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RECONSTRUCTION AND BELL TOWERS

One result of the grievous and widespread destruction of buildings is that persons in authority are taking steps to compile full graphic, photographic and other records of buildings of merit which have been damaged or are in outstanding danger of being damaged by warfare. Destruction, unfortunately, there has been and will be, but some attempt is being made to ensure that we and future generations shall not wholly lose the example and the inspiration of the work of men of past ages.

For the moment we are chiefly and strenuously concerned with the things of the present; shortly we shall be most urgently concerned with the things of the future; and it would almost seem that these are no times for us to concern ourselves about the things of the past. Yet the wise man knows without a peradventure that our future both as a nation and as a Church depends very largely on the extent to which we can preserve, in the changing conditions that are coming, the great things and the great ideas which have come down to us from the past.

To some the destruction of houses and churches appears as a most excellent opportunity of replacing them by buildings better and more worthy. And so it is. Much that has been destroyed was bad and we need not regret it. It is only the best whose loss we deplore and whose memory we wish to preserve.

As ringers we are particularly interested in the new ideas of building and architecture which may arise in the reconstruction period after the war. Our art depends on the existence of bells, and bells are useless unless there are suitable towers and steeples in which they can be hung. Throughout the long history of the Church from the earliest times the styles of architecture in which churches were built have varied enormously, but a steeple which could contain bells has always been considered as an essential feature of a complete church, though oft-times it was omitted for want of funds. Of late years there has been a distinct tendency towards a style of architecture which has no place for bell-carrying steeples. The nineteenth century architects built many churches with steeples too flimsy to hold ringing peals, but at least they pretended to be bell towers. Modern architects to a large extent have dropped even the pretence. There is a real fear that in the church building of the future no provision will be made for bells, and therefore anything which, like the new survey and record, tends to maintain continuity with the ideas of the past is to be welcomed.

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HANDBELL PEAL.

AYLSHAM, NORFOLK.

THE NORWICH DIOCESAN ASSOCIATION.

On Sunday, March 9, 1941, in Two Hours and 10 Minutes,

At 4, FAIRLEIGH TERRACE,

A PEAL OF BOB MINOR, 5040 CHANGES;

Being seven 720's called differently. Tenor size 16 in B.

ALBERT ROUGHT 1-2 | JACK N. A. PUMPHREY ... 3-4

WALTER C. MEDLER 5-6

Conducted by W. C. MEDLER.

SILENT APPARATUS.

AS USED AT ST. LAWRENCE JEWRY.

To the Editor.

Dear Sir,—I have followed with attention the correspondence in your columns on the above subject, but have not yet seen any suggestion which might give a lead to the would-be constructor.

The ideal apparatus is such that when the tower bells are rung with clappers fixed, a set of gongs corresponding to them sound in the ringing chamber and reproduce in miniature the blows the bells would have made if the clappers had been free. As far as I can ascertain, this has never yet been realised, but a fair compromise is possible.

The first requisite is the necessity for the signals given by the apparatus to synchronise with the blows of the bells (if open). It is fairly obvious that this cannot be attained by having contacts or triggers in fixed positions on the wheels or stocks, if one stops to consider the moment the clapper strikes the bell when at different heights.

Whether the arc the bell swings over is 90 degrees or 360 degrees, the clapper will strike it at the top of its swing. Consequently if the contacts are correct for a certain arc, they will not be so if the arc be greater or less, and, if less, they will 'miss' altogether. In change ringing the bells seldom fall lower than an arc of 240 degrees or 30 degrees above the frame either way, and it may be thought that if the contacts are placed so that they operate at this point, all will be well, but this is not so.

The signal given is too soon for bells rung to a set pull, the effect in change ringing being this. In rounds the bells 'shake down' more or less into a beat, as all are swinging regularly and get their signals equally early. But in changes it is not possible to make one's bell strike quicker by 'holding it down' or slower by 'pushing it higher.' A small bell may be 'driven' to strike in time, but with any weight at all it is really hard work pulling it about. This is the chief fault with the Seage and similar apparatus, it made 'work' for the heavy end.

The ideal could be realised if the clapper itself or some 'gadget' to reproduce the motion of the clapper could be made to operate the contacts or triggers. If done electrically either flexible connections or rubbing contacts would be required between the moving parts and the device operating the gong, which, by the way, must have more 'kick' than the ordinary single stroke bell movement, which does not give that firm blow required if the sound is not to be overpowered by the noise of the ropes moving in the slides. For this Solenoids specially wound would be required. At the present time electrical equipment is difficult to obtain, and the cost of the Solenoids alone would make it prohibitive to most towers. If done mechanically then again the precision work required would be costly, although quite possible. In addition, I am assured by practical people in bell circles that complicated apparatus would not be used, simply because it would not be kept in order. In fact, the simpler it is the greater the chance of adoption.

Although far from perfect, I will endeavour to describe the contrivance which had a fair measure of success at St. Lawrence Jewry:—

A set of eight handbells was clamped between battens fixed in the chiming rack, each bell having alongside it a hammer operated by a one-way trigger. From the bells in the tower waxed hemp cords were led through the pulleys and holes normally occupied by the chiming ropes and attached to the eight triggers respectively. The upper ends of the cords were anchored to the gudgeons (or bosses) of the bells by means of metal collars and swing loops. The object of the arrangement was to obtain a fall and rise of about 4in. for the cords operating the triggers, and where this was insufficient the diameter of the gudgeon was built up by a hardwood block to the required size. The upper ends of the cords terminated with spring hooks which could be quickly disengaged from the loops if necessary. The effect was that as the bell turned from hand or back or vice versa the cord was lowered and raised, operating the trigger, which missed on the down stroke and struck on the up stroke. Piano wire springs on the triggers held the cords in tension, and adjustments could be made as to length of cord by loops and thumbscrews, and as to timing by levers of variable length.

The whole arrangement was extremely simple and cheap, and its chief recommendation that all adjustments could be made in the ringing chamber. To some extent it had the faults mentioned earlier, but these could be modified by the adjustments possible. Finally there was nothing to get out of order.

E. MURRELL.

A BOURNEMOUTH APPARATUS.

To the Editor.

Dear Sir,—Many years ago Seage's apparatus was installed in the tower of St. Peter's, Bournemouth. I am given to understand by those who used it that it was anything but reliable and by reason of the strain placed upon the copper wire used, breakages were frequent. About 1920 the apparatus was dismantled, although the bells fixed in the ringing chamber remain.

I have successfully fixed up the tenor bell with an electrical device which will operate the gong in the chamber, using the slide as a 'make and break' contact. Further development in the idea to embrace the whole peal has not been proceeded with for several reasons. In the first place, I do not think enough ringers would climb our tower to ring 'dumb bells,' and to practise in this way would mean the tying of all the clappers 'or removing them.' How, then, could we say the bells are ready for use by the authorities should the necessity arise. One could nip aloft and release the clappers of one or two bells, but it would not be an easy task or a very safe one, with inexperienced would-be ringers knocking about.

I demonstrated my apparatus to three or four Bournemouth ringers, who voted it good, but doubted if it would attract a regular band for ringing. Could I be assured of this I would complete the job and risk the alarm bell business by using our sacring bell for the purpose. As it is, I propose leaving it until after the war, when in all probability we shall be glad of such an apparatus for practice purposes. I would send details of my apparatus to anyone interested.

Touching on one other subject, I do hope our officials have not lost sight of the vigilance necessary in post-war days to ensure that damaged rings of bells are replaced by hanging new bells and not by 'gramophone' bells. We must be ready to ward off a new offensive by the 'ersatz' bell advocates when peace comes.

ARTHUR V. DAVIS, Captain of Ringers, St. Peter's.

116, Alma Road, Bournemouth.

DUFFIELD.

ANNIVERSARY OF THE FIRST PEAL OF MAXIMUS.

Next Monday is the fiftieth anniversary of the first peal of Duffield Maximus, rung on March 17th, 1891, at St. Martin's, Birmingham.

The band was made up of members of the Society of St. Martin's Youths, with two from Burton-on-Trent, Mr. Joseph Griffin, who rang the seventh, and William Wakley, who rang the tenor. A. P. Heywood rang the sixth and conducted.

