THE RINGING WORLD

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A PROBLEM IN COMPOSITION.

The two peals of Spliced Surprise Major by Mr. Joseph W. Parker which we lately published are not only a very welcome reminder that his hand has not lost its cunning, but are proof that the problems of theoretic ringing are almost inexhaustible. Half a century ago it was commonly said that the composition of peals was worked out; so many men had been at the job that there was nothing left for anyone to do. Even so clever a man as Sir Arthur Heywood stated publicly that only one problem in the science of ringing (a seven-part peal of Stedman Triples) remained to be solved.

Had it been so, we should have been in a sorry case, for the intellectual efforts of our leading composers are among the most potent of the forces which keep the art alive.

The value of what they do is not to be measured by the use to which their work can be put. Whether Mr. Parker's peals are rung or not does not greatly matter; what does matter is the evidence they afford of the scope the science of ringing gives for the highest intellectual gifts, and that the Exercise contains the men who have them.

Mr. Parker, by reason of his age and attainments, shares with Mr. Gabriel Lindoff the foremost place among living composers, but fortunately they do not stand alone. Mr. Pitman was the first to develop the idea of splicing Surprise Major methods on the plan introduced by Henry Law James, and hard on his heels have come younger men, Ernest Turner and Harold Cashmore.

It does not seem so very long ago when, at the Central Council's meeting in the Chapter House, at Salisbury, the question of ringing more than one Surprise Major method in a peal was first debated. A proposal had been made to attempt to ring four separate quarter peals of the four standard methods. Would the Council sanction such a thing? The idea rather shocked some of the older members. 'You are proposing to violate the fundamental principle on which all ringing is based, that of truth.' So said C. D. P. Davies, and not a few agreed with him. Others said, 'Ring the four methods if you like, but ring them as a true peal,' but that was just what everyone thought could never be done. Then Law James had his brilliant inspiration and produced his peal in three-lead courses. It is justly entitled to be called an epoch-making composition, for it laid open a vast field for development in actual ringing, and though it is itself likely to be superseded, its effect will be lasting.

(Continued on page 266.)

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Spliced ringing has come to stay, but old prejudices die hard, and there are still people who object to it on the grounds that some bells (usually the tenors) do not ring the full courses. Already that objection has been partially answered. Peals have been rung which have included full courses of some of the methods, and Mr. Parker has succeeded in introducing full courses of as many as five. So far no peal has been composed in the four standard methods which contains a full course of each of them. Though it may seem strange to the uninitiated, it is a harder job with these four alone than when Rutland is added to them to make a fifth. Perhaps the problem will remain insoluble, but it will not be for want of trying.

HANDBELL PEALS.

HEVINGHAM, NORFOLK.
THE NORWICH DIOCESAN ASSOCIATION.
On Friday, May 23, 1941, in Two Hours and Thirty-Eight Minutes,
AT MR. WALTER C. MEDLER'S HOUSE,
A PEAL OF BOB MAJOR, 5056 CHANGES;
Tenor size 15 in B.

ALBERT ROUGHT	1-2	F. NOLAN GOLDEN	5-6
JACK N. A. PUMPHREY... ...	3-4	WALTER C. MEDLER	7-8

Composed and Conducted by F. NOLAN GOLDEN.

BUSHEY, HERTFORDSHIRE.
THE HERTFORD COUNTY ASSOCIATION.
On Monday, May 26, 1941, in Two Hours and Twelve Minutes,
AT THE ROYAL MASONIC JUNIOR SCHOOL,
A PEAL OF DOUBLE NORWICH COURT BOB MAJOR, 5056 CHANGES;
Tenor size 14 in D.

CHRISTOPHER W. WOOLLEY	1-2	ERNEST C. S. TURNER... ...	5-6
EDWIN A. BARNETT	3-4	EDWIN JENNINGS	7-8

Composed by EDGAR WIGHTMAN (C.C. Collection No. 139).
Conducted by ERNEST C. S. TURNER.

SWINDON, WILTS.
THE GLOUCESTER AND BRISTOL DIOCESAN ASSOCIATION.
On Friday, May 30, 1941, in Two Hours and Forty-Eight Minutes;
AT 81, COUNTY ROAD,
A PEAL OF BOB MAJOR, 5008 CHANGES;
Tenor size 15 in C.

*IVOR C. N. BELL	1-2	‡W. BERTRAM KYNASTON ...	5-6
†JACK S. ROBERTS	3-4	‡REV. M. C. C. MELVILLE	7-8

Composed by W. HARRISON. Conducted by REV. M. C. C. MELVILLE

* First peal of Major. † First peal 'in hand.' ‡ First peal 'in hand' on eight bells. First peal of Major as conductor.

