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DANGERS IN THE BELFRY.

The recent tragic accident in the steeple of St. Giles'-in-the-Fields is a warning of the dangers that may await the man whose duties take him up the bell tower and among the bells. Exactly what happened on that occasion seems not to be known, but it appears that the late Mr. Geare had gone into the belfry in connection with A.R.P. duties and had fallen from the intermediate chamber below the bells on to the belfry floor. Whether he was trying to raise the trapdoor or the floor was defective is not known. His tragic death was not unaccompanied by features which gave it a certain nobility. He had gone from the service of Holy Communion to the service of his fellow men, and in his fall he was entangled with a bell rope and so rang his own knell.

The details of the accident are unimportant, but what is important is to remember that a man who goes up into a steeple to do any work among the bells runs a certain risk. It is a risk, of course, which all steeplekeepers and many ringers continually face without paying any attention to it. And that is well. Everywhere in daily life we run risks, and if we stopped to take notice of all of them we should never do anything. We cannot cross a road nowadays without running a risk. That does not keep us on one side only of a street, but it should create in us the habit of looking both ways before we step off the pavement. So when a man goes up into a tower he should cultivate the habit of taking certain precautions.

This is particularly necessary in the case of men who are getting on in years and are no longer so sound in wind and limb as they once were. When a man is young he can run up the winding stairs of a tall tower with little effect. As he gets older his heart, though still good, is not so strong; the exertion may put just that amount of extra strain on him that does harm. Not immediate harm perhaps, but harm that may have lasting though unnoticed effects. Better take the long climb steadily and slowly; it may make all the difference if, when climbing among the bells, a slip is made.

There are, we hope, many steeplekeepers who, even in these days of the ban, like now and again to visit their belfries to see that all is in order with ropes and bearings ready for ringing when the welcome time comes. They know their bells and bell frames so well that they could clamber about them blindfolded. It is well that it is so, but let them not forget that the time comes when the foot is less sure, the hand less ready and the brain less alert. Fatal or serious accidents may be rare, but even a slight slip may be awkward and uncomfortable.

(Continued on page 110.)

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borough, Melbourne (Australia), Rochester, Dublin, St. Patrick's,
Manchester, Durban and Worcester Cathedrals, etc., etc.

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For it is the peculiarity of a church steeple that it is almost the most remote and inaccessible place in the parish. No one goes there except those whose duties take them on very rare occasions. A man who has an accident in a bell chamber might remain there for very long unnoticed unless he could attract outside attention by sounding one of the bells. It is well, if it can be done, to have assistance when a man, and especially an elderly man, attempts to do any work in a steeple. And always and for everyone it is well before going up the stairs to let somebody below know that you are going up and how long you expect to remain there. If anything did happen help would not be delayed for long.

HANDBELL PEALS.

BUSHEY, HERTS.

THE HERTFORD COUNTY ASSOCIATION.

On Monday, February 16, 1942, in Two Hours and Ten Minutes,

AT 50, RUDOLPH ROAD,

A PEAL OF KENT TREBLE BOB MAJOR, 5088 CHANGES;

EDWIN JENNINGS 1-2 | HAROLD G. CASHMORE ... 5-6

EDWIN A. BARNETT 3-4 | CHRISTOPHER W. WOOLLEY 7-8

Composed by T. B. WORSLEY. Conducted by H. G. CASHMORE.

BURBAGE, LEICESTERSHIRE.

THE MIDLAND COUNTIES ASSOCIATION.

(HINCKLEY DISTRICT.)

On Tuesday, February 24, 1942, in Two Hours and Forty-Four Minutes,

AT STEDMAN, SKETCHLEY ROAD,

A PEAL OF GRANDSIRE TRIPLES, 5040 CHANGES;

PARKER'S TWELVE-PART. Tenor size 15 in C.

ALFRED JORDON 1-2 | FRANK K. MEASURES 5-5

ALFRED BALLARD 3-4 | PTE. W. A. CLOUGH, R.A. 7-8

Conducted by FRANK K. MEASURES

First peal in the method 'in hand' by all. First peal of Triples 'in hand' by entirely Hinckley District members. Specially arranged for Pte. Clough, who was home on leave.

BRISTOL.

THE GLOUCESTER AND BRISTOL DIOCESAN ASSOCIATION

(BRISTOL GUILD OF HANDRELL RINGERS.)

On Friday, February 27, 1942, in Two Hours and Twenty-Eight Minutes.

AT 21, WATHEN ROAD,

A PEAL OF GRANDSIRE TRIPLES, 5040 CHANGES;

PARKER'S TWELVE-PART (7th observation). Tenor size 15 in C.

ALBERT M. TYLER 1-2 | THOMAS HARRIS 5-6

ROYSTON G. BRYANT 3-4 | DONALD G. CLIFT 7-8

Conducted by DONALD G. CLIFT.

Rung as a birthday compliment to Master Fred Harris, the eight-year-old son of the ringer of 5-6.

OXFORD.

THE OXFORD DIOCESAN GUILD.

On Saturday, February 28, 1942, in Two Hours and Twenty Minutes,

AT NEW COLLEGE,

A PEAL OF SPLICED PLAIN AND GAINSBOROUGH LITTLE BOB

MAJOR, 5016 CHANGES;

Tenor size 15 in D flat.

WALTER H. DOBBIE 1-2 | JOHN E. SPICE 5-6

WILLIAM L. B. LEESE 3-4 | JOAN HOULDSWORTH 7-8

Composed and Conducted by JOHN E. SPICE.

First peal of 'Spliced' by all the band and the first handbell peal in more than one method for the Guild. First handbell peal of Major by the ringer of 1-2, who was elected a member of the Guild before starting. This peal was specially arranged and rung as an 81st birthday compliment to Mr. N. Spice, of Tunstall, Kent.

J. A.
TROLLOPE'S

'COLLEGE YOUTHS'

A History of the Society

5/6 (post free) from

'THE RINGING WORLD' LOWER PYRFORD ROAD
WOKING, SURREY.

THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION.

A SUGGESTED SCHEME.

To the Editor.

Dear Sir,—I must confess that the correspondence that has appeared in 'The Ringing World' has provided me with interest, even some amusement, especially when the danger of a National Association looming in the distance (like Bolshevism) has caused a resolution to be passed deploring the idea of such a thing. No doubt if these menaces do not take root during this generation, they will in the next.

Some members have asked as to what are the advantages to be gained by the formation of such an association. I tried to explain these some years ago in 'The Ringing World,' but although I have not retained the correspondence (through patriotic reasons, of course) these, I believe, were the main facts:—

All territorial associations to be abolished and the country split up into county, diocesan or other units, sub-divided into deaneries or other areas as may be considered expedient. The funds in hand would provide a substantial credit balance to commence operations.

The objects of the National Association would be: To do away with pin-pricking that goes on between rival associations, abolish the compounding member's subscription when peal ringers venture over the border of their native soil; abolish the Central Council (of which I am a member), which would be replaced by an Executive Committee of the National Association coming under more active control of the members; to take over full financial responsibility for the publication of 'The Ringing World' under the care of a full-time secretary and editor. His remuneration would be derived from the saving of several hundreds of pounds spent annually in duplicating most of the information that has already appeared in 'The Ringing World' by dispensing with annual reports. (Note.—You said yourself some time ago that if all association members took in 'The Ringing World' it could be produced for 1d.) These circumstances would then exist, and for an annual subscription of 5s. 'The Ringing World' could be provided weekly for each member. It should be remembered that the reasoning was based on peace-time conditions.

The publication of 'The Ringing World' is going to create one of the most serious problems that the Exercise will have to face, but all the while the paper appears regularly nobody will care. Ringers just look backwards (or 'preserve past traditions,' as Mr. Thompson puts it) and hope for the best. They raise their hands in horror at the thought of a National Association, yet this is the only idea, in my opinion, that can hope to provide an attempt to solve 'The Ringing World' problem when it arises, as it surely will.

