringers from one company to another, and we can hardly doubt that his activity was largely in the hope of promoting the interests of the book. The famous visit to Norwich in 1785 had its inception in the idea of gaining new material and new support and subscribers to the venture; the visit led directly to the practice of Stedman in the metropolis; and the practice of Stedman led directly to the dissolution of the ancient Society of College Youths. The rivalries and quarrels of the two other authors of the book—John Reeves and Thomas Blake—were the immediate cause of that dissolution.

William Jones at the time held a prominent and, to a large extent, unique position in the London Exercise. He was a man of some standing and education, but, unfortunately, apart from his ringing career and his book, nothing is known of him. He probably lived at Kensington or in one of the villages in the neighbourhood, and it is not unlikely that the opening of the new ring of eight at St. Mary Abbot’s first brought him into contact with ringing; for though a William Jones was elected a member of the Cumberland Youths in the year 1754 and again in 1767, it is unlikely that it was the same person. A man of the name lived in Newgate Street and was a ringer though apparently he took part in no peals. He may have been a relative.

The first notice we have of William Jones is when he set himself to awaken the ancient Society of College Youths into renewed activity. Since the schism in 1756 it had led a more or less quiet and uneventful life. It held its meetings and its annual feast with dignity, and it numbered good ringers among its members; but they had few ambitions as peal ringers, though in 1771 they accomplished the first peal of Real Double Bob Maximus, the composition of which seems to have been false.

Jones joined them in 1775 with some other enthusiastic young men, and in the next year the society was recon-

structed. A new peal book and a name book were procured and a new and revised set of rules drawn up. A finely printed copy of these rules is extant and now in the British Museum.

During the years 1775 and 1776 seven peals were rung, three of them at Mortlake, two at Kensington, and one each at Bermondsey and St. Sepulchre’s, Snow Hill. Jones rang in four and called two. Then apparently there happened one of those quarrels which were so frequent in the old societies, and the band broke up. Jones left the College Youths.

At that time there was another band in the eastern part of the town which was active in peal ringing. It contained several first-class ringers whose names figure prominently in the records of the time, among them being Christopher Wells, George Scarsbrook and John Reeves; and it was to them that William Jones now turned. Perhaps it was through his influence that they were able to move their headquarters to St. Bride’s, Fleet Street, although the belfry was already the practice place of the ‘junior’ Society of College Youths. William Jones was young and energetic, he liked to be the leading man among his fellows, and in addition he had another and higher ambition. He wanted to write a good book on ringing, and for that he had many qualifications. He could write good English in the somewhat grandiloquent style of the time, he knew a good deal about the practical side of the art, and he had some pretensions to be a composer.

But he realised that if his book was to be a success he needed something more. Christopher Wells’ recent discovery of the liability of Treble Bob to internal falseness had thrown all ideas of composition and proof into the melting pot. A few peals stood secure—Annable’s Bob Major, John Holt’s Grandsire Triples, Baldwin’s Treble Bob—but most of the others were suspect and not without reason. To have printed what had been rung up till then would have been to court disaster. Practically the whole of the ground had to be surveyed and new compositions worked out for every method. It was a task beyond his individual capacity, and would have taxed the ability of any of the leading composers throughout the history of the art. Fortunately there was a man at hand capable of doing the job, and so John Reeves got his opportunity.

Reeves had already shown something of the stuff that was in him, but as yet he had not fully grasped the laws of composition and proof. Of his early peals some at any rate were false, and, since the figures of others are lost, we may reasonably suspect their truth. But now there was a chance of getting his work published in a permanent form, he devoted all his energies and skill towards composition and with brilliant results.

How early William Jones formed the intention of writing the ‘Clavis’ we cannot of course know. Probably the idea gradually shaped itself, and in any case it must have been several years before he could gather together the necessary material. He was in an entirely different position from every other man who has attempted to compile a text book on ringing. When Shipway, or Hubbard, or Sottanstaff set out to write his book he had at his disposal a mass of material which needed revision and arranging and supplementing. But in 1780 there were practically no compositions which had been printed, and of those in manuscript very few could be accepted as true. Nor were men at all willing to part with their figures, for

the risk of them being found out to be false was too great.

At the time there was a great need for a new text book, and the reason why it had not already appeared was not because there was no demand for it, but because there had been no one capable of writing it. The J.D. and C.M. 'Campanalogia' was an excellent book when it first appeared in 1702, but during the following eighty years ringing advanced by leaps and bounds, and in 1780 the book was about as much use to a competent band as a treatise on bows and arrows would be to a modern artillery officer. Yet booksellers found it worth their while to issue reprints, which, in default of something better, found a ready sale, and as late as 1766 the fifth edition appeared, with Joseph Monk as editor. A few perfunctory attempts were made to bring the book more up to date, but the attempt was hopeless, and nothing short of complete rewriting would really have been of any use.

For his new book William Jones needed all the information and all the support he could get, and he now turned to the Cumberlands. He joined that society on February 4th, 1778, and five days later rang a peal with them. Normally, if a man left one company and joined another, he had to break with his old associates, but in this case Jones remained on friendly terms with the London Youths.

Among the Cumberlands, no doubt, he talked with Partrick and George Gross and tried to find out what peals they had composed and rung; but the man who promised to be of the greatest assistance was Thomas Blakemore, who, besides being a clever ringer with some knowledge of composition, was a Piccadilly bookseller. His trade experience would be invaluable in making the

(Continued in next column.)

THE LATE MR. LINDOFF.

To the Editor.

Dear Sir,—May I be allowed to add my regret at the passing of Mr. Gabriel Lindoff. Your editorial of November 21st does no more than justice to this ingenious exponent of our noble art. His name will go down to future generations as a master among men, for as teacher, composer and conductor he had few if any equals, yet withal he was most unassuming and modest.

I believe I first met him when we made the first attempt at Halesowen, at Christmas, 1902, for the 14,112 London, which failed after 5 hours 20 minutes through a shift course. I had since met him on several tours in England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales, and at various times had had some correspondence with him on the subject of compositions.

