

THE RINGING WORLD

THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE CENTRAL COUNCIL OF CHURCH BELLRINGERS

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PRINCIPAL BELLFOUNDERS

GILLETT AND JOHNSTON CROYDON

Tel. THORNTON HEATH 3221-2-3 and 3120

MEARS AND STAINBANK

34, WHITECHAPEL ROAD
LONDON, E.1

Tel. BISHOPSGATE 2599

JOHN TAYLOR & Co. LOUGHBOROUGH

These famous bell-founding firms have kindly consented to this adaptation of their advertisements to meet the pressure on our space, due to the compulsory reduction in the number of our pages this week.

RINGING TEXT BOOKS.

One of the best features of the present revival of ringing is the increased sale of the standard text books. It is a good sign of the number of recruits that are coming to the belfries, and an assurance that no small amount of the right sort of information is being given them. Seed is being sown which may produce an excellent harvest in the years to come. For at the moment the problem which faces the Exercise is not so much the old familiar one of how to find recruits as what to do with them when they are found. They must be taught, and the task of teaching change ringing is neither an easy nor a short one. All over the country there are men who are willing and eager to do everything they can. The Exercise owes them a deep debt of gratitude, and they deserve to succeed. But zeal, patience, tact and perseverance, valuable and necessary as they are, will not avail unless something of the right things are taught and in something like the right way. Really first-class instructors are not common, either in ringing or in any other sphere, and even when a man has put his best at the service of his pupils there still must remain much of the elementary things of the art which the novice has yet to learn.

There are few things comparable to change ringing in which so long and so intense a training is needed if the beginner is really to make good. The first stages seem easy enough. To handle a bell so that rounds of a sort can be rung is a matter of comparatively few lessons, and the novice begins to think that in a few months' time he will be able to take his place in a competent band as a fully fledged ringer. It does not happen. He has a long journey yet to go; there are many disappointments and much disillusionment; and the chances are that his interest wanes, and after a time, when the novelty of the thing has finally worn off, the belfry sees him no more.

These things cannot be helped. They are part of the price we must pay for having an art which, when it is learnt, will provide a man with a lifelong interest. 'Easy come, easy go,' is true of interests as well as of money. What has cost us time, and effort, and endurance, that we prize, and it is better that there should be a few recruits who stay the course, than many whose interest is slack, attendance irregular, and technical skill poor.

There must, then, be a winnowing time, but that makes it all the more necessary that every recruit shall have a full chance, and especially that every one of the right sort shall have opportunities of gaining knowledge by himself

(Continued on page 26.)

and outside the belfry. This is where the value of text books lies. They do not take the place of the instructor; they supplement and make easier his task, and they give information which usually he has neither the time nor faculty of imparting.

Text books have had a great share in the great improvement made in the Exercise during the last half-century, and that is why we say the present increased sales are a good augury for the future. But these increased sales have raised a grave problem for the owners of the books. The stocks which remained of the pre-war copies are getting low. The three works most useful for beginners, 'Ropesight,' 'The Ringers' Handbook' and 'Standard Methods,' are almost exhausted. In the case of 'Standard Methods' the last of the copies of the Diagrams has actually been sold. In these days it is no easy matter to reprint books. There is an acute paper shortage, and the paper controller, rightly, will not lightly give permits for printing books. The cost of printing and material has increased enormously, and these books have always been sold at a price which did no more than provide the interest on the capital locked up. Booksellers' profits, authors' fees, and suchlike ordinary charges, were entirely eliminated.

The owners of the books are therefore faced with the alternative of either charging a little more when they reprint or else of allowing the books to go out of circulation.

All our readers will, we are sure, agree that the latter would be little short of a calamity. The Exercise needs these books, and in the present circumstances ringers, when they realise the situation, will not grudge the small extra charge.

HANDBELL PEALS.

ENFIELD, MIDDLESEX.

THE MIDDLESEX COUNTY ASSOCIATION AND LONDON DIOCESAN GUILD.

On Sat., Jan. 8, 1944, in Two Hours and Twenty-Nine Minutes, AT 24, SUFFOLK ROAD,

A PEAL OF BOB MAJOR, 5056 CHANGES;

*ALBERT J. WALLMAN ... 1-2	JOHN THOMAS ... 5-6
MRS. THOMAS ... 3-4	†ERIC A. DENCH ... 7-8

Composed by F. BENNETT. Conducted by J. THOMAS.
* First peal of Bob Major. † First peal of Major.

ENFIELD, MIDDLESEX.

THE MIDDLESEX COUNTY ASSOCIATION AND LONDON DIOCESAN GUILD.

On Tues., Jan. 11, 1944, in Two Hours and Twenty-Three Minutes, AT 24, SUFFOLK ROAD,

A PEAL OF GRANDSIRE TRIPLES, 5040 CHANGES;

HOLT'S ORIGINAL.

ERIC A. DENCH ... 1-2	*ALBERT J. WALLMAN ... 5-6
JOHN THOMAS ... 3-4	VICTOR R. WOODARDS ... 7-8

Conducted by J. THOMAS.

* First peal on an inside pair.

THE LATE MR. E. F. BEHAN

To the Editor.

Dear Sir,—The late Mr. E. F. Behan, when visiting this country in 1905, took part in a peal of Grandsire Triples at Ashted on Monday, September 21st, which I had the honour of conducting. It was rung as a farewell compliment on his leaving for South Africa on September 26th. Mr. Behan rang the 2nd.