There is also the question of 'issues at stake that could not be dealt with by the many associations.' Surely Mr. F. W. Housden raises doubts as to whether ringing will have the free hand that it enjoyed before the war, and that conditions will be imposed. I share with him his doubts, although we have not discussed the matter. If, when the war is over, it is decided that no ringing shall continue for an hour or half an hour without a pause being made (and from the public's point of view long continuous ringing is not necessary), who is to convince the 'powers that be' that three hours or more of continuous ringing is a necessity?

Mr. Pulling expresses his fear of the bishops. What clergy require, after all, are their bells rung for Sunday service, and I should not anticipate that the formation of the National Association would cause ringers to get the 'universal sack.' The College Youths and Cumberland Youths are, after all, National Associations without the episcopal blessing, and just look how they thrive!

I expect some members think I have painted a gloomy picture of the future. It is the fruit of looking forward un sentimentally, not living on history, and I trust this provocative letter will bring supporters and opponents into the open to express their opinion. Perhaps some valuable knowledge will be gained by all of us.

CHARLES H. KIPPIN.

Beddington, Croydon.

P.S.—Members have stated that we have a Central Council already. As Cyril Fletcher would say, 'You be roight—I doubt.'

WHAT GOOD WOULD IT DO?

Dear Sir,—I was at the meeting of the North Staffordshire Association in December when we opposed the formation of a National Association. I cannot see how it would benefit except to save ringers a little expense of becoming members, but I think very few grumble about that. Also we have grants made to us for the restoration of bells which I expect would cease.

We have a young and energetic secretary in Mr. A. Thompson, who is heart and soul in his work for us. Do you think that under a head secretary he or any others would have the same interest? I should say 'No.' We also have the Central Council to look forward to.

The suggestion of yours, Mr. Editor, re the Ringers' Conference, that all letters published in 'The Ringing World' should have the sender's name and not a 'nom-de-plume,' would be well received in general.

C. H. PAGE, Secretary of St. Peter's, Stoke-on-Trent.

THE COLLEGE YOUTHS.

GOOD NEWS FOR MR. E. H. LEWIS.

At the meeting, last Saturday, of the Ancient Society of College Youths, the Master (Mr. E. G. Fenn) presided, supported by the hon. secretary (Mr. A. B. Peck) and the hon. treasurer (Mr. A. A. Hughes); and there were present Messrs. E. A. Young, W. H. Passmore, G. Price, H. Hoskins, H. Miles, R. F. Deal, I. Emery, J. Shepherd, F. Collins, J. Prior, A. B. Wiffen, J. A. Trollope, C. Roberts, C. Kippin, Newman Stannard, C. Potheary and J. Chapman. Gunner W. J. Clough from Hinckley in Leicestershire was a visitor.

Mr. E. A. Young reported that on behalf of the society he, with Messrs. R. F. Deal and H. Langdon, had visited St. Paul's Cathedral and met Mr. Henderson, the librarian, who had shown them where the society's books and property were stored. It was in a vault under the south transept enclosed by massive walls, and was probably as safe a place as any in London. Mr. Young stated that he had taken the last name book home to make an abstract as decided by the members.

Mr. Deal confirmed what Mr. Young had said and produced a blue print of a plan given him by Mr. Henderson, on which the exact location of the property is marked.

The thanks of the society were voted to Mr. Henderson for his courtesy in the matter. The committee of three members was also thanked.

The Master proposed that the record of the recent silent Holt's Original on handbells should be illuminated in the peal book entry. Mr. Passmore and Mr. Charles Roberts, the umpire of the peal, supported the proposal, which was agreed to.

Mr. Peck read a letter from Mr. G. E. Symonds, of Ipswich, who sent greetings and enclosed a letter he had received with reference to the enquiry sent him by the society about the late Rev. W. C. Pearson's books. The letter read:—

Dear Sir,—Rev. W. C. Pearson deceased. We beg to acknowledge receipt of your letter of yesterday's date and have to inform you that under Mr. Pearson's will all his books relating to ringing go to Cambridge.—Yours truly, Gotelee and Goldsmith.

Ringers generally will be glad to learn officially that Mr. Pearson's unique library of ringing books is saved for all time.

Mr. Isaac Emery received a warm welcome from the Master after his recent prolonged illness. He suitably replied.

The meeting was very pleased to hear a letter read by Mr. Peck from Mr. Edwin H. Lewis saying that news had been received through the Vatican Radio of his son John. He apparently had a crash landing in the desert near Tripoli and is a prisoner. Whether he is in Africa or Italy is not yet known, but no doubt in a few weeks there will be a letter from him. Ringers throughout the country will join in congratulating Mr. Lewis on his son's escape from death.

The next meeting will be at the Bell Foundry on March 14th.

THE EXPERTS.

To the Editor.

Dear Sir,—I note that my old friend Tom Coles is almost inclined to join in the laugh at the expense of the experts, but only in a very respectable and modest way!

Now I am quite as grateful as Mr. Coles to those experts who have served the Exercise by their work, and I hoped that I had made it abundantly clear that what was under attack was the dogmatic or 'know all' vogue, of which we have seen far too much in the past. I note Mr. Coles carefully avoids giving any opinion on the matter which brought the experts under criticism; but I feel sure that he would support me in my contention that men of Dr. Slack's kidney ought to be encouraged—not discouraged, as seems to be the case in the two-part peal of Stedman Triples which he so cleverly produced. That is all I have to say on this matter, but there is one point in Mr. Coles' letter on which I crave a little space to reply.

He asks me 'what would I do if only the very early compositions of Stedman were available?' and I am reminded of the story of the Queen who, when informed that the people had no bread, said, 'Give them cake.'

Well there is a wide variety of cake to choose from, and I have sampled quite a lot in my time, even though I come from the spiritual home of Stedman. There is one kind of cake, however, to which I am not partial, i.e., the spiced variety. I much prefer what I once described to a famous ringer as 'a cut off the joint and two veg,' to which he replied that Spiced Surprise was not only all that, but had a bit of pudding on top!

Be that as it may. I do not crave the highly spiced assortment served up in a spiced peal to the present-day gourmets. A well-struck peal of Cambridge, London or Bristol is a satisfying ringing meal to me, and suits my digestion admirably. Those whose digestions or appetites are stronger than mine are quite welcome to indulge in their fancy to their heart's content, but I can still get all the pleasure I want out of a peal in a straight method. Every man to his taste!

To Mr. Coles' suggestion that I am a leg puller, I feel inclined to reply, 'You are not so bad yourself!'

FRANK SMALLWOOD.

38, Penn Lea Road, Bath.

THE BELLS OF LONDON.

(Continued from page 101.)

EARLY USES.

The early morning, mid-day and evening bells, although the most widely spread secular uses, were not the only ones. In many places a bell was rung to mark the opening and close of a market, and until the seventh year of Queen Victoria's reign, when the law was repealed, it was not lawful to buy or sell anything at a market before the bell had been rung. The object was to prevent 'forestalling' and to give to all the traders an equal chance. Often the church bell was used for the purpose, though in many cases a special bell was provided. At Norwich the bell was the sanctus bell that once hung in the tower of the Dominican priory, now St. Andrew's Hall.

It was similarly to give an equal chance to all that no one was allowed to glean after the reapers in the harvest field until the bell had been rung from the church steeple.

A very common use was that of the fire bell. In the Middle Ages and down to the Great Fire of 1666, London, like other towns and cities was mainly built of wood. The churches were stone with rubble-filled walls and piers, but stone was an expensive commodity, and that used for facings and the best work was for the most part brought from Caen in Normandy. It was an excellent stone, far superior to any to be found in Kent or Sussex, and the badness of roads forbade the use of the products of the quarries of the Midlands and the North. The making of bricks, which had been brought to a high degree of excellence in Roman times, was a lost art until the early sixteenth century. Ordinary houses were therefore necessarily constructed with wooden frames filled in with rubble, and any town or city so built was liable to severe damage and even destruction by fire. To fight so great a calamity every assistance was necessary, and no better means could be found of calling for help than the rapid insistent ringing of one of the church bells. Sometimes one particular bell was used for the purpose, and the use has survived in some places down to the present time.