He once sent me some peals of London, in all about 1,700. I should like to ask our Irish friends, particularly those of St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, if they can give us any particulars of Mr. Lindoff's books and manuscripts; probably Mr. R. Murphy could enlighten the Exercise on this point.

Mr. Lindoff, while once on a tour in Cheshire, before starting for a peal of Superlative, asked me to look through the composition (he was conducting). I asked, 'Why?' He replied, 'Just to make sure, Bill. You are a conductor. I do not claim to be one.' That little incident was typical of 'Gay,' and while living memory lasts will never be forgotten by
WILLIAM KEEBLE.

THE LARGEST TOWER.

To the Editor.

Dear Sir,—In answer to 'Enquirer,' while not claiming St. Mary's Cathedral, Edinburgh, to be the largest tower, it is perhaps worth mentioning. The ringing chamber is 30ft. square by 33ft. high, with rope guide 15ft. from floor. It is well furnished with interesting pictures, diagrams, etc., on the walls, and plaster reproduction of pre-Reformation bells on turn-table pedestals round the room. The bells (ten) are by Taylor. The tenor was 42 cwt. 2 qr. before it was retuned. They are hung in oak frame.
J. M.

'CLAVIS CAMPANOLOGIA.'

new book, and so Jones enlisted his services and sent him to the London Youths to join Reeves. Presently Jones rejoined that society, and soon afterwards the whole company, including Reeves, Jones, Blakemore and Christopher Wells went over to the ancient Society of College Youths.
(To be continued.)

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BELFRY GOSSIP.

The many friends of Mr. John W. Jones, of Newport, will join us in congratulating him on his 76th birthday, which falls to-day. Mr. Jones has rendered long and invaluable service to the Llandaff and Monmouth Diocesan Association, and now ranks with Mr. G. W. Cartmel, of the Hertford County Association, as the association secretary with the longest service.

Many ringers will learn with real regret that Mr. Claude I. Davies, for many years treasurer of the Lancashire Association, is lying very seriously ill in hospital. It will, unfortunately, be many months before he has recovered. We wish him very sincerely a sound and sure recovery.

A well-known schoolmaster ringer who recently joined the Forces has had to attend some classes for instruction. We hear that on one occasion he was sent out of the room for inattention. Served him right too.

On December 1st, 1732, the Society of Kentish Youths rang a peal of 5,040 Grandsire Tripples in the eighth month of their practice.

Ten years ago last Monday William Pye called at Willesden the first peal of Spiced Surprise Major in nine methods. It was also the first which contained the extent on the 3-lead course plan.

The first peal of Oxford Treble Bob Royal on handbells was rung at Sheffield on December 11th, 1811.

The first peal of Stedman Triples which we definitely know to have been true was rung by the College Youths at St. Mary Abbot's, Kensington, on December 4th, 1803, and on the same date in 1919 the first peal by Freemasons was rung at St. Clement Danes'.

Six years ago to-day the first peal of Melbourne Surprise Major was rung.

Two hundred and ten years ago to-morrow the Norwich Scholars rang at St. Michael's, Coslany, the second of the first two peals of Stedman Triples.

Fifty years ago to-day eleven peals were rung. They consisted of Grandsire Triples 3, Bob Triples 1, Oxford Bob Triples 1, Stedman Triples 2, Kent Treble Bob Major 2, Royal 1, Minor 1.

Ten years ago 36 peals were rung. They consisted of Stedman Doubles 4, Triples 14, Gaters 3, Cinques 3; Grandsire Doubles 1, Triples 3, Bob Major 1; Kent Treble Bob Major 1, Oxford 1; Double Norwich Court Bob Major 1; Cambridge Major 1; Norfolk Surprise Major 1; and peals of Minor 2.

LANCASHIRE ASSOCIATION.

RESIGNATION OF THE PRESIDENT.

The Rev. Arthur Scott, M.A., president of the Lancashire Association since 1936, has resigned from that position on his appointment by Queen's College, Cambridge, to the benefice of Oakington, near Cambridge, in the diocese of Ely.

Mr. Scott, who is a native of Hull, was educated at Queen's College, Cambridge, and Ridley Hall, Cambridge. The Bishop of Manchester ordained him in 1930, and his first curacy was at Christ Church, Harpurhey. In 1934 Mr. Scott was appointed lecturer of Bolton and senior curate of Bolton Parish Church, and whilst there was elected president in 1936 in succession to the late Canon H. J. Elsee, M.A.

In 1938 the Bishop of Manchester appointed him to be Rector of St. Luke's, Miles Platting, a large industrial parish in the city of Manchester. Mr. Scott will preach his farewell sermon at St. Luke's, Miles Platting, on Sunday, December 14th, at 3.30 p.m.

MEETINGS IN BRISTOL.

MORE SUPPORT NEEDED.

To the Editor.

Sir,—At the annual meeting of the Bristol City Branch of the Gloucester and Bristol Association, to be held on December 13th, a decision is to be taken whether to continue holding monthly meetings or not.

If the meetings are to continue it will depend largely on the support the branch is to have from the older members of the ringing fraternity in Bristol.

For two years, at least, the branch has been carried on by the younger members and visitors, who have often been half of the total gatherings.

Contrary to the general belief, the branch does not even have the support of the association officials living in or near the city.

Considering the amount of work put in by the secretary in making arrangements for the meetings and providing teas, the support he has had from the 'brass hats' is deplorable.

As the city is for the time being losing the services of a few of its small number of supporters, it will be up to the older members to come along.

At the last meeting comment was made on the outstanding success attained by the College Youths, and if London (which has had the worst of enemy attacks) can set such a splendid example to the remainder of the provinces, why is it that a city like Bristol, with approximately 90 ringing members, can only see four or six members at its meetings?

Therefore, if the flag of the branch is to be kept flying the branch officials must have more active support.

T. HARRIS.
D. G. CLIFT.

MIDDLESEX COUNTY ASSOCIATION.

MEETING AT BISHOPSGATE.

