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THE LENGTH OF PEALS.

Why should five thousand changes be necessary for a peal? Would it not do just as well to fix a shorter number and ring for two hours instead of the three which are now usual? These are questions which have been asked before, and a correspondent this week returns to the subject and gives what he considers good reasons for making the change. They are obvious enough and will readily occur to almost anyone who stops to think for a moment. There would be less risk of creating annoyance and so fewer complaints. There would be more likelihood of permission to ring being granted and so more attempts. There would be less physical strain for those who feel that the full three hours is too much for them. The chances of failure would be fewer and so there would be more peals.

These things are obvious, so obvious that they must have been clear all along, and yet the Exercise has never shown the slightest tendency to alter the standard which was set up two and a half centuries ago. It was accepted, without any consideration or discussion, simply because it seemed the natural length for a peal. No doubt what first suggested it was that it is the extent of the changes on seven bells, and we may assume that bands were ringing or attempting to ring the whole peal of Grandsire Triples (though it was false) long before there was any idea of fixing a length for all numbers. When, however, bands did think of ringing peals of Major, and Caters, and (a little later) Royal and Maximus, five thousand changes seemed so much the natural length to be aimed at that men do not appear even to have thought of any other. They looked upon it, however, not so much as the standard length of a peal, as the minimum—the shortest length worth recording in peal books or on peal boards—and the proportion of longer lengths they rang was much greater than it has been in recent years. The last forty or fifty years have seen some very remarkable long peals, but it is seldom a band thinks of starting for a six-thousand or a ten-thousand, just because it is a six or a ten-thousand which would not create a record of some sort.

There is no doubt that five-thousand changes and somewhere about three hours do give the conditions which for most men made peal ringing worth while. The length is enough to make the task a difficult one, but not too long to be fitted into an evening or an afternoon. A shorter length would not give the same satis-

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faction of having done something worth doing. A longer length is usually not convenient or even possible.

What should we gain if we lowered the standard and shortened the length of peals? Peal ringing would be easier. More attempts would be possible and a greater proportion of them successful. More ringers, perhaps, would be able to be peal ringers. Would these things be an advantage? That may very well be doubted. Peal ringing is far easier to-day (or would have been had times been normal) than it was fifty years ago. There are more rings of bells available and there are more ringers to select bands from. The hanging of the bells is incomparably better than it was, so much so that ringing as an athletic sport for strong men is almost a thing of the past. Tenors and other bells which once taxed the strength and skill of the most powerful men can now be rung easily by schoolgirls. There is much gain here, but some loss; for the charm and fascination of our art lies in the fact that it sets before ringers tasks which call for the best that is in them, mental, and moral, and physical; and so far as the standard is lowered so far are the charm and the attraction lessened.

Peal ringing is an important feature in the life and activities of the Exercise, but the number of peals rung, in itself, is not a great matter. The more ringers there are who hope and try to be peal ringers the better, but it would be for the good of the Exercise if the standard of peals was raised rather than if it were lowered.

PEAL RINGING.

To the Editor.

Dear Sir,—If the public could see those who practise the old English sport of peal ringing in the process of ringing a peal the cartoonists of this generation would have material for years to come. Surely it is time 'The Ringing World' dealt with the idiosyncracies of famous exponents of the art of ringing.

In the last peal in which I participated one ringer whose name is honoured and respected throughout the Exercise crouched on his rope with a stance reminiscent of a racehorse immortalised by Tom Webster. Another chewed his gum with such avidity and relish out-rivalling in facial contortion the brightest of our American cousins.

At least five of the eight, probably myself included, were mumbler, the brain being unable to retain the position without the movement of the lower jaw. Alas, none of them mumbled gracefully, but in the process pulled most hideous grimaces, providing a constant source of amusement. The greatest joys of the evening, however, were the periodic winks from one of the props of the Exercise, which seemed to imply not only an exhortation to stick it, but a refusal to be cowed by the conductor's injunctions about 'back stroke.'

And what of the conductor who will soon have a peal for each of his grey hairs? The peal started with that friendly atmosphere of a service touch. Then came the stage of nursing the weaker brethren, giving them full confidence. Just after half-way the glint of his eye had an additional lustre; there was a prize at stake which on no account was to be lost. Nothing escaped his vigilance; a crisper note was apparent in the calling of the bobs. As the minutes passed one felt that his enthusiasm had truly captured the band. His eye, however, did not lose its brightness; he was indeed the master of the belfry. Finally came the first of the two singles and the knowledge that except for something very unusual another peal had been added to the annals of the Diocesan Guild.

There were appropriate congratulations at the conclusion, but, above all, a sense of accomplishment and the knowledge that the traditions of a centuries old fine English sport had been maintained in an age when the majority of the community trust to others to provide their amusement.

Leaving the belfry, I found myself unconsciously parodying the old evangelical hymn of my boyhood:—

Count your blisters, count them one by one,

And it is surprising what the . . .

Your obedient servant,

'ONE WHO WAS BLISTERED.'

EALING.—On Sunday, October 1st, at St. Mary's, 1,260 Grandsire Triples: J. Birt 1, H. A. Harding 2, A. Jones 3, J. E. Churchill 4, H. Rogers 5, A. M. Stacey (conductor) 6, A. Harding 7, F. Miller 8.

BLETCHLEY.—On Sunday, October 8th, 720 Bob Minor: A. Crane 1, W. R. Loveridge 2, W. Daniels 3, S. Smith 4, F. Sear 5, H. Sear (conductor) 6.

PEALS.

To the Editor.

Dear Sir,—I have a suggestion to put forward, which may not be a new one, but may interest many of your readers. It is to alter the length of peals which are recognised by the various societies and recorded in their peal books, also in 'The Ringing World.' I suggest that the minimum length be reduced from 5,000 changes to 3,600. This would give five 720's on six bells, and an average peal on six or eight bells would take a little over two hours to ring, as against three hours.

In the country churches, where the sound of the bells is well regulated and unlikely to annoy anyone, the present peal length does not call for any alteration from the public point of view, but there are quite a lot of towers so situated in our towns and cities that to ring the bells continuously from 3 to 3½ hours is something of an imposition on many of the public who live or work in the vicinity of the church, and is apt to produce complaints which we do not like. We all like to think that our efforts are a source of pleasure to all who can hear the bells. I could mention a number of towers in my own district, with fine peals of bells, the ringing of which is, I think, a joy to the public, but the present peal length is, I think, too long except for events of great national joy, such as the victory we are all looking forward to.

The present peal length probably originated from the extent on seven bells, 5,040 changes, but there is no law which says that this shall stand for ever, should it be expedient to make a change. With a shorter peal composers would be able to select more musical combinations and omit some of the inferior ones.

There will probably be an increase in the number of peals rung when conditions have returned to something like normal, but it is doubtful whether there will be a big increase later, as the past 40 years have, I believe, shown a decline. There are quite a lot of lengths rung up to the quarter-peal, but usually the next stage is an attempt for the complete peal, one of the reasons being that it is published and recorded to the credit of those taking part.

Two hours of continuous ringing is a good test for a ringer, and it should encourage a high standard of striking, as the ringer of a difficult bell would put up a better performance if he had two hours to go and not three. As ringing usually ceases at 9 p.m. there would be more opportunity for evening peal attempts, also many good ringers who feel that to stand and ring a bell for three hours is too much for them may be able and willing to try a shorter length. Those ringers in the town and city churches who do not care for many peal attempts on their own bells may regard a shorter peal as quite permissible.

It is, I think, agreed that peal ringing improves the standard of ringing generally. Should the length be reduced probably more peals would be rung, with an improvement all round.

Peal attempts at any particular tower would, of course, still have to be limited to some kind of rule such as one per month, and it would still be possible to ring peals of 5,000 changes or more when desired and at towers suited to do so. Any extra credit due to length would be noted in the records.

HERBERT O. CHADDOCK.

Seagrave Crescent, Sheffield.

ST. MARTIN'S GUILD, BIRMINGHAM.

MEETING AT GREAT BARR.

A meeting of the Birmingham St. Martin's Guild, held at the six-bell tower of Great Barr, on September 30th, was attended by about 40 members and friends. Before the business meeting the Vicar addressed the gathering. He stressed the importance of good fellowship and wished the Guild success.

Mr. Albert Walker, the Master, presided. He referred to the death of John Austin and W. H. Fussell, both of whom had been members for many years and had done excellent service for ringers and the cause of ringing generally.