T. HOYLE.

The Angles, Ashted.

EIGHT BELL PEALS.

OXFORD.

THE OXFORD DIOCESAN GUILD.

On Tuesday, Jan. 11, 1944, in Two Hours and Forty-Four Minutes, AT THE CHURCH OF ST. EBBE,

A PEAL OF LITTLE BOB MAJOR, 5040 CHANGES;

Tenor 4½ cwt.	
WALTER F. JUDGE ... Treble	REV. JOHN P. PELLOE ... 5
WILLIAM H. B. WILKINS ... 2	*JOHN E. SPICE ... 6
CHARLES COLES ... 3	REV. M. C. C. MELVILLE ... 7
VICTOR J. F. BENNETT ... 4	MISS MARIE R. CROSS...Tenor

Composed by N. J. PITSTOW (C.C.C. No. 88).

Conducted by JOHN E. SPICE.

* First peal in the method on tower bells and as conductor. The first peal in the method on the bells and by all the band except the ringers of treble and 6th.

GUILDFORD, SURREY.

THE GUILDFORD DIOCESAN GUILD.

On Saturday, Jan. 15, 1944, in Three Hours and Fifteen Minutes, AT THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF THE HOLY TRINITY,

A PEAL OF STEDMAN TRIPLES, 5040 CHANGES;

PITSTOW'S VARIATION. Tenor 23 cwt. 3 qr. 8 lb. in D.	
WALTER F. JUDGE ... Treble	CHARLES HAZELDEN ... 5
*MISS VALHALLA HILL ... 2	CLARENCE H. DOBBIE ... 6
ALFRED H. PULLING ... 3	†C. ERNEST SMITH ... 7
WILLIAM J. ROBINSON ... 4	WILLIAM T. BEESON ...Tenor

Conducted by A. H. PULLING.

* First peal of Stedman. † 100th peal of Stedman.

BLACKHILL, CO. DURHAM.

THE DURHAM AND NEWCASTLE DIOCESAN ASSOCIATION.

On Sat., Jan. 15, 1944, in Three Hours and Twenty-Eight Minutes, AT THE CHURCH OF ST. AIDAN,

A PEAL OF KENT TREBLE BOB MAJOR, 5120 CHANGES;

Tenor 10 cwt. 2 qr. 7 lb. in F sharp.

JOHN M. BROADBENT ... Treble	CHRISTOPHER T. LAMB ... 5
*JACK LISHMAN ... 2	DENIS A. BAYLES ... 6
JOHN A. BROWN ... 3	WILLIAM TYSON ... 7
W. LESLIE ASKEW ... 4	GEORGE WILKINSON ...Tenor

Composed by J. REEVES. Conducted by DENIS A. BAYLES.

* First peal of Major and first inside. First peal of Treble Bob Major as conductor and first attempt.

TIPTON, STAFFORDSHIRE.

THE SOCIETY FOR THE ARCHDEACONRY OF STAFFORD.

On Saturday, Jan. 15, 1944, in Three Hours,

AT THE CHURCH OF ST. MARTIN,

A PEAL OF GRANDSIRE TRIPLES, 5040 CHANGES;

PARKER'S 12-PART (7th observation). Tenor 12½ cwt.

CLIFFORD SKIDMORE ... Treble	BERNARD LAWTON ... 5
JOHN LLOYD ... 2	ALBERT D. COLLINS ... 6
NORMAN G. LEECH ... 3	GEORGE HUGHES ... 7
*ALBERT E. MUNDAY ... 4	WILLIAM LOWE ...Tenor

Conducted by NORMAN G. LEECH.

* First peal. The ringer of the seventh has now completed the circle in this tower.

SIX BELL PEAL.

CRANFORD, MIDDLESEX.

THE MIDDLESEX COUNTY ASSOCIATION AND LONDON DIOCESAN GUILD.

On Sat., Jan. 8, 1944, in Two Hours and Forty-Three Minutes, AT THE CHURCH OF ST. DUNSTAN,

A PEAL OF MINOR, 5040 CHANGES;

Being two 720's each of Double Court and St. Clement's, and three 720's of Plain Bob. Tenor 7½ cwt. in B flat.

*FRANK C. PRICE ... Treble	†GEORGE C. GOODMAN ... 4
*RICHARD E. PRICE ... 2	H. WILLIAM BARRETT ... 5
†MILES A. BEAUCHAMP ... 3	TONY PRICE ... Tenor

Conducted by TONY PRICE.

* First peal, aged 10 years 5 months and 12 years 4 months respectively. † First peal inside. ‡ First peal of Minor. Frank C. Price is believed to be the youngest peal ringer on tower bells.

CENTRAL TOWERS.

By ERNEST MORRIS.

(Continued from page 21.)

The central tower of St. Mary's, Ilminster, Somerset, copies the central tower of Wells Cathedral. Both are broad and triple fenestration results. The two stages, however, are less intimately connected at Ilminster than in the Wells central tower. The pinnacles derive from the cathedral tower but are less imposing than those of St. Cuthbert's, Wells; this is compensated by running up minor pinnacles. The windows have 'Somerset tracery,' and great prominence is given to the stair turret. There are eight bells, the tenor being 22 cwt. 3 qr. 9 lb., by Thomas Bilbie, who recast it in 1732. William Bilbie cast the 5th in 1790. The 4th and 6th are dated 1611, and by G.P. (George Purdue), both inscribed: 'drawe neare to God.' The 7th, an ancient bell, simply dated 'anno domini 1583, W.P.,' with all crowned capitals, was recast by J. Taylor and Co. in 1902. At the same time two trebles were added by the same firm, and all the eight rehung in an iron frame. The 3rd is by J. Warner and Sons, 1861.