When the peal was published it was claimed that 'with the exception of the Double Norwich rung in 1817, it is the only peal of Maximus in any but the common methods.' It is, however, a little doubtful if the claim was a sound one. The Real Double Bob Maximus rung by the College Youths in 1784, and the Cumberland Treble Bob Maximus rung by the Cumberlands in 1795 can hardly be called 'common' methods, unless the last was really Kent Treble Bob.

In introducing Duffield, Heywood set himself to supply a want which, as he pointed out, was badly needed. There had lately been in his time a great advance in Major ringing, but on ten and twelve bells Treble Bob was the only method practised, and this lack of advancement was, he thought, due solely to the want of suitable Royal and Maximus methods.

He surveyed the whole situation, and as he said, 'followed a strictly consecutive line of argument, and showed how that which was sought was obtained, namely a more convenient and musical method than Treble Bob, applicable to all even numbers of bells from eight upwards; a result which, he trusted, may have, in time, the effect of stirring up progress in ten and twelve-bell ringing, for with this new method, whether as Major, Royal or Maximus, in simplicity, adaptability and musical properties, he unhesitatingly challenged comparison.' He was 'further bold enough to believe that, as in Stedman is found the perfection of odd-bell ringing, so in this new method will be found the most musical and adaptable even-bell system possible of attainment.'

The book Heywood published on Duffield is one of the best written of all the ringing text books; the arguments and explanations in it are excellent and clearly stated; Heywood seemed to have completely proved his case. And yet the method was a failure from the start. A few peals of Major have been rung at odd times away from the place of its birth and its name, fewer of Royal, and, we believe, no more than two of Maximus.

What is the reason? Partly it is conservatism, for Duffield stands outside the traditions which find expression in the standard methods; but chiefly it is because the method is monotonous—monotonous both to ring and to listen to. So far, however, as ten-bell ringing, and especially twelve-bell ringing, are concerned, it deserves a little more attention than it has received.

FAMOUS NORWICH RINGERS.

4.—CHARLES PAYNE.

Then I went to Norwich where the dons do dwell.

Some of the ringers I knew very well.

There was Hurry, he railed against Thurston and Payne,

And swore he would never ring with them again.

So runs the old Norfolk ballad written by 'The Rambling Ringer.'

Charles Payne, who in after years was chief labourer to Samuel Thurston, was born at Blo' Norton in the year 1791. There were five bells at the parish church, and on them he learnt to ring. The Rambling Ringer says that—

Then I went to Blo' Norton and there rang on five,

With some good men as any alive,

They were lovers of ringing as well as good beer,

And to practise their art they went far and near.

At the neighbouring tower of Garboldisham there was a ring of six and for many years a very enthusiastic and skilful band. Here Payne learnt Minor, and here he rang his first peal, one of Oxford Treble Bob Minor, in 1821. Three of his brothers were in the band. James Chinery, a native of Blo' Norton, told Samuel Slater that he remembered all these Paynes. John Payne was a jobbing gardener and Thomas was parish clerk. He and a man named John Andrews taught four men to ring, for as the saying goes, 'They Paynes were getting old and wanted to teach some young men before they died.' Tom Payne used to assist Andrews in his hay trussing, and one day when he was an old man, going to work, he fell down dead.

About the year 1821 Charles Payne left Blo' Norton and went and lived at Norwich, where he joined the Norwich Scholars. He became a close companion of Samuel Thurston, and rang in all his best peals, including Double Oxford Bob Major, Double Norwich, Superlative and London Surprise.

Thurston was employed as a stonemason at Norwich Cathedral, and Payne was in the band that rang the bells there for the last time.

On one occasion the Norwich Scholars went on a long ringing tour, but before it ended their finances went wrong and they had to sell or pawn their watches and part of their clothing to raise enough money to take them home, where they arrived in a state of destitution. Mr. Samuel Slater thought this was the occasion on which Thurston and Payne visited Lavenham for the annual anniversary ringing. The date would be about 1827.

On the last day of the year 1831 the Norwich Scholars started for a peal of Stedman Cinques at Mancroft with Payne at the tenth, but owing to an error by Thurston, who was calling, the bells came round when they had rung 4,884 changes. The ringing, Osborn says, was most excellent.

After Thurston's death in 1841, Payne moved to Great Yarmouth, where he joined the band at St. Nicholas' Parish Church. With them he rang three peals, Grand sire Caters, Treble Bob Royal and Treble Bob Major.

Several anecdotes are told of him. On one occasion there was a very disagreeable meeting and the members got to high words with each other. Payne sat quietly until both sides appealed to him. Then he said, 'You are all wrong, and fools for hitching up such a noise.'

Somebody asked him how many methods he knew, and his reply was, 'Ask me how many I do not know, and then perhaps I can tell you.'

Payne rang in 160 towers, most of them in Norfolk and Suffolk with five and six bell rings. Eight had three bells. He was a good double-handed ringer and able to ring two bells in several methods. On August 24th, 1826, he took part in a peal of Oxford Treble Bob Major with the Norwich men, and later, with three Yarmouth men, he rang a long touch of Double Norwich, the first recorded touch in the method on handbells. The details are given in a contemporary newspaper:—

'Yarmouth. Handbell ringing. On Tuesday, February 1st, 1848, a true and complete touch containing 1,680 changes was rung on handbells of Double Norwich Court by the following persons: Thomas Fox 1-2, Frederick Watering 3-4, James Burman 5-6, Charles Payne 7-8. Conducted by Charles Payne.'

The last time Payne rang with the Yarmouth company his eyesight was so bad that he had to be led by his rope, but he was still an excellent striker.

He died at Yarmouth on December 4th, 1866, in his 75th year, and was buried in the churchyard. The St. Nicholas' company erected a stone over his grave, which records that 'he was of unimpeachable integrity and enjoyed the highest respect and esteem of all who knew him.' The Norwich Scholars rang a muffled peal for him at Mancroft.

These particulars, which have been sent us by Mr. Theodore E. Slater from the manuscripts of his father, the late Samuel Slater, form an interesting addition to the accounts recently forwarded by Mr. Charles E. Borrett.

LEICESTER.—On Friday, March 7th, at St. Margaret's Church (with clapperless bells), 720 Bob Minor, in 24 minutes, by Miss Margaret Morrig 1, Ernest Morris (conductor) 2, Miss Betty Ravfield 3, George Stedman Morris 4, Josiah Morris 5, Ronald J. Rayfield, R.A., 6. This band comprises one grandfather, two fathers, two sons, three brothers, one sister, one daughter, one granddaughter, one uncle, one niece—yet only six ringers.

J. A. TROLLOPE'S
'COLLEGE YOUTHS'
 A History of the Society
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THE PEAL BOARDS OF LONDON.

A GENERAL SURVEY.

By J. ARMIGER TROLLOPE.

During these last six months we have had more than one sharp reminder of the loss we may suffer, and indeed have already suffered, in our old ringing records, through enemy action.

This applies in varying degree to the whole country, but especially to London, for it is there that the largest quantity of the most valuable kind has been preserved. It consists of the very fine collection of manuscripts and printed books in the library of the British Museum, which, we may be fairly certain, are well looked after, the peal and name books belonging to the Ancient Society of College Youths, the best of which are in a place of safety, though there was much regrettable loss when the Coffee Pot was burnt down; the records of the Cumberland Youths, which we understand have been cared for; and the ancient peal boards in various belfries.

Laughton's manuscript which was in the library of the Guildhall apparently is safe. Some time back I made a verbatim copy of this manuscript and it is now in the collection belonging to the Guildford Diocesan Guild.

In peal boards there has already been a serious loss and in the days to come there may still be more, but apart from the precautions which are now generally being taken to safeguard churches, it is difficult to see what can be done. It has been suggested that the most valuable should be taken down and stored in safe places. In some cases it might be done, but in others it would be, as things are, almost impossible. Some of the tablets at St. Peter Mancroft, Norwich, for instance, are very large; they are constructed of wood, plaster and canvas; and to take them down without damaging them would be a long, costly, and difficult operation.

Meanwhile, readers may be interested in a short account of what boards there are in London belfries, and what has been the fate of others in the past.