Mr. Norman Smith, of Four Oaks, Mr. G. W. Critchley, of Wyde Green, Mr. S. B. Higham, of Four Oaks, Miss B. Connor, of Edgbaston, and Mr. E. Weaver, of Aston, were elected members, and the elections as life members of Miss M. R. Cross, of Abingdon, Mr. D. D. Cooper, of Crydon, and Mr. A. Diserens, of Reading, were ratified.

It was decided to hold the annual meeting at headquarters on January 6th, and the next bi-quarterly meeting at Erdington Parish Church about the middle of November.

It was also agreed to hold the annual Henry Johnson Commemoration in March, and the secretary was instructed to make the necessary preliminary arrangements.

A vote of thanks was passed to the Vicar, to Mr. J. R. Terry who had made the local arrangements, and to the ladies who provided the tea.

DEATH OF L-CPL. HAROLD BRACKLEY.

News has been received that L-Cpl. Harold Brackley has been killed in action in Italy. He was 33 years of age and had been a ringer at Tring Parish Church since he was 14 years old. At the time he joined H.M. Forces he was captain of the belfry. On October 8th the bells were rung half-muffled before morning and evening services.

EIGHT BELL PEALS.

WHISTON, YORKSHIRE.
THE YORKSHIRE ASSOCIATION.

On Thurs., Oct. 12, 1944, in Two Hours and Fifty-Five Minutes,

AT THE CHURCH OF ST. MARY MAGDALENE,

A PEAL OF KENT TREBLE BOB MAJOR, 5088 CHANGES;

Tenor 14½ cwt.

MRS. J. E. TURLEY ...Treble	J. EDWARD CAWSEY ... 5
JACK G. BROTHWELL ... 2	JOHN W. SMITHSON ... 6
HERBERT O. CHADDOCK 3	RONALD H. DOVE ... 7
JOHN H. BROTHWELL ... 4	JOHN E. TURLEY ...Tenor

Composed by JOHN REEVES. Conducted by JOHN E. TURLEY.

BEXLEY, KENT.

THE KENT COUNTY ASSOCIATION.

On Sat., Oct. 14, 1944, in Two Hours and Forty-Four Minutes,

AT THE CHURCH OF ST. MARY,

A PEAL OF STEDMAN TRIPLES, 5040 CHANGES;

WASHBROOK'S VARIATION. Tenor 7½ cwt.

JAMES E. BAILEY ...Treble	HERBERT E. AUDSLEY ... 5
ROBERT WAKE ... 2	ALAN G. HALL ... 6
*ALAN G. BALL ... 3	HARRY HOVERD ... 7
DENNIS L. HALL ... 4	HERBERT A. HOLDEN ...Tenor

Conducted by HARRY HOVERD.

* First peal in the method. The conductor's 400th peal.

WICKEN, NORTHANTS.

THE PETERBOROUGH DIOCESAN GUILD.

On Sat., Oct. 14, 1944, in Two Hours and Fifty-Three Minutes,

AT THE CHURCH OF ST. JOHN-THE-EVANGELIST,

A PEAL OF GRANDSIRE TRIPLES, 5040 CHANGES;

PARKER'S TWELVE-PART (7th the observation). Tenor 15½ cwt.

*JOHN B. FITZHUGH ...Treble	*JOSEPH W. L. LINNITT 5
*PHILIP JONES ... 2	THOMAS E. ROBERTS ... 6
†WILLIAM YATES ... 3	*GEORGE CARE ... 7
ERNEST C. LAMBERT ... 4	FREDERICK C. CASE ...Tenor

Conducted by GEORGE CARE.

* First peal in the method. † First peal.

BARNET, HERTFORDSHIRE.

THE HERTFORD COUNTY ASSOCIATION.

On Sat., Oct. 14, 1944, in Three Hours and Eight Minutes,

AT THE CHURCH OF ST. JOHN-THE-BAPTIST,

A PEAL OF BRISTOL SURPRISE MAJOR, 5056 CHANGES;

Tenor 24 cwt.

ERNEST C. S. TURNER...Treble	MAURICE F. R. HIBBERT 5
*RALPH BIRD ... 2	EDWIN JENNINGS ... 6
FRANCIS KIRK ... 3	CHARLES W. ROBERTS ... 7
*BURLEY P. MORRIS ... 4	HAROLD G. CASHMORE ...Tenor

Composed by ARTHUR KNIGHTS. Conducted by H. G. CASHMORE.

* First peal in the method.

BURNHAM, BUCKS.

THE OXFORD DIOCESAN GUILD.

On Sat., Oct. 14, 1944, in Three Hours and Three Minutes,

AT THE CHURCH OF ST. PETER,

A PEAL OF BOB MAJOR, 5056 CHANGES;

PRITCHARD'S FOUR-PART. Tenor 16 cwt.

*MARY PEMBERTON ...Treble	JOHN E. TAYLOR ... 5
H. WILLIAM BARRETT... 2	FRANK H. HICKS ... 6
GEORGE H. GUTTERIDGE 3	WILLIAM HENLEY ... 7
†JOYCE HEARN ... 4	GEORGE GILBERT ...Tenor

Conducted by GEO. GILBERT.

* First peal. † First peal of Major.

WRAXALL, SOMERSET.

THE BATH AND WELLS DIOCESAN ASSOCIATION.

On Sat., Oct. 14, 1944, in Three Hours and Fifteen Minutes,

AT THE PARISH CHURCH OF ALL SAINTS,

A PEAL OF BOB MAJOR, 5056 CHANGES;

Tenor 23 cwt. 3 qr.

DONALD G. CLIFT ...Treble	EMLYN F. HANCOCK ... 5
JOHN H. B. HESSE ... 2	*NORMAN H. COOMBS ... 6
FREDERICK A. TARGETT 3	RONALD G. BECK ... 7
THOMAS W. KIMBER ... 4	DAVID MACKAY ...Tenor

Conducted by RONALD G. BECK.

* First peal of Bob Major.

SIX BELL PEALS.

WOLLASTON, STOURBRIDGE.

THE WORCESTERSHIRE AND DISTRICTS ASSOCIATION.

(Northern Branch.)

On Tues., Oct. 3, 1944, in Two Hours and Twenty-Two Minutes,

AT THE CHURCH OF ST. JAMES,

A PEAL OF GRANDSIRE DOUBLES, 5040 CHANGES;

Forty-two extents. Tenor 12½ cwt.

JOHN BASSTreble	SIDNEY THOMPSON ... 4
*CHARLES RICHARDS ... 2	PERCY RICHARDS ... 5
JOHN PAGETT ... 3	SAMUEL THOMPSON ...Tenor

Conducted by JOHN PAGETT.

* First peal. Rung for the golden wedding of Mr. and Mrs. Pagett.

GOSBERTON, LINGS.

THE LINCOLN DIOCESAN GUILD.

On Sat., Oct. 7, 1944, in Two Hours and Fifty-Six Minutes,

AT THE CHURCH OF SS. PETER AND PAUL,

A PEAL OF MINOR, 5040 CHANGES;

Being one extent each of Double Oxford, Single Court, St. Clement's, Double Court, Oxford Treble Bob, Kent Treble Bob and Cambridge Surprise. Tenor 17 cwt. 2 qr. 7 lb.

HORACE BENNETT ...Treble	ARTHUR J. FARR ... 4
*STANLEY E. BENNETT ... 2	HAROLD BARSLEY ... 5
JOHN G. AMES ... 3	CYRIL R. BURRELL ...Tenor

Conducted by C. R. BURRELL.

* First peal in seven methods. Rung for the wedding of Miss P. Robinson to Mr. W. G. Short, a ringer at Donington.

WALLASEY, CHESHIRE.

THE CHESTER DIOCESAN GUILD.

On Wed., Oct. 11, 1944, in Three Hours and Five Minutes,

AT THE CHURCH OF ST. NICHOLAS,

A PEAL OF CAMBRIDGE SURPRISE MINOR, 5040 CHANGES;

E. BANKES JAMES' ARRANGEMENT. Tenor 16½ cwt.

JOHN A. WEBSTER ...Treble	GEORGE R. NEWTON ... 4
LESTER L. GRAY ... 2	HARRY ROGERS ... 5
FRANK VARTY ... 3	THOMAS ROGERS ...Tenor

Conducted by FRANK VARTY.

