

## Essay for the Friends No. 20

### THE GOTHIC TRAVELLER

In 1982 a very readable multi-part article on Richard Cross and the Union Society of Shrewsbury, written by Harry Poyner, was published in the *Ringing World*. The first part, which appeared in the issue of 29 January 1982, refers to a news cutting in the back of Sam Lawrence's peal book (now in Shropshire Archives), which the author used as an introduction to the background of Richard Cross, the main subject of the article. This news cutting was stated to be dated 30 September 1808, and to be from an unknown newspaper. This article evidently made quite an impression in Shrewsbury, and a cutting of it is pasted inside a copy of the 1788 *Clavis Campanalogia* in my personal collection, a copy with Shrewsbury provenance, as in 1837 it belonged to Thomas Morgan of Shrewsbury. Whoever pasted it into the volume was careful to write at the top of the first part of the cutting 'Salopian Journal 12<sup>th</sup> Oct. 1808' and Alan Glover has kindly confirmed for me that the article did indeed appear in that issue.

The article is almost 1400 words in length, too long to transcribe *in extenso* here, but scans of the cutting in my copy of *Clavis Campanalogia* are used to illustrate this essay, and appear in the centre-fold for those who would like to read the original. Otherwise, a summary is given below. The first section begins by stating that at least 292 rings of bells had been cast at the Whitechapel foundry since 1738, and analyses the totals on the various numbers. The heaviest ring, at York Minster, is discussed, and details of ringing performances there are given. Then it goes on to state that change ringing began about 200 years previously, and that the first 5040 changes was rung at Bow church in about 1690, by the Society of London Scholars. A list of some 49 names is then given, stated to be those who had

greatly improved the science and art of change ringing, starting, inevitably, with 'Steadman'. It then goes on to list the rings of twelve bells in England, estimate the various numbers of rings of from five to ten bells, as well as the total number of rings of two, three and four bells, and list five great single bells. A statement that the heaviest ring of ten bells was at Exeter was followed by a table listing the number of possible changes on numbers of bells from two to twelve, and stating that, with a 40 cwt tenor, it would take about 44 years to ring the whole peal of changes on twelve bells, at a rate of about 21 changes a minute. A section comparing the rings of ten bells at St. Mary-le-Bow and York Minster follows, demonstrating that although the tenors were almost identical in weight, to within three lbs, the total weight of the ring at York was just over  $1\frac{1}{2}$  cwt greater than that at Bow. Finally, there is a record of a peal of Oxford Treble Bob Royal, including a list of the band, rung at Sheffield on 4 May 1808, followed by details of the peal (but without a list of the band) rung on 29 November 1804 on the reopening of the remodelled ring of bells there. The cutting is dated 30 September 1808, as stated by Harry Poyner.

### **Sources of Information**

The writer was clearly knowledgeable about bells and ringers but there is a doubt about how he obtained the information about the number of rings of bells cast at Whitechapel. The most likely source was one of the trade lists which were regularly issued and updated by Thomas Mears. I have a copy, the latest bells listed being cast in 1807, so it was issued in that year, or shortly afterwards. However, the total number of rings listed was 275, so there is a discrepancy there with the number quoted in the *Salopian Journal*, as it is unlikely that 17 rings were cast in a little over a year! If the trade list was the basis, how were the final totals for the rings of different numbers arrived at? If not,

what was the source? The writer also knew of the peal said to have been rung in 1690. However, the performance in question was at St. Sepulchre's without Newgate, London, by the College Youths, and not by the London Scholars at Bow, and this was corrected in a later version of the article. (For more discussion of this peal see *Change Ringing: the History of an English Art* Vol. 1 p.62).

### **Clues about the Identity of the Author**

There was a wide variety in the list of the names of the forty-nine ringers quoted, from all parts of the country, although not perhaps what might have been expected. There is also a preponderance of information from the north of England, suggesting, while the writer had a wide geographical knowledge, that this was his main area, with a detailed knowledge of Sheffield.

Those who are interested in the history of change ringing will probably already have guessed the most likely person to have written this article, but I crave a little indulgence before I suggest a name. Certainly he was widely travelled, and versions of the article that appeared in the *Salopian Journal* appeared in other newspapers, some of which are discussed below.