The inscription on one of the bells at Sherborne Abbey is familiar:—

Lord quench the furious flame,
Arise run help put out the same.

From at least as early as the thirteenth century church bells had become the usual and most important of the means by which those in authority could broadcast summonses and messages to the general public, and consequently the right to own and use them was highly valued and closely guarded. Parish churches and large monastic establishments of course always had the right, but there were other authorities which claimed to share it, or were granted it as a special favour.

In France, the right to own or use a communal bell was the special mark of a burgh. In effect it meant that the town authorities had the right and the opportunity of calling the citizens together; and in a land and at a time when the great nobles kept all power and authority in their own hands as far as they could, that meant a lot. Sometimes unauthorised persons usurped the right for their own purposes, and many riots and insurrections were begun by the sounding of the tocsin from the church

steeple. In the most famous of all town and gown riots at Oxford, which took place on February 10th, 1354, the townsmen were called together by the town common bell at Carfax Church and the gowmsmen by the University bell at St. Mary the Virgin.

For a chapel, hospital or similar small religious establishment, the possession of a bell was the sign that it was independent of the parish priest. It was a privilege which often could only be obtained from Rome, and the papal archives contain many instances of it being granted to various persons in England. For instance, on April 10th, 1400, licence was granted to William Tamworth, priest, of the town of Brystowe in the diocese of Worcester, to celebrate Mass at the chapel of St. Mary, and to have a bell rung without requiring licence of the diocesan or the Rector of the parish of St. Nicholas, the latter of whom he fears may hinder the same. And about the same time Henry Haselbech, priest in the diocese of Canterbury, was authorised to ring bells without requiring the licence of the Vicar of Cranbrook.

So much was a bell a necessary adjunct to a church that special reference is made in a letter of Pope Boniface IX. from St. Peter's at Rome in 1390, to the exceptional case of the parish church of Elmeston in the Diocese of Canterbury, 'which by reason of the poverty of the parishioners has no bells.'

Where there were large abbeys which dominated a town or village, the monks often tried to keep the bell-ringing under their own control, to confine it to their own bells, and to hinder the laity from having bells of their own. This led to many disputes, about which I may have something to say later.

On the other hand guilds were often granted the privilege of using bells in their services, and sometimes they possessed their own, which apparently were hung in the church tower.

Bells being thus such important things, we can understand why it was that so much stress was laid on them being rung in honour of the visits of kings and bishops and other great people. It was not just a compliment as it would be to-day. It was a formal admission of the status and dignity of the visitor, and the omission of it was strongly resented and usually punished, sometimes by a fine, sometimes by bishops by the inhibition for a time of all use of the church. In 'The Ringing World' for June 14th, 1940, I gave the text of an order of Archbishop Arundel who complained that though 'the comeliness of our holy Church of Canterbury deserveth and requireth that while we pass through the province of the same our church having our cross carried before us, every parish church in their times ought and are bounden in token of special reverence that they bear to us, to ring their bells, which notwithstanding, yea, on Tuesday last past when we betwixt eight and nine of the clock before dinner passed openly on foot as it were, through the midst of the City of London, with our cross carried before us, divers churches showed towards us, willingly, though they certainly knew of our coming, unreverence, ringing not their bells at all.' Therefore to revenge the injury the Archbishops put all the churches under his indictment till the ministers 'be able hereafter to attain of us the benefit of more plentiful grace.'

There are many references in churchwardens' accounts of parishes being fined for not ringing when royalty was passing, and often there was a rule which put the duty

of providing for doing so on to the parish clerk who had to bear the consequences of any neglect.

The tradition that it was the duty of a parish always to ring when the bishop made a formal visit lasted down to living memory. It was, of course, very generally done until the ban stopped all ringing, but not quite in the old spirit. Formerly it was a duty, now it is a voluntary compliment. Bishops once were much more remote and formidable personages than they have become in these democratic days.

The use of church bells for the personal needs of the ordinary individual layman was, as it still is, confined to marriages and deaths. The latter is almost the oldest and most universal of all the uses of bells, and I have already given a long account of it. How early bells came to be rung at weddings cannot be said. Probably it is a very old custom, but it is surprising how scanty are the references to it in church accounts. The death bell and the funeral bell were a necessity for every man, and the fees charged were an appreciable part of the parish revenue. Only the few had the bells rung when they wedded, and it would seem that they made arrangements directly with the ringers or the parish clerk and paid them. No fees went to the churchwardens and the parish accounts. At Loughborough in 1588 it was 'agreed that every marriage having or requiring to have the bells rung shall pay 6d. to the poorman's box and 6d. towards the repairing of the bells.' And at Ashby-de-la-Zouch it was ordered in 1628 that 'none shall be allowed to ring at weddings above three short peals, viz., one before the marriage and two after.'

Between the ringing for deaths and funerals and the ringing for weddings and other rejoicings there was, until

the beginning of the eighteenth century, no difference whatever. In all cases they were rung as high as was possible with the rather crude and imperfect fittings then in use. The half wheels and the absence of stays and sliders and of sallies on the ropes prevented any ringing at a 'set pull' until comparatively late times. Yet the bells voiced the varying feelings and sentiments of the people. Church bells for long ages had, and to some extent they still have the curious property of touching some chords in men's souls and memories and of expressing the emotions of the passing moment. To the man who rejoiced they sounded merrily. To the man who grieved they sounded mournful. To the man who felt poetical they gave heavenly music. To the irritated man they were an intolerable nuisance. The sullen bell that knolled a departing friend was the same bell and was rung in the same way as the merry bell that announced a wedding. It was in the man who listened that the difference lay.

THE MORNING AND EVENING BELLS.

A curious survival of the ancient custom of ringing a bell at morning, noon and night is mentioned by Mr. Shane Leslie in his book of reminiscences entitled 'The Film of Memory.' It relates to a big country mansion at Berkhamstead half a century ago:—

'Gamble was an old man with a long white beard like Methuselah, whose duty was to ring a bell high up in a lime tree in front of the house every day at six, at twelve and again at six as a signal to gardeners and workmen and the pathetic pensioners who collected the leaves that seemed to fall for their benefit all the autumn months.

'I can see the old man studying his watch not unlike Father Time himself.'

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION.

On Saturday, February 14th, at 11, Aylesbury End, Beaconsfield, to celebrate the birthday of Mrs. W. H. Fletcher, a quarter-peal of Bob Minor (1,260 changes) was rung by H. Wingrove (conductor) 1-2, Miss D. R. Fletcher 3-4, R. Lee 5-6.

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BELFRY GOSSIP.

We regret to say that the Editor, Mr. J. S. Goldsmith, has had a slight setback and is not quite so well as last week.

We have received the report of a peal rung at Bristol without the date. Will the conductor please forward it.

Visitors to London should take the opportunity of walking down Cannon Street to see such a view of St. Paul's Cathedral as human eyes have never seen till now. Owing to the clearance of buildings the whole length of the great church is visible from end to end without any obstructions, and from an angle where its fine proportions and the glorious dome show to the best advantage. It is a sight which Sir Christopher Wren saw in his mind's eye, but no one else had ever seen.

Henry Johnson was born on February 28th, 1809, and Edwin Horrex was born on the same date in 1838.

On March 1st, 1734, the Painswick men rang 8,064 Grandsire Caters. They followed up by 10,000 exactly a year later and by 12,000 in April, 1737. The Norwich men beat this by 12,600 on March 8th, 1738. The board says 1737, but that would be 'old style.'

W. Doubleday Crofts called 10,260 Grandsire Caters at Nottingham on March 3rd, 1778.

On March 5th, 1888, James W. Washbrook called 12,041 Stedman Caters at Appleton, the then longest length in the method.