Rung for the marriage of Mr. F. Varty to Miss J. Varley.

SWAVESEY, CAMBRIDGESHIRE.

THE ELY DIOCESAN ASSOCIATION.

On Sat., Oct. 14, 1944, in Two Hours and Fifty-Seven Minutes,

AT THE CHURCH OF ST. ANDREW,

A PEAL OF BOB MINOR, 5040 CHANGES;

Seven extents. Tenor 14½ cwt.

*HERBERT W. PRATT ...Treble	*JOHN PERKINS ... 4
FRANCIS G. GLEAVES ... 2	LESLIE W. FISHER ... 5
GEORGE E. CRISP ... 3	FRANK WARRINGTON ...Tenor

Conducted by F. WARRINGTON.

* First peal on six bells.

HANDBELL PEALS.

COVENTRY.

THE WARWICKSHIRE GUILD.

On Sat., Oct. 7, 1944, in Two Hours and Thirty-Three Minutes,

AT 117, WIDDINGTON ROAD,

A PEAL OF STEDMAN CATERS, 5017 CHANGES;

FRANK W. PERRENS ... 1-2	FRANK E. PERVIN ... 5-6
ALBERT WALKER ... 3-4	*HAROLD ARGYLE ... 7-8
J. FRANK SMALLWOOD ... 9-10	

Composed by JOHN CARTER. Conducted by ALBERT WALKER.

* First ten-bell peal in hand.

ENFIELD, MIDDLESEX.

THE MIDDLESEX COUNTY ASSOCIATION AND LONDON DIOCESAN GUILD.

On Tues., Oct. 10, 1944, in Two Hours and Forty-Three Minutes,

AT 24, SUFFOLK ROAD,

A PEAL OF STEDMAN CATERS, 5055 CHANGES;

ALBERT J. WALLMAN ... 1-2	MRS. J. THOMAS ... 5-6
JOHN THOMAS ... 3-4	CHARLES W. ROBERTS ... 7-8
ERIC A. DENCH ... 9-10	

Composed by J. W. WASHBROOK. Conducted by C. W. ROBERTS.

Rung with alternate tittum and handstroke courses.

THE PLAIN MAJOR METHODS.

Half a century ago the Central Council adopted a formal and official schedule of points by which the relative values of peals in different methods could be judged. All Plain Major methods were given eight points for each peal; all Double Major methods, sixteen points; all Treble Bob Major methods, twelve points; Cambridge and Superlative Surprise Major, forty points; and London, fifty points.

It was a significant action; for the men who drew up the schedule and the men who adopted it were not fools, nor were they altogether ignorant. They expressed what was the general opinion of the best ringers of the time, an opinion based on experience in the Exercise of more than one hundred years. If the schedule had been confined to the half dozen or so methods then in general use a good case might be made out for its values; but the scheme was drawn up at the close of a long period when method ringing was practically stagnant, and at the opening of a period when men were beginning to take an interest in the vast numbers of methods which lay outside what were then regarded as the standard methods; and the effect of these values expressed in points was to judge the future by the imperfect knowledge of the past. We do not say that men did consciously and deliberately value methods by the points allotted to them by the Central Council; but the same ideas which led people to imagine it was possible and advisable to allot points to methods led them to judge on very superficial grounds methods of which they had practically no experience or knowledge. It was the failing of the men of the time (a very natural and not very blameworthy failing in the circumstances) that they thought they were competent to lay down rules for ringing which should be valid for all time, and this failing has had some rather unfortunate results.

When these men looked at the methods they knew and which were practised in their time, they found a small number which seemed to fall naturally into well defined groups that could easily be arranged in an ascending order of merit. At the bottom were the Plain methods, which it was the fashion to look on somewhat contemptuously. Then there were the Treble Bob Methods, far too useful and too popular to be treated with contempt, but still rather beneath the notice of a first class band. Then the Double methods (which really meant Double Norwich with perhaps now and then Double Oxford). And, finally, the three Surprise methods, the climax of the best ringers' ambition, and the envy of the less skilful or less fortunate. Perhaps there was a time when these opinions were not so very far wide of facts. Oxford and Kent were for ordinary purposes better than Bob Major; Double Norwich was an improvement on Treble Bob; and Superlative, Cambridge and London did call for the best the ringers had to give. It was when men went further and unthinkingly applied these values to all other methods, that they went wrong and did the art of change ringing harm. It is surprising how much ringers have been, and are, influenced in their opinions by mere words. Call a method a Plain method and they feel it must be rather beneath their notice. Call another Surprise and they feel it must be worthy of the attention of the very best bands. Yet a Plain Major method is not necessarily, nor usually, a plain method—it is a method in which the treble has a plain hunting path. And a Surprise method

is no more than a method belonging to a rather artificial group which contains some first class and some really difficult methods, many that are quite easy, many that are commonplace, and many that are bad.

It has long been the fashion, and still is, to talk of Surprise ringing and Surprise ringers, as if that were the highest title which can be applied to a method or to a ringer. Why this should be is an interesting enough question, but one which does not concern us now. What is important is that a false standard has been set up which has done some considerable harm and may do more unless it is corrected. During the last forty years there has been a great and praiseworthy advance in method ringing, but it has been very largely confined to Surprise Major methods; while other and equally good classes of methods have been almost entirely neglected. In ten and twelve bell ringing the result has been distinctly unfortunate. Because of the great prestige of the Surprise Major methods, and especially of the four standard Surprise Major methods, when men sought for something beyond Treble Ten and Treble Twelve they must needs turn to Surprise Royal, and they wasted their time and their skill on what are called Superlative, and London, and Bristol, Surprise Royal, though they have precious little right to the names and on their own merits are not worthy of being practised. The truth is that, for clearly defined and easily understood reasons, Surprise methods as a class are quite unsuitable for ten and twelve bell ringing. There are methods—many of them—really suitable for these numbers, which can supply everything that is needed—interest, difficulty, music, and the rest—but they do not get a chance because the word Surprise blocks the way.

Just as the word Surprise has unduly raised some methods in the estimation of ringers, so the word Plain has unduly depreciated others. As we said just now, a Plain Major method is not necessarily or usually a plain method. The group as a whole is probably the most useful one in the whole of change ringing. It comprises every variety from the simplest to the most complex, and it can supply everything that is needed. If ringing had to be confined to the Plain methods the loss and the hardship would not be great, and there might even be gain. Shortly before the war there seemed a tendency among a few good bands to pay some attention to this neglected group, and it is to be hoped that when the next advance in method ringing comes (as it will come eventually) its merits will be more generally recognised.

There is no need to try to discourage Surprise ringing or to seek to belittle the merits of many Surprise Major methods. They will always be popular and always be rung and deservedly so. What is needed is for ringers to rid themselves of the tyranny of the word Surprise and the idea that because a method is a Surprise method it must be better than any other and the ringing of it more meritorious than that of other methods. We want the wider vision that can appreciate a good method to whatever group or class it belongs, and can understand why it is a good method.

We propose to make a survey of the Plain Major methods in the hope it will interest our readers in a group which is well worth study, not merely when there is a chance of practising one or more of them, but especially for the light it can throw on the art and science of change ringing generally.

MISCELLANEOUS

REDRUTH, CORNWALL.—On September 30th, 1,260 Grandsire Doubles: W. G. Hiscott 1, J. A. Pill (first quarter) 2, H. Seymour 3, W. J. Sanders 4, V. Williams (conductor) 5, S. Seymour 6.

ROUGHAM, SUFFOLK.—On Sunday, October 1st, 720 Bob Minor: Mrs. L. Wright 1, Miss B. Hill 2, F. Cooper 3, A. W. Rolfe 4, L. Wright (conductor) 5, A. Gillings 6.

DAYBROOK, NOTTS.—On Sunday, October 1st, 1,248 Kent Treble Bob Major: *R. A. Ward 1, *Mrs. R. A. Ward 2, *P. Groombridge, jun. 3, *P. E. Ball 4, F. Bradley 5, F. A. Salter 6, J. A. Barratt 7, *W. E. Clark (conductor) 8. *First quarter of Kent Major.

