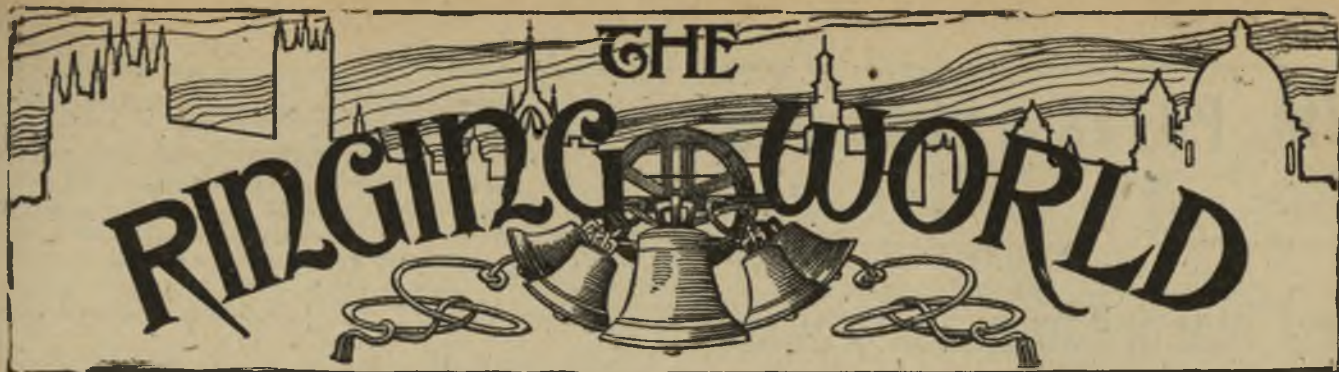




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FRIDAY, MAY 9th, 1941.

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THE HISTORY OF THE EXERCISE.

A fortnight ago we printed an extract from a well known book on Church Bells written by the Rev. William C. Lukis. It was published nearly one hundred years ago and gave a very lamentable picture of the state of the bells, belfries and ringers of Wiltshire at that time. This paragraph has drawn protests from two or three of our readers who think it ought not to have been reproduced. The picture drawn, they say, is not a fair one. Things were never so bad as that, and even if they were it is better to forget all about them. Why not talk about the progress that has generally been made since? Why give a handle to those people who are always on the look out to find nasty things to say about ringers?

We rather sympathise with our correspondents, but we think they hardly understand why the paragraph appeared. It certainly was not to libel the ringers of by-gone days or to blacken their characters, nor yet because the extract is in itself of any particular interest.

The exigencies of the war and the ban on ringing have compelled ringers, including ourselves, to turn their attention to matters which in ordinary times they look upon as rather of secondary importance. One of them is the history of the Exercise. We have published a number of articles and letters from several contributors, and the evidence is that quite a lot of interest is taken in the history of ringing.

But there is one condition which the writing of history shares with change ringing itself—if it is to be anything at all, it must aim at being true. To write accounts of past men in the style of after dinner speeches is not writing history, it serves no purpose, and it is not particularly interesting to read.

This year is the fiftieth anniversary of the first meeting of the Central Council. We have tried to give some account of the beginnings of that body, the causes of its foundation, and the general conditions of the Exercise. That led us further back to the foundation of the great territorial associations and the belfry reform movement, of which we hear very little nowadays, but to which we owe so very much.

There were great men among the ringers of past days, men who not only served their own generation, but have benefited those that came after them. They were not all peal ringers, or composers, or writers of books. Much of what they did has been forgotten, and their very names are usually overlooked. But if we would understand the history of our art we must know the truth about the state the Exercise had got into a century ago;

(Continued on page 218.)

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otherwise we cannot appreciate what these men did, and the debt we owe them.

The extract from Lukis and the other one from Thomas Geering are valuable historical evidence because they were written by men who lived at the time, who had full opportunities of knowing the truth, and who had no reason for representing things as otherwise than they really were. These extracts are footnotes to the historical articles which appear in other columns, and should be treated simply as such.

The Exercise has no reason to be ashamed of its history, taking it as a whole, but if it had, the truth is still the truth. If we are going to have a picture of old ringers let it be a true picture, otherwise we had better keep silence.

HANDBELL PEALS.

FELSTEAD, ESSEX.

THE ESSEX ASSOCIATION.

On Saturday, April 26, 1941, in Two Hours and Fifteen Minutes,

At SACKFORDS, MOLEHILL GREEN,

A PEAL OF BOB MAJOR, 5072 CHANGES;

Tenor size 15 in C.

RONALD SUCKLING	 1-2	LEWIS W. WIFFEN	 5-6
CHRISTOPHER W. WOOLLEY	 3-4	ALBERT WIFFEN	 7-8

Composed by J. A. TROLLOPE (C.C. Collection No. 131).

Conducted by C. W. WOOLLEY.

FELSTEAD, ESSEX.

THE ESSEX ASSOCIATION.

On Sunday, April 27, 1941, in Three Hours and Three Minutes,

At SACKFORDS, MOLEHILL GREEN,

A PEAL OF BOB ROYAL, 5040 CHANGES;

Tenor size 22 in C.

RONALD SUCKLING	 1-2	LEWIS W. WIFFEN	 5-6
BASIL REDGWELL	 3-4	CHRISTOPHER W. WOOLLEY	 7-8
ALBERT WIFFEN	 9-10		

Composed by E. M. ATRINS. Conducted by C. W. WOOLLEY.

THURSTANS' COMPOSITION REVERSED.

THE PEAL AT CHISLEHURST.

To the Editor.

Dear Sir,—I see that you included among your notes of 'Peals rung fifty years ago to-day,' a peal of Stedman Triples at Chislehurst on May 2nd, 1891, in which I took part and prior to which I was proposed a member of the Ancient Society of College Youths.

The band was J. W. Washbrook (conductor) treble, T. Durling 2, G. Conyard 3, I. Emery 4, H. P. Harman 5, H. G. Fruin 6, F. J. French 7, G. Durling tenor. Unless Harry Fruin is still alive I am the sole survivor of the band. Harry Fruin came to Bromley in 1888 or 1889 and revived change ringing here, which at that time was at a very low ebb. After the band had progressed and he (Fruin) had called one peal for them, they in the spring of '91 invited Washbrook up for a week-end. On the Saturday morning, May 2nd, they rang Holt's Ten-Part at Bromley, in the evening the Stedman Triples at Chislehurst, and on the Sunday afternoon a peal of Kent at Erith. Washbrook conducted the three.

The Stedman was the composition which was queried some months ago by Mr. E. Barnett, and I have waited until now, hoping someone could prove conclusively what composition J. W. W. actually did call, but it seems to remain a mystery. I do not know, for I was the youngest in the band and had not rung much Stedman Triples. I do know that there was a single very early in the peal, whether it was at 1 or 2 I cannot say, but if the late Mr. Barnett, who heard the start, said it was 8 at 2, well, it was at 2. I cannot dispute it. What I have often wondered is why Mr. Barnett, who rang the 7th at Erith to the Kent on the Sunday afternoon, did not ask Washbrook what peal he called the night before.

I well remember that after the peal, as we wended our way across the common, I asked, 'What kind of a peal was that, with a single so early on?' Someone (I believe it was Harman or Fruin, but certainly not Washbrook) said, 'Thurstans' reversed.' I said, 'Thurstans' Four-Part?' 'No,' came the answer. 'Thurstans' One-Part.' So as I am probably the only one of the band left and I cannot prove anything, I am afraid it will have to remain wrapped in mystery.