The first peal of Stedman Caters on Bow Bells was rung by the Cumberlands on March 8th, 1808.

Fifty years ago to-day not a single peal was rung. It was a Sunday. But the day before there were ten peals—Grandsire Triples 1, Caters 2, Kent Treble Bob Major 4, Royal 1, Double Norwich Court Bob Major 1, Minor 1.

THE LATE REGINALD E. GEARE.

MEMORIAL SERVICE AT ST. GILES'-IN-THE-FIELDS.

Last Saturday morning the parishioners and church workers of St. Giles'-in-the-Fields attended service to pay respect to the memory of Mr. R. E. Geare, who had met so tragic a death in the church steeple. The Middlesex County Association and London Diocesan Guild was represented by Mr. C. T. Coles, Mr. A. W. Coles, Mr. J. A. Trollope, Mr. E. C. S. Turner, Mr. J. Bennett and Mr. T. J. Lock. Mr. George Steere, of the Society of Royal Cumberland Youths, and Miss Prockson, of Clerkenwell, were present, as well as Mr. A. Howkins and Mr. W. H. Howe, of the local band.

The service was ordinary matins, for the Rector explained that he felt that Mr. Geare, who was so staunch a churchman and loved the liturgy so well, would himself have preferred the familiar forms of the prayer book.

The Rev. J. W. Jones, the curate of the parish, who had been the first to discover Mr. Geare after his accident, preached an impressive and eloquent sermon. Taking for his text the words, 'Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace,' he compared the departed to the aged Simeon, who had gone to his rest satisfied and in peace. In peace with himself, with his fellow men, and with God. So had Reginald Geare. He was an old man and had attained the serenity which comes from a life of religion and service. He had served St. Giles' as churchwarden, as chorister and as bellringer. He had gone to his death straight from receiving Holy Communion, and by a strange chance had rung his own death knell. Tragic though his death was, they could not doubt that he had died in peace. One most lovable characteristic of the man was the great interest he took in the children of the parish, whose games in Lincoln's Inn Fields he shared and promoted. At the time of his death he was engaged on work for the common good, and the distinguished and representative gathering at his funeral service showed how much he had gained the affection and respect of his fellow men.

PRISONERS OF WAR.

Mrs. L. East, of North Collingham, has received information through the Red Cross that her son, W./O. H. W. East, R.H.A., who was reported missing in the Middle East on November 21st, 1941, is now a prisoner of war in Italy. Mrs. East has just received his first letter. He has not suffered anything worse than a cold. W./O. East was a ringer of the Collingham band.

We are also pleased to learn from a letter read at the meeting of the College Youths last Saturday that Mr. Edwin H. Lewis has heard through the Vatican Radio that his son John, who had a forced landing in the desert near Tripoli, is safe though a prisoner.

THE LATE C. F. WINNEY'S HANDBELLS

To the Editor.

Dear Sir,—In reply to the enquiry by Mr. H. M. Page, may I say that what happened to the handbells belonging to the late Mr. Challis F. Winney was, I believe, as follows.

Mr. Winney had lent them for use at an annual service at the Church of St. Ethelreda, Ely Place, and they were put in charge of the late Mr. Charles Horton, who kept them at his office. During one of the early air raids Mr. Horton's office was destroyed and the handbells perished with it.

ALFRED B. PECK.

Reigate, Surrey.

AN EAST ANGLIAN GARLAND. RINGERS, BELLS AND REMINISCENCES.

BY CHARLES J. SEDGLEY.

'The time has come
To talk of many things,
Of shoes—and ships—and sealing wax,
Of cabbages and kings.'

The passing of the Rev. W. C. Pearson brings to mind the days when he took an active and prominent part in ringing in East Anglia, some 25 to 30 years ago, and the happy afternoons spent at his vicarage at Henley, where he delighted to entertain ringing friends. He was a tall, upstanding man of fine presence and had never married. His collection of ringing books was without an equal, and I have often had the privilege of seeing and handling these treasures. There was, too, at the vicarage a fine collection of ancient pestles and mortars, of which he was very proud. Sometimes we would walk and sometimes ride in a one-horse conveyance—it is only four miles from Ipswich—of which the late Jemmy Motts would be coachman. Upon reaching Henley the horse would be unharnessed and put in the vicarage stables—yes, they had stables in those days—and we would cross the road to the church, a typical country house of worship set in a churchyard surrounded by trees, and which in the early spring was sweet with wild violets, and later with cowslips, and primroses, which thrive on our heavy Suffolk land. The parson would join us and a peal would be attempted with varying success.

Invariably after the ringing was finished we would be invited across to the vicarage for tea. This would be partaken of in a room which I always called in my mind 'the ringers' room,' although I never heard anybody else call it so. This apartment was a fine one, with large double doors opening on to the lawn and gardens beyond. It was hung around with many things of interest to ringers, portraits, groups, association certificates, etc.; it housed also a beautiful set of handbells, which, when the repast was finished and the table cleared, would be brought out, and a pleasant hour or so spent in ringing and reminiscence. I don't think our host ever ventured on more than a plain course of Grandshire Caters. He was a good ringer of methods up to Superlative and Cambridge Major, and, what is more, an excellent striker, but, like others of us, he had his off days. I have vivid recollections of Jemmy Motts bringing his foot down with a resounding bang on the belfry floor and crying, 'Wake up, sir, wake up,' or words to that effect, when the slips became too frequent. After a while would come the homeward journey, a dry one be it said, for the only pub in Henley, the Cross Keys—Henley, is dedicated to St. Peter—lay a mile beyond the church, and we were not going that way. In the other direction there was no place of call until the four miles to Ipswich had been covered.

HENLEY 'PARSONAGE'

Henley Vicarage was a typical country parsonage, with high-pitched gables and clustered chimneys, set in the midst of trees; there were gardens and lawns, and beyond these an orchard which produced the kindly fruits of the earth in their season. There was a great walnut tree, and oftentimes a basketful would be brought to us, or we would wander underneath and get a handful of fallen ones. There was also a splendid cherry tree, a vision of beauty in the time of its blossoming, with underneath the curious purplish flowers of the fritillary or snake's head lily nodding their heads above the grass. This plant, which is of rare occurrence, is indigenous in parts of Suffolk. From its fruit used to be made a speciality of the Henley tea table, cherries preserved in syrup. All who have been there will remember them—but that was in the days of peace and no coupons. There were apple trees, too, which always seemed to produce bountiful crops.

As is well known, the Rev. W. C. Pearson was one of the few parsons who had rung a hundred peals on his own church bells. He also rang peals in many other towers in East Anglia. If he wanted to ring a peal at a particular place he would get Jemmy Motts to get a band together and go with him. They went to Worlingworth once for Cambridge Major. David Collins, who rang in the 16,608 of Treble Bob at Debenham, lived here, and he rang the treble. The attempt was not successful, and David, who was a typical broad-spoken native, gave it as his opinion to one of the band that he had never yet met a parson who could ring. The band went again a week or so later, and an excellent peal was rung. When it was finished Mr. Pearson went across to David and said, 'I understand, Mr. Collins, that you said that you had never met a parson who could ring.' But David was not at a loss and replied, 'Oh! no, sir, it couldn't have been me. It must have been my brother.' David died a year or so back at a ripe old age. The last time we saw him was outside Wilby 'Swan,' leaning on his stout ash staff about 8ft. long which accompanied him on all his later walks abroad. He stood waving us good-bye till out of sight. Perhaps he knew then that never again would he meet the tenor man who had stood with him for ten and a half hours in Debenham tower on that sunny Whit Monday in 1892.