BIDDENHAM, BEDS.—On October 7th, 720 Oxford Treble Bob Minor: Miss E. Steele 1, C. Branson 2, C. Mortimer 3, R. Brockett 4, P. Inskip 5, R. West (conductor) 6.—On October 8th, 720 Cambridge Surprise Minor: R. Chapman 1, F. Tysoe 2, Miss P. Gilbert 3, C. Branson 4, R. Brockett 5, L. Bowler (conductor) 6.

ALLESLEY.—On October 6th, 720 Cambridge Surprise Minor: C. Aylett 1, J. W. Taylor 2, W. Stote 3, J. W. T. Taylor 4, H. Summers (conductor) 5, F. W. Perrens 6.—On Sunday, October 8th, 720 Cambridge Surprise Minor: C. Aylett 1, W. Stote 2, H. Summers 3, J. W. T. Taylor 4, J. W. Taylor (conductor) 5, G. Gardner 6.

NORTON SUBCOURSE, NORFOLK.—On Sunday, October 8th, 720 Oxford Treble Bob Minor: Mrs. W. R. Barber 1, A. I. Walpole 2, B. Barber 3, S. Fenn (conductor) 4, H. W. Barrett 5, G. Walpole 6.

EPPING.—On October 8th, 1,260 Stedman Triples: H. Street 1, A. W. Brighton 2, E. E. Holman 3, J. C. Adams 4, C. T. Coles (conductor) 5, L. E. Last 6, F. C. Maynard 7, F. C. Taylor 8.

READING.—On Sunday, October 8th, at St. Laurence's, 1,260 Stedman Triples: Miss J. Stacey 1, Mrs. Catherall 2, A. D. Cullum 3, T. Lanaghan 4, H. Smith 5, R. Rex 6, E. Humfrey (conductor) 7, W. Rampton 8.



MR. F. W. ROMAINE.

The accompanying portrait of Mr. F. W. Romaine recently appeared in 'The Salisbury and Winchester Journal,' which has allowed us to reproduce it. An account was given in our last week's issue of a presentation made to Mr. Romaine on the completion of his 21 years' service as hon. secretary of the Salisbury Branch of the Salisbury Diocesan Guild.

PERFORMANCES

DEVIZES.—On Sunday, October 8th, 720 Bob Minor: *J. Romaine 1, W. Bolwell 2, *F. Hale 3, G. Winter 4, *W. Mortimer 5, *S. G. Grant (conductor) 6. *First 720 of Bob Minor.

OXFORD.—On Sunday, October 8th, at Christ Church Cathedral, 783 Stedman Cinques: Miss E. F. Badder 1, Miss V. V. H. Hill 2, W. F. Judge (conductor) 3, Miss M. R. Cross 4, H. Miles 5, W. C. Porter 6, W. G. E. Collett 7, H. R. Badder 8, G. E. Fearn 9, V. J. T. Bennett 10, J. E. Spice 11, H. Gardiner 12.

BANBURY.—On October 8th, 1,260 Grandsire Triples: H. Alexander 1, J. Simons 2, W. Watson 3, D. Mears 4, T. Impey 5, F. Selwyn 6, H. Impey (conductor) 7, J. Stretton 8.

OVERSEAL, DERBYSHIRE.—On Sunday, October 8th, 1,260 Grandsire Triples: F. Sharpe 1, G. Hair 2, E. W. Beadmoore 3, W. H. Curson 4, A. Beadmoore 5, P. W. Grice 6, J. W. Cotton (conductor) 7, H. Curson 8.

WHISTON, YORKS.—On Sunday, October 10th, 1,280 Kent Treble Bob Major: Mrs. Elsie Chaddock 1, Mrs. W. Rydes 2, Ronald Birch 3, Alan White 4, Mrs. D. E. Kelly 5, John E. Tunley 6, L. Colin Ryder 7, Norman Chaddock (conductor) 8.

ROTHERHAM.—On Wednesday, October 11th, at All Saints', 720 Bob Minor: David Adams (first 720) 1, L. Parkin 2, Mrs. T. C. Ryder 3, T. C. Ryder 4, E. Liversedge 5, A. Firth (conductor) 6.

SHERBURN-IN-ELMET.—On Wednesday, October 11th, 720 Bob Minor (with tenor covering): C. W. Sissons (first 720) 1, Miss D. M. Hawley (conductor) 2, Mrs. E. M. Bradley 3, L.A.C. Hammond 4, L. Scarth 5, E. M. Bradley 6, A. Sheppard 7.

MELBOURN, CAMBS.—On Thursday, October 12th, 720 Bob Minor: Miss N. E. Shorter 1, Mrs. V. E. Lathbury 2, W. Winters 3, R. L. Lathbury (conductor) 4, J. W. Ward 5, F. Harper 6.

SUTTON COLDFIELD.—On October 14th, 1,260 Grandsire Doubles: *S. B. Highams 1, G. F. Swann (conductor) 2, *G. W. Critchley 3, *N. G. Smith 4, W. G. Anker 5, *G. W. Anker 6. *First quarter-peak.

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The official journal of the Central Council of
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Hon. Secretary of the Council: GEORGE W. FLETCHER.

The White House, Caister-on-Sea, Norfolk.

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will send their payments to Mr. G. W. Fletcher, The
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Cheques and remittances should be made payable to
'The Ringing World.'

Members of the Leeds and District Society should note that the
October meeting will be at Leeds Parish Church, not at Burley as
intended.

SERVICE TOUCHES.

GRANDSIRE TRIPLES.

		1,260.			
		Continued	Continued		
234567					
674253	2	456372	1	672345	2
346572	1	674523	3	246753	3
673425	3	356274	1	372546	1
546273	1	743625	2	243765	3
735624	2	437625	4	572643	1
247563	2	634572	5	675324	5
352647	1	256734	1	436275	1
473265	2	632547	3	754623	2
734265	4	756432	1	237465	2
657423	2	457263	5	652743	2
346257	1	634725	2	376452	1
573624	2	256473	2	653724	3
245367	2	342756	1	246375	2
672534	2	253467	3	P 234567	1

From Holt's Original.

MAGDALEN TENOR.

To the Editor.

Dear Sir,—With reference to Major J. H. R. Freeborn's letter query-
ing the note and weight of Magdalen tenor, I should like to say:
(1) The president and fellows put up a board in 1919 for the Peace
Peal, which states that the tenor is 20 cwt. in E. (2) It was generally
known amongst ringers here that Appleton are the same note as
Magdalen, and Mr. R. White brought the note of Appleton 9th on a
tuning fork into St. Giles' tower when the trebles were added in
1927, assuming that it was the same note as the tenor, which proved
correct. St. Giles' tenor is F sharp, so Magdalen must be E natural.

For the information of Major J. H. R. Freeborn, Merton tenor is D
natural, St. Mary's and New are slightly flat of this, Christ Church
is D flat and Great Tom is A natural.

V. BENNETT.

30, Lime Walk, Headington.

TRURO DIOCESAN GUILD.

MEETING AT TUCKINGMILL.

The first meeting of the Truro Diocesan Guild for five years was
held on September 30th at Tuckingmill on September 30th, and was
attended by about 100 ringers from Truro Cathedral, Kenwyn, Crowan,
Ludgvan, Illogan, Phillack, Wadebridge, Redruth, Penzance, St.
Gluvias, Luxulyan, Mabe, Gwennap, Liskeard, Camborne and the
local belfry. Service was conducted by the Vicar, the Rev. J. Britton,
who gave an address. The lesson was read by the Rev. J. A. Simcock.

During the afternoon and evening the bells of Tuckingmill and
Camborne were rung to rounds, call changes, and Grandsire Doubles
and Triples.

THOMAS THURSTANS.

BY JOHN DAY.

(John Day, who wrote the following account of Thomas Thurstans, the composer of the familiar peal of Stedman Triples, was for many years a prominent man among the Birmingham ringers. He was a nephew of Thomas Day, one of those men who during the early middle years of the last century made the town a principal centre both of practical ringing and composition, and whose productions both in Stedman Triples and Treble Bob Major are of outstanding merit. John Day was not himself particularly distinguished as a ringer, but he came into contact with almost all the men of his time and he wrote a most interesting series of memories of them. He died about thirty or forty years ago.)

Next to my uncle, Thomas, the first man I ever knew as a ringer, wrote John Day, was the celebrated Thomas Thurstans. About the year 1830 my father kept a public house, the Bell, in Smallbrook Street, Birmingham, and a frequent visitor to the house was a man whom I used to hear spoken of as 'Tommy Thurstans.'