I. EMERY.

49, Wellington Road, Bromley, Kent.

THE CENTRAL COUNCIL.

V. THE GLOSSARY.

I do not know whether Arthur Heywood ever drew up a list of the matters he intended the Council to deal with, but the Johnson dinner resolutions show that something of the sort was in his mind, and that foremost among them was the revision of the technical terms used in change ringing.

He had gone deeply into composition, and was not content, as most other men were, to put forth the result of his work in the form of peals. He wished to educate the Exercise by explaining the scientific laws of composition. He was not the first to do this; C. D. P. Davies is, perhaps, entitled to that honour, and, before him, Jasper Snowden had explained Lockwood's system of composition. But Heywood was a real pioneer and he wrote many articles of the greatest value.

In doing so he was acutely conscious of the fact that he might be using words which did not convey to his readers the ideas that were in his mind. That is a difficulty which confronts every writer when he is explaining new ideas, but in Heywood's case it was especially prominent. He was dealing with mathematical subjects, he had had a mathematical training at Cambridge, and approached his problems with the mind and the equipment of a mathematician. If he could have used the idioms common to other mathematicians his task would have been simple. Already W. H. Thompson had shown how successfully it could be done. Thompson was not a ringer. He knew nothing about ringing, nor of ringers' ideas nor modes of thought, nor of the terms they used. He was given the problem—Is a peal of Grandsire Triples possible with ordinary bobs only? It was a mathematical problem, and he solved it brilliantly, working as a mathematician and using a mathematician's methods. Perhaps no book on ringing has had a greater influence than his. It entirely altered the outlook on composition as a whole. But, like some other famous books, its effect was indirect. I wonder how many ringers have ever read it, and of those who have, how many have really understood it.

Heywood could not work like Thompson. He had to make himself understood of the people. The ringers he addressed were not mathematically trained, in a general sense they were uneducated men, and Heywood was acutely conscious of the gap between himself and them. He showed it clearly in his book on Duffield. In his Investigations into Stedman Triples he apparently deliberately wrote for the few.

He formed the opinion that these difficulties could largely be got over if the Exercise were provided with a revised and enlarged set of technical terms which would be available to everybody. Each term should be carefully and straitly defined, so that whenever a writer used it, there could be no doubt about his meaning. As it was, the terms used by ringers were loose, indefinite, and antiquated. No improvement had been made since the days of the Clavis more than a hundred years before.

The result of all this was the appointment in 1894 of a committee to consider the technical terms used in the art of ringing, to suggest such corrections as may seem desirable, and to prepare a Glossary for the use of learners.

Several reports were presented to the Council, and finally the Glossary was printed and published in 1901.

Nominally the work of the committee, it actually was compiled, practically unaided, by Earle Bulwer, for as he wrote to me shortly before his death, 'the committee gives me no help.'

The Glossary was in many ways a most excellent book, but Heywood was quite mistaken in thinking it would, or could, have the effect he intended. It was quite true that there was a great deal of looseness in the use of technical terms, and they were in no better state than they were at the time of the Clavis. But a committee of the Council was not the proper persons to put the matter right. Words cannot be invented and imposed by authority. They must come spontaneously to supply particular needs. And no word and no term can be given by authority a precise and definite meaning, which, and which alone, it must bear. For words and terms are the expressions of thoughts and ideas, and as thoughts and ideas change and expand so must the meanings of the words. A writer must not complain that words do not convey his meaning; it is his job as a writer to see that they do, and if he occasionally finds there is no term to suit his purpose he must provide one, though, if he is wise, he will do so sparingly. If the reader cannot gather from the text what the writer means, he can hardly do so from a Glossary. This does not mean that a Glossary cannot be useful to a beginner.

But a writer is entitled to expect that the reader will do his share, and take a little trouble to understand what is said, especially when the subject is a difficult one.

All the ringing terms we use grew up naturally as they were wanted, and the reason why there was no development from the time of the Clavis until the end of the nineteenth century, was that in those years the Exercise had no one who could really write.

The Glossary and his share in the Investigations into Stedman Triples form Bulwer's best claims to fame, though in his lifetime he exercised a great and to some extent unique influence. Intellectually he probably was the greatest man in the Exercise at his time, but his circumstances were peculiar and his activities very much restricted.

Henry Earle Bulwer came of a younger branch of a very old and distinguished Norfolk family, the Bulwers of Heydon Hall, who gave many able men to the service of the country. His father was rector of Cawston, and in that village he was born on March 23rd, 1841. He was educated at Pembroke College, Cambridge, and was ordained deacon in 1864, and priest in 1865. In 1879 he went as curate-in-charge to Needham, near the town of Harleston, where Captain Moore and Gervas Holmes, both enthusiastic ringers, had started a bell foundry in conjunction with an engineer named Mackenzie. Bulwer became acquainted with them and took a great deal of interest in their enterprise.

The parish church of Harleston is at Redenhall, where is a noble tower with a fine ring of eight bells. The belfry had for long been the centre of a good band of ringers, who, as early as 1877, rang a peal of Superlative Surprise, the seventh that had then been performed in the method. Here Bulwer learnt to ring, his first peal, on May 3rd, 1881, being in the very uncommon method, Double Oxford Bob Major. This he followed up with five peals of Oxford Treble Bob Major, the method then almost exclusively practised in the Eastern Counties. In 1882 he went to Hunstanton as

(Continued on next page.)

THE CENTRAL COUNCIL.

(Continued from previous page.)

curate, in 1884 he accepted the vicarage of Stanhoe, a village nearby, and there he lived until he died. In neither place were there any bells, nor was there any ringing anywhere in the district, so that his connection with practical ringing from first to last was limited to no more than three years. Stanhoe is served by a branch railway, but there were no more than one or two trains a day, and, of course, it was long before there was such a thing as a motor-car. That meant that he was cut off from intercourse with ringers as completely as if he had been living in the North of Scotland. It says much for the man that under such circumstances he should have become one of the best known and most influential members of the Exercise.

It may seem strange that a man of Bulwer's intellectual ability should have been content to spend his life in almost complete isolation, but that was the fashion of the times and among the men of his class. By birth and tradition he belonged to the country, and his social equals were the country gentlemen and squires. His class was quite distinct from the average town clergymen. Personally he was a big man, with a long flowing beard, and an extraordinarily dignified presence. He was the last man with whom anybody would attempt to take a liberty, but there was nothing haughty or 'stand-offish' in his demeanour.

He took a great interest in the theoretic side of ringing. He was the first man to compose a peal with the deliberate intention of keeping the second away from the tenor in 7-8, and his 3-part peal of Treble Bob, which once was a very popular one, set a fashion which was followed, more or less, by all subsequent composers. He was the first to introduce a new Surprise Major method, and his New Cumberland has many merits. It does not now rank technically as Surprise, which may be one of the reasons why it is never rung nowadays. It is no disparagement of Heywood's work to say that the more complicated and abstruse part of the 'Investigations' into Stedman Triples was done by Bulwer.

At the second meeting of the Central Council, Earle Bulwer was appointed honorary secretary. He held the office until his death, and it is fair to say that its successful work was due as much to him as to Arthur Heywood.