Our way home would perhaps be enlivened by some of Charles Catchpole's stories, told in his own inimitable way. He was generally one of the party and was a born raconteur. He was a native of Wetheringsett, which lays just off the Norwich turnpike about 15

miles from Ipswich, to which town he migrated early in life. By his death early last year the St. Mary-le-Tower Society lost an old and valued member. Mendlesham is the next village to Wetheringsett, and I remember on one occasion somebody mentioned that the local chimney sweep had died. Charlie knew all about him, he was quite a noted character, and used to follow his trade around the farmhouses of the countryside by means of a horse and cart. When old enough, his son used to accompany him. It was his habit on his return in the evening to stop, all black from his chimney sweeping as he was, at Brockford 'Griffin,' a noted hostelry on the high road about two miles from his home, hand over the horse and cart to his son and stay there the evening. On one occasion, having had 'one over the eight,' he was taking the short cut home through Mendlesham Churchyard when he toppled into a newly-dug grave beside the path. In his bemused condition he could not get out, so he settled there for the night. Very early in the morning, hearing the footsteps of an early rising horseman, he popped his head up and asked the time. The startled horseman gave one terrified glance at this apparition of gleaming eyes in a black face issuing out of the grave, and fled for his life.

As far as my records go, I find that the Rev. W. C. Pearson's last peal was in 1923. This, curiously enough, was called by 'Bill' Garrett, the only one he has ever called, for, as he says, he does not profess to be a bob-caller. Still, he has one outstanding record to his credit, one which at present looks like standing for a long time—he is the first and only man to ring a hundred peals of Maximus and a fine list it is, with over fifty peals of Surprise and in seven different methods.

WILLIAM PYE'S 1,500th PEAL.

It was at Henley that the late William Pye conducted his 1,500th peal on August Bank Holiday, 1926. We had been to Coddendam in the morning and rung a peal of London—after a struggle. I don't know whether it was the glorious sunshine outside or the sounds of a fete in a nearby park floating in through the windows which upset the ringing, but we had to have two or three starts. However, we got it eventually, and after lunch went the short distance to Henley, where we rang a most excellent peal of Cambridge. The only trip was a slip dodge in 5-6 by the conductor, and I think every other member of the band told him of it in the same breath!

About four miles north of Henley lies Crowfield Hall, the seat, about 200 years ago, of Squire Theodore Ecclestone, whose ringing history has been told in 'The Ringing World.' Besides giving two bells to Fulham and two to Winchester, he put in peals of eight at Coddendam and ten at Stonham Aspal, both of which places are about a mile from Crowfield. At the latter place, in order to get the ten in, the tower, the lower part of which forms the porch of the church, had to be cut down so that the frame and bells can rest on the walls. To enclose them a wooden top storey was made, with pinnacles at the four corners and large louvered windows. The stone removed from the tower was afterwards used to line the church path, which in later years gave rise to the saying that to get to Stonham Church you had to walk over the steeple. It was here that we once got 'bats in the belfry'—not in the generally accepted sense of this expression—but one got into the ringing chamber during a peal, and fluttering around gradually put out the candles one by one, until the last went, which put an end to the ringing.

There is a grating in the floor of the ringing chamber at Stonham, through which one looks down to the porch 30 to 40 feet below. It is small and there is not much room to dispose of one's clothes before starting a peal. Once one of the ringers laid his on the floor, but during the ringing his rope caught up his collar and tie and flicked them through the grating. When we had finished and gone below we found them in a bucket of water, into which they had fallen, much to the annoyance of the owner and the rather heartless amusement of the others. It was at Stonham, too, as I have been told, that the local hand of stoney ringers many years ago rang over three hours of call changes, just long enough to beat a band who had gone over and rung a peal a week or so previously. The locals were not going to be outdone on their own bells!

EAST ANGLIAN ROUND TOWERS.

All who have travelled in East Anglia will remember the round church towers which are a feature of the district. There are more in Norfolk than Suffolk, but there are quite a number in the north of the latter county. Some have rings of bells in them. There are eight at Quiddenham in Norfolk. There have been several theories advanced as to the reason for their erection in this form, but I don't think archaeologists are agreed on the subject. One is that they were built by the old Saxon thanes as watch and refuge towers for themselves and their people. The lower stages are mostly pre-Norman. Another is that owing to the lack of stone in East Anglia they were built round to obviate its use. One theory I heard advanced was that these round towers were originally wells, from which the earth has sunk away, leaving the lining sticking up! Although ingenious, I can hardly give this explanation a great amount of credence.

There has been in recent issues of 'The Ringing World' some mention of style in ringing, and I am inclined to agree with my old friend George Cross that what matters is where the bell is put, not how it is put there; but for all that it is a pleasure to watch a neat and stylish handler. One of the best I ever had the pleasure of watching was the late John Scuter, of Diss, and to see him handling

(Continued on next page.)

AN EAST ANGLIAN GARLAND.

(Continued from previous page.)

a big bell was a joy. He was a bit of a martinet in the belfry, and woe betide the unfortunate wight who was marring a touch by indifferent striking. He would soon hear John's broad Norfolk, 'Spearse 'em out there, spearse 'em out.' He once rang the tenor at St. Peter's, Mancroft, to Superlative Major. At that time it was the heaviest bell turned in to Surprise Major. It has since been eclipsed by the exploits of Bob Newton and others at St. Mary-le-Bow, but it was a fine performance. Another good handler is Fred Tillet, of Ipswich, and to see him ring St. Mary-le-Tower tenor was a lesson in economy of effort coupled with good striking; still, as he turned her in to more than fifty peals he should know something about it. He is still with us, hale and hearty, and carrying himself more upright than many a younger man, the reward, as he himself would say, of leading an honest, sober and virtuous life. We have our stylists in the present generation, but I will refrain from mentioning names for fear of bringing the blush of modesty to their faces.

There are numbers of left-handed ringers in East Anglia, more, I think, than I have noticed elsewhere. I don't know why we call them left-handed, excepting that they are different to us others, who think we are right-handed. As an instance of this, I was once at a Guild meeting at Fransden, the belfry was full of people, and a call was made for a course of, I believe, Cambridge. After the band had got half and rung a peal or two, I looked round and found to my surprise that the whole eight were left-handed.

SUFFOLK BELLS.

From time to time one hears discussions on the merits of different peals of bells, this or that being given the preference by their respective admirers. There are a few good peals in Suffolk, to which county I shall confine myself, and Lavenham at once comes to mind. Their fame is known throughout the Exercise, and a grand peal they are with a noble tenor, Miles Graye's masterpiece. It is perhaps not so generally known that they are a left-handed ring. Mention of Lavenham brings to mind the late Arthur Symonds, who for over 40 years looked after these bells with fatherly care and love. He had the extraordinary record of having rung in a hundred consecutive peals on these bells.

In this southern area of the county are four other good peals of 24 cwt. and over—Clare, Hadleigh (a grand peal), Sudbury All Saints' (another good peal) and Boxford. The last named are not now ringable, and sadly need the attentions of a bellhanger. They hang in curious order: 5.1.2.4.3.6.7.8. It is in this church that a tablet records the untimely end of 'Elizabeth Hyam, who by a fall was at last hastened to her end on 4th May, 1748, in her 113th year'. It is rather remarkable that a town of Sudbury's size with less than 7,000 inhabitants should possess three peals of eight, All Saints' (27 cwt.), St. Peter's (23 cwt.), and St. Gregory's (16 cwt.), all in good ringing order. Bury St. Edmunds has a lovely peal of eight at St. Mary's with 27 cwt. tenor. There is a certain peculiar mellowness about them which is most attractive; their near neighbours at the Norman tower, that grand example of Norman work, are rather harsh in comparison. Still the latter are a very good ten, all of one family, cast by Osborn in 1785. Woodbridge, a few miles north of Ipswich, are a very good peal with 27 cwt. tenor. They, too, are an Osborn peal dated 1792, although one or two have been recast. There is a nice peal at Leiston, with a tenor of just over a ton. It was here that ringing history was made by the brothers Bailey and the rest of the talented company, who gave a start to the remarkable development in new Surprise Major method ringing which we have witnessed in recent years.

DEBENHAM BELLS.