As we should expect from the part they played in the early development of the art, London belfries are rich in peal boards, but more remarkable than the number of those which still remain is the number of those which for one reason or another have disappeared.

In the eighteenth century there were within the City fifteen towers which had ringing peals of eight or more bells, and in each of them more than one notable performance was achieved. In addition to those of which some account has survived it is certain that there were other peals rung by bands which belonged to societies such as the London Scholars, whose records are lost, or to companies like the City Scholars, which existed for only a short time and are either entirely forgotten, or are remembered by a chance reference in some contemporary newspaper or manuscript. Not every peal was recorded on a board, but whenever it was possible, it was done.

Thirteen of the rings of bells were hung by the middle of the eighteenth century, and accounts of 47 peals rung on them till then have been preserved. Of these peals we know that seven were recorded in the belfries, but only one of the boards still remains, that recording the 5,000 of Oxford Treble Bob Royal by the College Youths at St. Sepulchre's, Snow Hill, in 1741.

The first peal known to have been accomplished in London was one of the 5,040 changes of Grandsire Caters by the London Scholars in 1717. For this a board was

put up, but it was taken down when the steeple was repaired in 1796 and was not replaced. The same society rang in 1729 6,240 changes of Grandsire Cinques at St. Michael's, Cornhill. The board remained till about 1840 and was copied by Osborn, but it was then in pieces and not hung, and soon afterwards was broken up.

The second peal in London was the Hick Triples by the Union Scholars at St. Dunstan's-in-the-East in 1718. We do not know whether they put up a tablet to record it, but it is quite likely, for they did put up one to record the 5,120 of Treble Bob Major rung shortly afterwards in the same steeple.

What became of it is told in a letter written by Samuel Austin in 1863 to Ellacombe:—'That peal was recorded in the belfry, and in my younger days I saw it many times. The church was taken down (not the tower) and rebuilt in 1820; the bells were repaired, the belfry painted and whitewashed, and in taking down the board on which the peal was recorded it fell to pieces with old age and was not replaced.'

Sixty years ago there was at St. Andrew's, Holborn, a board for 6,160 Bob Major rung by a 'friendly society' in 1738. It was then much dilapidated and has since disappeared. The same tale may be told about the board for the peal of Treble Bob Royal by the Eastern Scholars in St. Sepulchre's in 1741, the first peal ever rung in the method.

The first peal rung by the College Youths was one of Grandsire Cinques in 1725 at St. Bride's. This was commemorated by a board which was the only one on which Benjamin Annable's name appeared. That was lost in the recent fire raid, and so was a board recording 6,012 Grandsire Caters at St. Giles'; Cripplegate, by the City Scholars in 1732, if it was the same as one which, through dirt and the discoloration of the varnish, had become illegible. I am rather inclined to think it had already disappeared.

For peals rung in the second half of the eighteenth century only three boards still remain. One at St. Magnus' records 5,148 Double Grandsire Caters by the College Youths in 1762, one at St. Botolph's, Aldgate, is for 5,040 Grandsire Triples by the Junior Cumberlands in 1785, and one at St. Sepulchre's for 5,111 Grandsire Caters by the same society in 1793. I have not seen the board at Aldgate, and so am not quite certain if it is still there.

Two boards lost at St. Bride's were for 5,104 Grandsire Cinques by the Union Scholars in 1751, and 5,232 Treble Bob Maximus by the College Youths in 1777. The illegible board destroyed at Cripplegate was probably for 5,200 Oxford Treble Bob Royal by the London Youths in 1777.

St. Botolph's, Bishopsgate, had formerly three or four old boards recording among other peals the three rung on the day the bells were opened. These peals were rung by the three leading London societies of the time, the Society of College Youths, the Society of Cumberland Youths, and the ancient Society of College Youths.

The boards were taken down about sixty years ago when the belfry was cleaned, and after standing for some time against the wall, were broken up for firewood.

St. Dionis', Backchurch, had a board recording a peal rung by the ancient Society of College Youths in 1785, and another recording one rung by the Cumberlands in 1850. Both boards disappeared when the church was

pulled down, and the same fate befel a board recording a peal of Real Double Bob Major by the College Youths, in 1778, at St. Dunstan's-in-the-West, when that church was rebuilt.

Two or three early nineteenth century boards were destroyed at All Hallows', Barking, in the recent fire.

It will be noticed that more than one famous belfry possesses no board as old as the eighteenth century. The oldest at Bow dates from 1803, the oldest at Cornhill from 1837. If any boards ever existed at St. Lawrence Jewry, or St. Stephen's, Coleman Street, they had disappeared long before the churches were destroyed. I am not quite sure, but I believe there was at one time an early nineteenth century board at St. Stephen's. There are no boards at St. Dunstan's-in-the-East.

Only four peals were rung at St. Michael's, Cornhill, during the eighteenth century, and that perhaps accounts for the absence of boards, but we should have expected to find some at Bow, where more than one outstanding performance was achieved. We are rather forced to conclude that there has been some regrettable destruction in the belfry.

DESIGN OF BELL FRAMES.

To the Editor.

Dear Sir,—In reply to Mr. G. P. Elphick, may I say that my bell frame with combined wood and cast-iron struts is a real thing; we have one here at St. James'.

I have seen a good number of different frames and this is the best of them all, steady as a rock. About eighty peals have been rung on the bells (tenor 20 cwt.), and I feel certain Mr. Elphick has never rung on a better going peal for their weight.

If Mr. Elphick will look at my letter again he will see there are four bolts at each end of the strut and they are required to be effective. I have a slight knowledge of woodwork and I have been working on it for 54 years.
J. HUNT.
Taunton.

ERIN DOUBLES.

WHY IS AN EXTENT IMPOSSIBLE?

To the Editor.

Dear Sir,—Your two correspondents who have replied to my query concerning Erin Doubles, namely, why is it impossible to obtain a 120, have answered differently. The Rev. E. S. Powell states the thing is impossible if you restrict your singles to the bells in 4-5, while Mr. Kenneth Lewis has obtained a 120 by making his singles at the parting of the sixes, and thus upsetting the regular slow work of the method.

Why should Mr. Powell object to the slow work being upset? As the whole of the method is contained in one six, then six changes of Erin Doubles is equivalent to a call being made at the end of the sixes, then to be consistent he ought to object to a call being made in Plain Bob, as that upsets the regular work of some of the bells as found in a plain course.

I understand that when Fabian Stedman produced his method, he did so for five bells, and his single was made, not by the dodging bells, but by three front bells lying still in the middle of a quick six. This version of a single may be found in the Central Council's Doubles and Minor collection, of which Mr. Powell is an editor. Does Mr. Powell approve of this way of ringing Stedman, and, if so, why not Erin?

Mr. Lewis' extent is ingenious, but why is it so irregular, with his five 'bobs' and three 'singles'? Can Mr. Lewis tell me how he came to produce it; was it by luck or was he working on some recognised plan? Has Mr. Lewis tried to produce an extent by making his 'bob' in the same place as the single in Stedman Doubles, i.e., in the middle of the six. If so this would lessen the extent to which the slow work is altered by his calls.

Mr. Powell does not like Mr. Lewis' 'single' because it alters the work of all five working bells. Unfortunately, a single in Grandsire Doubles alters the work of all the working bells. Some readers may not know an alternative single which may be used.

54132

51423

15432

14532

41523

45132

This single alters two of the bells only in their coursing order, which is exactly what a single ought to do.

I am grateful to Mr. Powell for laying the problem out in an orderly manner, but he has not satisfied my curiosity in telling me *why* the production of an extent is impossible. The method is regular enough and every bell occupies each place the same number of times in a plain course: Erin Triples can be rung, why not Doubles?

'PUZZLED.'

John Taylor & Co.