In compiling the Glossary, Bulwer used the ordinary methods of a dictionary maker. That is to say, he searched every available text book on ringing, noted the technical terms, and gave the meaning which seemed to be in the mind of the writer. He also collected all the traditional words used in belfries in different parts of the country and many more that had become obsolete. It was a very big job and was done excellently well. No small tribute to Bulwer's work is supplied by the fact that it was incorporated almost entirely in the great Oxford English Dictionary, the standard work on English words and their meanings.

But it was not the book Heywood had asked for. He had called for new and exact definitions and terms. Bulwer, like a true lexicographer, gave those already in use. Nor was it possible that such a book could be compiled without some defective or disputable definitions. For instance, the first word given is 'belfry,' which is defined as 'the part of the tower in which the bells are placed.' That, no doubt, is one of the meanings of the word in ordinary English, though it is not the usual meaning. When we come across it in a book it generally refers to the whole bell tower. When ringers use it they almost always mean the ringing chamber, not the bell chamber.

Here is one of the instances where a word has several meanings, and if a glossary is to be of any real use, these meanings must be explained and contrasted.

There are many other similarly defective definitions. Actual misstatements are few, but we are told that 'warner' was an old, now discarded, term for 'bob-caller.' The 'warner' in the old societies was the official whose duty was to give notice to, or 'warn' the members of meetings and special ringing. There were no post cards and no ringing newspapers in those days.

Judged as a dictionary, however, the Glossary is a good book, and might well have taken its place among the standard ringing text books. But two bad mistakes were made, one by the Council, the other by Bulwer himself.

The Council printed an edition of a thousand copies, issued it at a surprisingly low price, and speedily got rid of the lot. That was good business, but instead of realising that all present needs had been met, the Council printed another two thousand. Nobody wanted them, and the result was that ultimately the stocks had to be given away. The effect on the book's reputation was disastrous.

Bulwer's own mistake was even more serious, though quite excusable. He added an appendix in which he attempted to explain and classify the systems and methods of change ringing. It was part of the idea, held by Heywood and others at the time, that the Council could and should bring everything connected with ringing into proper and final order. All was to be tidied up, and every item properly described, labelled, and put in its right group.

Whether any real system of classifying methods is desirable or even possible is now seen to be very doubtful, but these people not only thought it could be done, but they tried to do it and without knowing much about the matter. The greatest difficulty lay in deciding what should rank as a Surprise method. Bulwer's Glossary definition is that a Surprise method is 'a Treble Bob Method in which the work is highly elaborated and more or less difficult of execution.' That is a good dictionary definition, and does quite accurately describe the meaning of the word as used in the Exercise for a couple of centuries; but when Bulwer tried to discover some rule

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which would exactly define a Surprise method he thought he had discovered it by saying that no definite portion or division of the work must ever be exactly repeated in the same course, save in the opposite direction.

It was very ingenious, but the snag was that London refused to conform to the rule, and to meet that, Bulwer tried to remove the method from the Surprise class altogether and called it London Marvel. The Exercise, however, would have none of it, and this failure discredited, not only Bulwer's system of classification, but the whole of the Glossary. It was hardly fair, but he suffered from two disabilities, one that there was as yet insufficient knowledge of method construction, and the other his almost complete divorce from practical ringing. The partial failure, however, should not blind us to the great work he did for the science of change ringing.

GLASGOW SURPRISE. ITS COURSING ORDER.

To the Editor.

Dear Sir,—I do not question your opinion that 'Glasgow' Surprise would be more difficult to ring than 'London' Surprise, but it may interest the Exercise to learn something about the coursing order of 'Glasgow.'

In the plain course the tenors are in Plain Bob coursing order for 14 changes! They are together for 53 changes!! They are reversed for 58 changes!!! They are parted for 99 changes!!!!

The importance of Plain Bob coursing order so greatly stressed by yourself is sadly lacking in 'Glasgow.'

2, North Street Quadrant, Brighton.

GEORGE BAKER.

We do not see the point of our correspondent's letter. 'Glasgow' was given as an example of a very difficult method, and it should be obvious that we cannot have difficulty unless we depart very widely from natural coursing order in the interior of the lead. To reverse the tenors in coursing order sounds very dreadful, but it often happens in methods, and when it is done below the treble, as in 'Glasgow,' it is not a defect. Considering how difficult it is, 'Glasgow' appears to be musically a very satisfactory method, but, as we said, that can only be decided definitely by actual practice.

MR. GEORGE WILLIAMS.

EIGHTY-FOURTH BIRTHDAY.

All our readers will join us in congratulating Mr. George Williams, who reached his eighty-fourth birthday last Wednesday.



MR. GEORGE WILLIAMS.

Mr. Williams is the Grand Old Man of the Exercise, and few ringers have had a career in any way comparable to his. By birth a Hampshire man, he rang his first peal at Sober-ton in that county in 1883. He made his name when he was the conductor to the famous band at St. Peter's, Brighton, in the nineties of the last century. They were one of the first to ring the Surprise methods as a matter of routine, and they were the first to score a peal of Bristol, Mr. Williams conducting.

On July 19th, 1938, at St. Mary's, Southampton, Mr. Williams and Mr. Frank Bennett, another notable Brighton ringer, each rang his 1,500th peal. Those were the bells which have since perished in an air raid. At North Stoneham, where he now lives, Mr. Williams gave two trebles to make one of the lightest rings of ten in the country. He shares with Canon Coleridge the distinction of having been a member of the Central Council ever since its first meeting 50 years ago. He is still hale and hearty, and we wish him many more years of activity and happiness.

HANDBELL RINGING AT CHELTENHAM.

On Sunday, April 27th, for the first time handbells were used for the morning service at the Parish Church, Cheltenham. Two short touches of Grandsire Triples were rung by Messrs. Rowland Fenn, Frank Shorter and Wilfrid Williams, of London, and Charles Martin, of Cheltenham, and, as might be expected by such experts, the striking was exceptionally good. The innovation was much appreciated by the congregation.

Handbell practices will be held throughout the coming summer at the Parish Church Room near the Fire Station, St. James' Square, on Thursday evenings from 7 o'clock. The average attendance at these meetings is about ten, and any visitors, especially ringers in H.M. Forces, will be made welcome.

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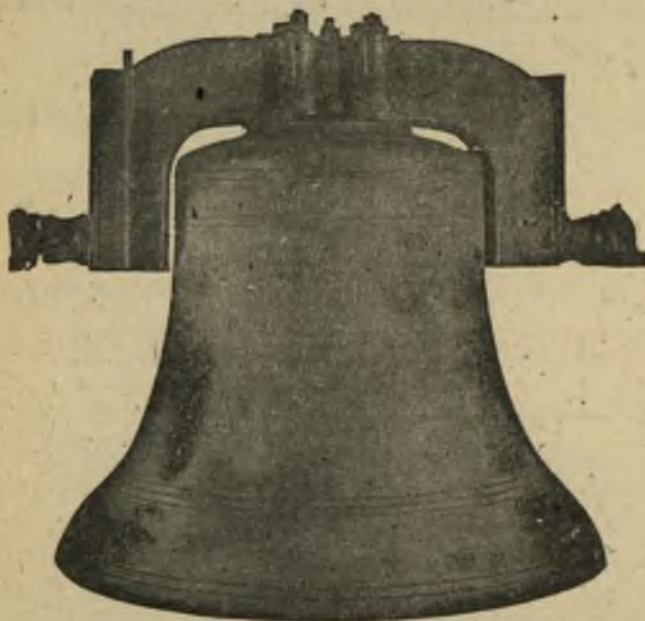
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THE EDITOR.