### **Other Versions of the Article**

In a shorter version that appeared in the *Lancaster Gazette* of 6 Jan. 1810, the number of rings cast at Whitechapel was updated to 298, and there were details of two different peals, one at St. Peter's, Liverpool, and the other at Ashton-under-Lyne. A different version was published, at the request of a correspondent, in the *Cheltenham Chronicle* of 17 Jan. 1811,

with the number of Whitechapel rings updated to 300 and states that:

'The first peal of tuneable bells was hung in one of the towers at the west-end of Croyland Abbey, Lincolnshire, about the year 960 of the Christian æra, being a peal of five; and only a peal of the same number the present day, but not the original ones.'

The article finishes with details of a peal rung at St. Peter's, Leeds 'a short time ago.' However, this was probably a peal thought to have been rung on 2 April 1810 (more of this later). Another version published in the *Kentish Gazette* of 28 June 1811 amended, among other things, the statement about the first peal of 5040 changes to:

'The first 5040 rung, was in the grandsire triple method by the London College Youths in the year 1690, at Saint Sepulchre's church without Newgate, London, ...'

The list of notable names was extended to about 130 names, and the initials J.P. were given at the bottom of the article, clearly those of the author.

### **Identity of the Author**

It is evident from the different information contained in each of the articles that this was not just a case of an article being copied from one newspaper to another, but rather that the different versions all came from the same source. Because of the wide geographical spread of newspapers in which the various versions appeared, and the fact that the details of peals quoted relate to the north of England in general, this suggests someone with northern connections, who travelled greatly, and whose initials were J.P. I can think of only one person who satisfies these criteria, and that was John Alfred Parnell, from Sheffield,

known from the survival of part of his MS, who called himself the 'Gothic Traveller'. Ernest Morris used material from this MS when compiling *The History and Art...*, and so the name of Parnell is well known to historians. However, I can find nothing in the surviving part of his MS that absolutely identifies Parnell with the authorship of these articles, but it would be surprising indeed if it was not him. It should also be noted that in the lists of notable ringers the name of Parnell occurs, also certain of the peals, details of which appear with the different versions of the article, include the name of John Parnell, all of which tends to confirm the identification.

### **Background History of The Gothic Traveller**

On checking the various sources, I find that little is known about Parnell, and so far have been unable to trace either his birth or death, or his marriages. The name book of the College Youths records that he became a member in 1789, so he was probably born in the 1760s, but the circumstances of his joining the College Youths are not known. Parnell is known for the extensive walking tours that he made, and in his MS he states that his first visit to London was in 1791. On the same tour he visited Bath, where he rang with James Albion, and at that time looked at the peal book of the Union Society, London, which had been passed to Albion after the dissolution of that society. The following year he was in London again, and rang two peals of Bob Major with the College Youths, at Clerkenwell on 7 April, and Battersea on 28 October, in both of which he rang the tenor, and these seem to have been the only peals that he rang with the College Youths.

It is likely that he continued his travels, collecting information that was published in the *Salopian Journal* in 1808. Parnell states in his MS that he went on walking tours in 1809, 1812 and 1814,

on each of which he visited Crowland Abbey, although it was not until his visit in October 1814 that he actually verified the details of the five bells in the tower, when 'the Old Inhabitants Informed me (the Grandsire Ringers also) there were never more than 5 Bells at one time.' This indicates a change-ringing band at Crowland at the time.

Parnell was on the road in 1816, as a note in his MS states that he was in Birmingham on 22 October 1816, when Henry Cooper told him of certain false touches and peal compositions in Parts 2 & 3 of Shipway's *Campanalogia*. Parnell evidently knew Shipway, but unless Parnell had visited Bath prior to his visit in 1791, this must have been in London, as Shipway moved from Bath to London in 1785. Parnell supplied to Shipway, among other things, a list of the large bells of Great Britain, who, when it was published in the preface to Shipway's *Campanalogia*, said it was 'from the account of that celebrated antiquary, John Alfred Parnell.' Parnell also supplied Shipway with inaccurate information about Fabian Stedman, which was also incorporated in the preface that was issued with Part 3 of *Campanalogia* in 1816. This has caused a very large amount of wasted time, as it is the first time that the legend that Stedman had been born in Cambridge in 1631 was published. There is no clue as to where Parnell obtained his information, and many ringing historians have tried and failed to verify this connection with Cambridge. The legend connecting Stedman with Cambridge is still repeated in ringing literature!