The meeting of the North and East Division of the Middlesex County Association last Saturday was not held exactly among the ruins of the City of London, for St. Botolph's, Bishopsgate, and the surrounding district still bear much of their accustomed aspects, though there are war scars here and there, and the church has had more than one incendiary bomb through the roof, happily without doing any permanent damage. One has to take a fairly long walk westwards before coming abruptly into a vast district which looks like a nightmare or a part of the Sahara desert. Poor old Cripplegate steeple stands up forlorn above the skeleton of the fine old church, yet not without giving hopes that it may again be restored to something like what it was.

At St. Botolph's a representative gathering came together, numbering something over thirty, and including Mr. C. T. Coles, the general secretary, Mr. Harry Kilby, the Ringing Master, whose office, alas, in these days is a sinecure, Mr. Ernest Turner, Mr. W. H. Hewett, Mr. Oram, Mr. James Bennett, Mr. G. M. Kilby, Mr. W. Nudds, and welcomed friends from further afield, among them Messrs. Edwin Barnett, Corpl. Barnett, S. Dawson, Audsley, Corby, Bagworth and Arthur Hardy.

The Rev. Dennis Oldacre, curate-in-charge, had placed the parish room at the disposal of the members and was present to welcome them. Mr. James E. Davis and his consort made all the necessary arrangements and provided the tea.

After some handbell ringing a short service was conducted in the church by Mr. Oldacre, who gave an appropriate address. Tea followed and then a short business meeting, presided over by Mr. C. T. Coles, assisted by Mr. T. J. Lock, the hon. secretary. A proposal had been made to hold the business meeting early in the afternoon instead of after the tea, but that did not find favour. The arrangements for the next and annual meeting were left in the hands of the secretary. Mr. Coles referred feelingly to the loss the Exercise had sustained by the deaths of James Hunt, William Willson and Gabriel Lindoff, all life members of the association. Mr. Hewett asked for information about the destroyed bells of the City, and Mr. J. A. Trollope stated briefly what was known about them.

Mr. Coles proposed a vote of thanks to Mr. Dennis Oldacre, Mr. and Mrs. Davis and the lady who accompanied the singing in the church for all their kindness and hospitality. Mr. Oldacre, who remained till the end, replied, and said he would always welcome the Middlesex Association to St. Botolph's.

The handbell ringing during the evening included touches of Bob Major and Double Norwich, Grandsire Triples and Caters, and Stedman Triples and Caters.

ST. BOTOLPH'S BELLS.

St. Botolph's, Bishopsgate, was built between the years 1725 and 1729 from the designs of James Gold. Architecturally it does not rank very high among the City churches, being rather pretentious and overlaid with detail. The tower is placed at the east end over the chancel, the idea (a perfectly sound one) being to give it greater prominence from the street. But to preserve the interior effect of the church the whole of the bottom part of the west wall of the steeple had to be omitted, and the structure is not rigid enough to carry a ringing peal of bells properly.

The ring of eight was cast in 1783 from an older six, with the addition of new metal. Robert Patrick was given the order, but as he apparently had no facilities for casting bells himself, he took Thomas Osborn, of Downham Market, into partnership for the job. Osborn was an excellent craftsman and the octave is quite a good one.

The original six had a good reputation in their time. Strype mentions 'the beautiful gift of Mr. William Hobby, citizen and ale-brewer of London, viz., the tenor bell in the steeple, bearing his own name and called Hobby, which he caused to be founded at his own cost and charges, and afterwards to be recast two several times only to make it tuneable with the other bells in the steeple, which was performed accordingly, and they are now as perfect and pleasing a ring of bells as can be wished. When he gave the bell to the parish he enjoyed this condition that at what time soever any man deceased that had borne any place of eminence and office in this parish and afterwards happened (by any cross or misadventure) to fall into decay, that yet he should have the benefit of the bell's service freely bestowed on him at his burial not paying any costs or duties thereof to the church. No doubt this man had an honest meaning and most charitable mind.'

Another benefactor to the belfry was Richard Murnford, at one time sexton of the parish, who in 1678 gave a treble bell with its frame and hangings and a new ringing floor. We may suppose, though we are not told so, that he was a ringer and that his gift was prompted by his love of the art. Evidently for a sexton he was a well-to-do man, and when he died in 1683 he left £100 to the Weavers' Company to clothe four poor men annually for ever.

William Laughton and the Ramblers rang Plain Bob and Cambridge Surprise on the bells in 1734. His opinion was that they were 'as good as e'er was cast.' This is the first account we have of any Cambridge being rung, though probably it was already a popular method with the most skilful bands.

On the day the new octave was opened, February 7th, 1783, three peals were rung, one by each of the then leading societies. First the College Youths rang 5,120 Oxford Treble Bob, then the Cumberlands

(Continued in next column.)

THE FIRST TRUE PEAL.

THE EVIDENCE IN MSS.

To the Editor.

Dear Sir,—We have recently had your leading article upon 'preservation of MSS.' and now the very interesting summary of our present knowledge as to the earliest peals. Mr. Trollope is here at his best, and we are much indebted to you both.

In to-day's contribution Mr. Trollope (one almost sees him gowned and bewigged) sits on the Bench and gives us, impartially, his 'summing-up.' Many of us are on the jury and the verdict will be 'promulgated in due course.' I, for one, have already made up my mind.

As my name has been mentioned in connection with the fortunate preservation of the wording of the two lost MSS., a few remarks may be of interest. Long before I was asked to rewrite the historical foreword of the College Youths rule book in 1928, I had made myself familiar with all the old books of the society. I then thought it necessary to inspect the Osborn MSS. This I did and, at the instigation of Mr. A. A. Hughes, the society acquired a typed copy of the section dealing with our own history, but that, too, has now gone, though I still possess my own carbon copy.