It has been found necessary for Mr. Goldsmith to undergo another minor operation. He is not likely to be able to leave hospital for some time.

BELFRY GOSSIP.

At the annual vestry meeting at Frodsham on April 16th, Mr. William Bibby was nominated by the Vicar to be his warden for the current year, and Mr. Bibby's younger son Francis was elected by the vestry as people's warden.

Readers will be sorry to learn of the serious illness of Mr. John Perry, of Brewood. Unfortunately, there is little hope of his recovery from a seizure.

On May 6th, 1922, 10,400 changes of Superlative Major were rung at the Loughborough Foundry Bell Tower. At the time it was the longest length in the method and was composed with bobs with the treble behind as well as in front.

The London Youths rang the first peal (Bob Major) on the heavy bells at Harrow-on-the-Hill on May 7th, 1780.

On May 8th, 1788, the Cumberlands opened Edmonton bells with 5,280 Oxford Treble Bob Major. John Reeves was composer and conductor.

Next Sunday is the thirty-eighth anniversary of the record peal of London Surprise Major, which was rung at King's Norton on May 11th, 1903. William Pye rang the tenor and conducted. James Motts was at the seventh, and Ernest Pye at the fifth. The composer, Mr. Lindoff, who rang the fourth, George R. Pye (2nd), William Short (3rd) and William Keeble (6th) are still, happily, alive.

Fifty years ago to-day five peals were rung. They were Grandsire Triples 2, Stedman Triples 2, and Kent Treble Bob Major 1.

Mr. A. Patrick Cannon has gone abroad. Any of his friends who wish to write to him should communicate with Miss Sylvia C. Jessop, 74, The Crescent, Eastleigh, Hants.

DEATH OF MR. A. WILKERSON.

RINGER AND VERGER AT NUNEATON.

We regret to record the death of Mr. Abraham Wilkerson, of Nuneaton, which took place recently after a short illness at the age of 70.

Coming to Nuneaton from Cambridgeshire about 20 years ago as an accomplished ringer, Mr. Wilkerson became attached to the Nuneaton Society, and besides taking part in 77 peals for the Warwickshire Guild, six of which he conducted, he helped to train a number of young ringers who have since made good progress.

He was hon. secretary of the Warwickshire Guild during the difficult years which followed the last war. A few years ago he left Nuneaton for Weston-super-Mare to open his own bakery and confectionery business. He rang at Weston and at Bristol, but returned periodically to Nuneaton, where he was always welcomed by his old associates. Last year he returned to Nuneaton as verger of the Parish Church, but he was not destined to occupy the position for very long.

The funeral service was at Nuneaton and was fully choral, being attended by a number of church officials and members of the Warwickshire Guild of Ringers. It was conducted by the Vicar, the Rev. Marcus Knight, assisted by the curate. The hymns, 'The King of Love' and 'Jesus lives,' were sung, and also the Nunc Dimittis.

The interment took place at Chilvers Coton Churchyard, and after the Blessing a course of Grandsire Triples was rung over the open grave by Mrs. A. H. Beamish 1-2, Mr. A. H. Beamish 3-4, Mr. H. Argyle 5-6, Mr. J. E. Moreton 7-8. Wreaths were sent by the Warwickshire Guild of Ringers, Nuneaton Parish Church ringers, and ringers of All Saints', Chilvers Coton.

THE LATE EDWIN T. PIKE.

HIS LOVE OF MUSIC.

To the Editor.

Dear Sir,—I should like to add a word or two as to the deceased's great love of music, though not himself an executant. His spare time was largely spent in attending recitals and concerts, and he could speak with critical appreciation of many of the works of the well-known masters, and also as to the abilities of those connected with their production to-day. This was particularly so in the case of Beethoven and Bach.

Mr. Pike was always reticent as to his family and affairs, and it was left for his sister to tell me that both his parents and a sister were organists. Though he spoke of 'my nephew, the organist,' he never mentioned to me his uncle the bellringer, which is again indicative. His sister adds that he was born at Dedham, Suffolk, and 'that he was one of the choirboys of Hoxne Church till, at 10 years of age, he was turned out because he would always be away in the belfry.'

It is of interest to note yet another case of the ringer's interest in and love of music.

E. ALEXR. YOUNG.

Italian Villa, Elstree Hill, Bromley, Kent.

THE CHURCH BELLS OF BERKSHIRE

A NEW ARCHÆOLOGICAL WORK.

As readers will have seen from our notice column, the third part of Mr. Frederick Sharpe's 'Church Bells of Berkshire' is now on sale, and the author is to be congratulated on being able to carry on his work without any lowering of the quality of paper or printing, notwithstanding the great difficulties of the times.

The present part deals with twelve churches which between them possess one ring of eight, three of six, one of five, one of four, one of three, one of two, and four single bells. With one exception, none of these is known among ringers, but several are very interesting from an archæological point of view. At Compton Beauchamp there is a bell, by an unknown founder, dating from the first half of the fourteenth century, and with an inscription which suggests that its founder, or his workman, was illiterate, for he used a number of letters without



THE REV. F. E. ROBINSON.

any order and making no sense. The hangings also are extremely interesting. The headstock is not later than the fifteenth century and may be as old as the bell. The wheel is a fifteenth century half-wheel increased to a full wheel in the seventeenth century. The clapper and gudgeons are mediæval.

Didcot has two early fourteenth century bells from the Wokingham foundry, but they are hung in modern fittings supplied as late as 1926 by Mr. Richard White, of Appleton.

Drayton is the parish where the Rev. F. E. Robinson was Vicar for 30 years, and the light ring of eight in the steeple receives full notice by Mr. Sharpe, who mentions many of the notable peals rung there. The first was Grandsire Triples in 1880, and was the first occasion on which a parson had called a peal in his own tower. Others included the first clerical peal (Stedman Triples in 1884), 11,328 London Surprise Major in 1896, and Robinson's 1,000th peal (Stedman Triples) in 1905; besides many others of Stedman, Double Norwich, Superlative, Cambridge and London. Some of them were called by Robinson and many more by Washbrook.

We notice one mistake in this account. Misled by the wording of the tablet, Mr. Sharpe says that the first unconduted peal of Stedman Triples was rung at Drayton in 1899. The first actually was rung at Burton-on-Trent in 1886. The Drayton peal was only the first non-conduted performance of Thurstans' Four-Part on tower bells.

A very attractive feature of Mr. Sharpe's book is the illustrations of ancient lettering and photographs of some of the bells. This is a book that will make a worthy addition to the fine series of county bell histories, and no one who is interested in that side of bell lore can afford to be without it on his shelves.

HEXHAM ABBEY BELLS.

AN OLD RECORD.

To the Editor.