The central tower and spire at St. Mary-the-Virgin, Almondsbury, Glos, is somewhat unique, and the approach to its ringing room unusual. One enters by a stairway on the north side of the church to the roof: thence across this to the tower, and on entering one finds oneself not at floor level but near the ceiling. Thus one has to go down some 15ft. by a wooden stair. The lead spire is unusual, being one of the very few of its kind in England, others being at Barnstaple, Godalming, and the famous crooked one at Chesterfield. In 1926 this spire was entirely recased inside and out, the entire covering of lead, a matter of some 14 tons, being recast and refixed consistent with not altering its original appearance. The whole structure of the spire was reinforced by the addition of several new beams (some of them 10in. square and 30ft. long), and strengthening of some of the old ones.

The eight bells (tenor 23 cwt.) are worthy of this beautiful spire. Up to 1743 Almondsbury possessed five bells, and in that year Abel Rudhall recast the first four into five, leaving the old tenor of 1601 by Richard and William Purdue, and the present 7th records this fact thus: 'These bells were recast into six by Abel Rudhall, Anno Domini 1743, out of the rents of the church lands in the hands of Thomas Chester Esq. Treasurer thereof.' In 1751 Rudhall added two trebles to make the octave. About 1875 the 6th was struck and cracked by the clapper of the 7th which broke during ringing. It was recast in 1881 by Llewellyn and James, of Bristol. In 1903 the bells were quarter-turned and rehung in a new frame by John Sully, of Stogumber, Somerset.

The handsome church of St. Paul, Burton-on-Trent, given by Mr. Michael T. Bass, has a grand central tower, panelled and battlemented. It is, of course, a tower noted in the annals of change ringing, and at the present time contains a ring of ten, with a tenor 28½ cwt. in D. The approach to the ringing chamber here is not direct, but first by a short spiral stairway affixed halfway along the west side of the south transept; on emerging, one then goes up the sloping roof of side aisle by stone steps to the central tower turret and up a further spiral stairway.

Originally this tower had a ring of eight by J. Taylor

and Co., dated 1872 with a tenor 15 cwt. 3 qr. 21 lb. in F, and in the belfry were exceeding noisy. The late Sir A. P. Heywood, who often visited the tower, said of it, 'Although the church was built regardless of expense, the belfry was, from the noise of the bells, the worst adapted for ringing of any in which I have ever rung, and I have rung in some bad ones.'

The Burton ringers progressed in the art very rapidly, reaching the zenith of their fame in the years 1885-88. The first peal of Stedman Triples was rung in May, 1883, but it was in ringing Double Norwich Major that they excelled.

On November 18th, 1882, they rang the longest length in the method achieved up to that time, 7,200, at Beeston, Notts. The names of that band are worth recalling: Harry Wakley, Edward I. Stone, John Jaggar, Joseph Griffin, A. Wakley, George Appleby, Jasper W. Snowdon and William Wakley. For some years, this was their favourite method; in fact, in the year 1885 they rang eleven peals in the method in succession, seven of them within the space of about six weeks.

Superlative Surprise followed, and in peals in this method, attempted up to then on only rare occasions, they were equally successful, and were the first band to achieve the extent with the tenors together, this being rung on January 24th, 1885. At the end of the same year they rang, with Joseph Field, Charles Hounslow and James W. Washbrook, of Oxford, three peals of Superlative in three successive days, a unique performance at that time.

In 1886 they scored the first peal of New Cumberland Surprise Major ever rung, and at the first attempt. Cambridge Surprise was also at that time practised at Burton, and three peals were rung in three attempts in twelve days in February, 1887, including the full 5,600, which was William Wakley's 100th peal. In April, the Burton men rang the first peal of Cambridge in the Burton variation (New Cambridge, as it is now known), and on September 1st of the same year came the crowning triumph, a peal of London Surprise, the first by all the band and the fourth ever rung. About twelve months afterwards the extent of London, with the tenors together, was rung at Burton.

The Burton band also rang the first peal of London Surprise Major ever rung in London, this being at All Saints', Fulham. This was on December 8th, 1888, and they rang another peal of London before the year was out.

In 1912 the old ring of eight was recast with added metal, the tenor being now 28½ cwt. in D, and they bear Latin inscriptions from the Holy Communion Service. Two trebles were added later, and now Burton possesses a grand ring of ten. Peals of Caters and Royal have periodically been rung on them. The late J. Swinfield for many years had charge of the belfry, which he kept in an ideal condition.

(To be continued.)

THE HANDBELL PEAL AT WELLINGTON

To the Editor.

Dear Sir,—The handbell peal of Bob Major rung at Wellington on December 16th was the first in the county of Shropshire and, of course, for the Shropshire Association. The ringers represented four counties, Kent, Yorkshire, Surrey and Cheshire. We in this county would like to congratulate them and to thank them for their great help in teaching learners tower and handbell ringing.

And now, Mr. Editor, with your kind permission, we Salopians would like to thank you personally for all you have done to keep 'The Ringing World' to the very high standard it is. Also the three 'stalwarts' who have so bravely taken on the great responsibility as trustees.

WILLIAM SAUNDERS.

Coalbrookdale.