Considering that Stowmarket have no two bells of the same date and only two by the same founder, they are a surprisingly pleasing peal, but then they have the advantage of a 24 cwt. tenor of the best period of Miles Graye. There is another Miles Graye tenor of 21 cwt. at Eye, a good peal hanging in a noble tower of typical East Anglian flush work. However, of all these peals I think the one that gives me the most pleasure to ring under is Debenham. They hang in a short, squat tower, the lower stage of which is Saxon, with the characteristic 'long and short' work at the corners and one small deeply splayed window into the ringing chamber on the ground floor. A nice weight with tenor of just over a ton, the circle and sight is excellent, the sound is exactly right, every blow can be heard, and withal a lovely peal to which to listen. 'As a well-known ringer once said to me, 'It is a sacrilege to strike a bad blow here,' and I agree. They were overhauled a few years back, and a good job was made of it.

I find in reading over these notes that I have 'talked of many things,' and can only hope that they will be as interesting to read as they have been in their recollection. I feel sure that many ringers could give even more interesting experiences if they would only write them down, and to me it seems that these things are the very spice of ringing; they are the things that men talk about in places where they meet, after the more serious business of ringing.

HALE, CHESHIRE.—On February 10th, in 51 minutes, 1,264 Bob Major: D. Vincent (conductor) 1-2, Gordon G. Vincent (aged 14) 3-4, John J. Vincent (aged 12) 5-6, Mrs. Vincent 7-8. The quarter was specially composed by Mr. J. W. Parker to help the band to ring their first quarter-peal.

THE HIGHCLIFFE SOCIETY.

SUCCESS OF A SWINDON ORGANISATION.

In spite of the fact that only one new member had been elected during the year, the standard of ringing by the Highcliffe Society has been well maintained.

This was revealed by the secretary in the report he presented at the second annual dinner held on Thursday, February 19th, the anniversary of their foundation. Headquarters were not available this year, but one of the members provided a room, first for a social evening and afterwards for the dinner and general meeting. The dinner itself was concluded according to traditional style with speeches.

The proposer of the toast 'Church and State' expressed the hope that, although they all wished the society to continue throughout the coming year, they would not be slow in throwing it over, and putting their efforts wholeheartedly into the war effort, when, one by one, they were called up. The State was, day by day, making increasing demands upon them all, and the proposer knew that they would not fail in their duty when the day of testing came.

'Prosperity to the Highcliffe Society' was next proposed by the most junior member, although by no means junior in years. This society, he said, was a new idea in Swindon, and when he first taught a band to ring handbells about a dozen years ago they were mostly older men; but the Highcliffe Society had certainly 'caught them young.' The original members were to be commended, he said, on their very fine performances, and he hoped that the society would not only continue, but continue to expand.

Two more toasts were drunk, first to the Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Association, and then to the success of the fight for democracy.

After the dinner the annual meeting was held. Arising out of the minutes of the previous meeting, the wish was expressed that more lessons on the theory of ringing might be given, and the speaker thought that they should not rest content until each of their members had conducted at least one peal.

The election of Master for the coming year was next proceeded with, and Dennis Smout, one of the original members, was unanimously elected.

In the course of his report the Secretary remarked that seven peals in all had been rung, in which the majority or all of the ringers taking part were members of the society. There were two peals of Bob Minor, four of Bob Major, and one of Bob Royal. Five of the peals were rung for the Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Association, one for the Ancient Society of College Youths, and one for the Oxford Diocesan Guild. The methods rung continue to be of a high order, and at present they had four members able to ring a course of London Surprise Major. Practices on the higher numbers were limited by the number of ringers available at one time, but they had enjoyed occasional courses of Cinques, Maximus and Sextuples. A pleasing feature introduced during the year has been the regular monthly ringing in St. Paul's Church, Swindon, before evensong, which has been very much appreciated by the congregation.—The report was adopted with satisfaction.

The personal future of more than one of the society's members is very obscure, but, given a certain amount of luck, the Highcliffe Society ought to prosper for at least a few more years and perhaps he will be able to take its part in the reconstruction of the Exercise after the war.

JOHN HARRISON.

To the Editor.

Sir,—I would like to pay high tribute to Mr. Trollope's articles which have now appeared in 'The Ringing World' for a great number of years. One looks on him as an authority on most matters, he seldom fails us, and I appreciate his many great gifts. But in the interest of truth may I point out that though on page 41, January 23rd issue of 'The Ringing World' he states John Harrison received £10,000, on page 53 of 'Old Clockmakers,' by Hudson Moore 1936 edition, it gives the offer as £20,000. On next page it states in 1773 he received the last half of his £20,000. Other horological books give practically the same information.

It is rather strange although John Harrison was recognised the greatest horologist of his day, yet he never was enrolled a member of the Clockmakers' Company. C. V. EBBERSON.
Snettisham.

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YORKSHIRE ASSOCIATION. ANNUAL MEETING AT LEEDS.

The annual general meeting of the Yorkshire Association was held at the Leeds and County Conservative Club, South Parade, Leeds, on Saturday, January 31st.

The chair was taken by Canon C. C. Marshall, M.A., president of the association, supported by the general secretary, Mr. L. W. G. Morris, the hon. treasurer, Mr. S. F. Palmer, and the hon. peal secretary, Mr. W. Barton. Apologies for absence were received from Messrs. J. B. Hutchinson, P. J. Johnson and G. Lewis.

Mr. L. W. G. Morris pointed out that twelve months had elapsed since the previous meeting owing to a decision then taken not to arrange any intermittent meetings during the year. That decision was taken at a time when air attack was at its height, but he thought they should reconsider that decision now, and, if the members agreed, he would only be too pleased to arrange a summer general meeting. Mr. F. G. Sherwood seconded, pointing out that it was most important that the life of the association should be maintained and interest in its affairs stimulated. This was then put to the vote and carried unanimously.

Mr. L. W. G. Morris then proposed that, subject to permission being given, Selby be the venue. This was seconded by Mr. J. F. Harvey and carried unanimously.

The hon. treasurer, Mr. S. F. Palmer, presented the balance sheet. This showed a gain on the year's working of £22 ls. 8d., which, having regard to the times, must be regarded as very satisfactory. The total assets of the association now stand at £334 11s. 3d. Mr. Palmer pointed out that a very appreciable sum had come in very late, and appealed to the members to relieve him of the large amount of extra work and expense by the early payment of their subscriptions.

Mr. F. G. Sherwood, representing the auditors, proposed the adoption of the balance sheet, remarking that it had been a pleasure to audit the accounts, which were in accord with the documents produced. They had, in fact, got through the audit in record time. This was seconded by Mr. A. Gill and carried unanimously.

A hearty vote of thanks to the treasurer for so ably handling this important part of the association's affairs was proposed by Mr. W. Barton, seconded by Mr. J. Hardcastle and carried. Mr. E. Hudson said he had great pleasure in moving that their best thanks be also accorded to the hon. auditors, who gave up the Saturday morning to do this work. Mr. T. B. Kendall seconded and this was carried. The treasurer, Mr. S. F. Palmer, supporting, said it had been a pleasure going through the accounts, and he desired to pay tribute to the able manner in which the audit had been conducted.

THE ANNUAL REPORT.

In presenting the annual report, the President pointed out that at any rate it had one distinguishing feature, it was the smallest report that had been issued for many years. Owing to war conditions and the ban on ringing, only three handbell peals had been rung. The committee were unanimous that, however short it may be, as long as circumstances permit, there shall be no break in the issuing of the annual report.

This is the 66th report, and the committee hoped that it would have some effect in keeping the members together and in sustaining their interest in change ringing.

As regards membership, it is good to know that the position is much better than might have been expected, and the best thanks of all were due to the district secretaries for the work they have done and the results they have achieved in obtaining so many of the annual subscriptions due. The membership now stood at 1,777. Fourteen members had passed away during the year, 17 had lapsed and there now were 75 serving with the Forces. Among those who have passed away, special mention must be made of the great loss sustained by the passing of Frederick W. Dixon, of Guiseley. He joined the association in 1888, had been a member of the General Committee for a number of years, and was a most regular attender at all its meetings. He had rung 195 peals and conducted 133 of them. The association had learned to value very highly his sterling character and loyal churchmanship, which stood out as an example to all.