Dear Sir,—I came across a cutting from 'The Newcastle Chronicle,' dated September 8th, 1848, among other old records in my possession, which I am sure will be of interest to your readers. It is headed:—

'Hexham Abbey Bells. The Members of the Union Society of Change-ringers of Newcastle and Gateshead had a pleasure excursion to Hexham on Monday, Sept. 4th, when, with the consent of the Rector and Wardens, a party of them ascended the Tower of the Noble Abbey and rang on their Splendid set of bells a true and complete peal of Grandsire Triples, containing 5,040 Changes. The above peal was completed in the unprecedented time of two hours and 41 minutes, being the shortest time that such a peal of that number of changes has been rung in that weight of metal, tenor 21 cwt. The following are the names of the members who accomplished this task: John Bennett, Treble; John Stokoe 2nd; Thos. Cook (1st peal) 3rd; Thomas Denton 4th; Joseph Pescott 5th; Robt. Balmra 6th; Thomas Gay 7th; Richard Warsless, Tenor.

'The above peal (Thurstans) contains 170 singles and 76 bobs, and from its excellently arranged method has been called the "Non-pariel." It was ably conducted by Mr. Robt. Balmra. This is the first peal on the bells since they were cast by Thos. Lester in 1742 from the old six bells, the tenor of which weighed 70 cwt.'

I gathered this cutting locally when our association reopened the restored peal on December 4th, 1884, and made a note then that 'Of the above band only one now survives, Tom Denton, and still rings. The son of the treble man, John Bennett, has now been many years verger of St. John's, Newcastle-on-Tyne.' Denton himself passed on, I think, about 1903. I also remark in my diary that through the tremendous noise in the belfry we did very little change ringing. Only plain courses were rung, probably because we could not hear the bob-caller.

C. L. ROUTLEDGE.

62, Jesmond Road, Newcastle-on-Tyne 2.

ENDOWMENTS FOR BELL ROPES.

AND HALSTEAD BELLS.

To the Editor.

Dear Sir,—In reply to Mr. Thomas regarding endowment for bell ropes, Halstead has a similar instance. Three acres of land named 'Bell Rope Field,' let for £4 per year, was left as an endowment for the repair of the bells and ropes. It is not known from whom this property was acquired and when. We now receive £10 6s. 9d. per year on this land, and bell ropes have the first preference on this fund.

It might be of interest to give the dates of the bells in this tower of St. Andrew's. The treble and second are comparatively modern, cast in 1903 by John Warner and Sons; 3rd inscribed, Thomas Gardiner, fecit 1755; 4th inscribed, Miles Graye made me 1633; 5th inscribed, Richard Bowler, me fecit, 1589; 6th is an undated pre-Reformation bell inscribed, 'Dulcis sisto melis campana vocor Gabriellis.' The Vicar has dated this bell as approximately 1380; there is no trace on the bell of the name of the founder. If any reader can give us any more details of this bell we should be glad to receive them. 7th inscribed, Henry Pleasant made me 1700. Tenor inscribed, Omnia jovam laudant animantia, 1575. From the Bury St. Edmunds foundry, then in the hands of William Land and Thomas Draper.

In a cupboard in the belfry is a ringers' jar capable of holding 4½ gallons of liquid. It bears the following inscription:—

Ringers' jar, St. Andrew's Church, Halstead, Essex. Agvst, 1658. SB, IH, GT, RH, TM, IM.

Be merry and wise

Use me much and breake me not

For I am but an earthen pot

As W sit by the fyre to keepe ourselves warme

This pot of good liquor will doe us no harme

If you be wice fil me not twice at one sitting in summer heate

And winter cold to drink of this we dare be bold.

The upper initials are those of five ringers, and the initials below, I.M., may be those of the maker of the jar.

HILDA G. SNOWDEN.

Halstead, Essex.

BELLS IN ISLE OF MAN.

To the Editor.

Sir,—A short while ago some correspondence took place regarding bells in the Isle of Man. At present I am in the island, and from what I can gather the tower became unsafe and the tall spire had to be taken down. Since then the bells have been used only by tunes being tapped on them. I do not know whether the tower is safe to ring them now, or whether it is the lack of interest for change ringing.

Regarding the peal at St. Thomas', Douglas, I made inquiries and was told there was a peal of six until 1926 and two more bells were added. Only tunes were tapped on them. I have not been up the tower to look at them yet.

W. FARRIMOND.

SURREY ASSOCIATION.

ANNUAL MEETING AT CROYDON.

The annual meeting of the Surrey Association was held at Croydon on Saturday, April 26th.

The tower of St. John's was open for handbell ringing from 4 p.m. to 5 o'clock, and a service followed, conducted by the Bishop of Croydon, vice-president of the association. The lesson was read by the Master, Mr. D. K. C. Birt.

The Bishop, in his address, welcomed the members and made some inspiring remarks about the present state of conflict. We were witnessing, he said, examples of domination by force, but it was only by love that the world would find true and lasting peace.

Tea was held at the Silverdale Road Hall, to which about 35 members sat down. Those present will agree that the meal would in peace time have been regarded as of most generous dimensions.

Previous to the business meeting which followed, the Bishop again welcomed the gathering and expressed his pleasure at being with them. He was sorry that he was unable to remain for the business, as he had a particularly heavy day on the morrow.—Mr. Birt, the Master, who occupied the chair, suitably replied.

The members stood in silence for a few moments as a mark of respect to Mr. C. H. Reading and Mr. A. Dean, a vice-president of the association, whose death had been lately reported in 'The Ringing World.'

THE COMMITTEE'S REPORT.

The treasurer's statement and the committee's report were adopted. The committee, in their report, said that the year had begun in practically a normal manner with Sunday service ringing much as usual, though limited in places by the 'black-out.' Practices were well attended where they had been well supported in peace time, much experience and enjoyment being gained by many members. Association meetings had been quite successful, three district meetings being held in the North-Western District up to the end of May with an average attendance of 45.

In June, however, bellringing suffered the greatest setback of its existence when the ban was imposed. The committee soon met to discuss the situation, and it was agreed that as the chief attraction of meetings no longer existed, the usual programme of gatherings should be discontinued and an effort made to arrange meetings which would offer alternative attractions. With this in mind, a meeting was held at Leatherhead in August, which included a pleasant walk from Box Hill Station to Leatherhead followed by a service, tea and social evening. It was pronounced by all who attended to be most successful, and it had been hoped to arrange a similar meeting at Merstham at the end of September, but circumstances prevented it taking place.

It was agreed that the valuable property of the association, such as the peal books and important records, should be deposited in as safe custody as possible. Accordingly this property has been placed in the strong room of the Westminster Bank, Redhill. Existing records comprising minutes of the last annual meeting and minutes of the committee meetings held during the year and details of cash transactions for the year had been duplicated and dispersed among the general officers to lessen the risk of the loss of this important information.

Up to the moment the affiliated churches and towers had suffered small damage as the result of enemy activity, and no damage to bells or fittings had been reported.

LOSS BY DEATH.

During the year three members had been lost by death, Mr. E. Accock, of Croydon, Mr. A. Bundle, of Carshalton, and Mr. J. Beams, of Ewell. Mr. Bundle had been a member for a great number of years and had been associated with Carshalton tower for a great length of time. Mr. Beams, who celebrated his fiftieth anniversary as member only this year, was a keen supporter of the association and rang and conducted many peals. He was the conductor of two of the four peals accomplished during the year. It was for his untiring and admirable work in the writing of the peal books of the association that he will live in memory, and the committee felt that they should place on record their deep appreciation of his valued services. Mr. Randall had kindly offered to undertake the writing of the peal book in succession to Mr. Beams.

Quite a number of members are now serving with H.M. Forces, including 16 from the North-Western District, and the committee recommended that the opportunity should be taken to send them very best wishes for their present and future welfare with the hope that their return will not be far distant.