'THE RINGING WORLD.'

The official journal of the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers.

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We have received a letter from Mr. A. R. Wilson, the hon. secretary of the Holy Trinity Ringers' Association of Hobart, Tasmania, asking us to convey Christmas and New Year's greetings to all bellringers.

Ringers attending the meeting of the Leeds and District Society at Pudsey on January 29th should note that the meeting place has been altered to the Conservative Club.

The peal of Stedman Triples at Guildford Cathedral was specially arranged for the 42nd anniversary of Mr. Hazelden and the conductor's first peal together.

ACOUSTICS OF THE BELFRY.

To the Editor.

Dear Sir,—It is to be hoped that your timely article, 'The Acoustics of the Belfry,' will receive the wide attention of ringers and, more particularly, people concerned with bell hanging, whether in new or existing towers. To do most of one's ringing, as many ringers must, in a tower where the bells are too noisy, not noisy enough, or, worst of all, where the sound of individual bells is predominant, must be sheer martyrdom.

Some 20 years ago it was decided to build a tower to complete a church, near London, which had been built some half century before. The Central Council, prompted by the commendable foresight of a local ringer, persuaded the church authorities to have the architect's plans altered to conform with the Council's ideal bell tower. Those of us who, some eight years ago, were privileged to stand outside the tower during the ringing of the opening touch on the really fine peal of eight which had then been installed could not fail to be delighted by the beautiful effect of the bells in the immediate neighbourhood.

Unhappily, the arrangements inside the tower were, and still are, an entirely different story. The only barrier between the ringers and the bells is a wooden floor with open joists. Some two or three months ago a friend wrote, 'I went to — on Saturday and took hold for a long course of Treble Bob, but the noise of the bells affected me so much that I had to stop.'

Obviously this is not the direct concern of the bell hangers, but in such a case a word in season from them to the church authorities would be most effective. It is hardly likely that church authorities willing to raise funds for an entirely new peal of bells would willingly spoil the ship for a haporth of tar.

The bell hangers are obviously the people most qualified to advise church authorities on the need for acoustic arrangements, and the fulfilment of this function is surely a debt they owe to ringers, who, after all, are in no small way responsible for a considerable proportion of their business.

P. A. CORBY.

Sutton, Ely.

SUSSEX COUNTY ASSOCIATION.

With the co-operation of the Cathedral ringers, a meeting of the Western Division of the Sussex County Association was held at Chichester on January 8th.

The ringers' service was incorporated with evensong, seats being reserved in the choir stalls. The Dean gave the address and presided over the business meeting, which followed tea kindly provided by the Cathedral ringers.

More than 30 ringers from 15 towers took part in the ringing, which ranged from rounds to Cambridge Surprise.

THE CROYDON BELL FOUNDRY.

CENTENARY OF MESSRS. GILLETT AND JOHNSTON.

This year is the centenary of the firm of Gillett and Johnston, whose bells and clocks are known not only all over this country, but in other parts of the world.

William Gillett, a young clockmaker at Hadlow, in Kent, started the firm. In 1837 he moved to Clerkenwell, and in 1844 he went to Croydon and opened a clock factory on the site of the present works at the corner of Whitehorse and Union Roads. Since then the bell foundry which he founded has been considerably enlarged and has won world-wide renown.

Subsequently Mr. Bland, a manufacturer from the North of England, joined Mr. Gillett and the firm became known as Gillett and Bland.

During this partnership the firm began to attain considerable distinction, and many large orders were received for tower clocks for new town halls, cathedrals and churches.

Mr. Bland used to travel about to get the orders, and it is on record that on more than one occasion he sat on the doorstep of the office until he had obtained his order. In the meanwhile Mr. Gillett and his workmen made the clocks.

Soon a steady flow of tower clocks and clocks for post offices and public buildings was being sent out to all parts of the world.

In 1877 the late Mr. Arthur Anderson Johnston joined the firm as a junior partner, and in the same year the firm embarked on the founding of bells as an additional manufacture.

Mr. A. A. Johnston rapidly became a prominent resident of Croydon, and he secured election to the Borough Council, on which he served for some years, rendering good service to the community.

After the death of Mr. Gillett and the retirement of Mr. Bland, Mr. A. A. Johnston became sole proprietor until his son, Mr. Cyril F. Johnston (the present managing director) joined as junior partner, after having served his apprenticeship in the works. On the death of Mr. A. A. Johnston in 1916 Mr. Cyril Johnston succeeded him as head of the firm. At that time he was serving as an officer with the Grenadier Guards in France.

Until recently Mr. Cyril Johnston was the C.O. of the firm's own Home Guard unit, which was raised at the inception of the L.D.V. in 1940 and which now numbers 65 men.

Among the firm's great achievements was the Toronto clock, erected in 1902, and for long the largest striking clock in America. The contract was secured in the face of the keenest international competition.

Croydon's Town Hall clock and bells were made by Gillett and Johnston, but it is not generally known that some of the metal used came from the old bells of Eddystone Lighthouse which had been melted down.

Among the most important tower clocks made by the firm are the following: St. James' Palace, London, Windsor Castle, Toronto City Hall, the Town Halls of Manchester, Cardiff, Lambeth, Bradford, Lancaster and Chorley, Birmingham Art Gallery, Reading University, Rangoon Municipal Buildings, Sydney Post Office, Bombay Harbour, Singapore Memorial Tower, Gibraltar Barracks, Johannesburg Post Office, Penang Railway Station and Buenos Aires Memorial Tower.

