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THE 'CONFERENCE.'

The arrangements for setting up the 'Ringers' Conference' are going ahead, and we publish this week the rules under which the proceedings will be conducted. They are based upon typical regulations which govern the procedure of a local authority, as far as they can be made applicable, but it has to be recognised, of course, that a Conference conducted by correspondence cannot be run in exactly the same way as a meeting at which the speakers are present in person. For that reason certain wider powers have to be given to the Chairman, otherwise it is possible to conceive a situation arising in which the proceedings would come to a standstill.

In relation to these powers given to the Chairman there is one other thing that must be made perfectly plain. It seems to be generally recognised that the Chairmanship must be in the hands of the Editor. Unless this is so the person who acts as Chairman, not being at hand to deal with the contributions as they arrive, would find himself at considerable disadvantage with the risk of discussions hanging fire. The Editor does not seek the office, and if there is any suggestion which would carry the scheme through more conveniently or with greater acceptance to the Exercise we should be glad to hear of it. But in view of the experimental nature of this scheme we think that, although the Chairman is in a sense 'self-appointed,' a trial should be given to this arrangement. In his capacity as Chairman the Editor will do his utmost to conduct the debates on the lines laid down in the rules, but there is always this overriding provision, that as Editor he has and must retain the right of editorial, as distinct from the Chairman's, supervision of what is printed. In a public meeting, if a man commits a slander, the responsibility is his; but if a libel (which as most of our readers know is the distinction between the written and spoken word) is committed, the printers, publishers and editor are alike responsible, and this responsibility cannot be evaded. Therefore, the editor will still hold the responsibility of finally deciding what shall and what shall not appear. Needless to say, this ultimate prerogative will not be exercised except to safeguard the interests of the paper.

The question of voting presents a somewhat difficult problem. There can be no 'show of hands' and yet a good deal of the value of the discussions will be lost if an opinion cannot be taken on any motion, or amendment. Thus it is that we propose to resort to post card votes, and we hope that all our readers will take the opportunity of participating whenever a question is put

(Continued on page 74.)

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to the Conference. The more readers who vote the better will be the guide provided to what ringers think on any subject, and the more weight will the decisions carry if, by any means, future action is possible. It is hoped to make the voting as simple as possible; in most cases by a mere 'Aye' or 'No' on the back of the post card, with the name and address of the sender. Readers who have made up their minds after following the discussions need thus not waste any time in recording their votes, and we hope that this simplification of procedure will lead to the wide expression of opinion to which we look forward. Again we would impress upon ringers that any reader may vote, whether or not they have previously taken part in the discussion concerned.

We have got to the stage now when we are ready to receive motions for the agenda—indeed already they are beginning to come in. We hope they will be numerous and varied so as to provide a diversity of interest. We look forward to the discussions being carried on in a spirit of friendliness and good will, with an absence of personalities and a modicum of humour. While the subjects which will be considered may be serious ones, there is no reason why contributions should not be witty; indeed a witty speech is often the leaven of a dull debate. Brevity is also the soul of wit, and while we hope that those who have something valuable to say will not hesitate to say it (it may later on be found necessary to fix a maximum length to which contributions may go) both short and breezy 'speeches' will be welcomed.

HANDBELL PEALS.

HAVERCROFT, WAKEFIELD, YORKSHIRE.
THE YORKSHIRE ASSOCIATION.
(BARNSELY AND DISTRICT SOCIETY.)

On Friday, February 6, 1942, in Two Hours and Sixteen Minutes,
AT 36, BRIAR LANE,

A PEAL OF SPLICED PLAIN AND CAINSBOROUGH LITTLE BOB MAJOR, 5016 CHANGES;

Tenor size 14 in D.

| | | | | | | | |
|--------------|-----|-----|-----|----------------|-----|-----|-----|
| DANIEL SMITH | ... | ... | 1-2 | PETER WOODWARD | ... | ... | 5-6 |
| HAROLD CHANT | ... | ... | 3-4 | RAYMOND FORD | ... | ... | 7-8 |

Composed and Conducted by HAROLD CHANT.

Arranged and rung as a compliment to Raymond Ford, whose birthday was on the above date.

OXFORD.

THE OXFORD UNIVERSITY SOCIETY.

On Sunday, February 8, 1942, in One Hour and Fifty-Five Minutes,

AT NEW COLLEGE,

A PEAL OF BOB MINOR, 5040 CHANGES;

Seven different callings. Tenor size 14 in E flat.

| | | | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----------------------------|-----|-----|-----|
| *JOAN HOULDSWORTH (St. Hilda's) | ... | ... | 1-2 | JOHN E. SPICE (New College) | ... | ... | 3-4 |
| *PATRICIA A. SCADDAN (St. Hilda's) | ... | ... | 5-6 | | | | |

Conducted by JOHN E. SPICE.

* First peal. An anniversary peal for the society, founded on February 2nd, 1872.

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FIRE EFFECT ON STEEL GIRDERS.

TOWER MASONRY CRACKED.

Major J. H. B. Hesse, a member of the Towers and Belfries Committee of the Central Council, writes:—

A short time ago I was asked to inspect a peal of bells belonging to a church where all wood work in the church and tower had been completely destroyed by fire caused by incendiary bombs.

The bells were hung in a modern iron frame mounted on steel girders. The heat in the tower must have been very intense. The wooden pads between the crown of the bells and the cast iron headstocks were completely burnt away. The fact that they were protected by the crown of the bells and the headstocks proves the excessive heat.

Owing to this intense heat the steel foundation girders would naturally elongate and when they cooled down again would contract. Therefore, because these girders have anchor plates fitted on all ends, something had to give, and the masonry round the girders has cracked, leaving the girders more or less loose in the tower walls.

The cracks were very difficult to see and might easily be missed if not very carefully looked for in other instances, and that is why I take the liberty of drawing this to the attention of others who may be examining towers with steel girder foundations. Of course, these girders will have to be regouted in.

CHURCHES DAMAGED IN AIR RAIDS.

THE NATIONAL BUILDINGS RECORD.

More than 300 churches in England have been destroyed or seriously damaged by enemy action, and more than 1,200 damaged less seriously. In London 33 churches have been destroyed, 47 have been rendered unfit for use, and 150 have been damaged.

As a result far-reaching proposals for parochial reorganisation after the war were discussed by the Church Assembly which met this week.

In connection with the scheme for making a record of churches and other buildings which might be destroyed in air raids, over 12,000 photographs have already been made for the National Buildings Record. A large part of this work has been done by a team of professional photographers, to-day numbering about a dozen, in London and other places which have suffered severely in air raids—Newcastle-on-Tyne, Liverpool, Leeds, Hull, Birmingham, Coventry, Norwich, Colchester, Bristol, and the South Coast from Dover to Plymouth.

Through the worst of the bombing of London the photographing of City churches and similarly imperilled treasures of architecture went on without respite. The photographer was sometimes just ahead of the bombs, occasionally just too late. The director of the National Buildings Record, Mr. Walter H. Godfrey, whose office is now in All Souls' College, Oxford, recalls how on one occasion he gave instructions overnight for a Wren church to be photographed next morning, but when morning and the photographer arrived the church was no longer there. At other times the photographer obtained pictures a day or so before the bombs fell, and the results survive in the National Buildings Record in pairs of photographs—'before' and 'after'—filed together.