The committee pointed out that possibly in some instances no supervision is being given to the bells, fittings and ropes, and they sug-

gested that periodical inspection should be made. Bearings should be kept lubricated with the proper type of oil or grease, and precautions should be taken to preserve the ropes from rotting. Commonsense suggestions will avoid considerable delay and perhaps disappointment when the bells are again required.

Four peals had been rung during the year; two of Grandsire Triples at Ewell, conducted by Mr. J. Beams, one of Stedman Caters at Beddington, conducted by Mr. F. E. Darby, and one of Cambridge Royal also at Beddington, conducted by Mr. C. H. Kippin. Two members had rung their first peal and five their first in the method.

The committee intended to arrange meetings during the coming months on the lines of that held at Leatherhead, and hoped that the support shown then will continue. If such support is forthcoming, the future of the association should give little cause for anxiety.

The Chairman remarked that these were especially trying times for bellringers, but he was sure that so long as they were able to maintain the spirit shown by the present gathering, when happier times came the association would arise with new vigour.

Miss Marian Ellis and Miss Joyce Franklin, both of St. Peter's, Croydon, were elected members.

It was agreed to leave the place of the next annual meeting to the committee to decide according to circumstances.

The following officers were elected: President, the Bishop of Southwark; Master, Mr. D. K. C. Birt; treasurer, Mr. C. H. Kippin; secretary, Mr. E. G. Talbot; assistant secretary, Mr. C. Parks; auditor, Mr. G. W. Steere.

The printing of the new service pamphlet was deferred until after the war. The meeting decided to send to Mr. F. Woodiss a letter of sympathy in his continued indisposition with the hope that his recovery to health would be speedy and lasting. The secretary was requested to write a suitable letter to Mr. J. S. Goldsmith, who made a practice of attending the annual meetings, congratulating him on his recovery from his recent operation.

It was agreed that a meeting be held in June at Reigate, details of which would appear later.

Mr. Harman announced that the clappers had been removed from the front eight at Leatherhead, and practices will be held on Tuesdays at 8 o'clock.

On the proposition of Mr. Young, seconded by Mr. W. Hewitt, it was decided to write a letter of sympathy to Mrs. A. Dean and to Mr. J. Crawford, who has recently become blind through enemy activity.

The Chairman, on behalf of the association, thanked the organist and verger for having the church in readiness, and Mr. Dan Cooper for making all the arrangements, and particularly the following ladies for preparing the tea and waiting at table: Mrs. Kippin, Mrs. Butler, the Misses Kippin and Miss D. Williams.

ROCHDALE RINGER KILLED IN ACTION.

The death is announced of Stoker Ernest B. Sykes, of H.M. Navy, which recently occurred in action. He was 23 years of age and had been in the Navy for about four years. Previously he was a ringer at Oldham Parish Church, where both his brother and sister were members of the band.

A short time ago Mr. Fred Crosland, the oldest member of the Oldham and District Society, was laid to rest. He was 85 years old, and began his ringing career 60 years ago. His ringing was at Leesfield, Oldham and Glodwick. He was a life member of the Lancashire Association and retained his interest in ringing affairs to the last. He had taken part in over 30 peals, one of them 9,000 Grandsire Major.

THE LATE WILLIAM NEWTON.

AN APPRECIATION OF A PARTICULAR FRIEND.

To the Editor.

Dear Sir,—May I trespass upon your valuable paper to pay a short tribute to a very close ringing friend, who passed away on Wednesday, April 23rd, and was laid to rest in Durham Road Cemetery on the 26th. I think he was the oldest member of the Durham and Newcastle Association and was an original member.

We first met in the early part of 1897, when the Stockton bells were six. At that time there was great enthusiasm in Surprise methods, he was always ready and willing to join in a 5,000 and I have had the great pleasure of ringing several with him. Above all, he was a man who struck the bell perfectly, which makes ringing worth while.

I mourn the loss of a true friend, who passed away in his 85th year.

Middlesbrough.

T. METCALFE.

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THE STANDARD METHODS.

BRIGHTON AND ASHTEAD SURPRISE.

All Plain, Treble Bob and Surprise Major methods have two variations. In one second's place is made at the lead end; in the other eighth's place. The actual rows in the plain course are the same in both variations, the only difference being that the leads come in a different order. In practice this difference is sufficient to make the variations distinct methods and as a rule they are given distinct names.

Not all these variations are of any value. In some the bells run round at the first lead end; in others bells lie still for more than two consecutive blows; and in yet others the amount of continuous dodging is excessive. Usually one of the two variations is better than the other, but it sometimes happens that there is little to choose between them.

In some methods each of the two variations has itself two variations. In one, first's place is made at the half lead end; in the other, seventh's. These variations are subject to the same limitations as the others.

To the ordinary ringer there is not much difference between a second's place method and an eighth's place, except in the bob making, the Bob Major bob being the type of the first and the Double Norwich bob being the type of the second; but to the conductor there is a very considerable amount of difference, and many of them (probably most of them) prefer a second's place method to an eighth's place method. This preference was expressed in our columns lately by Mr. Alan R. Pink, who, since he has called the first peal in about a dozen Surprise Major methods, is entitled to an opinion on the matter.

It may be, as Mr. Pink suggests, that this preference is largely prejudice, and that a second's place method does not really enjoy any advantages over an eighth's place method, but it is a fact that almost exactly three times as many second's place methods have been rung to peals as eighth's place methods.

Every method should be judged as a whole and not on any isolated feature, for we must never forget that almost every desirable feature has to be paid for.

For instance, in a Surprise method, if second's place is made at the lead end, then we can have a single dodge behind when the treble is in 1-2, or we can have a 5-pull dodge; but we cannot have a double dodge, a 3-pull dodge, or a 4-pull dodge. With an eighth's place method we can have two 3-pull dodges, with the treble in 1-2 and 3-4. Double dodging is possible with an eighth's place method, but not with a second's place method except when the treble is in 3-4 and 5-6. This refers to methods with all backstroke work; it is somewhat modified if handstroke work is introduced.

The best way to compare the effects of the second's place and eighth's place is to take the two variations of the same method, and a very good example is given by the method mentioned by Mr. Pink.

Brighton Surprise is a double method with eighth's place at the lead end and first's at the half lead end. With second's at the lead end it becomes Boveney. With second's at the lead end and seventh's at the half lead end it becomes Ashtead. With eighth's at the lead end and seventh's at the half lead end it becomes Ewell.

All four are excellent methods, and the first three have been rung to peals. Which is the best is, of course,

largely a matter of taste, but on the whole we think Brighton should have the preference, though Ashtead has actually proved the more popular.

Brighton S.	Ashtead S.
12345678	12345678
21436587	21436587
12346857	12346857
21438675	21438675
24183657	24183657
42816375	42816375
24186357	24186357
42813675	42813675
24831657	24831657
42386175	42386175
24381657	24381657
42836175	42836175
24863715	24863715
42687351	42687351
46283715	46283715
64827351	64827351
68472531	46283751
86745213	64827315
87642531	68523751
78465213	86247315
87456123	68274135
78541632	86721453
87546123	68724135
78451632	86271453
87415623	68217435
78146532	86124753
87416523	68214735
78145632	86127453
71854623	81672435
17586432	18764253
71856342	81674523
17583624	18765432
15738264	18674523

When Brighton was first rung, the bob was made in fourth's place; when many years later it was again rung (under the impression that it was a new method) a sixth's place bob was used.