But for the war there would no doubt have been celebrations befitting so important an occasion. These had necessarily in existing circumstances to be restricted, but they were nevertheless of a hearty and cordial character as befits a firm which has always maintained a happy association with its employes. They were in the form of a New Year's party—a party with a happy family atmosphere—on Tuesday, at the Grandison Hall, Norbury.

Among the guests at the party were the Mayor (Councillor A. L. Boddington) and Mayoress, Col. A. Keevil, O.B.E., M.C., Home Guard Z Sector Commander, Lt.-Col. G. H. Ward, O.C. 60th Surrey Home Guard, and officers of the East Yorkshire Regiment.

Children of employes of the firm were included in the celebrations, for on Saturday between 60 and 70 enjoyed a New Year party which went with a swing from start to finish with plenty of 'goodies' and lots of fun.

LANCASHIRE ASSOCIATION

MEETING AT EAST CROMPTON.

A meeting of the Rochdale Branch of the Lancashire Association was held at East Crompton on January 8th. Ringing began with rounds and call changes for beginners, and included Grandsire and Stedman Doubles, and Plain Bob, Kent Treble Bob, Oxford, Sandal, London Scholars' Pleasure, and Spliced Oxford and Kent Minor. Among those present were the Rev. F. F. Rigby, the president of the association, Mr. F. Hodgson, of Liversedge, and three young ladies from Moorside.

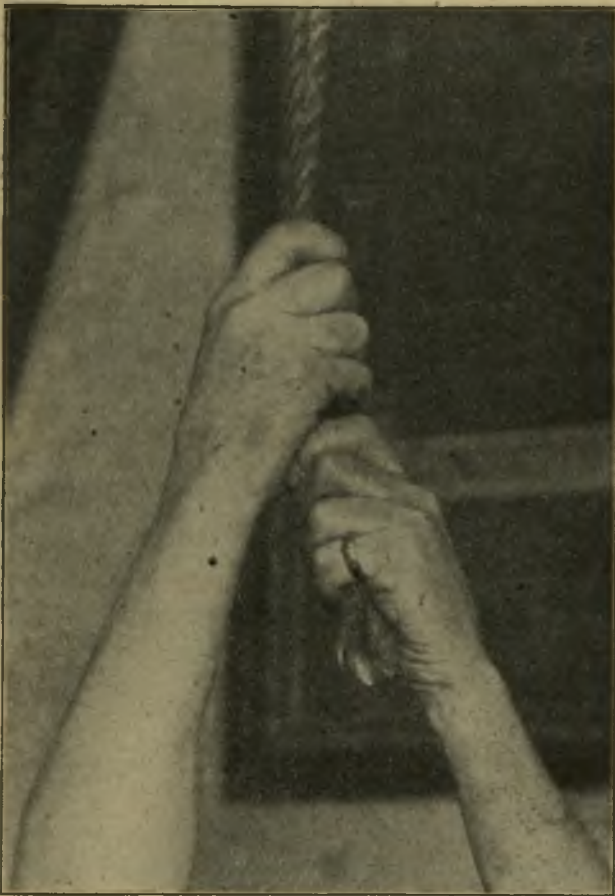
Refreshments were provided by Mr. and Mrs. R. H. Byrom, and there was some handbell ringing at their house before the members returned to the belfry, where the business meeting was presided over by the Vicar, the Rev. D. Williams, who welcomed the members and expressed a hope that they would continue their good work. The chairman was elected an honorary member of the association.

Leesfield was selected as the place of the next meeting, to be held on February 5th. Thanks were given to the Vicar and those providing the tea. About 25 ringers were present.

HANDLING A BELL.

(Continued from page 16.)

Some men advise instructors to give their pupils practice in bell handling first at backstroke and afterwards at handstroke. They include Jasper Snowdon and the authors of the Central Council publication, 'Hints to Instructors.' The opinion of such authorities must not be lightly regarded, but we prefer to begin with the handstroke. Our preference is, no doubt, largely due to the



BACKSTROKE.

fact that we have been accustomed to that way for more than half a century, but there are some more solid reasons. The instructors' job is to teach his pupil two distinct things. First to 'feel' his bell, which means to control its upward swing; and, secondly, to give the right amount of energy to the downward swing at the right moment. The second follows almost instantaneously on the first, but the two are not simultaneous. The natural tendency of the novice is to pull the rope as quickly as he can, and the result is that he has no control and is very

faulty in his timing—either too quick or too slow. At handstroke the instructor can much more easily observe what his pupil is doing, can check faults, and can himself lend a hand if it is necessary to steady the bell.

And here let us stress the importance of explaining clearly to the pupil what he has to do so that he understands it. Never let him go on in an imperfect or faulty style, hoping that practice will cure his faults. If he shows any tendency to do the wrong thing, or to omit to do the right, stop him at once. Show him by example and precept what he ought to do. If he has the right stuff in him, good instruction will soon yield an abundant harvest.

When the backstroke lesson begins, the very first thing is to adjust the tail end to the proper length. This is most important. The ringer should grasp the tail end firmly and naturally with both hands, the lower one (which is the hand he held the rope in at handstroke) not more than about three inches from the end, as shown in the illustration. When he stands erect with his arms fully stretched, but not strained, the bell should be just over the balance, far enough to hold the bell, but no more.