As will be readily surmised, I was at once struck with the value of the two accounts entered on the opening pages of 'Peal Record Book, No. 1' (see inventory in rule book). I judged both to have been written by the same hand, for there was a close resemblance, so, if I am right, Mr. Francis Marshall, in addition to compiling the second one, wrote them both. The style and wording are quite distinct, for he is flowery and verbose. Mr. Trollope says that he knows nothing of him. I can only add that Mr. Marshall, described as 'of Westminster,' was elected in 1835. There were only nine peals rung in that decade, and his name does not appear in those very lean years of a century ago.

In 1931 Mr. Trollope's first articles on the old societies began to appear, and I drew his attention to our MSS., ultimately giving him copies and procured him an invitation to visit The Coffee Pot and inspect our books. I felt that the more he knew of us the better, and my optimism is now justified.

In the meantime I made a search for 'The Oxford Ringers' Register,' and for the Scarsbrooks, of whom the said George was, I found, elected to the society in 1777 (with Samuel Mugeridge, both of Southwark), but a visit to Oxford found no trace of the so much desired register. I did, however, find the Scarsbrooks in the records of the Oxford Society.

If books were only vocal, what a tale they could tell. 'Peal Record Book No. 1' was a most handsome volume in its time, for it had had great ambitions, being sumptuously bound in calf with green morocco panels, front and back, and delightfully tooled and enriched in gold, its size, large 4to. The front panel read (six lines), 'The Ancient Society of College Youths, 1776' (of this and the tooling I have a rubbing). The back panel, I believe, had 'George Heath Steward.' The book seems to say, 'I was made as a peal book for the Ancient Society on the occasion of the election of Mr. Heath as Steward, he having come over from the Junior Society of College Youths, of which he was in 1756 a foundation member, and, hoping to be Master, gave me as a token of goodwill to his old rivals.'

The book remained unopened and unused. We cannot say whether Heath came to the Mastership; these are the blank years. He rang peals with neither society during all the years until, as described in Mr. Trollope's History, in 1791 he came into the limelight, page 76. ('Oh! Have you not heard of the Jolly Young Waterman?')

Then it was (romanticism being in the air) that old Scarsbrook probably mentioned about the register down at Oxford. His brother would send him a transcript, which eventually found its way into George Heath's book. It was then called 'Copy Peal Book,' and Peal No. 1 was that, now under debate, on 'January 7th, 1689-90,' rung at 'St. Sepulchre's-without-Newgate, London.'

Elstree Hill, Bromley.

E. ALEXANDER YOUNG.

'CAMPANOLGY.'

To the Editor

Dear Sir,—Whilst agreeing with 'T' in his denunciation of the words 'campanology' and 'campanologist,' Chambers' Twentieth Century Dictionary contains the following:—

'Campanology'—'the subject or science of bells or bellringing.'

'Campanologist'—'one skilled in the same.'

Therefore 'T' must allow that the use of these words is correct when alluding to both our art and ourselves.

H. RUMENS.

Upper Walthamstow.

MIDDLESEX COUNTY ASSOCIATION

(Continued from previous column.)

rang 5,040 Grandsire Triples, and then the 'ancient' College Youths rang 5,216 Oxford Treble Bob. The last was conducted by John Reeves. Evidently it was the peal given in the 'Clavis' and probably was the greatest number of changes that had then been got into 13 courses.

For several years before the war the belfry has been in the care of Mr. James E. Davis, and the company he got together proved themselves one of the best peal ringing bands in the country. The frequent peals were made possible by the adoption of Mr. Davis' silencers, which, first tried here, have since been installed in many towers.

BELLS AS 'LUXURIES.'

A COUNTRY RECTOR'S VIEWS.

To the Editor.

Sir,—I apologise for referring to some correspondence in 'The Ringing World' of nearly two months ago, but my attention has been drawn to a letter under the above heading in your issue of October 10th last.

I am aware of the fact that organs such as are in use to-day in our churches were often preceded by an 'orchestra' and very often by the barrel organ with its limited repertoire; I had one in my previous parish which had been 'converted' for the sum of £50 or so, and which is still doing yeoman service. Mr. Leslie W. Bunce says that I am quite wrong in stating that bells replaced trumpets. If I had said so, I would at once agree, but I enclose a copy of the magazine, with the article in question, from which you will observe that I did not make any such statement. Trumpets are not mentioned at all.

I think the misunderstanding might not have arisen if it had been realised clearly that I was writing of the average country church organ and bells (nor are we going to be dragged away from our old love—the church bells of the countryside). I write from a country parish and the whole tenor of the article in question is the organ and bells of the country church. The organs, particularly, in most country churches, as here, are not of the elaborate and very expensive type, i.e., 'luxuries'; even so, I maintain that it is going to be extremely difficult to find donors to replace any destroyed and not insured, since, to quote further, 'we are all now in the same boat' and will continue to be so for a considerable time after the war.

I have no knowledge of any mysterious conspiracy to silence church bells. I did state my conviction, however, that the compulsory silencing of country church bells during the war is an unfortunate mistake from a psychological standpoint.

A. A. LINEY.

Brampton Rectory, Northampton.

The following is the article referred to by Mr. Liney. It expresses a view of a difficult subject which will most certainly commend itself to all our readers. Whatever we may think about the possibility of insuring bells and organs, we shall agree that 'luxuries' is an unfortunate word to apply to them, even though it has several shades of meaning:—

The statement of the Diocesan War Damage Committee published in last month's 'Diocesan Leaflet,' distributed with our magazine, gave a list of fixtures regarded as part of the church fabric and which, therefore, need not be insured under the Government scheme. 'Bells,' continued the statement, 'are luxuries, provided by the generosity of church people in the past, and, if destroyed, should be replaced by similar generosity in the future. They should not be insured against war damage. Organs should be treated in the same way as bells; they should not be insured.'

So bells and organs are 'luxuries.' Relatively, it is to be supposed, since it is possible for service to be held without either: just as it is possible to sleep elsewhere than on a bed, and to produce 'music' by means of a comb and a piece of thin paper. The quarrel is not with the question as to whether bells and organs should, or should not, be insured; it is with that word 'luxuries' as applied to them. In regard to organs, it can be affirmed confidently that all the plain-song in the world can never supplant the accompanied harmony beloved by English people, and the organ never found its way into our churches, ousting the old scraped fiddle, etc., in the gallery, to be dubbed a 'luxury' in the estimation of the English temperament and character. After all it is an organ and the king of all instruments invented for the worship of God and the pleasure of man; totally unlike the bastard contraption to be found in cinemas.