On his travels Parnell recorded natural phenomena, and visited and measured the Green Dale Oak Tree in Welbeck Park on 13 January 1815, 22 August 1817, and 29 October 1820. This was a tree of immense age, described by Robert White in his book *Workshop, The Dukery and Sherwood Forest* (1875) as 'the Methuselah of trees'. So large was the tree, that in 1724 an

opening was made through the trunk, large enough for a carriage to pass through. Details of this tree, supplied by the Gothic Traveller, were published in the *Norfolk Chronicle* on Saturday 3 June 1815, where it was stated that the opening was 8 feet 6 inches high and 5 feet 6 inches wide, and that only one of the six major branches was left, and that it was estimated that the tree was 700 years old. The opening and single branch show clearly in an engraving of the tree in its decayed state, used by White to illustrate his book.

Another curiosity recorded by Parnell comes in a further newspaper report. On 23 September 1816 the Painswick Youths rang, in their home tower, a peal of 10,278 changes of Grandsire Caters. Short reports appeared in the *Gloucester Journal* on Mon. 30 September 1816 and *Cheltenham Chronicle* on Thurs. 3 October 1816, and a slightly longer report in the *Morning Post* of 4 November 1816, where it was stated to have been rung 'A few days ago' and went on to say that it was rung by 'a select twelve of the Society of Village Youths', adding the information that it was conducted by James Savory, and concluding:

'There are in this rural village church-yard 102 yew trees (as counted by the Gothic Traveller, J.A. P—LL), which are neatly cut and clipped to the sugar-loaf shape, having an evergreen pleasing landscape effect to the eye of the antiquarian.'

There was a legend that there were only 99 yew trees at Painswick, and if another was planted to make it 100, it would be uprooted by the Devil! Parnell's count shows that he must have become tired of doing this.

Parnell was present at the grand opening of the bells at St. Michael's, Ashton-under-Lyne, in July 1819, and in his MS there is a date touch of 1820 changes, and a record of a peal rung at Quex Park, also in 1820. The last datable item gives the details

of some tapping on handbells, performed by Joshua Short, of Birmingham, on 26 October 1822. It seems likely that Parnell died not too long after this, but the place and date of his death has not yet been established. If he died whilst on a tour, it could have been almost anywhere!

### **Other References to Parnell**

In the early nineteenth century the name of John Parnell appeared in a number of peal records, which probably all relate to the same person. Thus the details of the peal rung at St. Peter's, Liverpool, on 23 Nov. 1809, mentioned above and recorded in the *Lancaster Gazette* on 6 Jan. 1810, show that a John Parnell rang the tenor, surely our man. A few months later, on 21 May 1810, the *Hampshire Chronicle* recorded a peal of Bob Major that had been rung 'Last week, at Newport, in the Isle of Wight,...' The report lists the names of the band, which include a John Parnell on the tenor, and states that the band consisted of 'six of the Union Youths, of that town, and two London College Youths,...' A comparison with the name book of the College Youths shows that the College Youths were John Parnell, and 'T. Granger,' who rang the sixth bell. The latter was Thomas Granger, Esq., of Westminster, who became a College Youth in 1808, and his title indicates that he was of some social standing. According to the peal book of the Union Society, Newport, Isle of Wight, the peal was rung on 9 May 1810. Curiously, details of this peal appeared yet again in the *Hampshire Chronicle* on 30 Sept. 1811, stating that it has been rung 'Last week...' Otherwise the report is identical in every detail to the earlier one, and we can only speculate why it was repeated.

Mentioned above is a peal rung at St. Peter's, Leeds, details being published at the end of the article that appeared in the *Cheltenham Chronicle* on 17 Jan. 1811. This states that it was



rung 'A short time ago...' and the details show that this was the peal recorded in the peal book of the Union Society, Newport, Isle of Wight, as being rung at Leeds on 2 April 1810. The name of one of the band was given as Parnell, and the position of his name in the list implies that he rang the tenor. He also rang the tenor in the ringing that took place at Great Yarmouth, published in the *Morning Post* on Tues. 31 July 1810, with a slightly shorter report in the *Morning Chronicle* of Fri. 27 July 1810.