It is the 'before' that is really important, of course, for the purposes of the record. To protect a building at all comprehensively is impossible, but it is not impracticable to make records that will mitigate the loss of it by preserving the design for posterity, if not to serve as a basis for restoration or rebuilding.

THE ESTCOURTS OF PAINSWICK.

A CORRECTION.

Mr. John Austin writes that the reference to William Estcourt's son by Mr. Edgar Shepherd in our issue of January 16th was not quite correct. Mr. A. Estcourt was Mayor of Gloucester from 1895 to 1898, not of Bristol. During his term of office he laid the foundation stone in 1896 of the public library and in 1900 he performed the ceremony of opening it.

'He still took an interest in ringing,' writes Mr. Austin, 'and would often run over to Painswick when he knew we were going for a peal. He honoured us with his presence at the St. Michael's Juniors dinner in 1896 and during the evening rang 5-6 through a course of Grandsire Caters with the brothers James, myself and F. E. Hart. I think that gathering was the prelude to the 10 bells at St. Michael's.'

THE EXPERTS.

A WORD FOR THE OLDER MEN.

To the Editor.

Dear Sir,—Mr. Smallwood is too hard on the experts. It is quite true that all of them made mistakes and were not infallible, but I never knew that they ever claimed to be so. On the other hand, every ringer has benefited by their work.

Mr. Smallwood refers to Henry Law James, but in ordinary fairness it should be admitted that while James did at times express in rather dogmatic fashion opinions which the Exercise has not accepted, he rarely was at fault when he was dealing with facts. If he did not himself contribute much material to thought, he stimulated thought in others to an almost greater degree than any of his contemporaries; and to him the Exercise mainly owes Spliced ringing on six and eight bells—the greatest development in practical ringing during a century.

Nor has Mr. Smallwood any real cause for feeling 'a little private satisfaction at the confounding of these gentlemen,' and there is little chance of his getting 'even more amusement out of the attempt of the experts to put themselves in the right again.'

To put it bluntly, it is all fudge to say that by composing his peal of Stedman Triples Mr. Slack has done something 'in next to no time' which older men had tried in vain for years to do and had said was impossible. Nor is there anything novel or startling in the fact that he proved his peal before he composed it. It is the sort of thing every competent composer does; and you have only to turn to the writings of Heywood or Bulwer (to say nothing of many articles in 'The Ringing World') to see how it is done.

Mr. Slack's peal is on a plan which men like Heywood, Bulwer and J. J. Parker did not investigate further than was necessary for them to understand the historical development of Stedman Triples composition. And the reason why they did not investigate it was because its disadvantages in their opinion far outweighed any good it might give. Heywood calls it 'a system of composition which has the effect of degrading Stedman Triples to the position of Doubles with two extra bells dodging behind.' He may have been right or wrong in his opinion, but it was quite good enough a reason for neglecting to investigate the possibilities of such a peal as Mr. Slack's.

I have not said that Heywood was 'quite aware of the fact that an equal two-part with only two singles was possible.' I said that so far as I knew he never expressed any opinion on the matter, but I can add now that the knowledge and ability he showed in dealing with composition on the twin-bob plan should convince us that he would not have been baffled by this problem had he thought it worth while to investigate it. He did not do so, but that is no sign of inferiority to any later man who may have tackled the problem. Whatever merits as a composition Mr. Slack's peal may have (and they are many), they will not be increased by belittling the work of older composers, or pretending there has been some revolutionary development of composition which has put the work of old men in the shade.

Mr. Jennings challenges me to produce a two-part peal with only two singles and without these six-bobs sets. I have no intention of accepting his challenge. If I did produce such a peal it would not have the slightest effect on this argument. I know it would be a very difficult job and I can see many obstacles in the way, but I certainly should not like to say that it is impossible.

A lot of fuss has been made about the publication of this peal. If the figures had been printed when it was first composed about four years or so ago, 99 people out of 100 would not have looked at them, and the others would have forgotten all about them by now. One thing 'The Ringing World' has done at least. It has given the peal a good advertisement.

J. ARMIGER TROLLOPE.

'THE EXPERTS CONFOUNDED'

A CHALLENGE.

To the Editor.

Sir,—In your issue of February 6th there appeared a letter from Mr. J. Frank Smallwood under the above title, and I was much interested in his query about Mr. Morris' 'tapping.' I only met Mr. Morris once and then did not have any conversation with him about his tapping.

However, Mr. Smallwood might like to know that if he will provide a typist I will repeat a 5,056 London Surprise, in and 5th's, for the typist to take down, and the figures could be seen by anyone. Further, I should require the typist to be a non-ringer. Possibly Mr. Smallwood would prefer to write to me privately on the matter. If so, my address is Ward 1, Severalls Hospital, Colchester, Essex.

W. KEEBLE.

HANDLING THE BELL ROPE.

Mr. Charles E. Borrett writes, 'I do not think you were right in saying some weeks ago that it was "traditional" in Norwich to hold the tail end in the right hand. I think it was the other way: George Smith, Palgrave, Fiddament, Thorpe, Freeman and Skinner were all "lefts." I think Fred Knights started the "rights" with nearly all his pupils save Warnes.'

THE BELLS OF LONDON. THEIR ARCHÆOLOGY AND HISTORY.

By J. ARMIGER TROLLOPE.

The publication of the fifth part of Mr. Frederick Sharpe's 'Church Bells of Berkshire' brings once more to our notice the subject of bell archæology, a subject which, although it lies outside the main interest of most ringers, has for a select few a special and absorbing attraction.

As far back as the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries there are many references in the writings of antiquarians to old and historical bells, but it was not until the middle of the nineteenth that a few men woke up to the fact that all over England in the towers and steeples of towns and villages there were hundreds of bells of great interest and many of them of high antiquity. Those bells were little cared for, and through neglect and misuse their number was diminishing year by year.

In 1847 a little book was published by the Rev. Dr. Alfred Gatty which marks and to some extent created a renewed interest among a section of churchpeople in the bells, the sound of which was so familiar to their ears, but which themselves were so remote and inaccessible. Gatty's book was popular in style and rather slight in texture, and its intrinsic merits are altogether less than its ultimate effect; but it was followed by the writings of a few men who brought real knowledge and learning to bear on the subject.

Two of them may be called the real founders of bell archæology — Henry Thomas Ellacombe and William Charles Lukis—and they, followed by others, began to make a survey of the belfries of the country, to copy inscriptions, and to search out the records of the old founders, with the result that a number of books were published giving details of all the church bells in many of the counties of England. Lukis' 'Church Bells' appeared in 1857; J. A. D. Tyssen's 'Church Bells of Sussex,' the first complete survey of any one county, appeared in 1864; Ellacombe's 'Devon' in 1872, and his 'Somerset' in 1875; Dr. J. J. Raven's 'Cambridgeshire' in 1869, and 'Suffolk' in 1890; L'Estrange's 'Norfolk' in 1874; Thomas North published his 'Church Bells of Leicestershire' in 1876, and in subsequent volumes covered most of the Eastern Midlands; Stahlschmidt's 'Surrey Bells' appeared in 1884 and his 'Church Bells of Kent' in 1887; while the bells of other counties were dealt with by later writers, and especially by Mr. H. B. Waters, whose profession as well as his inclination especially fitted him for antiquarian work of this sort.