LINCOLN DIOCESAN GUILD

EFFORT TO KEEP UP MEMBERSHIP.

The annual meeting of the Northern Branch of the Lincoln Diocesan Guild was held at Gainsborough on Saturday, May 24th. Twenty-one members attended, which, under present conditions, was considered very good. Six 'silent' bells were 'rung' during the afternoon and evening, those taking part very much enjoying the feel of the ropes again.

A short service was conducted by the Vicar (Canon Whitworth), who, in his address, congratulated the members on their efforts to carry on now that no ringing can be done.

The business meeting was presided over by the Guild Ringing Master, Mr. Rupert Richardson.

The members stood a moment in silence when Mr. F. S. W. Butler touchingly referred to the death of the president, the Ven. Archdeacon Parry.

The hon. secretary gave a brief account of what had been done during 1940, together with the approximate financial position.

Canon Marsden, Vicar of Grimsby, was unanimously elected president, the remaining officers being re-elected.

It was decided to hold a half-yearly meeting at Willingham-by-Stow on August 9th.

Several suggestions were put forward as to how best to keep the members together in these difficult times, and it was agreed that a big effort should be made to keep up the membership total.

The meeting concluded with votes of thanks to all who had helped with the arrangements and to Mr. Richardson for presiding.

THE CENTRAL COUNCIL.

THE PEAL COLLECTIONS.

(Continued from page 256.)

The peals of Grandsire Caters and Cinques had been collected by Arthur Knights, and evidently were printed just as he sent them in. Davies and Carpenter had carefully corrected the proofs of their own figures, but apparently they never troubled whether Knights' were corrected or not, or (as is most likely), they left the job to Dains. The result was 39 bad mistakes in the figures of 114 peals. That rendered the whole thing valueless, for, of course, unless a conductor can have absolute confidence that the figures are accurate and true, no collection is of any use to him.

The figures were given without any particular arrangement, and in any case there is a sameness about peals of Grandsire Caters which makes a collection of them very uninteresting to the average ringer.

The second collection appeared in 1904, and dealt with Plain Bob and Double Oxford Bob. I was the collector for the former, and J. Holme Pilkington for the latter.

Holme Pilkington was the Rector of Framlingham in Suffolk. He learnt to ring rather late in life, and rang no more than a few peals in the simpler methods, but he had some distinction as a composer of Bob Major. For three years he represented the Norwich Diocesan Association on the Central Council. His collection of peals of Double Oxford was a small one, numbering no more than twenty-eight, but it was an excellent one and quite sufficient. Almost every peal is one which a conductor might now choose to call, and that is a good test of the value of a collection. Thirteen bear Heywood's name, for his band at Duffield had extensively practised the method. Some can hardly stand any test of originality, for they were merely adaptations of peals in other methods, and a good example is one which bears my name and is only the old twenty-seven courses adapted to short courses. It has appeared over many names in many methods from the time of John Reeves. Pilkington pointed out that some of the peals may have been adaptations, but he did not attempt to decide the question. One of Heywood's peals was a 7,008, which he had rung as the longest in the method. It is false. Dains added a peal of his own, also false, and so are one or two that he added to the Plain Bob.

The proof reading of the book again was bad, and there are many mistakes for which the committee were responsible.

Looking back after forty years I may perhaps be allowed to use my work as the collector of the Bob Major peals for an illustration of the difficulties of making a good collection and as a warning for the future.

I had studied the composition of Bob Major fairly deeply, and knew pretty well what the method was capable of. The majority of the best composers rather despised it as being too simple for their serious notice. As I have already mentioned, I had made a very fair collection of peals and a large number of others were sent me by various people. When the book was due for printing Davies asked me to make a selection, which most people then thought, and many probably would still think, was quite an easy thing to do. If the collection was to number a couple of hundred peals, all that was necessary (so it would seem) was to pick out the best couple of hundred and send them in.

But it was not nearly so simple as that. There were several ways of choosing the peals. Those selected might be the ones most suitable for the conductor's use, or they might be the cleverest from the composer's point of view, or they might be those which best represented what the method is capable of—simple and complex—or I could have allotted the available space among the men who had sent in figures, and given their peals roughly in proportion to the number they had provided. Whichever way it was done, it was sure, in the particular circumstances, to cause some dissatisfaction.