The instructor, who has the sally, will then tell him to ring the bell slowly, or quickly, or to hold it indefinitely, as he did when he was practising at handstroke. The pupil should not be told to set the bell at backstroke. If his rope is the right length, he would not be able to do so, unless he stretched his arms beyond the normal and perhaps had to reach up with one hand. As a general rule it may be said that if a ringer can put his two hands easily on the rope, when it is set at backstroke, without straining or going on to his toes, the rope is too long for him. With bells of heavy-medium weight and upwards it is often the case that the tail end of the set bell is quite beyond the reach of the man who has rung it comfortably and easily to a peal. It is comparatively seldom that bells need be set at backstroke, and novices can leave that until the future.

The reason for these things is that bells normally are rung appreciably higher at handstroke than at back. When we enquire why it should be so, the first thing which forces itself on our attention is the open handstroke lead used in change ringing. The two undoubtedly are connected, but the real historical reason lies in the way bell hanging was evolved from the primitive lever and rope.

When bells were fitted with half wheels, all the pulling necessarily was done from backstroke, for the bells were swung little more than frame high, and there properly was no handstroke at all, only the natural return swing of a pendulum. Early in the seventeenth century three-quarter wheels began to be fitted, so that the bells could be rung higher or (as the saying then was) at a greater compass. Still, almost all the pulling was at handstroke, for the rope was attached to the wheel, not as it is now, but at or near the top of the wheel when the bell is down.

(Continued on next page.)

TOWER CLOCKS

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HANDLING A BELL.

(Continued from previous page.)

This was the time when change ringing in its early and rudimentary forms was introduced, and for long changes could only be made at hand, because the bells could not be rung high enough at back to make changes there. Then came improvements—the shifting of the position of the garter hole of the wheel through which the rope is passed, the introduction of full wheels, the proper placing of pulley blocks, fitting of woollen sallies, and the rest. These things made modern half-pull ringing possible, but throughout the influence of the old-style hanging remained. Down to quite recent times the round ringers of the West pulled their ropes as their forefathers had done three and four centuries before them, and the style has not yet entirely disappeared.

Not only so, but traces of the influence of the old-style hanging still remain among change ringers. Watch an ordinary skilled ringer pulling a bell casually, say, to try his rope before starting up for a peal. Almost certainly he will definitely make his backstrokes quicker than his handstrokes. It is the natural thing to do.

Thus we may be as certain as we reasonably can be of something which happened unnoticed long ago, that the open handstroke lead was forced on ringers by the way bells are hung, and it was not until long afterwards, and then gradually and partially, that its great musical effect was recognised. It is significant that no attempts were ever made to introduce the open lead into the swing chiming which was universal for Sunday service use; and if it is objected that it would have been difficult to do so, that would only agree with our argument; for we may be sure that mere difficulty would not have prevented the attempt being made if musical effect had been the main object.

ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO.

Last Tuesday was the centenary of one of the outstanding performances of the Exercise. On January 18th, 1844, the Norwich Scholars rang at St. Peter Mancroft 7,126 changes of Stedman Cinques, beating the previous longest length in the method rung 24 years earlier at St. Martin's, Birmingham. To-day such a performance does not on paper look a very remarkable one, but circumstances have entirely changed and comparisons are misleading and futile. The traditions of this peal were that it was splendidly struck, and generally the old Norwich men owed as much of their great reputation to the way in which they rang their peals as to the methods they rang.

'The Era' of January 26th, 1844, the sporting paper of the time, which reported ringing performances, said: 'On the 18th last the Norwich scholars of St. Peter Mancroft, ascended the tower and rung on that noble peal of twelve bells, the longest peal of cinques, on Stedman's principle, ever accomplished in England. The time occupied in changes was five hours and seventeen minutes. The brilliant performance of this arduous task, and bold and regular striking, reflects the highest credit on the band.'

Charles Middleton, so well known as the composer of Cambridge Surprise, rang the fourth, and Henry Hubbard, the author of a ringing text book, rang the eleventh. The last survivor of the band, William Freeman, is well remembered by persons still alive.

This was the last of the really great performances by the Norwich Scholars. They continued to ring a few peals, but not many years later decline set in.

NEW YEAR'S CELEBRATION AT LEICESTER.

At half-past nine in the evening of December 31st, 58 persons, consisting of ringers, their wives and friends, sat down to supper in the Mayor's Parlour at the ancient Guildhall adjoining the Cathedral at Leicester. The building was originally erected in 1393 by the Corpus Christi Guild and was used as the Town Hall from 1459 till 1876. Among those present were the Provost (the Very Rev. H. A. Jones) and the Rev. R. C. Chandler.

Proposing the toast of 'Leicester Cathedral,' Mr. H. J. Poole referred to the old records of St. Martin's Church (now the Cathedral), in which items for the repairs of the bells repeatedly appear, and said that in these days of modern bell hanging, when bells did not need even oiling for years, the church authorities were apt to forget they had a peal of bells so far as concerns the accounts. At the Cathedral, however, with the teaching of learners and the occasional breaking of a stay, it was not possible for this to happen. He reminded the Provost of a pre-war arrangement that the bells would be available for a peal once a month, and said that the present peal were not nearly so noisy as the former peal. On a recent Saturday afternoon it was arranged to ring for a Confirmation service, but the verger said he did not know whether they could ring, as there was a special chess match with visitors from various parts of the country in the Church House adjoining. He was reminded that the ringing was for a special service, and it was arranged for him to come to the belfry should the bells prove too noisy for play to proceed. He never came and the following day reported that he saw the president of the Chess Association and enquired if the bells caused any inconvenience. The president replied, 'What bells?' and on being told the Cathedral bells, said, 'Were they ringing?'