When the skeleton course of Brighton is compared with that of Ashtead it will be seen that the movement is freer. All four variations have a clear proof scale and so sixty full natural courses available for composition. Our impression of the music of Brighton, derived from memories of the first peal, is that it is excellent, though we are not quite sure whether a 4-pull dodge is not too long.

At any rate, both Brighton and Ashtead, though not quite in the same class as Cornwall, are worthy to rank as standard methods.

MR. DRAKE AND BACKWARD HUNTING.

To the Editor.

Dear Sir.—The Times' leading article to-day has the following sentence: 'We are actuated by a single-minded desire to help the man on his way and be quit of him; and yet we cannot make him understand.' It rather reminded me of Mr. Drake.

J. A. TROLLOPE.

SILENT APPARATUS.

THE SWING OF THE CLAPPER.

To the Editor.

Dear Sir,—Mr. T. R. Bbys' letter is a very interesting contribution to this important subject, but as he asks if anyone can find any snags in it, may I point out that he seems to have overlooked some important factors.

First the swing of the clapper is not controlled by the force of gravity, though that does enter in a very complicated manner. The force which swings the clapper is imparted by the bell, the arc in which the bell swings is not the same as that in which the clapper swings and the clapper does not swing on a fixed axis as the bell does. The relationship between the swing of the bell and the wheel and the swing of the clapper gives a definite and fairly constant result, but in itself is very complicated and difficult to calculate. It would take a very large amount of calculation and much experiment to design a glass tube fixed to the wheel with a moving metal ball which would reproduce even approximately the motion of the clapper.

There is also the very great practical difficulty of making a satisfactory electric contact between the moving wheel and the handbells below. A flexible cord, of course, will be suggested. Easy in theory, but would it work?

MAURICE CLARK.

THEORY AND PRACTICE.

Dear Sir,—May I be allowed a few lines in your columns with regard to the theory advanced by Mr. T. R. Boys in your issue of April 25th? I would first address a word of warning to those who might be tempted to try out the device outlined. Theories do not by any means 'work out' in practice just according to paper plans, and this applies particularly to bells and clappers, as may be found by actual experiment.

The snag in this theory lies in the assumption that the ball of the clapper is a weight falling freely by gravitational pull. A moment's reflection should correct this idea. The clapper is actually a pendulum whose point of suspension (i.e., the crown staple) is continually changing position. Take the case of a bell hung normally, that is with the crown staple *outside* the gudgeon line. When the 'set' bell moves from 'hand' to 'back' the crown staple describes a circle, which in effect advances the point of suspension during the whole revolution, and simple gravitational law does not fit the case. It will be found by experiment that any device in the nature of a freely moving weight would fall much quicker than the clapper, even though describing a similar arc. In fact, it would probably fall its full extent while the bell itself was still on the downward half circle.

Assuming that the bell could be raised with the device 'right' (as compared with correct clapping), an appliance of this kind (mercury tube) would probably make contact before the bell moved a half revolution. Also the contact would not be 'momentary' but continuous while the mercury connected the wires, and consequently wasteful of current. But could it be raised 'right'? The mercury 'blob' in the tube when the bell is down would be at the lowest point, the centre of the tube which would be at the lower part of the wheel. Upon raising the bell the 'blob' would fall alternately to the *wrong* side (as compared with correct clapping), and when up it would be 'wrong,' and no turning over would be possible. Even supposing the tubes solved the question of contacts the remainder of the electrical equipment would be difficult to acquire at this time. The use of metal gongs of tubular pattern would certainly save space, and also allow of deeper 'pitch,' but they have little resonance and the sound dies quickly, giving small satisfaction to the listener. Handbells of large size if obtainable are preferable even if occasional adjustment is necessary.

To conclude may I offer to our Editor best wishes for a speedy recovery.

E. MURRELL.

17, Tokenhouse Yard, E.C.2.

PRACTICE AT CAMBRIDGE.

'Dear Sir,—It may interest many of your readers to know that practices are held on Monday evenings at Great St. Mary's, Cambridge, at 7.30 p.m., on Seage's apparatus. A new set of handbells has been bought. Everybody will be welcomed.

J. QUINNEY.

Cherry Hinton, Cambridge.

A NEW APPARATUS.

Dear Sir,—I have lately tried a new version of a silent practice apparatus and found it very successful. The apparatus is designed for use with electrically struck indicators, but can easily be used on a mechanical system.

The principle is roughly this, a wooden base board with a wooden upright about 6in. x 8in. x 1½in. is fastened just above the bearings. A wooden rod, about 30in. x 1in. x ½in. is pivoted about 1½in. from its lower end (which is bevelled to an edge) by a long screw or bolt fastened into the upright. This rod is pushed over by studs on the wheel, and as it moves the bevelled end curves down and presses together the two parts of an electric contact. It will be seen that this has one or two similarities to the Seage apparatus, but has the following advantages:—

(1) By varying the position of the studs the apparatus can be made to operate at any desired point (within about 45 degrees of the balance).

(2) The cost is low, and owing to the use of wood no metalwork tools are needed; a saw and screwdriver are quite sufficient.

(3) The moving part is light and almost frictionless, so removing the check given to the bell by the stiff arms of the Seage apparatus. This is only a rough idea of the apparatus. I will be very pleased to send full details and drawings to anyone who will write to me, giving, if possible, the following details:—

(1) Nature of frame (iron, wood or steel).

(2) Number of bells to be fitted.

(3) Whether a mechanical or electrical design is desired.

19, Grantchester Street, Cambridge.

R. LEIGH.

DEATH OF TWO BEENHAM RINGERS.

The Berkshire village of Beenham last week lost two of its ringers. One was the Rev. R. Howes, who had been Vicar of the parish for nearly six years. Previously he was Vicar of Cold Higham in Northamptonshire, and was the author of an elementary book on change ringing entitled 'Village Bells.' The other was Mr. Frederick Wigmore, aged 77, who had been a ringer for about fifty years, and rang the treble in a peal of Minor when 73 years old. Both died on Tuesday, April 22nd, and were buried on Saturday, April 26th.

DEATH OF MR. RICHARD CLARK.

BRISTOL RINGER KILLED IN AIR RAID.

In a recent air raid on Bristol, Mr. Richard Clark, his wife and sister-in-law were killed when his house was hit by a high explosive bomb.

Mr. Clark had rung about 350 peals, which included the first of Clifton Surprise Royal and other first peals in methods in the city. The funeral was at Greenbank Cemetery on April 19th.

RECORDS REPLACE CHURCH BELLS.

To the Editor.

Dear Sir,—On going through the 'Wireless and Electrical Trader' journal this week, the following article published on March 1st, 1941, came to my notice:—

'An idea which has successfully been put into practice by the Rev. W. E. W. Denham, Vicar of Chorley Wood, Herts, may well interest dealers who have at some time in the past installed sound equipment in church towers to replace the original bells by records.

'For two years the Rev. Denham has had a public address system in use. The loudspeakers are in the church tower, and originally broadcast the service to overflow crowds outside. When bellringing was banned the Vicar thought parishioners might welcome music from the tower.

'Many records of hymns are therefore played, and "they have just as good an effect as the bells in calling people to church." "My people like the music," he says, "and I believe the walkers on the common do also."