And what about our luxurious bells? And who, since we all are now 'in the same boat,' is going to be in a position to replace church bells after the war? If we are unwilling to concede that an organ is a luxury, nor are we going to be dragged away from our old love—the church bells of the countryside. Condemned to perpetual silence, except as a warning of the advent of 'paratroops,' they are sadly missed, and it is a thousand pities that some other means of giving warning have not been devised. The silencing of the bells would seem to be a psychological mistake of the first magnitude. These 'luxuries' represent not war but peace; they are symbolic of the message of faith and victory, of the love of God and of the call to respond to that love in His worship when 'tis the blessed hour of prayer.'

MAKE THE BEST OF THINGS AS THEY ARE.*To the Editor.*

Dear Sir,—I trust none of your readers will be led astray by the frothy rodomontade of your correspondent who calls himself 'Anti-Silent.' If we were to follow his advice we should simply make fools of ourselves. Foaming at the mouth, talking about 'enemies' who have 'declared open war,' calling other people offensive names, and quoting the Bible, won't do us any good. What we must do is to take things as they are and make the best of them, to recognise that just now there are matters of more immediate importance than bell-ringing, to hold fast to our art and our friendships, to keep our hearts high and to wait for the better times that will surely come.

LESLIE W. BUNCE.

BELLS AFTER THE WAR.

AN OPPORTUNITY FOR 'ANTI-SILENT.'

To the Editor.

Dear Sir,—Didn't I say so? Although by my letter in your issue of November 7th I tried to show that I am as keen as anyone in the view that bells are necessities and not luxuries, and to that extent supported his view, I had the temerity to tell 'Anti-Silent' that he was using the discussion to belabour his opponents by flinging cheap and not very effective epithets at them, such as 'Quislings of the Exercise,' and didn't I say I supposed I should now come in for castigation? Well, he's tried it on.

I said in my first letter that the arguments we are getting do not seem to lead us anywhere. And I ask 'Anti-Silent' how far his argument that those who have stated that bells are luxuries are Quislings of the Exercise has got us? I was going to say 'either him or us,' but he tells us there are no 'hims' in this business. If he would take his own advice to hear and drop personalities it might help him.

By the way, I like his high sounding phrase, 'We are dealing with fundamentals about which there must be universal agreement if the fraternity is to win through this utilitarian ramp and nonsense.' It looks good to me. I visualise George going out to slay the dragon—and, being unable to find a dragon, trying to kill his neighbour's cat.

When I ask how many associations have taken action in this matter, 'Anti-Silent' points only to one which seems to have made any real move. What has been done by his own association (if it is not the Kent) he doesn't tell us. Why doesn't he devote some of his energy to moving the association (if any) to which he owes allegiance?

The idea of giving lantern lectures (presumably on bells and their relation to the Church, although he doesn't say so) in aid of some charitable object may be a good one—if you can get the right audience. But does 'Anti-Silent' imagine that in a parish where, if we are to believe him, we have to face this 'utilitarian ramp and nonsense' he or anyone else would get even his nose into a lecture hall, let alone give a lecture, as an introduction to a 'fight with the sword of the spirit.' Tut, tut, Mr. Editor, if this is the best 'Anti-Silent' can put up, I'm sorry for his cause.

To do any good, he must, as he says, carry the war into the enemy's camp, but lantern lectures won't get him far: he won't get hold of the people who matter. The people he must lay hold of are the parsons and the members of the Church Councils in those places where the 'utilitarian ramp and nonsense' is supposed to 'ramp and nose.' I'm all for that. Get right in on them; lay about lustily and tell them how to get towers and bells without money.

The enthusiasm and eloquence of 'Anti-Silent' ought not to be wasted in trying to say nasty things in 'The Ringing World' to the one or two correspondents who do not happen to agree with him. Let him set up the fiery cross and lead the crusade into the parishes where he knows (if he really does know any) this utilitarian ramp and nonsense is going on. Apart from writing letters to 'The Ringing World' (letters which are abusive or entertaining according to the way you look at them), what has he done?

PLAIN HUNT.

WHAT OF THE FUTURE?*To the Editor.*

Dear Sir,—The suggestion of Mr. Housden in your last issue that one way of reconstructing the Exercise after the war would be by forming a national association is one worth considering, but there are many objections to such a course.

A National Association has several times been suggested in the past, but the idea has never taken well. A National Association, if it led to national unity of action, would, perhaps, help the Exercise to get on its feet again, but old allegiances die hard, and it may be difficult to persuade ringers to scrap their county and diocesan organisations.

If it is suggested that they be retained and affiliated to a National Association, it might be argued that the Central Council already stands in the position as the unifying body. Anyhow, Mr. Housden's suggestion opens up a subject which I hope we may see ventilated and discussed in your columns.

F. T. WILLIAMS.

VISITORS.*To the Editor.*

Dear Sir,—While not disagreeing with Mr. A. V. Davis' remarks, which to a great extent I endorse, we must not lose sight of Mr. Fletcher's aim, as you so ably put it in your leader, which was to be of assistance to the provincial visitor to London and his desire to 'try' one of the London churches.

This aim, in itself, is a laudable one, but it also smacks of conservatism in the London towers, and Mr. Davis goes a step further and calls it 'ringing snobbery.'

Personally, I think it is the care of the standard of ringing and the traditions which have been handed down in the London churches which prompt this view.

On the other hand, the necessity for a visiting ringer to have to obtain a 'visa' or be directed by a select body of London ringers seems out of place in the democracy of ringing, which has become such a marked feature of the Exercise.

FREDERICK E. PITMAN.

40, Tweedy Road, Bromley, Kent.