The interest of all these men was archæological. The value of a bell to them lay in its age, its inscription, the beauty of its lettering, and the rarity of its founder's work. They were little concerned with a bell as a musical instrument, with the quality of its notes, the purity of its overtones, or the harmonic effect of the whole ringing peal. Some of them dealt very fully with the historical and archæological uses of bells, but for most of them change ringing had scant interest, and when they mention it in their books they do so without much understanding or knowledge.

Ellacombe was to some extent an exception. He was himself a ringer, though he did not progress much further than Grandsire Doubles, and he was keenly interested in ringers, but he cared far more about their

social and moral welfare than about the art they practised. He was a diligent parish priest of the old squire-parson type, and a born archæologist.

It is easy to see why change ringing had few attractions for these men. Between the scholarly, studious antiquarians and the rough unlettered village ringers of the mid-nineteenth century there could scarcely be much sympathy or points of contact. Both classes were interested in bells, but their points of view and modes of thought were utterly dissimilar; the ringers had not sufficient education to understand the things the antiquarians cared for, and the antiquarians quite missed the attraction that change ringing had for the ringers.

Yet these books had indirectly a very profound and lasting effect on the fortunes of the ringing Exercise. It was mainly through them that the clergy began to wake up to the fact that the bells in the steeples were among the most valuable and interesting of the Church's possessions. Interest in the bells led to interest in the ringers, and so the belfry reform movement was greatly strengthened. The actual readers of these books no doubt were few, but they influenced many.

Since the great war the interest in bell archæology has much declined, though Mr. Sharpe's book is a sign that it is by no means dead. The decline no doubt is mainly due to the feeling that most of the work has been done and there is little left for the newcomer. The pioneers were adventurers and discoverers, who when they visited some neglected tower could always hope to come across some ancient bell by an obscure founder. But that is all passed. There are few bells now which are not known and of which the inscriptions have not been copied; but though full surveys have been published of most of the counties there are still some districts where this has not been done and among them is London.

The difficulties which face the man who should attempt to take rubbings of all the bells in the London churches as Ellacombe did in the Devon churches and other men have done in other counties, are so great that one may fairly assert that it will never be done. It is one thing to visit a pleasant country village where the belfry key can usually be readily obtained from the neighbouring parsonage; it is another thing to gain admittance to a London City tower, and when that has been done, not without the expenditure of much trouble, patience and money, the investigator's task is not a very pleasant one. There is dirt in a country bell chamber, especially when the bells have long been neglected (a thing fortunately much rarer than once it was), but the dirt which is the result of the slow disintegration of stone and timber is not unpleasant dirt. The dirt in a London bell chamber is caused by the smoke laden atmosphere of centuries and will not only ruin any clothes, but gives a sense of personal defilement.

And should the enthusiast surmount these difficulties the harvest he will reap for his pains is meagre in the extreme. From an archæological point of view the bells in the London district are perhaps the most uninteresting in England. Except at Southfield and in Westminster Abbey there are none that date from medieval times. The fire in 1666 destroyed those in greater part of the City, and those that survived were afterwards sacrificed to the demand for larger and better ringing peals. There are many fine bells in London and some of the eighteenth and nineteenth century founders were excellent crafts-

men, but the inscriptions they placed on their bells are uninteresting and commonplace to the last degree.

In the country many of the oldest and most valuable (archæologically speaking) of the bells are to be found among the rings of three or five or as single bells; in London the majority of the churches possess but two and those not earlier than the end of the seventeenth century and the beginning of the eighteenth.

But though London presents such a poor field to the bell archæologist, to the change ringer and the historian of ringing her belfries are the most interesting in the country; for nowhere else was there so much development of the art in early times and nowhere else is there so much information available about the bells of past ages. Only this information is widely scattered in scores and even hundreds of places. In the Public Record Office there are the inventories of King Edward's reign which, though not quite complete, give ample information of the numbers of bells in the hundred City steeples of pre-Reformation times. The churchwardens' accounts of many parishes have survived and they tell us much about the bells and something about the ringing. These churchwardens' accounts are not easy to read and a vast amount of patience and knowledge is required in dealing with them, but fortunately a large number have been transcribed and printed, and so are available for use by anyone who has access to such a library as that of the British Museum. In addition much research work has been done in various parishes and information about bells can be found in dozens of books published from time to time relating to the history of different churches. Naturally these books differ very considerably in their quality and authority.

Though no complete collection of the inscriptions of London bells has been published, those of the principal rings have been printed separately at different times and are available to anyone who cares to take the trouble of searching for them. Whether these transcripts are always accurate is a little doubtful and the inscriptions themselves have very little interest.

I have been able to gather together a considerable amount of this information, and the articles which have from time to time appeared in 'The Ringing World' show that though a book on London bells would not compare in archæological interest with those that have been written on the county bells, from other points of view it might equal and perhaps surpass any of them.

EDWARD READ'S FIRST BELL

PROBABLY HIS WORST.

To the Editor.

Sir,—I have read with interest Mr. Sharpe's letter concerning bells cast at Aldbourne, Wilts. I would like to point out, however, that Edward Read's first bell, cast in 1751, was recast by Taylors in 1938. This bell, the second in the ring at St. Michael's, Basingstoke, was of very poor tonal qualities, and was probably the worst bell in the tower, which, like East Hagbourne, Berks, also contained specimens of the work of six founders. But, unlike Hagbourne, their work constituted one of the worst peals in the county until the recent extensive restoration, when the front four bells and the tenor were recast.

It is interesting to note that when the founder placed the letters for his inscription in the mould he omitted the letter 'E' from Aldbourne, and afterwards put it in just above the rest. This omission was reproduced when the bell was recast.

That this bell was a very poor one may be accounted for by the fact that it was the founder's first attempt. Perhaps Mr. Sharpe can say if later bells by the same founder showed any improvement, and whether he cast any larger bells or complete rings. This bell weighed about 5 cwt.

C. W. MUNDAY.

A.D.O.S. Staff, R.A.O.C.

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BELFRY GOSSIP.

A handbell peal of Bob Minor was rung at New College, Oxford, on Sunday, to celebrate the seventieth anniversary of the formation of the Oxford University Society.

The peal was called by John E. Spice and the others of the band were two young ladies, Miss Joan Houldsworth and Miss Patricia Scaddan, both of St. Hilda's College, who rang their first peal. It was an admirable achievement, as they began ringing only last October.

Miss Houldsworth is 'following in father's footsteps.' Mr. Houldsworth was one of the band at Immanuel Church, Oswaldtwistle, Lancs, who rang many peals in the first twenty years of the present century.

Mr. G. F. Doel, late of Poole, now residing in Salisbury, is in the local infirmary, where he has undergone a serious operation for internal trouble. He is now making satisfactory progress and his friends wish him a speedy recovery.

The first and only peal of Kent Treble Bob Cinques was rung by the St. Martin's Youths at Birmingham on February 1st, 1832.

George Bolland, a leading Yorkshire six-bell ringer, was born on February 2nd, 1852. On the same date in 1872 the Oxford University Society was founded, and seven years later on February 4th, 1879, the Cambridge University Guild was founded by the late Rev. W. C. Pearson.

At Walsall on February 4th, 1861, 10,032 changes of Grandsire Major were rung.

Last Saturday was the seventeenth anniversary of a peal of Stedman Triples rung at St. Giles-in-the-Fields by a band all of whom were over 6ft. high. They ranged from Mr. Fred Rogers, a mere 6ft. nothing, to Canon G. F. Coleridge, 6ft. 4in.