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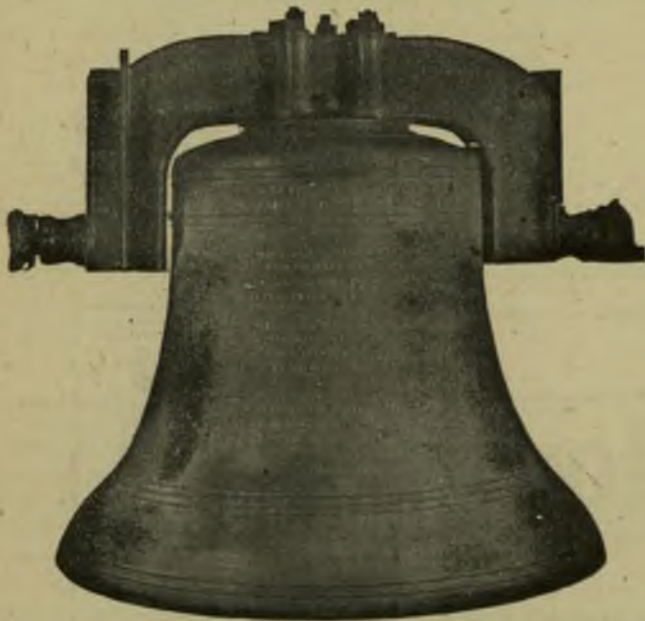
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THE EDITOR.

Mr. J. S. Goldsmith's condition continues satisfactory. It is expected that the major operation will be performed at the beginning of next week.

BELFRY GOSSIP.

In a recent air raid, St. Mary's Church, Swansea, was damaged by enemy action, and the ring of bells destroyed.

Mr. James George reminds us that the death of Mr. Ben Gough leaves him the only survivor of the band which rang a peal of Kent Treble Bob Major at Coseley in Staffordshire on November 24th, 1893, and again on the same date 20 years later. John Carter called the peals.

Next Sunday Mr. F. E. Dawe will celebrate his 79th birthday. He was Master of the College Youths from 1888 to 1890 and in 1892 and 1893. For one year he was non. secretary of the Central Council.

Any visiting ringers in H.M. Forces (or otherwise) to Leicester will be welcomed at St. Margaret's Church. Practice with clapperless bells and handbells every Friday evening 6.30 to 8.30, or by arrangement with Mr. Ernest Morris.

'Peterborough,' who writes day by day in 'The Daily Telegraph,' remarked that a walk through the City the other day reminded him that there is a silver lining to every cloud. In this case the lining was the beauty of the steeple of St. Mary-le-Bow. Unencumbered by its 19th and 20th century neighbours, it rises in all its original loveliness as Wren meant it to be seen.

The time-honoured tradition of the Appleton 'March 4th' festival was unavoidably broken this year, but certain members of the Oxford Diocesan Guild decided that this famous date should not pass entirely without notice. So 720 of Grandsire Doubles were rung, at about the time when the dinner should have been in full swing, by Florence E. Wigg 1, Frederick Sharpe (conductor) 2-3, C. Elliot Wigg 4-5. This was the treble ringer's first touch in any method, and rung at the first attempt. (Rung at Launton, Oxfordshire.)

A very famous peal was accomplished on March 10th, 1784, when the College Youths rang at St. Saviour's, Southwark, 7,008 changes of Oxford Treble Bob Maximus.

On the same date in 1742 the Richmond Society rang a peal of 5,040 Richmond Triples. What was rung is not known.

The first silent peal of Stedman Triples on handbells was rung by the St. James' Society on March 11th, 1854, and on March 11th, 1887, the College Youths rang Holt's Original silent in hand for the first time.

The first peal of Oxford Treble Bob Maximus was rung at St. Saviour's, Southwark, on March 12th, 1758, by the College Youths. George Meakins conducted.

The Bedfordshire Association was founded on March 13th, 1882.

The first peal on the twelve at St. Martin's-in-the-Fields (but not the first on the ten) was rung on March 14th, 1727, by the London Scholars.

On March 15th, 1894, Mr. C. E. Borrett called 6,720 changes of Bob Major on handbells at Norwich. It was an attempt for the record length, which was allowed to run home half-way owing to the coldness of the room.

Fifty years ago to-day eight peals were rung. They consisted of Bob Triples 1, Grandsire Triples 2, Oxford Bob Triples 1, Bob Major 1, Kent Treble Bob Major 2, and Stedman Caters 1.

DEATH OF A KENT RINGER. THROUGH ENEMY ACTION.

We regret to announce the death of Mr. Guy R. Ambrose, of Milton-next-Gravesend, at the age of 62, which took place on Wednesday March 5th, by the loss of the vessel with all hands, on which he was employed as engineer, presumed by enemy action.

Mr. Ambrose had worked on the River Thames practically all his life, and had been employed by a firm of tug owners for the past 25 years. Previous to this he worked in Tilbury Docks under the P.L.A. In spite of his hazardous war-time work, he carried on with his usual sangfroid, well known to his intimate friends, which is so characteristic of Englishmen in the fight for freedom.

He commenced his ringing career with the writer in 1909 at Milton-next-Gravesend and had been a member ever since. Never with any great ambition for peal ringing—he rang about 25 peals—Mr. Ambrose was first and foremost for Sunday service ringing, being most regular and punctual in this respect. During this long period he was also chorister and sidesman at the church he loved, and many good deeds can be traced to his untiring efforts.

In his earlier days he was a keen sportsman and was hon. secretary to the local Hospital Football Cup Competition, which in one season realised over £100. To commemorate this his fellow members, etc., presented him with a gold watch suitably inscribed.

In addition to his long membership of the Kent County Association, Mr. Ambrose was also a member of the Ancient Society of College Youths and the Middlesex Association.

The Exercise has lost a valued member, the Church a faithful son and the writer a true pal of 35 years' standing.

F. T. M.

YORKSHIRE ASSOCIATION.

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE WESTERN DIVISION.

In spite of bad weather, there was a very satisfactory attendance at the annual meeting of the Western Division of the Yorkshire Association, held at Guiseley last Saturday. About 40 members were present from 16 towers, including Addingham, Armley, Birstall, Bradford Cathedral, Bramley, Guiseley, Headingley (St. Michael's and St. Chad's), Holbeck, Idle, Keighley, Ossett, Pudsey, Rothwell, Silsden and Shipley. This is once again an indication that if suitable venues can be arranged the members will support the efforts of the officials.

Two of the oldest members of the association were present—Mr. Joshua Woodhead, now of Rawdon, aged 87, who joined in 1875, the year when the association was formed, and Mr. George Titterton, of Bradford, aged 85. It is the spirit of members such as these which has made the association as strong as it is to-day, and now that it is passing through a period which is perhaps the most difficult in its history, it remains for the general body of younger members to see that the progress of the association continues from strength to strength.

In the old tithe barn, which has been converted into the Parish Hall, a very enjoyable tea was provided free of charge by the local company to the 36 who sat down.

The Rector of Guiseley, Archdeacon Lowe, in a short address of welcome, spoke of the pleasure of receiving the association, and hoped that in spite of the weather everyone would enjoy themselves. He spoke of the comradeship which existed among ringers and was very proud of the fact that two of his own ringers had each more than 50 years' service at St. Oswald's. It was a remarkable record of church service and he very much appreciated the work that ringers had done and were doing. The ban on ringing had made things very difficult, but he hoped the time was not far distant when the bells would ring out their messages again, perhaps even before final victory was won. He impressed upon everyone the righteousness of our cause, and even though at times things looked very black, he was sure that good would always triumph over evil. He invited all to look over the beautiful church and the rectory gardens, though he would have liked them to see the place in summer when the flowers were more plentiful. The address was greatly appreciated.

The business meeting was presided over by the district vice-president, Mr. P. J. Johnson, supported by the association's president, Canon Marshall.

The secretary, Mr. Frank Rayment, was unanimously re-elected, though he had not felt justified in offering himself for election. Owing to extreme pressure of work, he was unable to devote as much time as he thought necessary to the work. He felt that now more than ever it was essential to have a secretary who could attend more of the meetings of the district societies and so keep in touch with everyone.

Canon Marshall and the chairman assured him that they appreciated the difficulties, but they knew everyone was quite satisfied with the valuable work which was being done, and they had no intention of changing.

Messrs. John Ambler, J. F. Harvey and William Ambler were elected as committee men, the first on the General Committee.

A desire was expressed to hold the summer meeting in the Huddersfield area, and the matter was left in the hands of the chairman and secretary.