Another old and valued member had passed away in the person of Mr. J. A. Dixon, of St. Marie's, Sheffield. He joined the association in 1879 and was closely connected with ringing in Sheffield since that date. Of out-county members who had passed away special mention must be made of Gabriel Lindoff, of Dublin, a very notable ringer and composer, whose great gift was the production of just those peals which best suited ringers' needs. Of the younger members who had passed on, the committee desired to mention Reginald Payne, of Treeton, who was killed by accident while serving with the R.A.F.

The committee thought it only right that they should mention also the name of Mrs. William Snowden, who died at Cartmel, Lancs, at a very advanced age, and whose name would take their thoughts back to William Snowden, the second president of the association.

The committee desired to mention the retirement of Canon Solloway as Vicar of Selby, and to place on record its appreciation of his many kindnesses to the association, and of the help which he has so often given in many ways.

FALSE COMPOSITIONS.

The peal secretary's report showed that only three handbell peals had been rung during the year. The checking of peal compositions which have appeared in previous reports was proceeding, and more than half the total number had now been proved. Unfortunately, six further false compositions had been found and would be found recorded in the appropriate page in the report.

Finally, the committee desired to call the attention of all members to the 'Notes on the care and preservation of bells and bell-frames during the present period of inaction,' which would be found printed in the report.

Mr. D. Smith moved and Mr. J. Hardcastle seconded the adoption of the report, which was carried unanimously.

Mr. F. G. Sherwood, in moving the re-election of Canon Marshall as president, paid tribute to his sterling qualities and counsel, and the association's sound position was proof in itself of the able manner in which the president had fulfilled his office. Mr. E. Hudson seconded, and it was carried with applause. Canon Marshall, in reply, said he desired to thank the members for their renewed confidence in him and for all their help and assistance given in many ways over the years.

Mr. S. F. Palmer, in moving the re-election of Mr. W. Barton as peal secretary, said that such men were indispensable, and he did not think they had another member so ably fitted to carry out this important office in the highly efficient manner Mr. Barton did the work. Mr. J. Ambler seconded and Mr. Barton was unanimously re-elected. Mr. Barton thanked Mr. Palmer for the nice things he had said. He was sorry he had to reduce the peal totals of some of the members by discovering false peal compositions, and hoped they would be able to make up for them at an early date.

The President said the committee had considered the position of members of H.M. Forces who ring peals for the association during the war, and he would ask Mr. Barton to propose the following resolution:—

'That personnel of H.M. Forces who ring peals under the auspices of the association be made honorary members of the association for the period of the war.'

Mr. Barton explained that already a case had arisen which made it necessary to define policy on the matter. Canon Marshall seconded and the resolution received unanimous approval.

CARE OF BELLS AND BELFRIES.

The President announced that since the committee had decided to print the notes on the care and preservation of bells in the report, he had received a copy of a booklet dealing with this matter, which was available at 2d. per copy. He proposed that the association should send a copy to every church with a ringing peal of bells in the County of York, provided that some central authority had not already undertaken distribution. This was seconded by Mr. J. Hardcastle and carried.

Canon Marshall referred to the unique distinction Mr. Fred Cryer, of Selby, now held by passing more than 70 years as a ringer. He hoped he would be able to spend many more years as one of their members and committeemen and also as a ringer at Selby.

Mr. L. W. G. Morris proposed a hearty vote of thanks to the president for presiding. Mr. E. Hudson seconded and it was carried with applause. Canon Marshall, in reply, thanked the members for their vote of thanks, remarking that although the attendance was not as large as had been hoped for, the business discharged was a good indication of the interest still being maintained in the association. He was sorry that it had not been possible to arrange a tea as usual, but thought those wishing to stay to the social evening, which had been arranged to take place on the same premises at 6.30 p.m., would find no difficulty in obtaining tea at the many cafes in the city.

Most members and friends returned later, and the programme was well up to standard. A course of Grandsire Cinques was rung by Miss L. K. Bowling 1-2. H. Chant 3-4. P. J. Johnson 5-6. W. Barton 7-8. L. W. G. Morris 9-10. J. Ambler 11-12. Miss N. M. Askham contributed several songs, and Mr. Kershaw Thomas delighted the members with his excellent conjuring performances.

[We regret the delay in the publication of this report, but we did not receive it until last Monday.—Editor, 'The Ringing World'.]

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THE PROVING OF PEALS. YORKSHIRE ASSOCIATION'S EXPERIENCE.

To the Editor.

Dear Sir,—The subject of false peals rung throughout the country has ever been a source of disappointment to the great majority of peal ringers, especially those who keep a record of their personal performances and take pride in the achievement of same.

Many of us have already been rudely shocked by the research and discoveries of Mr. C. W. Roberts relative to traditional peals which had stood for many years as milestones in the history of the Exercise, and now proved to be false.

It will further disturb the mind of many peal ringers when I respectfully beg to inform you that Mr. William Barton, the indefatigable peal secretary of the Yorkshire Association, has, since the commencement of the war, been overhauling the records of the association and set himself the formidable task of proving all the peals rung under its auspices.

Before the war, I may say that Mr. Barton, since his appointment as peal secretary, considered it his duty to prove the figures of all peals rung and sent to him year by year, and it was found that odd ones here and there were false. Consequently they were eliminated before they could be published in the annual report, and the conductor and composer were advised accordingly.

As the annual number of peals rung previous to September, 1939, was a fairly large one, Mr. Barton had not the time to thoroughly investigate the past records, but as the number rung since the ban has been in operation (and those on handbells) is infinitesimal, he has been able to devote himself more assiduously to the task in hand.

Up to the end of the last financial year ending September, 1941, no less than 25 peals published in the association's reports were found to be false.

I understand that these were from a total of just over a thousand peals proved, and there is nearly another thousand to be gone into before his task is completed.

This is all the more alarming when it is revealed that nearly all these false peals were the work of such well known and eminent composers as the late Arthur Knights, Arthur Craven, Charles Henry Hattersley, Charles Severn, Rev. Law James, William Sottanstill, and Henry Johnson, and the methods include peals of Stedman Caters, Grandsire Caters, Cambridge Royal, Treble Bob Major and Bob Major. Also there are several efforts by our younger composers.

All this has led me to believe that quite a large number of false peals must have been rung in past years and recorded by other associations, especially where (I am not writing in any derogatory sense) peal secretaries or those responsible have not the ability to undertake this most important sphere of labour.

I do not know if there is any universal remedy for this serious blemish and thus prevent such peals being rung, but to my mind it is certainly a subject for sober thought and could be ventilated by our newly formed Ringers' Conference with a view to passing the findings, together with a recommendation (should it be thought necessary) to the Central Council for all new compositions to be proved before being published or passed to a conductor.

It would be interesting to know how many of the

(Continued in next column.)

GUILDFORD DIOCESAN GUILD.

SUCCESSFUL WAR-TIME MEETING AT LEATHERHEAD.

From the district point of view, the annual meeting held at Leatherhead on February 21st was not much to boast of, but from a broader view it was a successful war-time meeting. Thirty-two ringers attended from Bagshot, Banstead, Beddington, Cobham, Croydon, Clandon, Kingston, Isleworth, Leatherhead, London and West Grinstead.

Ringings commenced about 3.30. Grandsire Triples and Cambridge Major being rung on the (silent) tower bells, and Stedman Triples, Grandsire Triples and Caters, Bob Major and Royal on the handbells.

Service was conducted by the Rev. S. E. Hickox (priest-in-charge during the Vicar's absence), but other engagements prevented him from attending the business meeting.

Tea was served at the Duke's Head, and although numbers exceeded notifications by 50 per cent., everyone was well provided for.