'A few evenings ago was rung at St. Nicholas's Church, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk, a charming peal of *Bob-Royal*, on the fine toned new peal of ten bells, cast in 1808 by Mr. THOMAS MEARS, bell-founder, Whitechapel, London, in the grand key of D, which was boldly struck and nobly brought round, to the general satisfaction of a numerous assemblage of attentive hearers. Mr. JAMES LAMB rung the 8th, and conducted the peal. Mr. J. PARNEL [*sic*] performed at the tenor singly, which weighs 30 cwt. net bell metal.'

Two peals of Bob Royal were rung on the bells in 1809, both of which were reported in the local papers, but the name of Parnell occurred in neither, so this must have been on a different occasion, and not just a very late report. No report of the above occasion has so far been traced in the Norfolk papers, which suggests it was Parnell who passed on the details, and, significantly, no time is given, which most likely means that it was a touch rather than 5000 or more changes, usage of terms at the period being somewhat different to our present rigid classification.

There are a couple of peals where it is at least possible that Parnell was involved. On Sat. 23 January 1808 the *York Herald* report a peal attempt at Ashton-under-Lyne on 4 January, and recorded a peal of Bob Major rung there on the following day by 'a joint company of ringers consisting of three Ashton College youths, four Oldham youths, and an honest Yorkshireman, ...'. It

is possible that Parnell was the 'honest Yorkshireman' and also that he was the person mentioned in the following report, taken from the *Sussex Weekly Advertiser* of Mon. 6 January 1812:

'The Brighton Society of Ringers, with the assistance of a gentleman from Yorkshire, rang out the old year with a complete peel [*sic*] of 5040 grandsire tripples, much to the satisfaction of those who delight in that species of harmony.'

Parnell was clearly well known, and the evidence also suggests that he was an inveterate writer to newspapers (rather like me to the *Ringling World*, I suppose!). This is confirmed by a note that appeared in the *Chester Chronicle* on 2 Sept. 1814:

'Our old friend the GOTHIC TRAVELLER next week.'

Unfortunately, nothing from the Gothic Traveller did appear in subsequent issues (nor, at present, can I find anything earlier, due to the fact that the issues for 1807-1812 inclusive are missing from the run to which I have access), but there is little doubt that this was Parnell, who was clearly well-known to the readers of the *Chester Chronicle*. It was also probably the Gothic Traveller who features in the news report below, taken from the *Morning Chronicle* of Tues. 20 April 1813:

'Thursday evening last, between 9 and 10 o'clock, as Mr. John Alfred Parnell was returning from Chatham to Stroud, he was attacked, just at the entrance of Rochester City, by a gang of ruffians, to the amount of eight or ten, all dressed in sailor's attire, who first hustled and jostled him, and then cut off one of his coat pockets, containing property of the value of upwards of 50/. They made a second attempt at the other pocket, but accidentally missed it: He pursued them, and seized the identical man that had the property, who instantly dropped it in the middle of the road, but the banditti rescued him, and they all escaped.'

That Parnell was carrying £50 indicates that he must have been of substantial means. Another rare glimpse of Parnell's personal circumstances is given in the following extract from the obituary column of the *Chester Chronicle* on Fri. 30 June 1815:

'On the 14th June, at Bath, Mrs. Sophia Parnell, aged 36 years, second wife of Mr. John Alfred Parnell, the Gothic Traveller, and noted walking visitor to all the Gothic Cathedrals in England. This lady's death was occasioned by eating cucumber raised by copper sheet reflectors, which put a period to her life in the short space of three hours.'

This visit to Bath again suggests substantial means. The image of eating contaminated cucumber (sandwiches?) is a vivid one, and quite unusual, and it was no doubt this caused the report to be copied in the *Hereford Journal* on Wed. 12 July 1815, and in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, Vol. 85 Part I, p. 647. Details of the various Gothic cathedrals visited by Parnell are given in his MS, at the end which he wrote:

'This Account Collected and given by the Gothic Traveller who paid the whole 25 Cities a Walking Visit within Twelve Months & wrote in this Book on Sunday the 26th Feb<sup>y</sup> 1815 by your ob<sup>t</sup>. hble serv<sup>t</sup>

At Sheffield

John Alfred Parnell.'

A transcript of these descriptions, made by Herbert O. Chaddock, was published in the *Ringing World* for 22/29 December 1972, taken direct from Parnell's MS, which is in the Sheffield Cathedral ringing chamber library. A version of these descriptions appeared in the *Chester Chronicle* of 5 May 1815, and although anonymous, the extreme similarity to the Parnell MS leaves no doubt but that Parnell was the author.