The chairman, in proposing a vote of thanks to the Rector, wardens and local company, paid tribute to the very efficient manner in which they were always entertained at Guiseley.

Canon Marshall, seconding, also spoke of the welcome they always received. He himself was never tired of visiting the beautiful old church, and he felt sure that, in spite of the weather, all had thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

Mr. A. C. Walsh, replying for the local company, said it was a privilege to receive the Yorkshire Association. They had a very close association with the society. Some of their oldest ringers had been members from the earliest days. They were proud of their old church and had already started a fund to provide new bells. They intended to have a first-class peal. He hoped they would soon be able to ring the bells and this time for victory.

A collection for the Bell Repairs Fund realised 17s. 3d., being a record.

Throughout the afternoon and evening many touches were rung on handbells in a few of the standard methods. Altogether it was a very enjoyable meeting, due entirely to the careful arrangements made by Mr. F. W. Dixon and the local company.

AIR RAID DAMAGE IN MANCHESTER.

The Bishop of Manchester has stated that over 40 churches in the diocese have been damaged by enemy action. Some are past repair, others can be restored after the war, and some can still be used.

The Cathedral had a direct hit and two chapels at the east end have been destroyed. The Cathedral itself was reopened on Ash Wednesday. Nearby the Chetham Hospital (Blue Coat School) was hit, but not badly. Ringers who attended the Central Council will remember it as the place of meeting.

Other churches with bells which have been damaged are St. John's, Oldham Road, Holy Trinity, Sacred Trinity, Salford, and St. Thomas', Pendleton. The President's Church, St. Luke's, Miles Platting, was also hit.

OXFORD UNIVERSITY SOCIETY.

ANNUAL LUNCHEON.

The president, the Rev. C. E. Wigg, happily recovered from his recent short illness, was in the chair at the annual luncheon of the Oxford University Society, held last Saturday at the City Restaurant, and there were present 18 members of the society, as well as Mr. V. Bennett and Mr. R. A. Post, the secretary and Master of the Oxford City Guild, Miss M. Cross, who has assisted the society so kindly and so efficiently, Mrs. Wigg and Dr. R. E. Havard.

The lunch was admirably catered for by Messrs. G. E. Weeks and Co. in spite of the rationing.

After everyone had settled down to a somnolent reminiscence over the coffee, the Master, Mr. J. E. Spice (New College), rose to his feet. He said that he had a particularly pleasant duty to perform; first in welcoming back the president from his illness, and, secondly, in congratulating him and Mrs. Wigg on their recent marriage. As a mark of respect the society had subscribed for a small wedding present in the form of an engraved pewter tankard. During its purchase, doubts were cast upon its usefulness, but after remembering the episode after the Cassington peal attempt, fears were allayed!

The President thanked the society for the gift, and said that it would serve two purposes, first as a useful implement, and, second, when taking its well-earned rest on the mantelpiece, as a reminder of the pleasant times he had had with the society. 'Speaking of the lunch, he said that it had proved an occasion well worth reviving.

The secretary, Mr. W. F. Gibbons (Kemble), welcomed the guests. Dr. Havard replied, and said that he was very pleasantly surprised at the success of the society which, during his loss of contact with it, he believed was suffering heavily from the effects of the war.

Mr. Bennett, speaking also on behalf of the Master of the City Guild, said the City Guild always regarded the University Society with keen interest, and called to mind the efficiency of the society in the days before the Battle of France, when it had co-operated with the City in ringing the Oxford bells.

The Master then called upon Mr. H. Miles, vice-president, to say a few words, and his account of the early history of the society was indeed very interesting.

The afternoon would not have been complete without a few words from Miss Cross. She said how pleased she was to see the society so flourishing, and how she was always glad to give any help required.

The afternoon concluded with handbells, a plain course of Grandsire Triples by members of the society being especially good. Meanwhile members had the opportunity of inspecting the peal books of the City Guild, which Mr. Bennett kindly brought along from the strong room of Messrs. Elliston and Cavell.

At 3.30 p.m. the society adjourned to New College tower, where a joint meeting of silent tower-bell ringing was held.

GLOUCESTER & BRISTOL DIOCESAN ASSOCIATION.

ANNUAL MEETING OF CHELTENHAM BRANCH.

The annual meeting of the Cheltenham Branch of the Gloucester and Bristol Association was held on Saturday at Cheltenham and was well attended.

After handbell practice at the Parish Room, tea was partaken of at the Gloucestershire Dairy Cafe, followed by the business meeting, with the Master (the Rev. Noel E. Hope) in the chair, supported by Mr. W. Dyer (captain of the Cheltenham band), ex-Sergt. J. Williams, Mr. J. Austin, Messrs. Wilfrid Williams, Frank Shorter and Roland Fenn, of London, and about 30 members. A hearty welcome was extended to all old friends, and particularly to those from London.

A number of new members were elected, and the retiring officers of the branch were all re-elected as follows: Chairman, the Archdeacon of Cheltenham; branch representative, Mr. W. Dyer; branch hon. secretary, Mr. W. Yeend.

Touches of Stedman Triples, Grandsire Triples, Plain and Treble Bob, and courses of Stedman and Grandsire Caters were rung on handbells. Ex-Sergt. Williams and Mr. J. Austin gave their back-to-back exhibition of Grandsire Triples and some good tune ringing.

A telegram was received from the secretary of the Bristol City branch wishing the meeting success.

A handbell practice is held weekly at the Parish Room, St. James' Square, near the Great Western Railway Station, at 7.30 on Thursdays, to which all are welcome. It is hoped that during the coming months many gatherings will be arranged.

NORTH STAFFS ASSOCIATION.

FOURTH ANNUAL DINNER.

The fourth annual dinner of the North Staffordshire and District Association was held at the George Hotel, Burslem, on Saturday, February 22nd. The Archdeacon of Stoke presided and the vice-chairman was the Rev. H. Benson, Vicar of Sneyd. Among those present were the Rev. S. F. Linsley (Vicar of Tunstall), the Rev. H. H. Treacher (Rector of Hanley), the Rev. T. R. Parker, Mr. and Mrs. G. Jones, Mr. and Mrs. N. Sargeant, Miss B. Beeston, Miss J. Durbar, Mr. and Mrs. C. H. Page, Miss E. Spears, Mr. A. D. Steel, Mr. and Mrs. A. Thompson, Mr. L. Bourne, Mr. T. A. Foster, Mr. and Mrs. Buckley, Aircraftman D. Perkins and Mr. E. Steele.

After the toasts, singing and handbell ringing occupied the rest of the evening. Mr. N. Sargeant was at the piano.

The party broke up about 9 p.m., many having some distance to travel home.

TREBLE BOB.
ITS VALUE FOR GOD STRIKING.

To the Editor.

Dear Sir,—I am sorry so much acid is being used by some of your correspondents about Treble Bob. It couldn't be worse if they were discussing the disease with the same initials!

The method is one of our oldest friends and the forefather of much that is lauded by the young gallants to-day. So show a bit of respect, gentlemen, for age.

For my part, I was weaned on it, thanks be, and why 'thanks be'? Because it gave me greater opportunities of grasping what good striking meant than any other method.

Anyone ringing Treble Bob in a strange tower should get into his proper stride and take the measure of any peculiarities of the other bells—if not before then certainly by the time he has done his first slow work. No other method gives so fine a chance, and no ringer can be excused if afterwards he chips lumps off the other bells. We hear much of the virtues of good striking, and rightly, judging by the amount of the other kind with which we are afflicted. But if a ringer has been thoroughly grounded in Treble Bob he ought to be a good striker, and he will be equally good in any other method he may tackle. And some tell us a touch or peal of Treble Bob is not worth hearing. If the striking is bad I agree, but no method is worth hearing under those conditions. If the striking is good, I maintain their views are all moonshine.

How many of us get through the slow work in Treble Bob—especially Royal or Maximus—with perfect striking? Not nearly so many as there are who make an unholy mess of it. So why revile the slow work of Treble Bob, which takes some doing, and laud those methods with a lot of quick movement which enable 'chipping' to be less noticeable?