Throughout the history of the Exercise we find examples of the men who have written text books being faced consciously or unconsciously with similar difficulties. On the one hand they wished to give the best in their books, on the other they wished to figure as clever composers and the two interests clash. The Clavis avoided the difficulty best of all. Almost all the compositions in it are by John Reeves, one of three authors, but his claim to them is generally asserted in the preface and no name is given below the actual figures. Shipway put names to all the peals, his own included, and so created the impression that he was trying to advertise his skill. Sottanstall and others carried it much further, and actually did harm to their reputations. Both Shipway and Sottanstall did compose really fine peals, but readers are more apt to remember that they passed off variations of older peals as their own than to give them the credit they fairly earned by their genuine work. Jasper Snowdon did not attempt to be a composer, and for that reason was the better author.

The selection I made was intended to represent the best the method could produce and to illustrate its history. Looking back now with complete detachment, I think it was quite a good selection.

It appeared in the book not quite as I sent it in, for Davies altered the arrangement, and Dains added one or two peals. When I saw it in print I was disappointed. I did not like the arrangement, there were too many mistakes in proof reading, and my name appeared at the foot of too many peals. Out of 191 compositions, 35 were my own production, and naturally there were people who said that I had exploited the Council's publication for my own benefit. It was not really true, for when I made the selection I was more concerned to include the peals I thought necessary than to bother about who had composed them, nor was the proportion of my peals greater than that of the collector in the other methods.

I made up my mind then that never again would I be responsible for any selection of peals if names of composers were added, for the rivalries between them were so keen and the disputes as to ownership so many that it was almost impossible to judge a composition objectively. It so happened, however, that I could not keep to my resolution. When I prepared the Collection of Plain Major Methods I worked out a number of suitable peals for those methods for which none then existed, and I wished to have them printed without any composer's name; but Law James strongly objected and insisted on initials being added—on the whole, I think, a worse plan than giving full names.

My selection of peals of Bob Major was quite a good one, but it was very little use as it was printed. After

(Continued on next page.)

THE CENTRAL COUNCIL.

(Continued from previous page.)

I sent it in I had no more to do with it. The committee ought to have seen that it was printed without mistakes; and if they had been up to their job they ought to have added explanatory letterpress, or got somebody to do it for them. And they ought to have made sure that no false peal was included in any publication for which they were responsible. It is easy to be wise now after the event, and the chief good these early collections of peals did was to show us what mistakes we must avoid in any future publications.

Just as the book was going to press Davies asked me for some peals of Royal and Maximus. I had made no collection of them and I had to supply some offhand. For that part of the book there is little good to be said.

The third collection dealt with Double Norwich and was a complete failure. The peals were badly collected, badly selected, badly proved, badly arranged and badly printed. Davies knew nothing about Major composition, and exercised no supervision; Dr. Carpenter was hardly more interested; and Dains, on whom, as both the collector for the method and a member of the committee, the work devolved, was the last man who should have undertaken to prepare a book in all its stages.

After this failure Davies asked me to join the committee and prepare the Treble Bob peals for the press. I did so, and I had a long but fairly straightforward task. Something had been learnt from past mistakes, and there was Jasper Snowdon's book on Treble Bob to serve as a model. I spent many hours bringing that collection up to date. The number of peals that came into my hands was enormous. I searched every available source, whether in print or in manuscript, and I carefully edited and arranged the figures. The number of the sections and sub-sections into which the peals were grouped ran to many hundreds, and I wrote a long descriptive introduction.

The intention had been to print another book, but it began to be clear to everybody that there was no great demand nor need for these collections of peals, and my work never got into type. It was, however, not altogether wasted. H. T. S. Richardson proved all the peals (a very big job), Mrs. Fletcher typed them, and the Council's library now contains what is probably the biggest and most complete collection of peals which will ever be made for any one method. It is available for the use of anyone who really needs such a collection.

Collectors had been appointed for all methods and a great mass of peals of Stedman Triples and Caters, Surprise Major, Duffield and others were sent to the committee. I came across the papers not long ago and, after binding them roughly, handed them to the Council's librarian. The manuscripts have historical interest, some being autographed copies of compositions by leading composers like Heywood, Bulwer, Arthur Knights and others, but the peals, if published, would not have been of much use to-day. Almost all the Stedman Caters, for instance, are old-fashioned all-tittum peals.

The attempt to make and publish complete collections of peals was an important part of the Council's early activities and that must be my excuse for dealing so fully with the matter.

WORCESTERSHIRE ASSOCIATION.