On February 10th, 1849 the Woolwich band, who were members of the Ancient Society of College Youths and included five of the Banister family, rang 5,376 changes of Superlative Surprise Major, the first true peal of Surprise Major in London.

Just a year later on February 9th, 1850, the St. James' Society rang at Bethnal Green 5,600 changes of the same method. Henry W. Haley conducted and Matthew A. Wood rang the tenor. James Dwight, the ringer of the seventh, died fifty years ago last week.

Four years later, on February 10th, 1854, the St. James' Society rang the first peal of Stedman Cinques on handbells. This also Haley called and Dwight rang 11-12.

The first true peal of Cambridge Surprise Major, Middleton's full composition, 5,600 changes, was rung by Leonard Proctor's band at Benington in Hertfordshire on February 11th, 1873.

On February 12th, 1821, 14,016 changes of Kent Treble Bob Major were rung at Oldham, and on the same date in 1853 William Wakley was born.

The first peal of Kent Treble Bob Caters was rung at Aston by the Birmingham men on February 13th, 1848.

The College Youths rang 7,018 Grandsire Cinques at St. Michael's, Cornhill, on February 14th, 1731. There were three men to the tenor, including Benjamin Annable, who called the bobs. This is not surprising, as the heavy ring of bells was, then hung quite high up in the lofty tower.

On the same date in 1920 the Painswick men rang 13,001 changes of the same method.

Joseph Tebbs, of Leeds, the composer of a famous peal of Stedman Triples on the multi-bob plan, died on February 14th, 1836.

Fifty years ago to-day eight peals were rung. Three were Grandsire Triples, one Grandsire Caters, two Kent Treble Bob Major and one each Doubles and Minor.

Ten years ago to-day 30 peals were rung. They consisted of Grandsire Triples 5, Cinques 2, Stedman Triples 2, Caters 2, Cinques 2, Kent Treble Bob Major 1, Double Norwich Court Bob Major 2, Cambridge Surprise Major 1, Royal 1, Superlative 1, Bristol 1, London 2, and Minor 8.

Ten years ago to-day Mr. C. H. Kippin rang and called his first peal of Bristol Surprise Major.

MR. W. J. NEVARD.

EIGHTY-SIXTH BIRTHDAY.

All our readers will join us in congratulating Mr. William J. Nevard on the attainment of his eighty-sixth birthday, which took place last Sunday.

Mr. Nevard, who was born at Langham in Essex on February 8th, 1856, began his ringing in 1870. His first peal was at Long Melford on February 7th, 1885, and since then he has taken part in about 450 others. He has held various offices in the Essex Association and represented it on the Central Council for many years. Some months ago he had the misfortune to have his house burnt down, and he suffered from a rather severe illness. There is no more popular member of the Essex Association, and we trust he will be spared yet many years.

GERMANY MELTS HER BELLS.

Hans Fritsche, the Nazi propaganda broadcaster, declared in a broadcast from Berlin last week that every ounce of metal in Germany is being called in, including the church bells, which will serve the country as in the last war.

THE RINGERS' CONFERENCE.**RULES OF DEBATE.****What Contributors May and May Not Do.**

We publish below the 'Rules of Debate' proposed for the Ringers' Conference. If they seem rather lengthy for such a simple method of discussion it is because we wish that there shall be no disputes as to the rights of those who take part and because we desire the procedure to be adopted to be known from the outset.

It may appear that the Chairman is given more discretionary powers than is sometimes the case at a meeting, but that has been found necessary to meet what would otherwise provoke unavoidable delays or deadlock, and perhaps acrimonious correspondence. The essence of success in this scheme is to keep the discussions flowing freely.

One other thing must be emphasised, and that is that editorial responsibility for what appears in the reports in 'The Ringing World' cannot legally be shelved and, while full scope for the expression of opinion within the limits already indicated will be given, the editor's decision on what is permitted to appear must be final and no correspondence can be entered into on the subject.

NOTICES OF MOTION.

Notices of motion should be sent in as soon as possible so that the agenda may be drawn up and published. Each should be accompanied by the names and addresses of the proposer and seconder and forwarded to the address given below.

THE RULES.

1. Every notice of motion shall be sent to the Chairman, The Ringers' Conference, 'The Ringing World' Office, Lower Pyrford Road, Woking, signed by the proposer, and accompanied by the name of the seconder, whose previous consent shall have been obtained.

The Chairman shall have power to reject any motion which he considers frivolous or likely to bring the Conference into disrepute, but the proposer and seconder may request a vote of the subject. No discussion shall take place on the request.

2. No previous notice need be given of amendments, but to facilitate discussion an amendment must be accompanied by the names of the proposer and seconder. Under the same conditions motions to close a discussion may be submitted.

3. The order of the agenda shall be the order in which the notices of motion are received, and any dispute on this point shall be determined by the Chairman in his absolute discretion.

4. When a new subject is to be introduced the contributions to the debate by the proposer and seconder shall be forwarded to the Chairman in order that they may appear in the same issue of 'The Ringing World.'

Every person taking part in a debate shall direct his contribution to the question under discussion or to an explanation or to a question of order.

5. An amendment shall be either (i) to leave out words; (ii) to leave out words and insert or add others; (iii) to insert or add words, but such an amendment shall not have the effect of introducing a new proposal into or of negating the motion before the Conference.

6. If an amendment be rejected other amendments may be moved on the original motion. If an amendment be carried, the motion as amended shall take the place of the original motion and shall become the motion upon which any further amendment may be moved. Not more than one amendment shall be before the Conference at one time, but other amendments may be sent to the Chairman to be held in suspension until the one under discussion has been disposed of.

7. A person shall not make more than one contribution to the debate on any motion, or any amendment, except on (i) a point of order, or (ii) by way of personal explanation (which shall be confined

(Continued in next column.)

WORCESTERSHIRE ASSOCIATION,**HALESOWEN RECTOR AND DANGERS OF SILENT BELLS.**

A well-attended meeting of the Northern Branch was held at Halesowen on Saturday, January 17th. Good use was made of the handbells and it was gratifying to note the progress made by the young band from St. Thomas', Stourbridge, and particularly of their most recently joined member, Miss Flossie Wright, who, in the space of four months, has graduated to a pair in Grandsire Caters... Unfortunately, the progress of this band will be retarded by the early departure of Messrs. Derek Watson and Raymond Smith, the former for service in the Royal Navy and the latter in the R.A.F.

An excellent tea was provided at the Central Cafe, to which all apparently did full justice.

The quarterly business meeting followed, the chair being taken by the Rev. T. T. Davies, the Rector.

It was decided to hold the February practice meeting at Stourbridge on February 21st. Further meetings up to June were fixed as follows: Dudley, March 14th; Kidderminster, April 25th; Hartlebury, May 23rd; and Hagley Park, June 20th or 27th.

The Rector expressed his pleasure at having such a goodly gathering despite the unfortunate ban on tower-bell ringing, and was delighted to learn that all the meetings were similarly attended. He touched upon the possible adverse effects the ban might have if it endured for any length of time upon youngsters growing up, who had never heard bells rung as they were meant to be rung, and may come to look upon them as harbingers of danger, suffering and misery, instead of the beautiful and inspiring things they are in reality. There were many more efficient methods of invasion warning available without making our churches military objectives.

After the meeting the handbells were again in demand until the time came to adjourn to another rendezvous.

Members were present from Birmingham, Brierley Hill, Glent, Dudley, Stourbridge, Wollaston, Wolverley and the local tower.