The Provost said he much appreciated the efforts and enthusiasm of the ringers. He easily disposed of complaints regarding the bells by telling the complainants to report their grievance to Inspector Poole, of the City Police. He never heard any more of them.

A course of Stedman Cinques was rung on handbells, and Mr. W. C. Dunford entertained with some clever sketching.

The old year was rung out and the new year opened with good wishes to all, ceremonial ringing and a course of Cambridge Surprise Royal.

THE ST. MARTIN'S GUILD, BIRMINGHAM.

ANNUAL MEETING.

The annual meeting of the St. Martin's Guild for the Diocese of Birmingham was held on January 1st. After various methods had been rung on the bells of St. Martin's, the business meeting was at the society's club room at the Tomworth Arms, Moor Street, the Master, Mr. Councillor A. Paddon Smith, being in the chair.

Messrs. T. Abbotts and O. N. Thomas, of Shirley, and Mr. E. Atkinson, of Kingstanding, were elected members. The next quarterly meeting was fixed for April 1st at Aston Parish Church.

Mr. Thomas H. Reeves, the hon. secretary and treasurer, in presenting the balance sheet, said that the finances were in a very healthy condition. Subscriptions had come in well and expenses had been kept low, with the result that during the year the credit balance at the bank had been increased by £10. The auditors, Messrs. G. E. and H. H. Fearn, reported, and the balance sheet was adopted.

The president and vice-presidents were re-elected on the proposition of Mr. Reeves, seconded by Mr. W. C. Dowding.

Mr. Albert Walker was elected Master on the proposition of Mr. H. C. Spencer, seconded by Mr. G. F. Swann, and took the chair.

Mr. George E. Fearn was elected Ringing Master on the proposition of Mr. E. T. Alloway, seconded by Mr. G. F. Swann.

The trustees, Mr. A. Paddon Smith and Mr. E. T. Alloway, the auditors, the hon. librarian, Mr. G. F. Swann, and the hon. secretary and treasurer, Mr. T. H. Reeves, were all re-elected.

It was decided to hold the Henry Johnson commemoration lunch on March 4th and to invite the Rector of Birmingham to preside. The arrangements were left in the hands of the secretary.

Apologies for absence were received from Messrs. J. George, G. Williams and A. E. Norman.

The business was followed by a social hour and handbell ringing.

DEATH.

COOPER.—On January 4th, 1944, Mary Ann, beloved wife of Charles William Cooper, 46, Cemetery Road, Lye, Stourbridge. Passed peacefully away. Sincere thanks to all friends for kind expressions of sympathy.

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NOTICES.

THE CHARGE FOR NOTICES of Meetings inserted under this heading is at the rate of 4d. per line (average 8 words) per insertion, with the minimum charge of 2/-.

ESSEX ASSOCIATION.—South-Eastern District.—Annual district meeting at Great Baddow, Saturday, Jan. 22nd. Ringing 3 p.m. and after tea. Service 4.30. Tea and meeting afterwards.—H. W. Shadrack, Hon. Dis. Sec.

OXFORD DIOCESAN GUILD.—Banbury Branch.—Meeting at Lower Heyford, Saturday, Jan. 22nd. Bells (6) from 2.30. Service 4.30. Tea and meeting to follow. Please notify.—E. Pearson, Adderbury West, Banbury, Oxon.

WORCESTERSHIRE AND DISTRICTS ASSOCIATION.—Northern Branch.—Quarterly meeting, Stourbridge (8 bells), Jan. 22nd, 2.30 p.m. Service 4.15 p.m. Tea and business 5 p.m.—Bernard C. Ashford, Sec., Bowling Green Road, Stourbridge.

ELY DIOCESAN ASSOCIATION.—Hunts District.—Meeting at Great Staughton on Saturday, Jan. 22nd. Bells (6) 3 p.m. to 8 p.m. Service 4.30. It is hoped to arrange tea.—H. J. Parker, Dis. Sec.

ANCIENT SOCIETY OF COLLEGE YOUTHS.—Meeting at Bell Foundry, 34, Whitechapel Road, E.1, Jan. 29th, 3 p.m. Ringing at St. Botolph's, Bishopsgate.—A. B. Peck, 1, Eversfield Road, Reigate.

LEEDS AND DISTRICT SOCIETY.—Meeting at Pudsey, Saturday, Jan. 29th. Bells 2.30 to 4.30 p.m. Tea only for those who send names to Mr. W. Barton, 9, Pembroke Road, Pudsey, near Leeds, by Jan. 27th. Business meeting in the Conservative Club, 6.30 p.m.—H. Lofthouse, Hon. Sec.

ESSEX ASSOCIATION.—Northern Division.—Annual district meeting at Bocking, Saturday, Jan. 29th. Bells (8) from 2 p.m. and during blackout. Service 4 p.m. Bring food; cups of tea provided.—Hilda G. Snowden, Hon. Dis. Sec.

PETERBOROUGH DIOCESAN GUILD.—Wellingborough Branch.—Annual meeting at Irchester (8 bells) on Saturday, Jan. 29th. Service 4.30. Notify for tea.—A. Bigley, 30, Allen Road, Irthlingborough.