STEDMAN'S BELLS.**TERCENTENARY CELEBRATION RECALLED.**

To-day is the tenth anniversary of the tercentenary celebration at Cambridge of the birth of Fabian Stedman. The event aroused universal interest throughout the Exercise and was marked in many parts of the country by the ringing of peals of Stedman Doubles, Triples, Catets and Cinques.

In Cambridge itself over three hundred ringers gathered representing nearly all the associations to do honour to the memory of the great pioneer, the central part of the celebration being a service at St. Benet's Church, where the bells were rededicated after renovation.

At the sole cost of ringers throughout the length and breadth of the land and overseas, the ancient Saxon tower had been restored, and the six bells, five of which were there in Stedman's time, rehung



ST. BENET'S SAXON TOWER.

in the massive old oak frame which, for the protection of the tower, was brought many feet lower down and quarter turned.

It was on these bells that Stedman himself had practised change ringing, and the tablet on the wall of the tower which commemorates the tercentenary bears the following inscription:—

TO THE GLORY OF GOD
AND TO COMMEMORATE THE TERCENTENARY OF THE
BIRTH OF FABIAN STEDMAN OF CAMBRIDGE A RINGER
AT THIS CHURCH WHO BY HIS LABOURS LAID THE
FOUNDATION OF THE ART OF CHANGE RINGING THE
BELLS IN THIS TOWER WERE RESTORED BY THE
RINGERS OF GREAT BRITAIN IRELAND AND OVER-
SEAS.

DECEMBER 1931

The service was conducted by the Vicar (the Rev. W. Greenwood), the dedication performed by the Rural Dean (Canon Adams) in the absence of the Archdeacon of Ely, and the sermon preached by Canon G. F. Coleridge.

The ringing which followed was first done by representative hands, and afterwards everyone who wished had the opportunity of trying out the bells, which the Vicar said not only belonged to the parish, but would be held in trust for the whole world of ringers.

Further reference to Fabian Stedman will be found in our leading article.

BROMLEY PARISH CHURCH.**LOSS OF THE OLD PEAL BOOK.**

We are very sorry to hear that the old peal book belonging to the Bromley ringers, which was reported to be safe when the church was destroyed in an air raid, is damaged beyond repair.

When the fear of air raids became imminent the ringers took precautions for safeguarding their property. The handbells were removed to a private house and they are safe. For the far more valuable peal book permission was sought to have it placed in the church safe, which was granted. But the church official to whom it was given, instead of putting it inside the safe, just laid it on the top, and when the church was blown to bits by a bomb no thought was given to it. It was left exposed to the weather and has been ruined by rain water.

The book dated from the latter years of the eighteenth century and recorded the performances of the Bromley Youths, a skilful and energetic company who from the year 1773, in which they commenced, until well into the following century were active peal ringers. Their first peal was 5,040 Bob Major on September 22nd, 1774, and they followed it up with many more in the same method and of Grandfire and Union Triples and Oxford Treble Bob Major, rung not only in their own steeple, but in many other places, one so far afield as Hertford. Among their most notable achievements were 12,672 Bob Major in 1783, the first peal of Real Double Bob Major with two bobs in a lead, the first muffled five-thousand, and the first 'John' peal.

For many years William Chapman was their leader and conductor. He was a carpenter by trade and it was for him that the muffled peal was rung.

Outside the London societies there were very few original peal books which could compare with this in historical interest and value, and its loss is very much to be regretted.

The incident and the destruction of the bells at St. Clement Danes' show that it is not enough to take precautions. Ringers must see that the precautions are efficient ones.

HERTFORD COUNTY ASSOCIATION.**MEETING AT APSLEY.**

A small but very enjoyable meeting of the Western District of the Hertford County Association was held at Apsley on Saturday.

The members met at the Woodbarners Cafe at 4 o'clock and discussed conditions in the district, made inquiries about other members and recalled other similar occasions.

Mr F. J. Reeve, of Tring, presided over the very informal formalities.

The members stood in silence as a tribute to the memory of the late president, Mr. C. H. Horton, and of Mr. Henry Golding.

The secretary was asked to continue his efforts to obtain use of the bells at St. Mary's, Hemel Hempstead, for silent practice. The Vicar has already given permission for the tongues of the back six to be taken out, but the Home Guard refuse to hand over the keys, as 'they are in charge of the tower.'

Although full explanation has been given by the district secretary of the intentions, and the responsibility accepted for there being no resultant sound, the Home Guard remain adamant. Failing any satisfactory agreement, the secretary was asked to obtain information from higher authority.

A resolution was passed for submission to the General Committee that 'in view of the financial position of the association and also of the scarcity of paper, the annual report shall not be printed until the end of hostilities.'

The care of bells and ropes was discussed, members being urged to give both regular attention.

A list of 18 district members serving with the Forces was compiled. The members were delighted to have with them Sapper F. J. Tompkins, R.E., of the Apsley band, on leave from 'somewhere in Scotland.'

Tea was the next item—sausage and mash—very well served, and received due attention.

The handbells were then brought into use until 6.30, when the company adjourned. The cafe proprietor had kept open during the afternoon for the benefit of the members, and was cordially thanked.

Another meeting will be arranged in the New Year.

WARKTON BELLRINGER'S WEDDING

On Saturday, November 15th, at All Saints' Church, Stoneycroft, Liverpool, Mr. Archibald Stanley Toseland was married to Miss Margaret Dodd, of Gorton Road, Liverpool. The bridegroom, who is the youngest son of Mr. and Mrs. G. Toseland, of Warkton, is a member of the local company of ringers, and also of the local Home Guard. The bride is the only daughter of Mrs. and the late Mr. Edward Dodd.

The ceremony was performed by the Rev. E. B. Whitley, and two hymns, 'O perfect love' and 'For the beauty of the earth,' were sung.

The bride was given away by her brother, Mr. Paul Dodd, and the bridesmaid was Miss Elizabeth Wright, her cousin. Mr. Norman Ferris (a friend of the bridegroom), of Kettering, was best man.

After the reception the happy couple left for Rhos-on-Sea for the honeymoon.