THE RINGERS' CONFERENCE.

(Continued from previous column.)

to some material part of a former contribution on the same motion or amendment which may have been misunderstood). The ruling of the Chairman on a point of order or on the admissibility of a personal explanation shall be final and not open to discussion.

The foregoing paragraph shall not apply to the proposer of a motion or an amendment in as far as the proposer of a motion shall have a right to reply at the close of the debate upon such motion immediately before it is put to the vote, and if an amendment is proposed the proposer of the amendment shall be entitled to reply at the close of the debate upon the amendment. A member exercising the right to reply shall not introduce new matter.

8. When a motion is under debate no other motion shall be moved except as in paragraph 9, or (i) to amend the motion, (ii) to proceed to the next business, (iii) that the question be now put, but the Chairman shall have discretion as to accepting either of the last two.

9. In the event of either of the last two motions being moved and seconded and accepted by the Chairman, discussion on the next subject on the agenda shall be begun pending a vote on the proposition. Similarly, in order that there may not be undue delays, the debate on the next subject shall be begun, while a vote is taken on a motion or an amendment.

10. Voting shall be by postcard authenticated by the name and address of the sender and shall not be confined to those who have taken part in the debate. Any reader may vote, although he or she has not contributed to the discussion. The time limit for voting will be five days after the announcement that a vote is to be taken, thus postcards must be received by the Chairman by Wednesday in the week following publication.

11. Postcards recording votes and all correspondence relating to the Conference must be sent to

THE CHAIRMAN,
RINGERS' CONFERENCE,
'THE RINGING WORLD' OFFICE,
LOWER PYRFORD ROAD,
WOKING, SURREY.

In any point of dispute not covered by these rules the Chairman's decision shall be final, and he shall also have power, in an emergency, temporarily to vary the rules if it appears to him in the interests of the Conference to do so. He shall also have power to edit or refrain from publishing contributions or parts of contributions which introduce irrelevant matter or overlap other subjects.

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SALISBURY DIOCESAN GUILD.

DORCHESTER BRANCH TO 'KEEP GOING.'

Though the towers of old England still stand silent, members of the Dorchester Branch are seeing to it that the tradition of the ancient English art is well maintained as far as possible. This was evidenced at the annual meeting of the branch on Saturday, January 31st.

The ringers of St. Peter's had been working overtime during the previous week to get the silent apparatus in order, and thanks to them and the assistance of Mr. O. C. Vidler, a noted Dorset engineer and archaeologist, the back six of the peal of eight were quite ready for the meeting. As a result the handbells were neglected, for it was the first time any of those present had touched a rope since the ban. Everyone was enthusiastic and anxious to have a pull and to hear how the bells fixed in the belfry were striking.

The service was conducted by the chairman of the district (the Rev. Canon A. W. Markby), who also gave the address, taking for his text Romans x. 18, 'Their sound is gone out into all the earth.' He mentioned that he had received letters from ringers from practically every front, and one stated when he heard 'Big Ben' over the wireless in the desert it gave him quite a thrill.

Some well-known hymns were sung, and the service concluded with the hymn for absent brethren, 'Holy Father, in Thy mercy.'

Tea was served at Major's Cafe and a plentiful supply of food was in evidence.

At the annual meeting, which followed, 35 members were present, the towers represented being Abbotsbury, Bradford Peverell, Dorchester (St. Peter's), Fordington, Maiden Newton, Stratton, Sydling, Upwey, Wool and Wyke Regis. A welcome visitor was Lieut. P. Newington, R.A.F., of Spalding, Lincs. Several apologies for absence were received, the cause in nearly all cases being due to the petrol rations.

The Master of the Guild (the Rev. C. C. Cox) wrote: 'I am sure if we could only be allowed to sound our bells for Sunday services again it would do more than anything to inspire our people to labour for victory.' Mr. Martin Stewart wrote admiring the hon. secretary for endeavouring to carry on the good work of the Guild, while the general secretary (the Rev. F. Ll. Edwards) wrote wishing the members of the branch all success in their activities and desiring emphatically to express his gratification, both at the way in which they maintained their interest in the work of the Guild under such adverse conditions.

HON. SECRETARY'S REPORT.

The hon. secretary presented his annual report, in which he regretted that the ban is to continue. As far as he could learn, it would not be lifted throughout the duration of the war. The land was thus robbed of the cheerful and encouraging sound of the music of the bells floating over the countryside, particularly for the Sunday services. The activities had been well maintained, three very successful meetings having been held. The call to duty with H.M. Forces and national service had caused a falling off of members and consequently of subscriptions.

He regretted the passing of one of their oldest members and a founder of the branch, Mr. James Orchard, of West Lulworth, who was a member for over 40 years. In the 'Roll of Honour' they had to regret the loss of one of the Wyke Regis ringers, who was killed in H.M.S. 'Barham.' He was a promising ringer, a member of the choir and a server.

They were glad to know, continued the report, that in spite of all difficulties St. Peter's band, Dorchester, met as often as possible for handbell practice, and now the silent apparatus was nearly completed they would carry on with the ropes.

Previous to Armistice Day, a wreath was placed on the branch memorial, to the brethren who gave their lives in the last great war.

Thanks were extended in the report to all those who had entertained the members at the respective meetings, and greetings and all good wishes were sent to all members serving with H.M. Forces with wishes for a safe return home. Lastly, the secretary appealed to the members to throw their whole weight into the fight for Christianity, victory and freedom.

The financial statement was presented and showed receipts of £33 8s. 9d. and expenditure of £14 16s. 3d., leaving a balance in the Post Office Savings Bank of £18 12s. 6d.

Both the report and balance sheet were carried with acclamation, and the best thanks of the meeting were given to the hon. secretary for his continued good work on behalf of the Guild.

A discussion then took place as to whether any further meetings should be held, and it was unanimously agreed to carry on if possible.

The Vicar of Wool invited the branch there in June, and the Rector of Stratton invited them to that village in August. The hon. secretary said if they required another meeting he would do his best to arrange one.

Further discussion then took place on the paragraph in the general secretary's circular, which stated: 'It is felt that while activities of the Guild are suspended, it is not reasonable to demand payment of the members' normal subscriptions, etc.'

Many expressions of opinion were offered, and it was unanimously resolved that, as far as the Dorchester Branch was concerned, the members wish to pay the usual subscription.

(Continued in next column.)

PETERBOROUGH DIOCESAN GUILD.

WELLINGBOROUGH BRANCH ANNUAL MEETING.

By the co-operation of the Rector (the Rev. R. S. Sleight), the annual meeting of the Wellingborough Branch of the Peterborough Diocesan Guild was held at Irthingborough on Saturday, January 31st. Ringers attended from Wellingborough, Higham Ferrers, Rushden, Wilby, Mears Ashby, Great Doddington, Irchester, Finedon, Earls Barton, Harrold, Turvey, Barton Seagrave, Warkton, Addington and members of the local band.

The Guild service was held in St. Peter's Church during the afternoon and was conducted by the Rector. In welcoming the ringers, the Rector said how much he was looking forward to hearing the peal of eight bells ring out, having as yet never heard them. He was quite sure that never more than now was the work of bellringers more appreciated, for since the ban the cheering voice of the bells had been missed.

The organist was Mr. Donald Cockings, of Harrold, now serving with the Royal Navy. Home on leave, he was asked at the last moment to officiate, and he did so with much credit, as he had never before seen the instrument.