He was looked upon by my parents as somewhat of a nuisance, being generally noisy and intoxicated. Possibly that was the reason I noticed him at so early an age.

At the commencement of my ringing career in the year 1842, one of the first names I heard mentioned in the belfry was Thurstans, and I soon learned that it was the man I had known in childhood, and it was not long before I saw him. He was a bachelor, and lived with his sister in a small house in Church Street very near St. Philip's Church.

A FAMOUS COMPOSER.

After Sunday morning practice, Chattel and I generally passed the house on our way home, and often Thurstans would be standing at his door in shirt sleeves, pipe in mouth, waiting to have a chat with Chattel. He would ask about the young band, give his opinion as to their progress, and generally work his way round to Lates and Stedman Triples, since Lates and he were both hard at work at that time trying to improve the peal.

I only remember ringing with him once, when I was a very young hand, and he made a not very complimentary remark about my striking, but it did me no harm.

Thurstans' name will last probably as long as the art of ringing is practised as the composer of the peal of Stedman Triples bearing his name. He must have begun to study composing when very young in the art, as he would be about twenty-four years of age when he called his peal of 6,600 Stedman Cinques, while there were also peals of Stedman Caters and Treble Bob Royal of his composition rung even prior to that.

No doubt there would be a little rivalry between Thurstans and Cooper, as the latter had made a name before the former came on the scene. Being so good a man at the heavy end would enable Thurstans to assert himself and claim priority as conductor.

I have heard both my uncle and the late Henry Johnson say that Thurstans' great fault as a composer was his lack of patience to prove his work, and I have had many opportunities of knowing such to be the case. His later peals of Stedman were submitted to Mr. Johnson, and his peals of Treble Bob Major to Mr. T. Day to look over as to their truth.

TREBLE BOB COMPOSITION.

When he was working at Treble Bob Major with the tenors parted, which resulted in his peal of 15,840, he sent a great number of peals to Mr. Day, the late Amos Cresser being the messenger, as he lived in Church Street very near Thurstans. Mr. Day used to look them over and then put them into an old hat, which he kept for the purpose in a recess over the stairs door, and the hat was nearly full before Thurstans produced a true peal. On one Sunday afternoon, on my way to see my uncle, as I usually did once a fortnight, I met Cresser coming away from his house. He told me he had taken another peal to be looked over, and when I arrived I found my uncle very interested in the figures. Knowing that it was of no use to speak to him while he was so occupied, I sat down and waited quietly for him to break the silence, and he did so presently with his usual, 'Yes! Yes! This will do, if he alters these three courses. I believe it will run true,' at the same time showing the papers with the 7th in 5th's. The alteration was made, and as is now well known the peal is true.

Thurstans was very pleased with his success, and went to see Mr. Day, thinking he had superseded the others' peals, but this was not so, as Mr. Day had a peal of the same number of which he had said

nothing, not even mentioning it to me. Thurstans was rather annoyed when he learned this, and could not help showing his pique, so that when he was leaving Mr. Day told him that if he sent any more peals to be looked at he hoped he would send him something of his own, 'for,' he said, 'what you have sent is nearly all my work.'

On one occasion a band met at Aston for a peal of Treble Bob Major, Mr. Day intending to ring the tenor and call one of his own peals. Thurstans was in the band, and almost at the last moment asked Mr. Day to call a peal of his (Thurstans'). Being willing to oblige, he did so, and an apparently excellent peal was rung. Among those who heard it was Lates, who had just begun to show his skill as a composer and as a listener. In due course he asked to see the figures, and pronounced it to be false. False it was, and Mr. Day was so much annoyed at the occurrence I believe he never rang another peal of Major.

When Mr. Henry Johnson began to compose Stedman, thinking he had a good peal of Caters, he asked Thurstans to look over it for him. This he did, pronouncing it true. It was rung at Aston, Thurstans being in the band, and on its publication a Mr. Cross, of Liverpool, sent for the figures and discovered them to be false. Of course, Johnson never trusted Thurstans again in this way.

About the year 1846 (the year that Thurstans composed his peal of Stedman) there was a great stir about Treble Bob Triples. Day had produced a peal, and Lates had by some means got one, while Day and Cooper had produced touches also. At that time the large bells at St. Martin's were seldom rung owing to the eleventh going so badly. Stedman and Treble Bob Triples were practised on the first eight, and some beautiful ringing used to be heard. The Treble Bob Triples was quite a feature, and Thurstans, on hearing a touch rung, tried his hand in that direction and submitted a number of touches to Johnson, not one of which was true. He made a final effort, and said if that was not true it was 'impossible' to get a true touch, and Day's and Cooper's must be false. But, like all the rest, his final effort was false.

Apart from all this, I have heard Mr. Johnson, my uncle, and others say that no man of his time understood the theory of composition more than he did, but that he jumped at conclusions that were often erroneous.

A TRAGEDY.

In appearance Thurstans was a very broad-set man, about 5ft. 8in. in height, although not looking so tall, and in later years he had a stooping and waddling gait. It was very plain to see he had been a very strong man, as he was very wide from shoulder to hip. By trade he was a brass finisher, and up to 1825 or thereabouts was a quiet and respectable man. About that time there was a trade dispute, resulting in a strike, and through leaving his work in an unfinished state he was summoned before the magistrates, who, in the then existing state of the law, had power to send him to prison. This they did for a month's hard labour at Warwick gaol.

The first time I heard of this I was in conversation with Lates, about the time Thurstans had been having one of his 'break outs.' 'Ah!' said Lates. 'Tom has never done any good since they made him grind his own corn.'

There can be no doubt that this disgrace totally upset him, and, although steady and right enough at times, on others he would break out and act more like a madman than anything else. We also used to think he had been jilted in a love affair, for when he had a fit on, if anyone said anything to him relating to women it would make him ten times worse (and this was sometimes done on purpose, I am sorry to say). In fact, I and one or two others always avoided him at these times as they generally lasted for weeks until he became dirty and ragged, and a fit of illness put an end to it.

The last time I remember seeing him he was respectably dressed in black—I think in mourning for his sister, with whom he had lived for many years. He was carrying a basket of soil, which he had been getting for his window plants. He told me he was unwell and could not work. That was in the spring of 1858, and in the autumn of that year Mr. T. Cole, a former member of St. Martin's Youths, went to Johnson and told him 'poor Tom' was dead. From what Mr. Cole said we were led to suppose that he had had a break out and was taken ill in the street, it was said with English cholera. He was taken to the 'General Hospital,' and there died.

No one knew who he was, and no one enquired about him, so it came to pass that the parish authorities buried him, no friends or relatives being near. We used to think it was mainly through the influence of his brother Charles that he was employed for some years as a flier at Messrs. Ellingtons, the manager overlooking his transgressions as to loss of time, etc.

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CURIOUS TOWERS AND BELFRIES.

By ERNEST MORRIS.

(Continued from page 425.)

There are a number of towers, the base of which forms the entrance or porch to the church. Where ringing takes place in such towers from the ground floor, it often means that the congregation will have to pass through the circle of ropes to attend Sunday services. Perhaps the best known of such towers is that of the very famous Crowland (or Croyland) Abbey Church, Lincs. Here the present ring of six bells is rung from the ground floor, and there is consequently a very long draught of rope. There are two or three sets of iron guides, but nevertheless the handling is somewhat difficult. As the tower forms the entrance to the church, the congregation pass through the circle of ringers when entering.

There is a tradition (for the truth of which I cannot vouch) that Croyland Abbey was the first church in England to possess a peal of bells. Be that as it may, we find that Turketye, the sixth abbot (A.D. 946-976) cast a great bell for the abbey, and named it Guthlac, to whom the abbey is dedicated. Egelric, his nephew and successor (A.D. 975-984) added six more bells, viz., two large ones, named Bartholomew and Betelin; two middle ones, named Turketye and Tatwyn; and two smaller ones, named Pega and Bega.