SATISFACTORY ANNUAL MEETING.

Office of Clerical Secretary Left Vacant.

The facts that Worcester is so fully 'occupied' that a room could hardly be found available for handbell ringing, and that no catering establishment could undertake any arrangement for tea, did not detract from quite a good attendance at the annual meeting of the Worcestershire and Districts Association on Saturday, May 17th. A total of 43 members was present at the business meeting, including visitors from Cheltenham, Bristol and one in khaki from Chichester, while others 'looked in' during the course of the evening.

In the absence of the president (the Dean of Worcester), who had a prior engagement, the Master, Mr. S. T. Holt, presided over the meeting, held in the Chapter House.

The report and balance sheet were adopted, Mr. E. E. Barber, auditor, referring to the satisfactory total of the association's funds.

The librarian (Mr. C. W. Cooper) again reported a very quiet year. Only three applications for six books were made, and members were again reminded of the facilities provided for books on loan and were urged to put the library to better use.

The librarian said he had received from the relatives of the late Mr. Harry Mason, of Hagley, a complete set of the association reports from its foundation, and these, beautifully bound, were on view. Enquiries revealing he had had these bound at his own expense, a very hearty vote of thanks was given to Mr. Cooper for his generosity, while the secretary was instructed to write a letter of thanks to Mr. Mason's relatives.

In passing, it may be remarked that this is at present the only complete set of reports of the Worcestershire Association known to be in existence, a second set already in the library being short of the years 1911-12. These should be easily obtainable, but of the series in the general secretary's possession, and despite efforts to obtain it, the report for 1886 is missing. It will be appreciated if any member knowing of the existence of a copy will communicate with the secretary.

The Dean of Worcester was re-elected president, and a discussion arose on the election of a clerical secretary, the office being vacant through the death of the Rev. G. W. Webb. No name was forthcoming, and it was eventually decided to leave this office vacant for the moment.

All the remaining officers were re-elected en bloc, and a vote of thanks to them for their services was supported by several speakers.

It was decided that the Master should arrange for the annual peal to be rung on handbells, and Worcester was again chosen (D.V.) for the next annual meeting.

Two new performing members were unanimously elected—Miss Janet Peat and Miss Christine Richardson, aged 11 years (daughter of the late Rev. H. S. T. Richardson), both of the Malvern Abbey School Guild. In presenting these names for election, the secretary read a letter from Miss Monica Richardson, the moving spirit of the Guild, stating these young ringers had both rung several 720's of Minor, and touches of Grandsire and Bob Major on handbells, and that the Guild were now practising Oxford Bob and Kent Treble Bob.

On the proposition of Mr. W. C. Dowding, it was decided that the secretary should write to Mr. J. S. Goldsmith, expressing the association's sympathy with him in his illness and expressing the sincere hope for a speedy return to his normal health and activities. Mr. Goldsmith's work for the Exercise could not be measured, and the speaker appealed for a wider and more individual support for 'The Ringing World,' and so relieve the Editor of some of his difficulties.

The meeting decided that the cost of tea at the annual meetings for the duration of war be borne by the members themselves.

A vote of thanks to the Dean and Chapter for the use of the Chapter House concluded the business.

The members later attended choral evensong in the Cathedral, following which the disappearance of the Master led to the supposition that he was exerting pressure and undue influence to obtain a room for handbells. In this he was eventually successful, and the ringing ranged from tunes and Grandsire Doubles, à la 'Skinny Lizzie,' to Treble Bob Major and Stedman Caters.

MIDLAND CHURCHES DAMAGED.

RINGERS LOSE THEIR HOMES.

In a recent blitz on a Midland town another well-known church was destroyed by incendiaries, while a high explosive bomb of heavy calibre fell in the churchyard outside the south wall, making a huge crater and demolished everything except the tower, which, however, is cracked from top to bottom.

The Vicarage and Parish Hall were also badly damaged by blast, as also was the home of Mr. J. E. Moreton, captain of the tower for many years.

This is the 'home' tower of Mr. and Mrs. A. H. Beamish. Their residence escaped damage except for one broken window.

The Parish Church of the same town was also badly damaged by blast, but the extent of the injuries to this tower is not yet known.

The homes of two well-known ringers connected with this tower, Messrs. T. W. Chapman and D. H. Argyle, were, we are sorry to report, completely demolished, but both they and their families are, happily, safe.

LANCASHIRE ASSOCIATION.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH MEETING.