It would be a pity if this enforced ban on church bells is to be an excuse for 'synthetic' means of calling people to church after the war.

L. WALTER PROSSER.

119, Caerphilly Road, Birchgrove, Cardiff.

HYMN TUNES AT WEYMOUTH.

Synthetic music was broadcast from the tower of St. John's Church, Weymouth, on Easter Sunday.

The church authorities had secured permission to have 'canned' music in the form of hymns for a quarter of an hour before the service.

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OR REPAINTING OF DIALS.

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.

All communications should be sent to THE EDITORIAL OFFICE OF 'THE RINGING WORLD,' LOWER PYRFORD ROAD, WOKING, SURREY.

NOTICES must be received NOT LATER THAN MONDAY.

ST. MARTIN'S GUILD, BIRMINGHAM.—Handbell practices will be resumed at the Tamworth Arms, Moor Street, City, at 7.30 p.m., commencing Thursday, May 8th.

ANCIENT SOCIETY OF COLLEGE YOUTHS. — The next meeting will be held on Saturday, May 10th. 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.

MIDDLESEX COUNTY ASSOCIATION AND LONDON DIOCESAN GUILD.—The annual general meeting will be held at St. Andrew's Church, Kingsbury, on Saturday, May 10th. Handbell ringing from 3 p.m. Service 4.30 p.m. Tea 5.15 p.m., at a cost of about 1s. (please bring your own sugar). Annual business meeting to follow. Nearest station to Kingsbury is Wembley Park (Met.), from whence No. 83 buses pass the church.—C. T. Coles, Hon. Gen. Sec., 21, Vincent Road, E.4.

WORCESTERSHIRE AND DISTRICTS ASSOCIATION (Northern and Western Branches).—A joint meeting will be held at Wychbold, near Droitwich (D.V.), on Saturday, May 10th, at 3 p.m. Six tower bells probably available for 'silent' practice. Tea 5.30 p.m., followed by handbells and social evening.—B. C. Ashford, Northern Branch Sec., 9, Bowling Green Road, Stourbridge.

OXFORD DIOCESAN GUILD.—Witney and Woodstock Branch.—The annual meeting will be held at Cassington on Saturday, May 10th. Service 3.30 p.m. Handbells available. A good attendance is necessary.—W. Evetts, Hampton, Tackley, Oxford.

HERTFORD COUNTY ASSOCIATION.—St. Albans District.—A meeting will be held at St. Peter's, St. Albans, on Saturday, May 10th, at 3 p.m. Business meeting at 6.15 in the tower.—Harold J. Hazell, Dis. Sec., 15, King's Hill Avenue, St. Albans.

SALISBURY DIOCESAN GUILD.—The annual meeting will be held at Salisbury in the Church House on Saturday, May 10th, at 3 p.m. Handbells available at 2.30. Service in St. Thomas' Church at 4.30.—F. Ll. Edwards, Hon. Sec., Kington Magna Rectory, Gillingham, Dorset.

OXFORD DIOCESAN GUILD.—Reading Branch.—The annual meeting will be held at the Girls' Club Rooms, Chain Street, Reading, on Saturday, May 10th, at 4 p.m., followed by tea at 5 p.m., 9d. per head. Handbells available.—E. G. Foster, Hon. Sec., 401, London Road, Reading.

GUILDFORD DIOCESAN GUILD.—The annual general meeting will be held at Guildford on Saturday, May 17th. Service at S. Nicolas' Church at 4.30 p.m. Tea and business meeting at Ayers' Hall (next to the church) at 5 p.m. Please send numbers for tea to me by May 11th.—G. L. Grover, Hon. Sec., East Clandon, near Guildford.

WORCESTERSHIRE AND DISTRICTS ASSOCIATION.—The annual meeting will be held at Worcester on Saturday, May 17th. Business meeting in the Cathedral Chapter House at 3 p.m. prompt. Service in the Cathedral at 4.15 p.m. St. Alban's Room, Fish Street, will probably be available from 2.15 p.m. and again in the evening for payment of subscriptions, distribution of reports and handbell ringing. Owing to catering difficulties, it has not been found possible—up to the moment—to arrange for tea. Will members please provide for themselves? — J. D. Johnson, Gen. Sec., Cheltenham Road, Sedgeberrow, Evesham.

ESSEX ASSOCIATION.—A district meeting will be held at Brentwood on Saturday, May 24th. Service at 4.30 p.m. Tea arranged, but only for those whose names are received not later than May 17th. Tower bells (silent) and handbells available.—J. H. Crampion, Hon. Sec., 14, Wellesley Road, Wanstead, E.11.

HERTS ASSOCIATION.—Bushey.—Meeting, Saturday, May 31st, at the Studios, Falconer Road. Comfortable, pleasant room. Tea can be arranged. Handbell practice and social chinwag. All interested in ringing are welcome.—C. H. Horton, 53, Aldenham Road, Bushey.

ESSEX ASSOCIATION.—The annual meeting will be held at Chelmsford on Saturday, May 31st. Details next week.—L. J. Clark, Gen. Sec., 36, Lynmouth Avenue, Chelmsford.

PETERBOROUGH DIOCESAN GUILD.—The annual meeting will be held (D.V.) on Whit Monday, June 2nd, at Kingsthorpe, when the Vicarage grounds will be open. Central Committee meet at the Vicarage 2.45. Service 3.30, with address by the Vicar. Tea 4.30, followed by meeting and election of officers. Tea, free to all resident members who are clear on the books and who apply to the general secretary for tickets on or before May 24th. Non-resident members and non-members 1s. 6d. each, to be sent with application for tickets. No application for tickets will be entertained after May 24th. This will be strictly adhered to. Bring sugar if required. Bells (6) (silenced) and handbells before and after the meeting.—Robt. G. Black, Gen. Sec., Stamford Road, Geddington, Kettering.

'THE CHURCH BELLS OF BERKSHIRE.' Part III.—Reprinted from the 'Journal of the Berkshire Archaeological Society,' by permission of the society. To be obtained from the author, Mr. Frederick Sharpe, Derwen, Launton, Bicester, Oxon, price 1s. post free.

SOCIETY FOR THE ARCHDEACONRY OF STAFFORD.

A meeting of the Stafford Archdeaconry Society, held at Wolverhampton on Saturday, April 26th, was attended by upwards of 40 members and friends. During the afternoon St. Peter's belfry was open for handbell ringing, and at the committee meeting it was decided to hold the annual meeting at Wolverhampton on Saturday, June 21st. In the church a short service was conducted by the Rev. C. H. Barker, who gave a nice address. Mr. Seymour, of St. George's, kindly officiated at the organ.

At the social in the evening in the George Hotel various methods were rung on handbells and a few selections were rendered by the St. Peter's Handbell Quartette.

PRESTWICH, MANCHESTER.—At Rectory Lane, on Monday, April 21st, 720 Bob Minor: W. Sidwell (first 720) 1-2, Rev. R. D. St. J. Smith (conductor) 3-4, F. Reynolds (first 720 'in hand') 5-6.

BEACONSFIELD.—On April 23rd, at St. Mary and All Saints' Church, a quarter-peal of Plain Bob Major in 42 minutes: H. Wingrove (conductor) 1-2, W. Lee 3-4, D. R. Fletcher 5-6, K. E. Fletcher 7-8. Rung in honour of St. George's Day.

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