BATH AND WELLS DIOCESAN ASSOCIATION.—Ilchester Deanery Branch.—Annual meeting at Martock, Saturday, Jan. 29th. Service 4 p.m. Tea and meeting to follow. Notify early for tea.—F. Farrant, Martock, Somerset.

MIDLAND COUNTIES ASSOCIATION.—Special general meeting Leicester, Jan. 29th, St. Margaret's bells (12) 2 p.m. Committee meet in choir vestry 3 p.m. Tea at Co-op, High Street, 5 p.m., only to those who notify me by the 26th. Further details next week.—Ernest Morris, Gen. Hon. Sec., 24, Coventry Street, Leicester.

GUILDFORD DIOCESAN GUILD.—Farnham District.—Annual meeting at Farnham, Saturday, Jan. 29th. Bells (8) 3 p.m. Service 4.30. Tea 5 p.m. Numbers for tea to Mr. R. Hasted, 1, Victoria Villas, St. George's Road, Farnham, by Jan. 26th.—W. Viggers, for Hon. Sec.

ELY DIOCESAN ASSOCIATION.—Wisbech Branch.—Annual meeting at Wisbech on Saturday, Jan. 29th. Bells (10) 2.30 p.m. Service 4.30. Tea at 5. Tower blacked out.—W. W. Cousins, Dis. Sec., Terrington St. John, Wisbech.

LINCOLN DIOCESAN GUILD.—Northern Branch.—Gainsborough District.—Annual meeting at All Saints', Gainsborough, on Saturday, Jan. 29th. Bells afternoon and evening. Service at 4 p.m. No tea arrangements; cafes in the town. Business meeting in the belfry at 6 p.m.—Geo. L. A. Lunn, Hon. Sec., 248, Lea Road, Gainsborough.

GLOUCESTER AND BRISTOL ASSOCIATION.—South Forest Branch.—Meeting at Lydney, Saturday, Jan. 29th. Bells (8) 4.30 p.m. Meeting at Cross Keys Hotel. Election of officers.—Oliver Thomas, Hon. Sec.

KENT COUNTY ASSOCIATION.—Lewisham District.—Meeting at St. John-the-Baptist, Erith, on Saturday, Jan. 29th, 2 p.m. Service 4.15. Tea will be arranged, if possible, for those notifying me by Tuesday, Jan. 25th.—A. G. Hill, Hon. Dis. Sec., 53, Hengist Road, Erith, Kent.

KINGSTON SEYMOUR.—Meeting, Saturday, Jan. 29th. Bells 2.30 p.m. Tea 5, after which Yatton bells available.—Percy G. Yeo, Hon. Local Sec., Long Ashton.

PETERBOROUGH DIOCESAN GUILD.—Towcester Branch.—Annual meeting at Towcester, Saturday, Jan. 29th. Tea 3.45. Service 4.30. Names by Tuesday, the 25th, to Rev. E. V. Fenn, Lois Weedon, Towcester.

LANCASHIRE ASSOCIATION.—Preston Branch.—Meeting at St. Mary's, Brownedge, Bamber Bridge, Saturday, Jan. 29th. Bells 2.30. Bring food.—Fred Rigby, Hon. Sec., 8, Carrington Road, Chorley.

DONCASTER AND DISTRICT ASSOCIATION.—Annual meeting at Doncaster, Jan. 29th, 2.30. Meeting Clergy House at 6. Own arrangements for tea. Several cafes near the church.—W. E. Lloyd, Sec.

MIDDLESEX COUNTY ASSOCIATION.—Meeting at Fulham, Saturday, Jan. 29th. Bells 3.30 to 5. Short meeting in belfry after, then handbell ringing till blackout. No tea arrangements.—J. E. Lewis Cockey, Hon. Dis. Sec.

PETERBOROUGH DIOCESAN GUILD.—Daventry Branch.—Annual meeting at Daventry (8 bells), Saturday, Jan. 29th. Usual arrangements. Notify for tea.—W. C. Moore, 5, Williams Terrace, Daventry, Northants.

CHESTER DIOCESAN GUILD.—Stockport and Bowdon Branch.—Annual meeting at Norbury, Saturday, Jan. 29th. Service 4.30. Tea 5.15. Bring food.—T. Wilde, Hon. Sec.

LANCASHIRE ASSOCIATION.—Preston Branch.—Meeting at Adlington St. Paul's on Saturday, Jan. 29th. Bells (8) 2.30. Bring food.—Fred Rigby, Hon. Sec., 8, Carrington Road, Chorley.

SHROPSHIRE ASSOCIATION.—Annual meeting, St. Chad's, Shrewsbury, February 5th. Bells (12) 3 p.m. Service 4 p.m. Business meeting. Tea at cafe in town.—E. D. Poole, Hon. Sec.

MIDLAND COUNTIES ASSOCIATION.—Nottingham District.—Annual meeting at Bulwell, Saturday, Feb. 5th. Bells 2.30 to 8. Tea 4.30, followed by meeting. Election of officers and other important business. Names for tea must reach Mr. F. Smith, 47, Minerva Street, Bulwell, by Monday, Jan. 31st.—T. Groombridge, jun., Hon. Dis. Sec.

NORWICH DIOCESAN ASSOCIATION.—Meeting at St. John-de-Sepulchre, Norwich, on Saturday, February 5th. Bells (8) from 2. Service 4.15. Tea and meeting at Ber House (1s. each), 4.45 p.m. Names for tea by Feb. 1st.—A. G. G. Thurlow, Gen. Sec., 52, The Close, Norwich.

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