Amongst the presents received was an electric table lamp from the Rector and ringers of St. Edmund's, Warkton.

WHEN THE CHURCH BELL RANG.

A VILLAGE INCIDENT.

A correspondent in 'The Church Times' tells a tale of what happened recently in a country village, as an illustration of the value of church bells for giving an alarm.

The alertness of the Home Guard detachment in a village just outside Northampton received an unrehearsed test when the verger was accidentally locked in the church. The verger had gone up the tower to attend to the clock, unnoticed by the parish priest, who was saying Evensong by himself in the choir. The porch gates are fitted with black-out shutters as a light lock for the only door of the church in use, and these the Rector duly padlocked behind him as usual at the conclusion of the service. When the luckless verger in turn tried to leave the building he found himself a prisoner.

The only people to pass through the churchyard during the next half-hour were some children, who promptly took to their heels when the verger called out to them, evidently 'thinking thieves were in the house of prayer.' It was by now nearly dark and, rather than risk a comfortless night in the church, the verger thought his predicament justified him in ringing a few strokes on one of the bells.

There was an immediate response. Home Guardsmen came at the double from field and allotment, night workers waiting for the Northampton bus swelled the parade and, from a nearby cottage, the housewife brought up the rear with a stirrup pump. The only man in the village unaware of what was taking place until the next day was the unwitting cause of the business—the parish priest.

Any doubts as to the value of the church bell as a warning signal have certainly been dispelled by the incident and, though the verger was perhaps guilty of a technical offence, the Home Guard Commander and his men rightly regard it as a proof of their preparedness if the alarm bells had to be given for even more serious purposes.

HANDLING A BELL.

SLOVENLY RINGING AND BAD STRIKING.

To the Editor.

Dear Sir,—In the issue of 'The Ringing World' for November 7th are a few lines quoted from William Shipway referring to the handling of a bell. It has been my experience to notice the awkward styles of many young ringers in this essential detail, and I have on several occasions spoken to the individual concerned. In one or two instances they have appreciated my kindly appeal to them to alter their style, all to their own benefit.

I fail to see how, for instance, with a stance with both feet very close together, and standing upright, more like a toy, with no movement of the body at all, they can handle their bell as it should be. This style of ringing, in my opinion, has a tendency to cause bad striking. Novices should not be allowed to ring changes until they can handle the rope and command the bell properly. I have even seen Surprise ringers who would do well to alter their style and show a little more gracefulness in handling a bell. The soldier on the parade ground has only one way of doing his drills, and that's the right way, on the word of command and the movement done perfectly. You will hear the sergeant bawl out, 'As you were,' and the movement has to be done again; but not so the ringer, he has the idea that he will do it as he likes, right or wrong, gracefully or not.

I was taught to keep my hands close together at hand and back, feet a few inches apart, with one foot slightly in advance of the other to retain my balance, and to reach up reasonably high with my hands to let my bell go just over the balance and keep her up when the occasion arose. I don't claim to be infallible, but I think the words of Shipway might well be read and digested, and that slovenly ringing be discouraged. **ONCE A NOVICE.**

HEAVY RING OF FIVE.

To the Editor.

Dear Sir,—In reply to 'Enquirer,' Felmersham, Beds, has a heavy ring of five, tenor 263 cwt. We rang 1,200 changes on them about 12 years ago, and I believe that was the longest touch.

Blumham, Beds, has five, tenor 22½ cwt., and a peal has been rung there. Bremham Church, Beds, is the only one named St. Owen in England as far as we know. Another church named St. Owen is in Rouen. I have been told that they are the only two churches known of that name.

T. INSKIP.

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GRANDSIRE CATERS.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMPOSITION.

By EDGAR C. SHEPHERD.

(Continued from page 575.)

In Part 2 of Shipway's 'Art of Ringing,' the following touch of 900 is given by the bob leads. It is not, perhaps, a very distinguished piece of work, but it is interesting; for it is the earliest recorded touch of the In-

900.

23456789

53426798 2.4.5

34526 98

54623 87

64325 87

36425 7-3

62435 8-3

42536 87

54236 7-3

verted Tittums. This placing of 789 is not comparable to the Tittum position, but it has been used with grand effect in muffled ringing, and one feels that Mr. Trollope is hardly fair when he calls it very poor stuff.

The Tittum Position and the Hand-stroke Home Position have never lost their places as the supreme favourites among Cater ringers. Nevertheless, from the middle of the 19th century composers experimented with other placings of the back bells. One of the earliest examples is found in Hubbard's 'Art of Ringing,' 1876. The figures are No. 94 in the Central Council Collection of Peals. In a perfect three-part composition Hubbard uses in each part the positions 798, 879, 987, 978, 897 and 789, with the 6th at home throughout. As a musical production it is perhaps not very striking, but it is interesting as an attempt to break away from the Annable tradition, and it probably pointed the way to further and more successful experiments.

At the end of the century there was a veritable epidemic of Grandsire Cater compositions, and most of the possibilities of the Tittum Position were exhausted. Between 1892 and 1900, for instance, nearly one hundred compositions were published, most of them aiming at the extent of the 6th at home or behind the 9th (or both), or else at securing these qualities in the smallest number of changes.

In 'The Bell News' of September 24th, 1898, 'Plain Speaker' wrote: 'We are getting a surfeit of compositions of Grandsire Caters. To me they all seem the same thing over and over again, and a knowing blade in this part of the science thinks so too.' Despite this criticism it cannot be denied that some fine compositions were produced at this time. Indeed, as far as Tittum and Hand-stroke compositions are concerned one needs nothing better than these.

Composers of the period took their work very seriously, and were fierce in the defence of their progeny. Thus, it is unfortunate that the correspondence columns of 'The Bell News' of the time are disfigured by frequent controversies and quarrels, often expressed in very inelegant terms, and conducted with acrimony that would not be tolerated to-day. Some good, of course, emerged from these heated arguments. In the first place public criticism was keen and outspoken, and the standard of composition had to be high in order to avoid attack and ridicule. Secondly, the desire to get ahead of rivals led to search for musical forms away from the Tittum and Handstroke Home positions. The results of this research can be studied in 'The Bells News' and in the Central Council Collections of Peals, Part 1.