Tea was provided in the Co-operative Hall by the wives of the local ringers. The Rev. J. H. Marlow (Bozcat) presided at the subsequent business proceedings, at which 28 were present. Apologies for absence were received from the Marquis of Northampton, Mr. C. Payne and Mr. E. W. Johnson (auditor).

The next place of meeting was left to the secretary.

Mr. A. W. Lovell, of Great Doddington, was elected an honorary member.

The report and balance sheet for 1941 were accepted with thanks to the secretary.

The officers were all re-elected, viz.: Branch president, the Rev. J. H. Marlow; secretary and treasurer, Mr. A. Bigley; Ringing Master, Mr. J. R. Main; Central Committee, Messrs. G. Basford and A. Plowman; Branch Committee, Messrs. A. Y. Tyler, C. Payne and A. Boddington; auditor, Mr. E. W. Johnson.

A very encouraging letter was read from the Rev. C. F. Westcott, at one time Rector of Wilby and branch president.

A discussion took place concerning Rule 5, whereby members are crossed off the books after two years' arrears, and it was decided to press for an amendment at the forthcoming general annual meeting of the Guild.

Mr. C. Newman proposed a hearty vote of thanks to the Rector for the service, to the ladies for the splendid tea, and also to the voluntary organist, who unfortunately could not stay to tea. Handbells provided an alternative to the usual tower bells, but the chief pleasure was meeting old friends once again.

A NATIONAL ASSOCIATION.

To the Editor.

Dear Sir,—It is with more surprise than interest I read of the suggestion to form a National Association of Ringers! it sounds to me like a 'political rebellion.'

What else is our Central Council but 'national'?

'D.'

A FIRST QUARTER-PEAL.

On Sunday, February 1st, at Ridout, Stoke Wake, Blandford, Dorset, a quarter-peal of Grandire Doubles (1,260 changes): Mrs. Joan P. S. Field 1-2, E. T. Paul Field (conductor) 3-4, William E. Trevett 5-6. First quarter-peal 'in hand' by all, and first quarter-peal on an 'inside' bell by the ringer of 5-6.

SALISBURY DIOCESAN GUILD.

(Continued from previous column.)

The Chairman referred to absent brethren and expressed the devout wish that those serving in defence of their country would return home safely. He stated only on the previous Thursday he had 'tied the knot' of their tower secretary, Mr. Jack Smith (now of the R.A.F.), who was home for a few days, and St. Peter's ringers turned out with the handbells.—The members sent the happy couple their best wishes.

The Vicar of Wool (the Rev. A. L. Edwards) and Mr. O. C. Vidler were elected honorary members, and Mr. C. H. Steemson, of St. Peter's, Dorchester, a ringing member.

The Chairman, in referring to the silent apparatus now being installed, said that it would cost from £15 to £20.—The meeting voted £2 2s. from the branch fund towards the fund, and thanks were given to Mr. Vidler and the captain of St. Peter's ringers (Mr. J. Squire) for the way they had worked to get it in readiness for the meeting.

The district officers were re-elected en bloc by acclamation, and the chairman and hon. secretary returned thanks. Both the Ringing Master, Mr. C. Smart, and the Deputy Ringing Master, Mr. P. Tancock, are serving with the Forces.

It was reported that Abbotsbury, which usually had nine ringers, had seven members serving with the Forces.

The usual votes of thanks were passed to all who had helped in any way to further the good work of the Guild, and particularly the chairman hon. secretary and Mr. J. T. Godwin, who made the local arrangements.

The happy meeting concluded, the members then adjourned to St. Peter's tower and enjoyed the use of the ropes until late in the evening.

ESSEX ASSOCIATION.**MEETING AT CHELMSFORD.**

The annual meeting of the South-Eastern District of the Essex Association, held at Chelmsford on January 31st, although not largely attended, was very enjoyable. Handbell ringing and a touch of Kent Major on the silent tower bells preceded the meeting in the belfry under the chairmanship of the District Master, Mr. H. Mansfield, who was again unanimously re-elected to this office.

The hon. secretary, Mr. H. W. Shadrack, and the representatives to the General Committee, Mr. G. Green and Mr. E. Runter, were also re-elected.

Mr. Shadrack reported the death of a life member, Mr. H. Bowers, of Broomfield. Mr. Arnold Brunton, of Great Baddow, was elected a member.

Some discussion took place regarding meetings, the hon. secretary saying that the biggest difficulty was the catering, especially when it was not certain how many would attend, but all agreed that meetings should be held if possible so that members could meet and renew old acquaintances.

It was finally decided to hold a meeting at Great Baddow in late April or early May, Mr. G. Green undertaking to arrange for tea, and it was hoped that all who can will endeavour to attend and help to keep the association alive and ready to recommence its main activities when ringing can be resumed.

After the meeting the association service was conducted in the Cathedral by the Provost, Canon W. E. R. Morrow, during the course of which he welcomed the ringers once again to the Cathedral. Mrs. Harrison was at the organ.

In the evening several members met at the Spotted Dog, where a room had been engaged, for handbell ringing and 'chatting.'

MEETING AT ROMFORD.

The annual district meeting of the South-Western District of the Essex Association was held at Romford on Saturday, January 31st, and was most successful, about 20 members being present from Brentwood, Prittlewell, Chigwell Row, Leytonstone, Wanstead and Romford. Some of the members took the opportunity of ringing a few touches on the handbells until 4 o'clock, when a service was conducted by the Vicar of Romford, the Rev. E. C. Blaxland, who gave an address and said how sorry he was the members could not adjourn to the tower to carry on the art of bellringing.

The business meeting was held in the vestry, presided over by the Rev. E. C. Blaxland, supported by the District Master, Mr. J. Chalk. A letter was read from Mr. J. H. Crampion, saying that although he could not be present in person, his thoughts were there, and he hoped that the meeting would be a success. During the afternoon the Rev. E. C. Blaxland was made an hon. member of the association.

The acting secretary then gave a report on the activities of the district during the past year, and stated that in spite of the unfavourable conditions, the district had maintained its standard; that two very successful meetings had been held, at Brentwood and Loughton. The district had lost two members during the past year, Mr. Parker, of Barking, and Mr. Perry, of Loughton, who had been members of the association for many years. The secretary further stated that there were about 43 members in H.M. Forces, and on behalf of the district and all present he wished them good luck and good speed on their safe return.

It was proposed that the next meeting should be held at Hornchurch, or, in the event of Hornchurch not being available, at Dagenham. Mr. J. Chalk was re-elected District Master for the coming year and Mrs. J. H. Crampion was re-elected district secretary. Mr. G. Dawson and Mr. A. Prior were re-elected as committee members.

Mr. Lufkin, of Prittlewell, stated that he would like to put on record the name of Douglas Smoothy, who, only 19 years of age, was killed on active service while serving with the R.A.F. Although not a member of the association, he had been a most keen ringer for three years and would in all probability have been made a member had not the war intervened.

A lengthy discussion then took place with regard to the formation of a National Association, which was strongly opposed.

The meeting concluded with a hearty vote of thanks to the Rev. E. C. Blaxland for conducting the service, and for accompanying the hymns; to Mr. Butler for all that he had done, and to those who supported the meeting. Varied touches were rung on the handbells during the evening. During the service a collection was taken for the Bell Restoration Fund, which amounted to 13s.

LONDON MINOR AT GLASGOW.