## **Conclusion**

After Parnell's death his MS passed to William Booth, of Sheffield, and thence to Booth's grandson, T.H. Hattersley, also of Sheffield, and subsequently into the Sheffield Cathedral ringing chamber library. It is clear, from his MS and the extracts quoted above, that John Alfred Parnell was a great character, and it is hoped that as a result of this preliminary essay more details of his life will be found. Should anyone have further information on him, I would be delighted to hear.

## **Acknowledgments**

Thanks to Alan Glover for verifying that the article which sparked off this essay did in fact appear in the *Salopian Journal*, and for the loan of the microfilm of the Parnell MS from the Central Council Library, a microfilm kindly donated to the Library by Ron Johnston in 1983. Also to Chris Pickford for discussion of, and information on, Thomas Mears' trade lists, and to Simon Reading for confirming that Parnell's MS is still in the Sheffield Cathedral library. All newspaper extracts quoted above will be published in the next volume of newspaper extracts, covering the years 1800-1829.

(Inside outer covers) The first four pages of Shipway's Preface (1816), in which is given false information on Fabian Stedman.

A  
SHORT VIEW  
OF THE  
**Antiquity of Ringing in Peal,**  
AND THE  
ORIGIN OF CHANGE RINGING;  
WITH  
A LIST OF THE PRINCIPAL PEALS OF  
BELLS IN ENGLAND.

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“The practice of ringing bells in peal is said to be peculiar to England; whence Britain has been termed the ringing island. The custom seems to have commenced in the time of the Saxons, and was common before the conquest.”—*Encyclopedia*. Bells are still to be seen in this country, having Saxon characters on them. The earliest set of bells in peal, of which I have been able to obtain any account, were hung in one of the towers of Croyland Abbey, in

Lincolnshire. These were, by different authors, said to be the first set of church bells ever put up in England; but Ingulphus mentions, as before observed, that Turketilus, abbot of Croyland, gave to that church a peal of six bells, viz., two which he called Bartholomew and Bettelin, two called Turketil and Tatwin, and two named Pega and Beta; all which rang together in peal. The same author says, “There was not such a ring of bells in all England.” Thus it evidently appears, that there were peals of bells before them; and likewise that they were much earlier than 945, as stated in the Clavis, or 876, according to Parnell; the abbot dying in 870.

The commencement of change-ringing is equally uncertain; for, according to Parnell, the earliest artist and promoter of change-ringing we have any account of, was Mr. Fabian Stedman, born in the town of Cambridge, 1631. He introduced various peals on five and six bells, printing them on slips of paper (being by profession a printer). These, being distributed about the country, were soon brought to London; but what progress the art had made in the metropolis at this time does not appear. The Society

of College Youths\*, in the summer of 1657, on a visit to Cambridge, were presented by Mr. Stedman with his peculiar production on five bells, since called Stedman's Principle, which was rung, for the first time, at St Bene't's, Cambridge, and afterwards at a church on College Hill, London, where the Society, at that time, usually practised, and from meeting at which place they obtained their name. It appears from this account, that change-ringing must have been much earlier than 1657; as, before those curious and cross change peals were discovered, single changes were universally practised, *i. e.*, only changing two bells at one time; whereas the improved plan, of double and triple changes, &c., *i. e.* every bell to change at one time, appears to have taken place long before 1657, by Mr. Stedman having produced such a complex method of ringing as his principle. In 1669 he

\* This appears to be the most ancient society of ringers. They are said to have been established in the sixteenth century; and a book, containing memorials of that society in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, after escaping the ravages of the fire of London, has been unaccountably lost.

published a Book, entitled Campanologia, or the Art of Ringing, which, before 1680, had gone through three editions.

Thus I have endeavoured to trace the origin and antiquity of church bells, and the time of their being first rung in peal; and also the origin of the musical and particularly interesting science of Change-ringing, which, I trust, will be found interesting to all lovers of this curious Art. "The music of bells," says one author, "is altogether melody; but the pleasure arising from it consists in the variety of interchanges, and the various succession and general predominance of the consonances in the sounds produced." A variety of other testimonies might be adduced as to the excellence of this pleasing Science; but, as the author is writing principally to those who are acquainted with it, he is aware, that nothing which others may be able to say in its favour can recommend it so strongly as the pleasure they feel in the performance of its manly exercises, and the study of its intricate evolutions.