One of my earliest ringing recollections is of listening to a peal of Kent Maximus at Mancroft, rung by eight very distinguished ringers of that day, with the aid of four local men. After about two hours of it, another listener—I confess he was a grumpy chap, but a superlative striker—gave a snort and growled, 'There isn't one of them, bar our chaps, knows a d—d thing about striking when in the slow.' Mr. Woolley would be right about that peal—it hadn't a redeeming feature.

But, on the other hand, two years later I stood in the same place and heard a peal of Oxford Royal. It was perfectly struck from start to finish, and was majestic in effect. And four years after that I took part, with my old friend Trollope, in another peal of Oxford Royal on the same bells, and on the tenor box we had a magnificent ringer, George Smith. If the critics of Treble Bob would assert those two peals were not worth listening to—well, let them.

I know little about contiguous or adjacent places, or cross-sections or similar highbrow matters—the sounds coming through the belfry windows are of greater interest to me.

Yes; Treble Bob has redeeming features besides the lengthening lead, and I, for one, am glad to have been nurtured on it. If 'Country Ringer' is short of a man in the 'heavenly' band for his peal of Treble Bob Major, I wish he would offer me a rope. I should jump at the chance, if my place of residence allowed it!

Sheringham, Norfolk.

CHARLES E. BORRETT.

P.S.—My old friend Charles Routledge, who writes on the subject this week, may be interested to know that in 1890 eight 'firsts' took part in a peal of Treble Bob Maximus at Norwich. The names were well-known ones, viz., Revs. F. E. Robinson and G. F. Coleridge, John W. Taylor, J. W. Washbrook, Charles Hounslow, Frederick and Ernest Pitstow and John Piddament.

WHY HAVE SO MANY PEALS BEEN RUNG?

To our Country Ringer.

Dear Brother,—I am very pleased to see you stick up for Treble Bob, and when we do meet in heaven I shall be very pleased to ring the 7th for you. I am with you. It is a very nice and simple method, and I have enjoyed ringing many peals of it with two Bobs at Home at every course end. What is better than 7-8 dodging together? Each ringer knows where he is when he hears 7-8 behind. If the method is no good, why have there been so many peals rung in past years? When we look back twenty or thirty years many handbell peals were rung of it in Derbyshire and Yorkshire. Those peals were rung well, the slow work was a pleasure to listen to, each bell taking the lead clear. I will say this: if it was not for this simple method a good number of our brother ringers would not have rung their higher methods. That slow work teaches a ringer to strike his bell on the lead and to dodge clear with the treble. Ring one method well before going on to a higher one.

'ANOTHER COUNTRY RINGER.'

STANDARD METHODS AND THE NEW SURPRISE BOOK
LET GENERAL OPINION DECIDE.

To the Editor.

Dear Sir,—Mr. J. F. Harvey, in his interesting letter, asks how many good ringers have been lost because their company refused to progress? I think the question could be easily reversed. How many good companies have had their equilibrium upset by some members trying to force the pace?

The majority of the Surprise peal bands have been composed of members from several towers, and the number of towers with a complete Surprise band of their own are few. This means that even if some methods are recommended by the experts, they will only come into general use through the same channels as the other methods have done. Judging by the faults which can be found on paper with Cambridge, Superlative and London, the selectors need to be as expert in assessing human nature as they do at ringing.

An example of this can be seen in connection with Spliced Surprise. When splicing was first practised, a certain ringing organisation put a ban on spliced peals. It had within its borders at least two bands who would have been capable of ringing spliced peals, but they took no interest in the new idea. Spliced ringing has slowly built itself up in the usual way from small beginnings, and in recent years one of the bands I mentioned visited one of the Spliced Surprise 'strongholds' and tried their hand at the 'new idea,' which they, through their guild, had banned years before.

The B.B.C. experts took several months to decide on a new interval signal. It has since received almost universal condemnation. It will probably be replaced by something suggested by the many letters the B.B.C. has received on the subject, that is by general opinion.

I would suggest that the same be done with the Surprise Major book. Let us have it as a book of reference with a good selection of methods and leave general opinion to decide which methods are to become the favourites.

J. E. BAILEY.

20, Swaisland Road, Dartford, Kent.

ESSEX ASSOCIATION.

NORTHERN DIVISION MEETING AT BOCKING.

A meeting of the Northern Division of the Essex Association, held at Bocking on Saturday, was attended by 15 members from Braintree, Springfield, Chelmsford, Earls Colne, Halstead, Dunmow, Rushmere and the local band. Ringing on six 'silent' bells and on handbells was followed by a short service conducted by the Dean, the Rev. E. Rogers, and by tea in Messrs. Courtauld's dining hall, kindly lent by the manager. The tea was provided by the local guild of ringers, and ably prepared by their lady helpers.

At the business meeting the District Master, Mr. H. W. Smith, was in the chair. Two members were elected for the general committee, Mr. F. Ridgwell and Mr. F. Claydon. It was proposed that the secretary should try to arrange a meeting at Kelvedon some time in June, failing which it was left to her to fix up to the best of her ability.

The District Master proposed a very hearty vote of thanks to the Dean for his address, and to the local Guild for providing the tea; he remarked how pleased he was to welcome the visitors, who included Mr. L. J. Clark (general secretary), Mr. Runter, and Mr. Jennings, of Rushmere. Pleasure was expressed at the presence of Mr. L. W. Wifen, who recently sustained a fractured ankle, and everyone wished him a speedy recovery.

Several touches were brought round on the handbells, the methods including Bob Major, Bob Royal, Double Norwich and Grandsire.

VARIATIONS OF THURSTANS' FOUR-PART.

To the Editor.

Dear Sir,—I have a variation of Thurstans' Four-Part peal which was given to me years ago by the late Sam Reeves, of West Bromwich. It has the treble as observation. I called it at St. Margaret's, Ipswich, with my Ipswich friends. I have rung and called many peals, but this was the elite of all. Nothing said from beginning to the 'That's all.' I am reluctant to say it was nearly 30 years ago. Whether it was by the late Henry Johnson I am not in a position to say.

W. C. HUNT.

GOOD STRIKING.—'When every bell keeps due order and time what a sweet and harmonious sound they make, all who hear them are charmed by that common music; but when once they jar and clash with each other, either jangling or striking irregularly, how displeasing is that music.'—Bp. Joseph Hall, Norwich, mid 17th century.

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THE STANDARD METHODS.

EARLY ATTEMPTS AT RULE MAKING.

One rule which has had many supporters in the past, and which still finds favour with some people, is that the regular succession of the nature of the rows should not be broken in the plain course. Every seven bell method should consist of uninterrupted triple changes; every nine bell method of uninterrupted cater or quadruple changes; and every eleven bell method of uninterrupted quintuple changes. Eight bell methods should consist of an unbroken succession of alternate quadruple and triple changes; ten bell methods of an unbroken succession of alternate quintuple and quadruple changes; and twelve bell methods of an unbroken succession of sextuple and quintuple changes.

Some people, among them notably C. D. P. Davies, have held that this is the fundamental law of the science. Many more have recognised it as a fundamental law, but were prepared to allow occasional and exceptional infringements of it. Heywood took this view, and it is expressed in the Method Report, which still stands as the official Central Council pronouncement on the matter.

A very widely held opinion is that the law must be scrupulously observed in the case of odd bell methods, but need not be in the case of even bell methods.

Is the law a fundamental one? The answer given by history and experience emphatically is that it is not. It did not appear until long after change ringing was fully developed, and its enforcement would mean the sacrifice of very many of the methods which have proved themselves to be the most useful in practice.

Nevertheless, it marks a definite and important stage in the development of the art. The first of all 'peals' were produced by single changes in which only one pair of bells changed places at a time. When Cross Peals were introduced the aim was to change as many pairs as possible, and Grandsire on five bells, which was produced by continuous double changes (except for the two necessary singles) was rightly held to be a great achievement. Later on, when seven bell ringing became common and Grandsire Triples was the standard method, the same idea held, and the composers' ambition was to produce an extent entirely of triple changes.

It was a worthy ambition, but we must note that the standard was set up for the composer and not for the benefit of the practical ringer. For many years the great problem which faced composers was, Can a peal of Grandsire Triples be had with common bobs only? Until fifty or sixty years ago they thought it could, if only some one would arise clever enough to solve the problem.