A London Surprise Minor practice was held at St. Mary's Cathedral, Glasgow, on the silent apparatus on January 31st. The band rang their first courses of the method and a short touch was rung by the following: W. H. Pickett 1, A. J. Smith 2, H. F. Sargent 3, E. Hournfrey 4, R. G. Townsend 5, W. H. Pve 6. This was the first touch of London by the ringers of 2, 3, 4 and 5.

As a matter of interest, the ringer of the 2nd, A. J. Smith, has never rung changes on 'open' bells. He has been taught entirely on the 'ban on ringing,' and can now ring Grandairs, Stedman Triples and Caters. Trouble Bob Major, and Cambridge and London Minor.

**DANGER OF LEAVING BELLS UP.
AN ASHTON-UNDER-LYNE INCIDENT.***To the Editor.*

Dear Sir,—I should like to express my own personal views on the subject of leaving bells up, founded on practical experience. 'Before answering the question, let me ask another, 'Why leave bells up?'

One of the most beautiful things in ringing is to hear a ring of bells raised in well-struck peal. Some adopt raising singly, a rather slow and monotonous job. I fancy I hear someone saying, 'All very well for those who have got a handy and easy ring of bells.' This may prompt many to be tempted to leave bells up on 'set,' also there is the racking of the bell ropes where they have to be pulled up by two and sometimes more person, owing to bad clapping, caused by worn crown staples and gudgeons through neglect or oversight, thereby shortening the life of the ropes and causing endless trouble through them breaking by the excessive strain put on them. When bells are left up and are ready for ringing, the effect is much more pleasing to and appreciated by the outside listener than when they are pulled up haphazard before beginning to ring, let us say, for church service. To their mind and ear is not this jangling a very jarring sound? Personally I must plead guilty to having caused the bells to be left up on 'set' many and oftentimes in past years.

Whether the bells should be left up at my own church was definitely once and for all decided through the following incident that took place a good many years ago. It was the harvest festival and we were to ring for the afternoon service, but the ringers, whether they had had too much dinner or, shall I say, a late one, none of them turned up except myself at the appointed time. In the meantime I had gone up among the bells, being doubtful about the clapper of the tenor being on the right side, when to my amazement some of the bells were pulled off. I leave you to guess my feeling as I stood on the bell frame in a precarious position. By putting on a brake of more than human effort I managed to prevent the bell (which was immediately over the exit trap door) from rising to the set and subsequently brought it to a standstill.

Upon descending to the ringing chamber I found a few young lads, including some of the choirboys. Didn't I let them have it! They remember it to this day. Bless them, they didn't mean any harm, but, you see, the Vicar, who did not realise the danger, had sent them up to pull the bells for service. When my wife, also a ringer, told the Vicar what had happened and what the result might have been by his action, he was very much moved and dumbfounded, and was most profuse and sincere in apologies.

No one is now allowed to go up in the tower except by the tower-keeper's permission, and I think you will agree the incident related is a very good reason why bells should not be left up.

Ashton-under-Lyne.

W. W. WOLSTENCROFT.

HERTFORD COUNTY ASSOCIATION.**WATFORD DISTRICT TO PUBLISH DR. SLACK'S PEAL.**

A very enjoyable meeting of the Watford District was held at Bushey on January 31st.

Mr. R. G. Bell was voted to the chair and interesting discussions ensued on a variety of subjects.

Mr. E. Jennings raised the question of Dr. Slack's peal of Stedman and said that he did not think that any argument would induce 'The Ringing World' to publish the figures, and he suggested that they be sent to 'The Ringing World' as a notice and that a collection be made among members to defray the cost of publication.

A resolution to this effect was put to the meeting and carried. The question of compiling a record of all peal compositions rung by the association was considered, and a proposition that the matter be placed before the County Committee was adopted.

The following resolution was put to the meeting and enthusiastically approved: 'That this meeting extends to the members of the Ancient Society of College Youths an invitation to hold a meeting at Bushey during the summer months on a date to be selected by the Ancient Society.'

The secretary asked for the opinion of the meeting on the resolution from the Western District that the Annual Report of the Association be discontinued for the duration of the war.

It was decided to oppose the resolution.

Handbell ringing in a variety of methods was indulged in before and after the meeting.

DR. SLACK'S PEAL.*To the Editor.*

Dear Sir,—Your decision not to publish Dr. Slack's peal of Stedman Triples is, in my opinion, not in the best interest of all concerned. It certainly will not encourage him or anyone else to further investigate the problems of Stedman Triples if what he has already achieved is not to be made available to the majority of ringers, or shall I say readers of 'The Ringing World.' So, Mr. Editor, perhaps you may be persuaded to use another right you have, that is, change your mind and let us have a look at this peal.

Will the correspondents who recently advocated the forming of a National Association give us more information on the following. Is it to be an additional association having no connection with the existing associations, or is it intended to put them all in the melting pot and make them into one?

Cambridge.

E. G. HIBBINS.

ELEMENTARY COMPOSITION.

FOR THE AVERAGE READER.

If you were going to build a wall, you would first of all get together a number of bricks. You would then arrange those bricks in a certain order, and you would join them together by mortar. It might be, that to get the result you wanted, you would have to cut some of the bricks into two pieces, and it might be that in the completed wall half of an original brick was in one place and the other half in another. Or it might be that you would have to throw away a part of a brick and not use it at all.

Something very similar happens when you set out to compose a peal. Instead of bricks you have a number of courses as your material, and these courses are like the bricks in that they are all similar, but all separate; and they can be cut into two or more pieces, and the pieces can be used in different places in the composition.

The course then is the unit of composition. It is what the method supplies, and neither the composer nor the conductor can alter the changes it produces, nor the order in which they occur. All they can do is to decide which courses are rung.

The Plain Course of a method is the one most familiar to ringers, and it is the only one which is ever rung by itself. In Bob Major, for instance, we always start from rounds, and if no calls are made we ring 112 changes and come back to rounds again. Those 112 changes are always the same and they are divided into seven leads. But in theory we need not necessarily start from rounds and ring to rounds again. We could begin with the bells in any other order—Queens, for instance—and if we rang the method, we should produce 112 changes divided into seven leads, and having done so, we should return again to Queens, whence we started. Courses of this sort are occasionally rung on handbells.

When we are pricking changes on paper, and are free from the restrictions and conventions of practical ringing in the belfry, it is just as easy to write out a course from a row like 16423578, or 14523678, or any other, as it is to write one out from 12345678; and the course we then produce is exactly similar to the Plain Course in every way, except that it consists of different rows. Although in actual practical ringing the Plain Course is the only one which ever appears by itself, for the purposes of composition any block of 112 changes produced from any row by Bob Major or any other method, without the aid of bobs or singles, is a separate and independent course. Such a course is called a Natural Course, to distinguish it from the courses produced by a combination of plain and bobbed leads.

Now, in a method like Bob Major (and we shall confine our remarks for the present to that method) it is usual to ring touches and peals without altering the relative positions of the seventh and tenor. The seventh always courses next after the tenor and turns it from the front or from behind. This keeping the tenors together, as it is called, is for the sake of the music, but it also simplifies to a great degree the question of composition. These two bells form what are called the observation bells and their work supplies the backbone of the structure of the composition.