Abbot Ingulph, the chronicler, says that when these seven bells were rung 'an excellent harmony was produced thereby, nor was there such a peal of bells in those days in all England.' The sound of Guthlac was said by Fuller to be a remedy for headache. Those bells hung in the central tower until 1091, when a fire broke out in the belfry and they were totally destroyed. Ingulph, going to the door and trying to enter, had a narrow escape of being killed by the molten metal which poured down from above. This fire was caused by a plumber who had been preparing lead for repairs to the roof of the tower, and had foolishly left his embers covered up for the next day. Nearly the whole of the abbey was consumed thereby. After the fire, the monks set to work immediately to rebuild their abbey. No sooner was the calamity known than the neighbouring towns and villages sent relief in money, food, building materials and other commodities. Among these, Fergus the copper-smith, of Boston, gave two metal skillets or pans, which were suspended in a temporary belfry, and which gave a certain amount of resonance when struck. Ingulph replaced the books, vestments, bells and other requisites before his death in 1109.

Abbot Ralph Merske (1253-1281) erected a detached bell tower at the east end of the church, which was called the 'outward belfry.' Abbot John de Asheby, who died in 1392, gave or recast the large bells hanging in this structure. In 1405 there were 'four sweetly sounding bells hanging in the tower behind the choir.' These were repaired in that year by Abbot Thomas Overton. In the time of Abbot John Lytlington (1427-1469) the great bells in the outer steeple were recast 'in order that they might be brought into a state of more perfect harmony.' In this work the monks were assisted by John Leycester, a brother of the monastery, who in 1463 'induced by pious considerations, contributed 40 marks towards the work.' What became of these bells in the outer steeple at the Dissolution is not known.

It was in 1465 that Abbot John Lytlington, 'in order that nothing might remain undone which is considered to tend to the increase of the praise of God, caused five fine and choice bells to be cast at London and substituted for the three old ones (one gone since 1405) here (*i.e.*, in the central tower), to send forth their sweet sounds with their harmonious chimes. The cost of these, together with the expense of the carriage thereof to Croyland by land and water, amounting in all to £160, was defrayed entirely by himself. These bells, while still lying below upon the ground before they were hung, were solemnly consecrated by Nicholas, the venerable Lord Bishop of Elphin, who was at this time suffragan to the reverend Father in Christ, John, Lord Bishop of Lincoln. They were inscribed from the smallest to the greatest with the names in especial of the patron saints in whose honour they were most devoutly dedicated, the names being Guthlac, Bartholomew, Michael, Mary and Trinity.'

It is further related that a great beam, which was being raised in the greater bell tower, which had been newly built in the western part of the church, in which it was intended that the bells just mentioned should be hung, fell down, doing much damage and jeopardising the lives of the workmen, all of whom, however, escaped.

From 1788 up to 1903, the tower contained a ring of five bells, and the following note on Croyland in the original M.S. book of J. A. Parnell, of Sheffield, is most interesting:—

'The first set of Tuneable Bells in England was put up (say hung up) in the Tower of Crowland Abbey, in Lincolnshire (near Holbeach and Spalding) which was a Musical Peal of five about the year 900—or a little before that time or period of the Christian Aera. I (John Alfred Parnell) paid this once large Gothic Building—now most of it in Ruins except the North Aisle which is Patched up or rather say slightly Built up for Crowland Abbey Parish Church—a walking visit in October, 1814—and found only 5 bells. When I descended the very low West End Gothic Tower on Examining it I say very minutely and the old Inhabitants Informed me (the Grandsire Ringers also) there were never any more than 5 bells at one time. These 5 Bells were not the Originals—some of them cast as late as 1783 and one in 1788 by Mr. Arnold of the Town of Leicester.

'I have paid the Ruins of this once large Abbey 3 Walking visits—in 1809, in 1812 and 1814.

'The Town is a very small one situated in a very flat part of the County of Lincoln, and has an old Gothic Bridge—Built Triangular—with three entrances on to it from three different Streets, and suppose it was Built in 600 or 700 of the Christian Aera—its like is not in Great Britain says the Gothic Traveller, John Alfred Parnell.'

On the old five bells only one full peal was rung thus: On Saturday, November 28th, 1894, in 2 hours 48 minutes, 5,040 Doubles being four 120's Canterbury, four Plain Bob, twenty-four St. Dunstans, ten Grandsire, each differently called. The ringers were: P. Cherrington 1, W. Ambrose 2, R. Wyche 3, Rev. H. Law James 4, C. R. Lilley tenor. Since 1903, when the ring was increased to six, one or two peals of Minor have been rung. To commemorate one of these, the present writer did an illuminated tablet which is preserved in the tower of the abbey. (To be continued.)

HENRY THOMAS ELLACOMBE.

(Continued from page 416.)

In the year 1846, four years before Ellacombe published his first book, a pamphlet on bells and ringers was issued by a man named Walter Blunt, a clergyman of the Church of England. Where he lived and who he was I cannot say; he claimed to have had the care or joint care of very many parishes in various parts of the country, and evidently he had been shocked by what he saw and knew of the condition in the belfries. Like Ellacombe, he felt he was called upon to do what he could to bring about a reformation and, like him, he started from the assumption that bells and ringing had once been sacred things, solely devoted to the cause of religion, but had now been desecrated and degraded to every wrong and profuse use.

'In our older churches,' he says, 'the position of the belfry on the floor of the church immediately communicating with the nave is sufficient to point out to every thinking person in the parish the very sacred character which was attached to their bells when they were first hung, the holy purposes to which they were dedicated, and how solemn a matter, how truly a service of Almighty God the ringing of them was then esteemed. In other churches, almost always of a later date, we find the original position of the ringers at a higher level, upon a floor in the tower. But the belfry was still laid open by an arch to the body of the church—thus yielding evidence that the ringing of the bells was still esteemed a very sacred thing.'

He goes on to state that from these ideal conditions there was a steady and gradual decline. Superstitious and profane uses were introduced and 'the rules and doggerel verses which remain in many of our belfries, while they often show that the bells were still used for holy purposes and according to their original design, afford, alas! a melancholy evidence that the ringing of them was no longer esteemed a sacred service.'

The final mischief was brought by change ringing. 'Towards the latter half of the last century, that worst age of the English Church, the ringing of church bells became a fashionable amusement among the yeomanry and gentry, and was degraded to the level on which the hurdle-race and steeple-chase now stand; and while their sweet voices were seldom heard for any holy purpose, they were made continually to wake the echoes of the neighbourhood in no more noble cause, for no more sacred object, than the battue-shooting of the present day. This amusement, however, at any rate in most parts of the country has long ago become vulgar and gone out of fashion.'

The belfries were now, he said, in a state of filthy dilapidation and the ringers were the most profane and profligate persons in the parish.

To amend this deplorable state of affairs he made several suggestions, but first he reviewed what he considered to be the Church's law and rule on the matter as laid down in the prayer book and the canons.

Eleven suggestions for reform are made. They are all excellent in intention, and some are harmless and almost self-evident. But most of them are quite unworkable and quite clearly come from one whose zeal was far greater than his practical knowledge. We need not go through them in detail. If they had been fully carried out, the ringers would have become a very docile flock

of sheep waiting patiently to do what they were told and when they were told, and in the way they were told. There were to be two bands each equal to the number of bells. The first one would do all the regular ringing and take all the money; the second one would supply any permanent or temporary vacancies which might occur in the other. There was to be no ringing for any but ecclesiastical purposes. No ringing should last longer than a quarter of an hour at a wedding or any other time. Before a burial the bells were to be rung or chimed 'in a steady, grave and solemn though cheerful peal (kept strictly for this purpose)' for ten minutes only; and after the burial 'in a steady, solemn, though more cheerful peal (kept strictly for the purpose)' for five minutes only. At midnight on eight days in the year the bells were to be rung in peal for five minutes only. No practice ringing was provided for the regular band, but the second company were to be allowed a special quarter or half an hour on festivals. That apparently was all they would get throughout the year.

The writer claimed that 'very beneficial results have been obtained from the following out of this system, and it has become evident to those who have tried it that the more perfectly it is carried out, so much more in due proportion, are the benefits.' We must take his word for it, but it does not seem very likely. Even Ellacombe, whose ultimate object was the same as Blunt's, could see clearly that the latter's proposals would not work. 'Perhaps,' he said, 'they would have been more intelligible if the author had explained what he means by a "peal." He proposes one peal of a quarter of an hour, whereas it is well known that some heavy bells cannot be raised and ceased in that time; nay, some heavy bells never can be raised in peal, but are raised singly; a *fortiori* a five minutes peal would be still more difficult.' 'It can hardly be expected that any ringers would think it worth while to meet to practise only for a quarter of an hour; it would be almost useless, and a five minutes peal at midnight would be unintelligible—almost as much so as what is meant by a solemn, cheerful peal.' Ellacombe had sound common sense as well as reforming zeal. What was wanted, he considered, was not a uniformity of use, but that the parson of each parish should do what he could according to the circumstances, and if he acted temperately and judiciously he would soon make some progress to an improvement.