I now proceed to give some account of the present state of the art in this country, and also of the number, weight

BELL RINGING.

There have been cast at the great Bell-Foundry, White chapel, London, since the year 1738, no less than 202 peals of musical church bells: viz 59 peals of 5 bells; 126 peals of 6; 1 peal of 7, for St. Petersburg, in Russia; 110 peals of 8; 12 peals of 10, and 4 peals of 12 bells.—The tenor in any of the lightest peals, is 7 cwt. and the tenor in the heaviest peal is 53 cwt. 25 lbs. which belongs to the fine ring of 10 bells hanging in the richly carved Gothic Towers of York Minster; the Society of London College Youths paid a visit to it some time ago, and rung the first long peal on them, composed of 5183 changes of grandsire caters, which said peal was composed and conducted by Mr. Thomas Blakemore, stationer and bookseller, London, and was finely completed in 3 hours and 47 minutes.—The St. Peter's Youths, at York, rung the next peal on them, containing 3003 harmonious changes of grandsire caters, in 4 hours and 42 minutes; the conductor, Mr. Richard Beesforth, pattern-maker, of that city.—The St. Michael's Youths, of Ashton-under-line, afterwards paid a friendly visit to the ancient city of York, and performed the last long peal on the Minster bells, (up to this date) containing 5021 melodious changes, in 3 hours and 37 minutes, composed and conducted by Mr. Thomas Ogden, warehouse-man, of Ashton-under-line.

Change Composition and Change-Ringing was introduced and brought to practice about 200 years ago; the first 50-40 peal was rung at Bow Church, in Cheapside, London, about the year 1690, by the Society of London Scholars. Since that time, the composition and discoveries in both the science and art of change-ringing has been greatly improved by Messrs. Steadman, Patrick, Meskins, Holt, Roberts, Gross, Monk, Purser, Crofts, Peat, Povey, Blakemore, Jones, Reeves, Neenan, Williams, Tebbs, Ogden, Edwards, Lawrence, Dorey, Hill, Clemson, Grayson, Bouth, Newton, Edwards, Lee, Chesnut, Saul, Tronca, Riley, Ravenscroft, Beesforth, Mews, Cross, Wild, Hazard, Barbur, Shipway, Wright, Pugh, Smith, Stead, Hewitt, Brook, Bartlett, Bartell, and Farnell.

The cutting of the article that appeared in the Salopian Journal on 12 Oct. 1808, which sparked off this Essay.

There are twelve peals of twelve bells in England, viz.  
 Peal of 12 bells at St. Saviour's Church, London; Tenor ... 51 cwt.  
 Peal of 12 bells, at Christ Church, Spital Fields, London; Tenor ... 44 cwt.  
 Peal of 12 bells, at St. Michael's Church, Cornhill, London; Tenor ... 40 cwt.  
 Peal of 12 bells, at St. Giles's Church, Cripplegate, London; Tenor ... 36 cwt.  
 Peal of 12 bells, at St. Martin's Church in the Fields, London; Tenor ... 34 cwt.  
 Peal of 12 bells, at St. Leonard's Church, Shore-ditch, London; Tenor ... 30 cwt.  
 Peal of 12 bells, at St. Bride's Church, Fleet-Street, London; Tenor ... 28½ cwt.  
 Peal of 12 bells, at St. Peter Mancroft Church, Norwich; Tenor ... 40 cwt.  
 Peal of 12 bells, at St. Martin's Church, Birmingham; Tenor ... 36 cwt.  
 Peal of 12 bells, at St. Chad's Church, Shrewsbury; Tenor ... 34 cwt.  
 Peal of 12 bells, at Great St. Mary's Church, Cambridge; Tenor ... 50 cwt.  
 Peal of 12 bells, at All Saints' Church, Cirencester; Tenor ... 28 cwt.

In Great Britain and Ireland, there are—  
 50 Peals of ten musical church bells.  
 366 Peals of eight ditto ditto ditto  
 600 Peals of six ditto ditto ditto  
 500 Peals of five ditto ditto ditto

Beside upwards of 700 peals of four, three, and two bells.—  
 The largest single bells in England are at the following cities.  
 Oxford, the Great Tom, 7 ton weight.  
 Exeter, the Great Tom; 6 ton weight.  
 London, St. Paul's Cathedral, the Great Tom Growler, 5 ton weight.