Leading men were so obsessed with this idea of getting a peal of Grandsire Triples by bobs only, that they unconsciously extended the idea to all seven bell ringing. They condemned Bob Triples not because the four blows behind are 'stagnation,' but because (as we saw in Bulwer's suggested rules) it does not consist of unbroken triple changes.

Earlier composers, notably Benjamin Annable, were free from such prejudices, and they introduced and rang more than one excellent 7-bell method with a treble and six working bells. New Bob Triples is the best of them.

These methods have qualities which are not to be had in 'pure' Triples methods and provide work of the same sort as is to be had in the more difficult Surprise Major

methods, but they have been killed by this prejudice. There has been very little development in seven bell ringing, and it is entirely due to the mistaken idea of insisting on a rule which is a good one in its proper and limited sphere, but a bad one when it is made universal.

We need say nothing about the rule as applied to even bell methods. There never was a time when it was recognised by practical ringers, and to-day only a fanatic or a lunatic would think of trying to enforce it. There is no justification for the opinion held by some people that methods which keep the rule are necessarily superior in construction to those that break it.

The men who in the past attempted to lay down codes of rules for method construction have almost always included a rule that all legitimate five, six, and seven-bell methods should be capable of producing the full extent of the changes; and all legitimate methods on eight bells and over should be capable of producing at least five-thousand changes without parting the tenors. This, as we saw, was the first rule in Bulwer's code and at first sight it seems an obviously necessary one.

No band is at all likely to practise a new method unless there is a reasonable chance of ringing a peal of it, but it by no means follows that a method for which no extent or no true five-thousand exists may not have its uses. The Alliance Minor methods would have been ruled out if the Council had adopted Bulwer's suggestion, but they have proved of some value; and in the same way a Surprise Major method might be very useful in spliced ringing though no true five-thousand of it had been composed. Mr. Pitman's clever peal in eighteen spliced Surprise methods includes Watford. When the composition was published it was promptly stated that the false course ends of that method are such that no true peal of it is possible. The fact remained, however, that for the purpose Mr. Pitman intended it the method is a most excellent one. Actually and contrary to expectation Mr. Harold Cashmere composed a true peal.

But for a standard method at any rate it is necessary that there should be at least one good peal. Should we go further and say that it is necessary that there should be a considerable choice of peals?

That certainly is an important point, but perhaps not of such supreme importance as we are sometimes tempted to think. Cambridge has but one peal with the tenors together, and though people continually profess to lament the fact, it has not affected the popularity of the method. If it were so great a hardship as some suppose we should imagine that the Exercise would have adopted the device used by Benjamin Thackrah, and advocated by Sir Arthur Heywood in which the places in 1-2 in the first section are moved to the second cross section. For the practical ringer the difference is hardly noticeable, while the range of compositions is very largely extended, and yet bands seldom ring New Cambridge except as an occasional novelty.

(Continued on next page.)

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THE BELLS OF ST. CLEMENT DANES. AN APPEAL FOR HELP.

To the Editor.

Dear Sir,—You were good enough to publish my letter re the late loss of famous bells by enemy action.

I am very glad to be able to inform you that it has led to steps being taken in the above case, and that these bells are in comparative safety, the Rector, the Rev. W. Pennington Bickford, having arranged for their lowering to ground level and being sandbagged. He will, I am sure, be congratulated by the Exercise and by many others who know of these widely sung 'Oranges and lemons' bells.

Of the eight bells cast by the Wightmans in 1673, seven yet remain. There is, too, the sanctus bell, cast at the Whitechapel Foundry by Mot over 360 years ago. It is of interest to note that the same foundry, now Messrs. Mears and Stainbank, are carrying out this 'safety first' work to-day.

The City of Westminster is known for its rich churches. We all readily think of St. George's, Hanover Square; St. Peter's, Eaton Square; St. Margaret's by the Abbey, and the Royal St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, as being at the top of the list; but very few, even Londoners, know that St. Clement Danes (once so wealthy) is now nearly at the bottom of Westminster's long list of churches. To-day, also, it stands bombed and closed!

The Rector is endeavouring to raise £50 to cover the above preliminary work, and I feel sure that many of your readers would like to help (for he has set a fine example) by sending him a subscription to The Anchorage, Clement's Inn, Strand, London, W.C.2.

E. ALEXR. YOUNG,

Member of Church Council, St. Clement Danes.

ODD-STRUCK BELLS. THE CLAPPER HANGING.

To the Editor.

Dear Sir,—It is not altogether the odd-struck bell man who is at fault; the rest of the band should ring with him and listen.

Just a word with regard to bells getting false struck. A clapper gets loose and very often wears the washer through before it is tightened up. The clapper is screwed up without the washer, does not hang level and very soon gets slack again, wearing the bush. If one should want to put a washer on, let it be one of good hard leather and soaked well before putting on. See that the clapper is in centre, then tighten up. Do not ring the bell until the washer has got set.

E. C. GOBEY.

RAISING AND CEASING.—'Raising and ceasing in peal when properly executed is undoubtedly very pleasant and melodious, but the adepts of the art in this City of London very seldom choosing to put themselves to the pains of it is now chiefly practised by the country gentlemen.'—'The Clavis.'

THE STANDARD METHODS.

(Continued from previous page.)

Again, we should remember that in more than one method where there is a very wide choice of peals, ringers do not avail themselves of it. For many years Holt's Ten-part was almost the only peal of Grandsire Triples rung, and nowadays Parker's Twelve-part and Holt's Original practically monopolise the method. In the same way, although there are scores of good peals of Stedman Triples, it is seldom that any other than Thurstans' Four-part and its variations are rung. Even in Bob Major, which has such a great variety of compositions, a very large proportion of the conductors are content with Pritchard's peal.

These things seem to lead us to the conclusion that, provided a method has a sufficient number of other good qualities and one good peal, the absence of other peals would not necessarily bar it from becoming a standard method, though in judging the value of any method the number of its peal compositions is an important factor.

DEATH OF MR. WILLIAM D. GRIFFITHS.

RINGER AND CHURCHWORKER.

We regret to announce the death of Mr. William D. Griffiths, of Talgarth, Brecon, who passed away on February 13th, at the age of 62. Four years ago he fractured his leg and had not been really well since. He was always jolly and care-free and made any ringers he met welcome. He was keen to help beginners. By trade he was a carpenter and carver, and some very beautiful fittings in Talgarth Church and elsewhere, such as lecterns, reredos and altar tables, stand as memorials to his fine work.

Mr. Griffiths was a member of the choir for over 50 years and a bellringer for over 40 years. He was a prime mover in getting the Talgarth bells restored in 1907, and collected over £100 himself. In 1935 he was presented with a gold watch and chain for his services in the church.

He was one of the original members of the Swansea and Brecon Diocesan Guild and was a member of the committee from its formation. He rang about 35 peals.

At the funeral on Monday, February 17th, the Vicar, the Rev. W. Gumos Davies, a vice-president of the Swansea and Brecon Guild, officiated, and the bearers were the local ringers, all of them pupils of Mr. Griffiths. Among the many flowers were wreaths from his fellow ringers, the choir, and the Parochial Church Council. Much sympathy is extended to the widow in her sad loss.

A LETTER FROM AMERICA.

NEWS AND GREETINGS.

To the Editor.

Dear Sir,—In these regrettable days, with no ringing of peals or touches in the towers to be recorded, you may find space for a brief report from the United States, where the Exercise is still carried on in a few places, though in a very elementary form.

At Groton School every Sunday Grandsire Doubles and occasional Triples are rung on the fine eight from the Whitechapel Foundry; and at Kent School in Connecticut there is also regular ringing, though the boys are handicapped by having no older instructor in the art.

Here in Boston, where I now live since retiring from Groton five years ago, we have only four Englishmen available for ringing; but, with my two sons and about twenty graduates of Groton and Kent, it is possible to get a band together who, with regular practice, could make real progress. Such practice is not possible unfortunately, but at least we ring often enough to enjoy the meetings and to remember what happens when a Bob or Single is called. Our English ringers are Richard Newton, James F. Laker, William Bashford and Joseph Goodhead, who join with me in sending greetings to our brother ringers and all who are fighting so nobly for freedom from tyranny and aggression.