(To be continued.)

LEADING.

To the Editor.

Sir,—Just an attempt to amplify your leader on 'Leading.' The second bell taking the leading bell off notes which bell he has led off. That is the last bell down, or, and this is the only alternative, who is looking at that bell.

How does a covering bell find the last bell down? By watching the last two bells change places. It is just the same.

CHARLES W. BLAKEY.

133, Ormerod Street, Accrington.

SALISBURY DIOCESAN GUILD.

MEETING AT CHURCH HOLT.

A meeting of the Devizes Branch of the Salisbury Diocesan Guild, held at Church Holt on October 7th, was attended by 40 members from Melksham, Warminster, Keevil, Trowbridge, Bishops Cannings, Chirton, Longbridge Deverell, North Bradley, Westbury, Holt, Devizes and Southbroom. The methods rung during afternoon and evening were Grandsire, Stedman, Cambridge and Plain Bob. Service was conducted by the Vicar, the Rev. C. F. H. Brewis, Miss Pullin being at the organ. Tea was served in the Parish Hall by ladies of the parish.

BELLS AS WARNINGS.

The recent action of the Government in reserving the use of church bells as a warning in the event of an invasion was not a new idea. As far back as the reign of King Edward the Third a very similar order was issued, only then the ban on ringing was not a total one. One bell and one bell only was allowed to be used for ordinary purposes in all the parishes within 21 miles of the sea, and it was ordered that if there was an invasion all the bells should be rung as a warning. England was then at war with France and Scotland. It was the beginning of what is known as the Hundred Years War. For some time French ships made attempts to raid towns on the South Coast. They burnt Southampton and Harwich and Plymouth, and did other damage, but a great English naval victory at Sluys destroyed the French fleet, and afterwards it was the English who invaded France.

On November 20th 1338, an order was issued to all sheriffs of counties lying on the sea coast which ran: 'Because we have understood for certain that our enemies from abroad are daily preparing to invade our realm, in order to commit therein what evil and wickedness they can—for this reason we have ordained by the advice of our Council, for the more speedy warning of our people of the approaching attacks of the enemy, and for the better avoiding of their malice, that one bell only shall be rung in all churches within a distance of seven leagues from the sea; and that if peril shall threaten from such hostile attacks, all the bells shall be rung in each of these churches, for the defence of our people, and to give warning for the repulse of our enemies.'

In the twelfth century, movement in war by sea or by land was far slower than it is to-day, people were much more accustomed to listen for the messages the bells had to give them, and the warning (in conjunction with beacons) was doubtless quite effective.

BATH AND WELLS DIOCESAN ASSOCIATION,**MEETING AT WEDMORE.**

A meeting of the Axbridge Deanery of the Bath and Wells Diocesan Association, held at Wedmore on September 23rd, was attended by nearly 50 ringers from Wedmore, Mark, East Brent, Bristol, Street, Shepton Mallet, Weston-super-Mare, Kewstoke, Dinder, Clevedon, Yatton, Burnham-on-Sea, Wookey, Congresbury, Wrington, Cheddar, Cleve, Badgworth, Worle and Churchill.

In the absence of the president, the Rev. L. T. Powys David, the Vicar of Wedmore took the chair at the business meeting which followed the service in church.

It was decided to hold the annual meeting at Congresbury in December, and practice meetings at Axbridge in October and Kewstoke in November.

The methods rung were Grandsire Doubles and Triples, Stedman Doubles and Triples, Plain Bob Minor and Major, Kent, Forward and Cambridge Major.

DEVON GUILD.**MEETING AT SILVERTON.**

A meeting of the North-East Branch of the Guild of Devonshire Ringers was held at Silverton on September 30th and was attended by members from Exeter, Calverleigh, Silverton, Honiton Clyst, Tiverton, Thorverton, Washfield and Plymouth. Thirty-eight were present at the business meeting, which was presided over by the Rev. J. M. Turner, chairman of the branch. One member was elected and the annual meeting fixed for January 27th at Calverleigh. Rounds, Grandsire Doubles and Triples, Stedman Triples and Bob Major were rung.

KENT COUNTY ASSOCIATION.**MEETING AT TONBRIDGE.**

The annual meeting of the Tonbridge District of the Kent County Association was held at Tonbridge on October 7th and was attended by 30 members from Leigh, Sevenoaks, Tunbridge Wells, Shipbourne, Ponshurst, East Peckham, Aylesford, Tunstall, Headcorn and the local belfry. Service in church was followed by tea and the business meeting, at which Mr. B. Collison took the chair.

The secretary's report and balance sheet were adopted, Sevenoaks was selected as the place of the next meeting and it was decided to hold weekly practices at Tonbridge on Fridays. Mr. T. Saunders was re-elected hon. secretary, Mr. B. Collison ringing master, and Miss B. Richardson and Mr. A. Battin district representatives. A collection for the association realised 8s. 6d.

JOINT MEETING AT HILLINGDON.

A joint meeting of the South and West District of the Middlesex County Association and the East Berks and South Bucks Branch of the Oxford Diocesan Guild, held at St. John's, Hillingdon, on October 7th was attended by about 80 ringers from Ealing, Rickmansworth, Pinner, Farnham Royal, Hillingdon, Harrow, Windsor, Cookham, Cranford, Beaconsfield, Isleworth, Stoke Poges, Uxbridge, Hughenden and High Wycombe. The ringing, under the direction of Mr. J. Fowler and Mr. T. Bannister, ranged from rounds to Cambridge Surprise Royal. Tea, provided by Mr. and Mrs. Goodfellow, was at the Parish Hall. It was decided to hold the next Middlesex meeting at St. Mary's, Ealing, on November 25th.

NOTICES.

THE CHARGE FOR ONE INSERTION of a notice of a meeting is 2s. Other insertions are at the rate of 1s. each. Altered notices count as new notices.

All lines exceeding six in any one insertion are charged at the rate of 4d. per line.

ANCIENT SOCIETY OF COLLEGE YOUTHS.—Meeting Saturday, Oct. 21st, 3 p.m., Whitechapel Bell Foundry, E.1. Ringing All Saints, Poplar, 4.30. St. Dunstan's, Stepney, 9.30 a.m., Sunday, Oct. 15th. 307th anniversary luncheon, November 11th, Slater's Restaurant, Basinghall Street, E.C., 1.30 p.m. Tickets 6s. 6d. each. Accommodation limited to 110.—A. B. Peck.

OXFORD DIOCESAN GUILD.—Reading Branch.—Practice meeting at St. Laurence's, Reading, Saturday, Oct. 21st, 6 to 8.30 p.m.—E. G. Foster, 401, London Road, Reading.

KENT COUNTY ASSOCIATION.—Canterbury District.—Meeting at St. Stephen's, Canterbury, Oct. 21st, 2.30. Service 4.15.—B. J. Luck, Hon. Dis. Sec., 20, Beaconsfield Road, Canterbury.

CHESTER DIOCESAN GUILD.—Stockport, Bowden and Macclesfield Branches.—Meeting at Macclesfield on Saturday, Oct. 21st. Christ Church (8) 3 to 4 p.m. Service in Christ Church 4 p.m., followed by tea and meeting in Christ Church Day Schools. Parish Church (12) after meeting.—T. Wilde and T. Taylor, Hon. Secs.

ESSEX ASSOCIATION and MIDDLESEX COUNTY ASSOCIATION.—Meeting Saturday, Oct. 21st, at St. John's, Leytonstone, 3 p.m. Service and tea.—J. H. Crampion and T. J. Lock, Hon. Secs.

YORKSHIRE ASSOCIATION.—Eastern District.—Meeting at Market Weighton, Saturday, Oct. 21st. Bells (6) from 2 o'clock. Service 4.15 p.m. Tea 5 p.m.—H. S. Morley, Hon. Sec., 45, Green Lane, Selby.

BATH AND WELLS ASSOCIATION.—Glastonbury Deanery.—Meeting at Dinder, Saturday, Oct. 21st. Bells (6) 3 p.m. Service 4 p.m. Tea and meeting to follow.—W. H. Marsh, 4, Dovecotes, Street, Somerset.