Canterbury Cathedral Clock Bell, 70 cwt.  
 Lincoln, Great Tom, nearly 5 ton weight.  
 The heaviest ring of tuneable bells in Great Britain is at Exeter City; the tenor of that ten bell peal weighs 67 cwt. and is in diameter 6 feet at the skirt. There has not been a long peal of musical changes rung on them by any Society.

The following table is the full extent of changes that can be produced upon each number of bells: viz.

Peal of 2 bells produces	2	Changes.
Ditto 3 bells ditto	6	ditto
Ditto 4 bells ditto	24	ditto
Ditto 5 bells ditto	120	ditto
Ditto 6 bells ditto	720	ditto
Ditto 7 bells ditto	5040	ditto
Ditto 8 bells ditto	40,320	ditto
Ditto 9 bells ditto	362,880	ditto
Ditto 10 bells ditto	3,628,800	ditto
Ditto 11 bells ditto	39,916,800	ditto
Ditto 12 bells ditto	479,001,600	ditto

—To ring the whole peal on twelve bells, keeping the bells continually going, will take no less time than 44 years, the tenor weighing 40 cwt. at the rate of about 21 changes each minute.

The fine peal of ten bells at St. Mary-le-Bow Church, Cheapside, London, was cast in the year 1762, by Messrs. Lester and Pock, bell-founders, Whitechapel, London, and opened by the London College Youths, on the King's birthday, June the 4th, 1762.—The noble grand peal of ten bells, at the Cathedral of St. Peter's, at York, (generally called York Minster) was cast at London in 1765, by the above founders, and opened by the City Change Ringers from St. Peter's, Norwich, on the Prince of Wales's Birth-day, August 12th, 1765, who rung on them 1600 bob royals.—The following is the exact weight of each bell, in each peal, and the weight of both peals:—viz.

Bow Bells, London.			York Minster Bells.				
	cwt.	qr.	lb.		cwt.	qr.	lb.
Treble Bell	3	3	7	Treble	6	3	7
2	9	0	2	2	9	1	5
3	10	1	14	3	10	1	22
4	12	0	7	4	12	2	21
5	15	0	24	5	13	2	22
6	17	0	11	6	15	0	4
7	20	2	15	7	21	0	23
8	24	2	5	8	26	0	13
9	34	2	6	9	33	2	16
Tenor	53	0	22	Tenor	53	0	25
Bow whole peal 10 3 2 2				York whole peal 10 5 0 13			
				Bow peal 10 3 2 2			

Bow whole peal of bells lighter than York whole peal 1 2 16

Both peals weigh ... .. Tou 20 8 2 20

The Society of St. Peter's Youths change-ringers, at Sheffield, in Yorkshire, in honour of Lord Milton's annual birth-day, May 4th, 1808, ascended their gothic church tower of St. Peter's, and in 3 hours and 43 minutes they completely brought round a fine-rung peal, in that intricate and harmonious method of Oxford treble-bob-royal, composed of 3040 changes; which was nobly rung on the fine, grand, deep-toned new peal of ten bells, cast by Messrs. Thomas Mears and Son, bell-founders, Whitechapel, London, in the key of C: weight of the tenor 41 cwt. 5 lb. nett bell.—The artists were, viz.

Treble, Mr. George Fleet,	7 Mr. Wm. Creswick,
2 Mr. Samuel Willey,	8 Mr. Simeon Dutton,
3 Mr. Henry Grayson,	9 Mr. William Heald,
4 Mr. Robert Walton,	Tenor, Messrs. W. Rowin,
5 Mr. John Heald,	and Co.
6 Mr. William Booth,	

The peal was conducted by Mr. William Booth, table-knife cutler, of that place.

This melodious peal of ten bells was opened by the St. Peter's Society of change-ringers, of Sheffield, on the 29th of November, 1804, who finely completed a peal of grandsire caters on them, containing 5039 changes, in 3 hours and 37 minutes, conducted by Mr. Joseph Grayson, silver plater, of that town.—This Society of St. Peter's Youths rang last summer on the same bells, at various times, 11,177 harmonious changes, in the intricate methods of Bob-Royal, Oxford-Treble Bob-Royal, and Steadman's Principal—which was to represent the 11,177 Independent Freeholders, who paid for Lord Milton, at York, and out of which were 9000 noble Plumbers.

September 30th, 1808.