Mr. A. Harman took the chair for the business meeting, and he was supported by the Guild treasurer (Mr. J. Corbett), the Guild secretary (Mr. G. L. Grover) and the district secretary (Mr. A. H. Smith).

The balance sheet showed a balance of over £11 in hand, nearly a £2 advance on the previous year.

Owing to the present circumstances, a complete report was not possible, but a few interesting and encouraging points were mentioned. Banstead still managed to ring handbells for Sunday services, the Cobham band got together at times and rang at both their churches at Christmas time, while at Leatherhead tower and handbell practices were held on Tuesday evenings with a further handbell practice on Fridays.

The district officers were re-elected for the ensuing year.

Before the nomination of Guild offices took place Mr. Grover pointed out that the Master, Major J. H. B. Hesse, had moved away from the diocese and wished the Guild to elect someone in his place.

Mr. A. Harman was nominated to fill the vacancy.

All the other officers were renominated, including the Central Council representatives, who were due to retire this year.

No other business being forthcoming, the meeting closed with votes of thanks to the Rev. Hickox for taking the service, and to Mrs. Arnold, the organist.

A few more touches on handbells and a prolonged discussion upon ringing and ringers in general brought the evening to a close.

ELLACOMBE AND CHANGE RINGING.

To the Editor.

Dear Sir,—I can quite agree with most of what Mr. Powell says about H. T. Ellacombe's ringing activity in Devon, but what I wrote in my article was quite accurate.

I was referring to the nineteenth century bell archaeologists, and I said that for them change ringing had scant interest, but Ellacombe was to some extent an exception. I have read, I think, everything he published in books, in 'Notes and Queries,' and in 'Church Bells,' and I have been through a mass of letters relating to bells sent to him from all parts of the country. The general impression I got was that he was keenly interested in bells and keenly interested in ringers; but though he clearly considered 'scientific' ringing should be encouraged, he had very few opportunities of practising it himself, and he took no particular interest in the science. He gives in one of his books a fairly long account of the old London societies, but it is merely a transcript from Osborn's unpublished history. When he was asked to report on the Mason MSS. in Downing College library for the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts, as they related to peal compositions he handed the job over to Jasper Snowdon.

I should not say that 'he had but a lukewarm interest in practical ringing,' but I should say that he was far more concerned about the bells and the men who rang them than about what they rang.

J. A. TROLLOPE.

THE PROVING OF PEALS

(Continued from previous column.)

associations actually have the figures proved before insertion in their reports, even if it is done at all.

I may add that the Yorkshire Association inserts in its report all new compositions rung throughout the year. If this is not done by other associations, I am afraid a research would bring to light an experience similar to ours.

I am sure that most ringers will agree with me that we are deeply indebted to Mr. Barton for his prodigious activities in this direction, and if only a solution can be found, his work will not be in vain.

SIDNEY F. PALMER,

Hon. Treasurer of the Yorkshire Association.
Sheffield.

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.

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THE CONFERENCE.

We remind readers that to-morrow (Saturday) is the last day for sending in notices for the agenda of the Conference. They should reach us not later than Monday next.

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-President, Albert Walker, Esq., in the chair.—T. H. Reeves, Hon. Sec., 136, Newton Road, Sparkhill, Birmingham 11.

OXFORD DIOCESAN GUILD.—North Bucks Branch.—A quarterly meeting will be held at Hanslope on Saturday, March 7th. Handbells 3 p.m. Service 3.30, followed by tea and meeting. All welcome. — R. H. Howson, 19, Greenfield Road, Newport Pagnell, Bletchley.

MIDLAND COUNTIES ASSOCIATION.—Loughborough District.—A meeting will be held at Loughborough on Saturday, March 7th, to elect officers and consider future activities. Handbells in the Foundry campanile from 4 p.m. Please attend if possible.—A. E. Rowley, Hon. Sec.

MIDLAND COUNTIES ASSOCIATION.—Leicester District.—A meeting will be held at Belgrave on March 7th. Ringing (8 bells, silent) from 3 p.m. Tea and meeting, Hotel Belgrave, near church, at 5.30 p.m.—H. W. Perkins, Hon. Dis. Sec., 53, Landseer Road, Leicester.

OXFORD DIOCESAN GUILD.—The annual general meeting (1942) will be held in the Chapter House, Christ Church, Oxford, on Saturday, March 14th, at 3.15 p.m. (p.v.). A good attendance is requested.—Richard T. Hibbert, Gen. Sec., 69, York Road, Reading.

WORCESTERSHIRE AND DISTRICTS ASSOCIATION.—Northern Branch.—Combined meeting with Dudley Guild at St. Thomas', Dudley, Saturday, March 14th (p.v.), 3 p.m. Usual arrangements.—Bernard C. Ashford, Sec., 9, Bowling Green Road, Stourbridge.

DUDLEY AND DISTRICT GUILD.—The annual meeting will be held at Dudley on Saturday, March 14th. Service 4.15 p.m. Business meeting and election of officers. Cups of tea will be provided. Please bring your own sandwiches.—John Goodman, Hon. Sec., 45, Holcroft Street, Burnt Tree, Tipton.

ANCIENT SOCIETY OF COLLEGE YOUTHS.—The next meeting will be held on Saturday, March 14th, 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 Penshurst on Saturday, March 14th. Service in Church at 4.30 p.m. Tea at 5 o'clock in the Green Tea Room, followed by business meeting. All those requiring tea please let Mr. G. Edwards, Elliott's House, Penshurst, know not later than Thursday morning, March 12th.—T. Saunders, Hon. Dis. Sec., Peckham Bush, Tonbridge.

SALISBURY DIOCESAN GUILD.—Devizes Branch.—The annual meeting will be held at Southbroom, Devizes, on Saturday, March 14th. Service in St. James' 4.30. Tea (for which please advise) 5 o'clock.—W. C. West, Branch Hon. Sec.

SURREY ASSOCIATION.—North-Western District.—The annual district meeting will be held at Leatherhead on Saturday, March 21st. Eight silent tower bells and handbells available at Parish Church from 3 p.m. and again during evening. Service at 4.45. Tea, followed by business meeting, at the Duke's Head at 5.30 p.m. Names for tea must be sent to Mr. G. Marriner, 7, Poplar Avenue, Leatherhead, as early as possible.—G. W. Massey, Hon. Dis. Sec.

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SO NOW—WHAT?

To the Editor.

Dear Sir,—Mr. Malcolm Melville is right. The so-called 'conference' is just an amusement if what is put forward is to carry no weight. It becomes no more than the ordinary correspondence we have read in 'The Ringing World' for years, and the elaborate claim that it is something different is absurd and mere eyewash.

Furthermore, what assurance have readers that any letters supporting views they hold will be published unless they are what a certain gentleman himself considers 'good copy'? A friend of mine has recently sent two letters on a subject which has been asked for, and so far neither have been published, which makes this sound like another Dr. Slack touch—the writer doesn't happen to be in 'the band.'

One always notices the subjects you lean towards by the prominence you give letters supporting your view and the way you cut down or brush aside letters against. Yet you say you do not create favouritism. To my mind, this is not only abuse of the subjects, but is a total abuse by you of your paper. I can quite understand and sympathise with the men of the Watford district. Now I expect you will be busy searching around for some excuse to make in reply to this.

ALAN PEARCE.

c/o 30, Inkerman Terrace, Northampton.
There is no need to search for any reply to this letter; our readers will supply their own.—Editor, 'Ringing World.'

SILENT RINGING

PRECAUTIONS SHOULD BE TAKEN.

To the Editor.

Dear Sir,—I notice from 'The Ringing World' that at various meetings up and down the country silent ringing is becoming very prevalent.

Now during ringing it is quite possible for one of the clappers to get unlashd, and unless the ringer of this particular bell was very keenly alert it would strike openly at least two or three times. This I am afraid would bring the authorities down on them like a thousand of bricks. Moral, lash securely.

J. E. WHEELDON.

Milton, Staffs.

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