KENT COUNTY ASSOCIATION.—Lewisham District.—Annual meeting at Bexley, Saturday, Oct. 21st, 3 p.m. Service 4.30.—A. G. Hill, Hon. Dis. Sec.

MIDLAND COUNTIES ASSOCIATION.—Derby District.—Meeting at West Hallam (8 bells), Oct. 21st, 2.30 p.m. Bring food. Cups of tea provided.—Wm. Lancaster, Hon. Sec., 83, Albert Road, Chaddesden, Derby.

WORCESTERSHIRE AND DISTRICTS ASSOCIATION.—Northern Branch.—Meeting Wollaston, 3 p.m., Saturday, Oct. 21st. Tea 5 p.m.—Bernard C. Ashford, Sec., Bowling Green Road, Stourbridge.

GUILDFORD DIOCESAN GUILD.—Chertsey District.—Meeting at Hershaw, Saturday, Oct. 21st. Bells (8) 3 p.m. Tea 5 p.m.—F. E. Hawthorne, Hon. Sec., 39, Queen's Road, Thames Ditton.

NEWCASTLE CATHEDRAL GUILD.—Practice on alternate Tuesdays at Cathedral (12 bells) and St. John's (8 bells). Cathedral, Tuesday, Oct. 24th, 7.30 p.m.—J. Anderson, Hon. Sec.

SUSSEX COUNTY ASSOCIATION.—Western Division.—Practice Meeting, Chichester Cathedral, Saturday, Oct. 28th. Bells (8) 3 p.m. No business.—L. Stilwell, Pikeholme, Pulborough.

SURREY ASSOCIATION.—Southern District.—Meeting at Merstham, Saturday, Oct. 28th, 3 p.m. Service 5 p.m. Tea 5.45 p.m. at the Golden Wheel, by invitation of Mr. D. Kenneth C. Birt, to those who accept by Oct. 25th, to Alfred Gear, Sandy Way, The Cutting, Redhill.

SUSSEX COUNTY ASSOCIATION.—Practice meeting at Crawley, Saturday, Oct. 28th, 3 p.m.—O. Sipetts, 10, Three Bridges Road, Crawley.

LEEDS AND DISTRICT SOCIETY.—Meeting at Leeds Parish Church, Saturday, Oct. 28th, 3 p.m. Tea can be obtained near church. Business 7 p.m.—H. Lofthouse, Hon. Sec., 8, Wortley Road, Leeds 12.

BEDFORDSHIRE ASSOCIATION.—Biggleswade District.—Meeting at Biggleswade, Saturday, Oct. 28th. Bells (8) 3 p.m. Tea 5 p.m.—C. J. Ball, 25, Tempsford Road, Sandy.

BATH AND WELLS ASSOCIATION.—Axbridge Deanery.—Meeting at Axbridge, Saturday, Oct. 28th. Bells (6) 6.30 p.m.—E. J. Avery, Hon. Local Sec., Sandford, Bristol.

HUDDERSFIELD AND DISTRICT ASSOCIATION.—Meeting at Almondbury (8 bells), Oct. 28th, 3 p.m. Bring food. Cups of tea provided.—Frank Rhodes, Sec.

DONCASTER AND DISTRICT SOCIETY.—Meeting at Sprotborough, Saturday, Oct. 28th, 3 p.m. Buses every 15 minutes. Names before Oct. 24th.—W. E. Lloyd, 3, Cranbrook Road, Doncaster.

MIDLAND COUNTIES ASSOCIATION.—Loughborough District.—Meeting at Ibstock, Saturday, Oct. 28th, 3 p.m. Service 4.45. Cups of tea at Rectory 5 p.m. Bring food. Buses from Coalville every 10 minutes.—A. E. Rowley, Hon. Sec.

LINCOLN DIOCESAN GUILD.—Eastern Branch.—Meeting at Freiston (6 bells), Saturday, Oct. 28th, 2.30 p.m. Service 4.15 p.m. Tea to follow. Names by Oct. 24th.—W. E. Clarke, Hon. Sec., 99, Norfolk Street, Boston.

DURHAM AND NEWCASTLE ASSOCIATION.—Eastern District.—Meeting at South Shields, St. Hilda's (8 bells), Saturday, Oct. 28th, 2.30 p.m. Bring food. Cups of tea provided.—Frank Ainsley, 30, Aysgarth Avenue, Grangetown, Sunderland.

OXFORD DIOCESAN GUILD.—E. Berks and S. Bucks Branch.—Meeting at Burnham, Saturday, Oct. 28th, 3 p.m. Service 4.30 p.m. Tea, 5 p.m., 1s. per head. Names for tea by Oct. 23rd.—A. D. Barker, Cambridge, Wexham, Slough, Bucks.

PETERBOROUGH DIOCESAN GUILD.—Northampton Branch.—Meeting at Hardingstone, Saturday, Oct. 28th. Service 4.15 p.m. Tea provided (1s. 6d.).—R. S. Cowley, 83, Beech Avenue, Northampton.

BATH AND WELLS DIOCESAN ASSOCIATION.—Cary Branch.—Meeting at Henstridge (6 bells), Saturday, Oct. 28th, 3 p.m. Service 4.30. Tea to follow. Templecombe bells also.—H. C. Lintern, Alhampton, Ditchat.

LINCOLN DIOCESAN GUILD.—Grimsby and Gainsborough Districts.—Meeting at Scunthorpe, Saturday, Oct. 28th. Bells (8) 2.15. Service 4.15. Tea, 5 p.m., in the Old Library. Names to Mr. F. Lord, Campana, 107, Bushfield Road, Scunthorpe, by Oct. 25th.—H. I. Mingay and L. Lunn, Hon. Secs.

KENT COUNTY ASSOCIATION.—Rochester District.—Meeting at Rainham, Saturday, Oct. 28th, 2.45 p.m. Service 4 p.m. Names before Oct. 25th to G. H. Spice, 35, Woodstock Road, Sittingbourne.

LANCASHIRE ASSOCIATION.—Manchester Branch.—Meeting at St. Matthew's, Stretford, Saturday, Oct. 28th, 3.30 p.m. Business meeting.—Frank Reynolds, Branch Sec.

HERTFORD COUNTY ASSOCIATION.—Diamond Jubilee Celebrations at St. Albans, Saturday, Oct. 28th. Ringing: St. Peter's (10) 2.30, St. Michael's (6) and St. Stephen's (6) 2.30-3.30. Service, St. Peter's, 4 p.m. Social Gathering at the Abbey Restaurant 5 p.m. Tickets, 6s. inclusive, from district secretaries or W. Ayre, Leverstock Green, Hemel Hempstead. Latest date, Oct. 24th.

MIDLAND COUNTIES ASSOCIATION.—Nottingham District.—Meeting at Sawley on Saturday, Nov. 4th, 3 p.m. Service 4.30. Tea in School 5 p.m. (1s. 3d. per head), followed by business meeting. Names for tea must reach Mr. W. Dawson, Clarke Drive, Sawley, Long Eaton, Notts, by Monday, Oct. 30th.—T. Groombridge, jun., Dis. Sec.

KENT COUNTY ASSOCIATION.—Ashford District.—Meeting at Willesborough, Saturday, Nov. 4th, 2.30. Tea 5 p.m. Names for tea to Mr. Ruck, 3, Hunter Road, Willesborough, Ashford, by Nov. 1st.—P. Page, Hon. Dis. Sec.

NORWICH DIOCESAN ASSOCIATION.—Meeting at Scottow (6 bells), Saturday, Nov. 4th, 2 p.m. Tea and meeting 4.30. Buses leave Norwich Bus Station 2 p.m., leave Scottow 5.3 and 7.28. Names for tea to Rev. A. G. Thurlow, 52, The Close, Norwich.

WINCHESTER AND PORTSMOUTH DIOCESAN GUILD.—Basingstoke District.—Meeting at Deane and Church Oakley, Saturday, Nov. 11th. Service in Deane Church 4 p.m. Tea and business 5 p.m. at the Deane Gate. Names to Rev. F. S. H. Marle, Deane Rectory, by Nov. 7th.—J. G. Stilwell, Hon. Sec.

BIRTH.

MARCON.—On Sunday, Oct. 8th, at the Bromhead Maternity Home, Lincoln, to Sylvia May, wife of Harold Marcon, the gift of a son.

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