This peal collection was published in 1903. In 'The Ringing World' of June 6th, 1941, Mr. J. A. Trollope

(Continued on next page.)

NOTICES.

THE CHARGE FOR NOTICES of Meetings inserted under this heading is at the rate of 3d. per line (average 8 words) per insertion, with the minimum charge of 1/6.

ANCIENT SOCIETY OF COLLEGE YOUTHS.—The next meeting will be held on Saturday, December 6th, at the Bell Foundry, Whitechapel Road, E.1, at 3 p.m.—A. B. Peck, Hon. Sec., 1, Eversfield Road, Reigate.

KENT COUNTY ASSOCIATION.—Tonbridge District.—A meeting will be held at Tunbridge Wells on Saturday, December 6th, when the accounts and balance sheet for 1941 will be presented. Service at St. Peter's at 4 p.m. Tea (free) at 4.45 in the Parish Room. Eight silent bells will be available. There are a few more subscriptions owing, which the hon. district secretary would be glad to receive before the meeting.—T. Saunders, Hon. Dis. Sec., Peckham Bush, Paddock Wood.

OXFORD DIOCESAN GUILD.—North Bucks Branch.—A quarterly meeting will be held at Stony Stratford on Saturday, December 6th. Handbells 3 p.m. Service 3.30.—R. H. Howson, Hon. Sec., 19, Greenfield Road, Newport Pagnell, Bletchley.

BATH AND WELLS DIOCESAN ASSOCIATION.—Chew Deanery Branch.—The annual meeting will be held at Long Ashton on Saturday, December 6th. Bells (with silent apparatus) available 3 o'clock. Divine service 4.30.—Percy G. Yeo, Hon. Local Sec., Long Ashton.

DUDLEY AND DISTRICT GUILD.—The next meeting will be held at Sedgley on Saturday, December 6th. Bells available for 'silent' practice 3 p.m. Service 4.15. Business meeting after.—J. Goodman, Hon. Sec., 45, Holcroft Street, Burnt Tree, Tipton.

NORTH STAFFORDSHIRE ASSOCIATION.—The annual meeting will be held at Stoke-on-Trent on Saturday, December 13th, at 3 p.m. Tea at 5.30. Will those requiring tea kindly notify Mr. S. Churton, 1, Birks Street, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffs, not later than December 9th. All members and ringers welcome.—Andrew Thompson, 63, Whitehouse Road, Cross Heath, Newcastle, Staffs.

GLOUCESTER & BRISTOL DIOCESAN ASSOCIATION.—Bristol City Branch.—The annual meeting of the Branch will be held on Saturday, December 13th, at the Haymarket Hotel (opposite St. James'). The business will include the election of officers for the ensuing year, presentation of annual accounts and 'Shall the Branch continue to hold its monthly meetings?' Handbells available from 3 p.m. Tea and meeting to follow.—A. M. Tyler, Branch Hon.*Sec.

GLOUCESTER AND BRISTOL ASSOCIATION.—Swindon Branch.—Annual branch meeting at Rodbourne Cheney Sunday School on Saturday, December 13th, at 6 p.m. Handbells available.—W. B. Kynaston, 37, Vicarage Road, Swindon, Wilts.

OXFORD DIOCESAN GUILD.—Central Bucks Branch.—A quarterly meeting will be held at Waddesdon on Saturday, December 13th. Handbells from 3 p.m. Tea 4.30 p.m. Service 6 p.m. All welcome.—F. Gibbard, 30 Horn Street, Winslow, Bucks.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS.—The address of Mr. J. E. Lewis Cockey, hon. secretary of the South and West District of the Middlesex Association, is now Listoke, 1, Edgehill Road, Ealing, W.13.

FOR SALE.

'RINGING WORLDS,' unbound, 1915-1941.—Offers to Mrs. D. M. Driver, 60, Coleman Road, Belvedere, Kent.

GRANDSIRE CATERS.

(Continued from previous page.)

discusses the book, and of the Caters and Cinques sections he writes: 'The peals of Grandsire Caters and Cinques had been collected by Arthur Knights, and evidently were printed just as he sent them in. Davis and Carpenter had carefully corrected the proofs of their own figures, but apparently they never troubled whether Knights' were corrected or not, or (as is most likely), they left the job to Dains. The result was 39 bad mistakes in the figures of 114 peals. That rendered the whole thing valueless for, of course, unless a conductor can have absolute confidence that the figures are accurate and true no collection is of any use to him.

'The figures are given without any particular arrangement, and in any case there is a sameness about peals of Grandsire Caters which makes a collection of them very uninteresting to the average ringer.'

This seems rather hard on the collection. It is true that the book contains many errors, and the student should take care to obtain the corrigenda leaflet now issued with each copy. Nevertheless the 100 peals of Grandsire Caters printed form a basis for much interesting study; and their diversity of plans and musical arrangements (unequalled, perhaps, in any other method) is sufficient refutation of Mr. Trollope's concluding remarks.

(To be continued.)

BELLS IN THE ISLE OF MAN.

To the Editor.

Dear Sir,—The tower at Peel was taken down and rebuilt in 1911 and the same frame was put back. The bells were cast by Warners and the tenor is about 8 cwt. I have had a talk with Mr. Young, the former leader of the band, who is an old man now, and he told me the bells were pealable, and said if I wanted them for a peal after the war I could have them. There is a tenor bell hanging in the Church of St. Minian's, Douglas. A very imposing tower overlooking the bay, the bell was cast by Mears and Stainbank. There is no one in the parish who can ring it, but the gentleman who I met there takes a big interest in bells and he hopes for a peal of six some day. He said he would like to hear it rung up.

There is also a peal of eight in the new church at Kirk Bradden hung dead, and I am told there is a peal of five at Lezaryes. There are some records in the museum at Douglas, but I have not had the time to look through them.

Clarke Street, Douglas.

W. FARRIMOND.

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