Last week we pointed out that the Plain Course (and similarly every Natural Course) is a round block and properly has neither beginning nor end; but for con-

venience we generally assume a Natural Course as beginning and ending with a row we call the course-end, just as in actual practical ringing the Plain Course begins and ends with rounds. We must not, however, forget that this is no more than a convenience, and we shall find that not seldom when in any composition a full Natural Course appears, its course-end comes in the middle of it. This will create no difficulty if we get firmly into our minds the fact that every Natural Course is a round block and the calling one particular row in it the course-end is only a convenience.

Which row we call the course-end is decided by the position of the two tenors; it is the row when they are both in their home positions while the treble is leading. Since these three bells are always in the same positions, it is usual, when writing down a course-end, to assume them and to omit them from the figures. Thus we say that the course-end of the Plain Course is 23456, which stands for 12345678; and, similarly, if we wrote down 64235 as a course-end, that would stand for 16423578.

As we just remarked, whenever we start from rounds and ring the Plain Course of Bob Major, we always ring the same changes. In the same way, if we select any other course-end and prick down a Natural Course, it must always be the particular set of rows which belongs to that course-end. There can never be any variation from this, and that enables us to use the course-end as the signature of the whole Natural Course, as its title, and the means by which we can identify it. When we speak, for instance, of the course 64235 we mean the whole 112 rows which would be produced if we pricked a full course from the row 16423578.

This method of using Natural Course Ends as the signature of the whole Natural Course is a very great help in composition. It was introduced by John Reeves in the 'Clavis' which appeared as far back as 1788, but its full possibilities were not discovered until much later when Sir Arthur Heywood used it and recommended it to the Exercise generally in his book on 'Duffield.'

In Bob Major there are 120 rows in which the treble and the two tenors are in their home positions, and consequently there are 120 rows which can act as course-ends. Half of these are even or in-course, and half of them are odd or out-of-course, but we will not bother about that for the moment.

Now, if we were to sit down and from each of these course-ends prick a Natural Course, we should have 120 separate and independent round blocks which together would contain 13,440 changes, the full extent of the method with the tenors together. We happen to know, too, that there is no row which appears twice in the 120 Natural Courses; the whole set is true, though, of course, it is not a composition but a group of independent units.

How we know there is no repetition of rows does not for the minute concern us. We can take it as a matter of fact that the 120 Natural Courses of Bob Major, Double Norwich Court Bob Major and similar methods are true. We shall find that there are methods where this is not so, and that introduces further complications into the question of composition.

These 120 Natural Courses form our stock of bricks from which we can build our wall. They are all good,

(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.

NOTICES must be received NOT LATER THAN MONDAY.

'The Ringing World' can be sent direct by post from the Editorial Office for 4s. 3d. per quarter.

All communications should be sent to THE EDITORIAL OFFICE OF 'THE RINGING WORLD,' LOWER PYRFORD ROAD, WOKING, SURREY.

ANCIENT SOCIETY OF COLLEGE YOUTHS.—

The next meeting will be held on Saturday, Feb. 14th, at the Bell Foundry, Whitechapel Road, E.7, at 3 p.m. The payment of 1s. 8d. to enable those members who have not attended the required number of meetings to vote on matters of finance is now due.—A. B. Peck, Hon. Sec., 1, Eversfield Road, Reigate.

PETERBOROUGH DIOCESAN GUILD.—Kettering Branch.—The branch annual meeting will be held at Rothwell on Saturday, Feb. 14th. Service 4.30. Tea and meeting afterwards.—H. Baxter, Branch Sec., 21, Charles Street, Rothwell, Northants.

WORCESTERSHIRE AND DISTRICTS ASSOCIATION.—Northern Branch.—Meeting at St. Thomas', Stourbridge (D.V.), Saturday, February 21st, at 3.30 p.m. Bells (8) available for 'silent' practice. Tea 5.15 p.m. Handbells and usual social evening.—Bernard C. Ashford, Sec., 9, Bowling Green Road, Stourbridge.

GUILDFORD DIOCESAN GUILD. — Leatherhead District.—The annual district meeting will be held at Leatherhead on Saturday, Feb. 21st. Eight silent tower bells available from 3 o'clock. Service at 4.45. Tea and business meeting following at 5.30 at the Duke's Head. Will those requiring tea please send notifications to Mr. G. Marriner, 7, Poplar Avenue, Leatherhead, as early as possible? Handbells also available, and everybody will be welcome.—A. H. Smith, Dis. Hon. Sec.

LINCOLN DIOCESAN GUILD. — Elloe Deaneries Branch.—The annual meeting will be held at the Corn Exchange, Spalding, on Saturday, Feb. 21st. Service at Parish Church 3.30 p.m. Tea at 4.15 p.m. Will those intending to come to tea please let me know before Tuesday, Feb. 17th?—W. A. Richardson, Hon. Sec., Glenside, Pinchbeck.

HERTFORD COUNTY ASSOCIATION. — Meeting at The Studios, Falconer Road, Bushey, on Saturday, Feb. 28th. Handbells from 3 p.m. Tea 5 p.m. All welcome.—H. G. Cashmore, 24, Muriel Avenue, Watford.

HEREFORD DIOCESAN GUILD. — Kington District.—A meeting will be held at Eardisland on Saturday, Feb. 28th. Bells (6, silent) and handbells available 3 p.m. Service 4.45. Tea 5.15. Business after tea. Please advise me by Tuesday, 24th, the number to expect for tea.—J. C. Preece, Dis. Sec., Lea Lodge, Staunton-on-Arrow, Leominster.

ST. MARTIN'S GUILD FOR THE DIOCESE OF BIRMINGHAM (Established 1755).—The 54th annual Henry Johnson Commemoration will be held at the Imperial Hotel, Temple Street, Birmingham, on Saturday, March 7th. Owing to prevailing conditions this will be a luncheon to commence at 1.30 p.m. prompt, Vice-Presi-

dent, Albert Walker, Esq., in the chair. Tickets will be issued to fully paid-up members at 1s. each; to other members and friends at 5s. 6d. each. All applications for tickets must be received by Saturday, February 28th. Apply T. H. Reeves, Hon. Sec., 136, Newton Road, Sparkhill, Birmingham, 11.

BIRTH.

POWELL. — On Saturday, Jan. 24th, at Victoria Cottage, Lyme Regis, to Laura, wife of Cuthbert W. H. Powell, a daughter (Hilary).

PUBLICATION.

THE CHURCH BELLS OF BERKSHIRE, Part V. (reprinted from the Berkshire Archæological Society's Journal, by kind permission of the Society). To be obtained from the author, Mr. Frederick Sharpe, Derwen, Launton, Bicester, Oxfordshire. One shilling, post free.

ELEMENTARY COMPOSITION.

(Continued from previous page.)

sound bricks, and we need not fear to use any one of them if we need it and provided it will fit into the place where we want it. We could, if we chose, compose by cutting the paper on which the Natural Courses are written into 120 pieces and fitting the pieces together like a jig-saw puzzle, or like the bricks in the wall. In effect that is what we do when we compose a peal, but we get the same results by rather less laborious means.

The other day a correspondent in 'The Ringing World' made some fuss about the work of another person who had proved a peal first and composed it afterwards, and he suggested (why was not very clear) that such a method of working would not be approved by 'experts.' Well, that is just what we should be doing if we selected any of the Natural Courses from those we had written out and joined them together by bobs and singles. We make sure before we begin to build that our bricks are good, sound bricks and our mortar is good mortar. We do not build first and then get somebody to lean against the wall to find out if he can push it over.

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