S. WARREN STURGIS.

86, Marlborough Street, Boston, U.S.A.

RINGING AND 'SHOOTING MATCHES IN THE OLDEN TIME

LONG STRATTON.—Whereas the Peal of Bells at Long Stratton in Norfolk have been lately put in Tune by the famous Mr. Collett, of Diss, and are thought (by those that are very good Judges of Ringing) to be the most musical Peal of Five Bells any-where near them: notwithstanding they were very much out of Tune before; Therefore this is to give Notice to all such Gentlemen and others as are Lovers and followers of the Society of Ringing, that for their Encouragement there will be Six Pairs of Gloves given Gratis by William Sturman at the Chequer in Stratton aforesaid, to be rung for by Three Companies, the best of Three Peals, on Monday the 25th of this Instant February, to enter their Names by Eleven a Clock in the Forenoon at the Chequer aforesaid. And on Shrove Tuesday the 26th there will be a Pair of Buckskin Breeches of a Guinea Value, to be shot for by Twenty Men, each putting in a Shilling Entrance; to enter by One a clock in the afternoon, to shoot with fair Fowling Pieces, Rifled Pieces to be excluded; the first Best to have the Breeches, the second Best to have a Pair of Gloves of Two Shillings and Sixpence Value, the third Best to have a Pair of Eighteen Pence Value, and the fourth Best to have a Pair of One Shilling Value, to enter at the Chequer at Stratton aforesaid, where all such Gentlemen and Others, as will be so kind as to Favour me with their Company, shall meet with a Glass of good Liquor, Civil Usage, and a hearty Welcome, from their very humble Servant,

William Sturman.

From the 'Norwich Gazette,' February 9th, 1745.

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NOTICES.

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

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NOTICES must be received NOT LATER THAN MONDAY.

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

SURREY ASSOCIATION.—North-Western District.—The annual district meeting will be held at Leatherhead on Saturday, March 15th. Bells available at Parish Church in afternoon if required. Service 4 p.m. Tea at the Duke's Head at 5 p.m., followed by business meeting. Handbells, etc., available afterwards.—G. W. Massey, Hon. Dis. Sec.

NORWICH DIOCESAN ASSOCIATION.—Welcome to Hethersett, March 15th. Six tower bells from 3 p.m. and handbells in church. Service 4.15. Tea 4.45 at the King's Head, followed by business meeting and more handbells. Reports to hand. Subscriptions gladly received.—F. Nolan Golden, Sec., Brabazon Road, Norwich.

SURREY ASSOCIATION.—Southern District.—The annual district meeting will be held at The Cottage, Oakway, Reigate, at 5 p.m. on March 15th.—A. T. Shelton, Hon. Sec.

ESSEX ASSOCIATION.—A district meeting will be held at Little Clacton on Saturday, March 15th. Handbell ringing at the Vicarage (opposite church) 2.30 p.m. Service 4.30 p.m. Tea at Blacksmith's Arms 5.15 p.m. Business meeting and more ringing at the Vicarage after. Neighbouring friends in Suffolk are cordially invited. There is a good bus service from Ipswich and Colchester passing the church, but visitors coming by car must get a permit before entering the coastal defence area.—Leslie Wright, Hon. Dis. Sec., Lower Barn Farm, Dedham.

ANCIENT SOCIETY OF COLLEGE YOUTHS. — The next meeting will be held on Saturday, March 15th. Members will meet at the Two Brewers, Shoe Lane, E.C.4, at 2.30. Business meeting and handbells at 15, Farringdon Avenue, at 3 p.m.—A. B. Peck, Hon. Sec., Branksome, Eversfield Road, Reigate.

WORCESTERSHIRE AND DISTRICTS ASSOCIATION.—Northern Branch.—Meeting for practice, Brierley Hill (D.V.), Saturday, March 15th, 3 p.m. Tea 5 p.m. Social evening to follow.—Bernard C. Ashford, Sec., 9, Bowling Green Road, Stourbridge.

MIDLAND COUNTIES ASSOCIATION.—Nottingham District.—The March meeting will be held at 1st Floor, Vernon House, Friar Lane, Nottingham, on Saturday, March 15th, from 3 p.m. Handbells available for single and double-handed practice. All are welcome. — F. A. Salter, Dis. Sec.

OXFORD DIOCESAN GUILD.—The annual general committee meeting will be held in Reading (D.V.) on Saturday, March 22nd, at the Central Girls' Club, 29, Chain Street (opposite St. Mary's Church House), at 3.15 p.m. It is hoped that all branches will be represented.—Richard T. Hibbert, Gen. Sec., 69, York Road, Reading.

BEDFORDSHIRE ASSOCIATION. — Biggleswade District.—A meeting will be held at Henlow on Saturday, March 22nd. Bells (6, silent), also handbells, available, commencing at 3 p.m. Tea at 5. Will those requiring tea please write Mr. L. Bywaters, 12, New Town, Henlow, Beds? — C. J. Ball, 25, Tempsford Road, Sandy, Beds.

PETERBOROUGH DIOCESAN GUILD. — Northampton Branch.—Quarterly meeting at Walgrave, Saturday, March 22nd. Usual arrangements. Bus leaves Derngate 2.40. Names for tea to Rev. Segger. — J. Dean, Hon. Sec., 4, Court Road, Northampton.

GLOUCESTER AND BRISTOL DIOCESAN ASSOCIATION.—Bristol Rural Branch. — A meeting of the Bristol Rural Branch will be held at Mangotsfield on Saturday, March 22nd, at 3 p.m. Tea at the Vicarage. Please make a special effort to attend and do NOT forget to advise for tea.—H. C. Gifford, Branch Sec., Diamond Jubilee House, Short Hill Road, Westerleigh, Chipping Sodbury.

SALISBURY DIOCESAN GUILD.—Devizes Branch. — The annual meeting will be held at Southbroom, Devizes, on Saturday, March 22nd. Service, St. James', at 4.30, followed by tea and meeting at 5 p.m. Handbells will be provided. Names for tea, please, by March 17th.—W. C. West, Branch Sec., 584, Semington Road, Melksham. Phone 297.

MIDDLESEX COUNTY ASSOCIATION AND LONDON DIOCESAN GUILD.—North and East District.—The annual district meeting will be held at Kilburn on Saturday, March 29th. Further details will be announced later.—T. J. Lock, Hon. Dis. Sec.

HERTS ASSOCIATION.—Meeting, Saturday, March 29th, at Guides Studio, Falconer Road, Bushey, at 3.45. Handbells. Social chat. Comfortable room. Tea arranged. A welcome to all interested in ringing, whether handbell ringers or not. Call in and see. Bus service close handy. — C. H. Horton, 53, Aldenham Road, Bushey.

WORCESTERSHIRE AND DISTRICTS ASSOCIATION.—Annual Meeting. — Preliminary Notice. — The annual meeting will be held (D.V.) at Worcester on Saturday afternoon, May 17th. Resolutions for the agenda should reach me by Saturday, April 19th (Rule 10). Tea will be arranged, if possible, but **only** for those whose **names** are given to the branch or general secretaries at least ten days before the meeting. Will members please note, as the committee have decided to strictly enforce this?—J. D. Johnson, Gen. Sec.

DEATH.

On February 8th, at Church View, Willoughby, near Rugby, James Major Hancock, aged 70 years.

DEATH OF A LINCOLNSHIRE RINGER.

The death is announced of Mr. Frederick Holdstock, of the R.A.F., which occurred recently on active service. He had been a ringer at Bigby, Lincs, until he left the village some time ago. He took part in 17 peals, all of which were Minor. Three were handbell peals, including a seven-method peal. His tower-bell peals ranged from Bob Minor to Minor in 14 methods. He was 26 years old.

NORTH STAFFS ASSOCIATION.

The North Staffordshire Association are doing their best to keep things going, and on Saturday last they held a meeting at St. John's Church, Hanley, at which tower bells without clappers were rung to Grandsire Triples and Kent Treble Bob Minor. Grandsire Triples and Caters and Bob Minor and Major were rung on handbells. A very pleasant afternoon was enjoyed.

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