St. Nicholas', the old Parish Church of Liverpool, has been burnt out and destroyed by enemy action, but, happily, the tower still stands, and there on Saturday, May 24th, a meeting of the Liverpool Branch of the Lancashire Association was held.

A good number of members attended, the front eight bells were used with tied clappers and several touches were rung on the handbells. The president (the Rev. Arthur Scott) was a welcome visitor and he took the chair at the meeting. In his address he expressed his pleasure at being present and congratulated the branch on holding the meetings and on their efforts to keep the association's flag flying.

The secretary said he had received a letter from the Rector of Liverpool (the Rev. D. Railton) saying that he was going away for a time. He is suffering from a severe internal injury and it is hoped that a few weeks' rest will bring him freedom from pain. The meeting extended to him their sympathy in his illness.

It was reported that Mr. E. Gibbins had recently celebrated his golden wedding jubilee. He had written a letter thanking the members of the branch for their congratulations on the occasion.

It gave the meeting much pleasure to hear that Mr. J. S. Goldsmith had left hospital for home, and hopes were expressed that he was completely restored to health. It was moved and seconded that letters of sympathy should be sent to the Rector of St. Mary-on-the-Hill, Walton, and to the Vicar of St. Luke's, Liverpool. Both these churches with their bells have been destroyed in recent air raids.

After some discussion it was decided to hold the next meeting at St. Nicholas'. It will be the third meeting there this year. The advantages of a central meeting place were pointed out while travelling is so difficult.

Supporting the president were the Rev. D. P. Roberts and the hon. treasurer, Mr. C. I. Davies. The towers represented were Bebington, Bootle, Huyton, Oxton, Rock Ferry, Southport, Woolton, Ormskirk, Prescot and Liverpool (St. Nicholas'). Altogether it was a very representative meeting.

HANDBELLS IN A MOTOR-CAR.

Handbells have been rung in many queer places, and peals and quarter-peals have been brought round in trains, charabancs, on ocean liners and even in bed. Not many quarter-peals, however, can have been rung in the confined space of a private motor-car, but on Saturday week, while travelling between Swindon, Wilts, and Cirencester, Glos, a distance of 16 miles, a quarter-peal of Grandsire Doubles was rung by the following: Ivor Bell 1-2 and Jack Roberts 3-4, in the back seat; Dennis Smout 5-6, in the front seat. The Rev. Malcolm Melville was both driver and conductor.

MR. DRAKE AND BACKWARD HUNTING.

To the Editor.

Dear Sir,—I rather wonder whether Mr. Drake knows what people are referring to when they speak of backward hunting. It is pretty evident he does not, and, therefore, it seems futile for him to argue whether it is properly named or not. However, here is a test. Will he answer this question? The work of the second in a plain course of London Surprise: which part of it is what we call forward hunting, and which part is what we call backward hunting?

He says I made no attempt to answer parts of his letter. That is true, but the reason was not because they were incontrovertible, but because they were beside the point. Actually his letter is full of errors, and two of them show how little he really has understood the subject. He says that what he calls contrary motion goes on until there is a snapping blow, or some odd number of places are made, when ordinary motion will supervene and the rows be inverted. Actually on any even number of bells there must be an even number of places at every change, and there can never be an odd number (nought counts as an even number). And on any odd number of bells there must be an odd number of places in every change, and there can never be an even number.

Also instead of it being impossible for one bell to be hunting forward at the same time others are hunting backward (as he asserts), that is the only way changes are produced or can be produced.

J. A. TROLLOPE.

SPLICED SURPRISE MAJOR.

To the Editor.

Dear Sir,—Please allow me to congratulate Mr. J. W. Parker on obtaining his composition of Spliced Surprise Major in five methods containing a full course of each method.

As kindly pointed out by Mr. E. C. S. Turner, I did some work in this direction a few years ago and produced a composition on a similar plan in the four methods, London, Rutland, Cambridge and Superlative As regards London, Bristol, Cambridge and Superlative, I had not completed my investigations when other matters claimed my attention, and through lack of time chiefly I have not since taken the matter up.

Seeing that others are interested in the matter, there is no doubt one will be obtained in the latter in four methods also.

A. J. PITMAN.

40, Pentyla, Aberavon, Port Talbot.

HUGHENDEN, BUCKS.—On Saturday, May 10th, in Hughenden belfry, a quarter-peal of Bob Major (1,280 changes) in 37 minutes: H. Wingrove (conductor) 1-2, Miss D. R. Fletcher 3-4, R. Lee 5-6, Miss V. Look (first quarter-peal 'in hand') 7-8.

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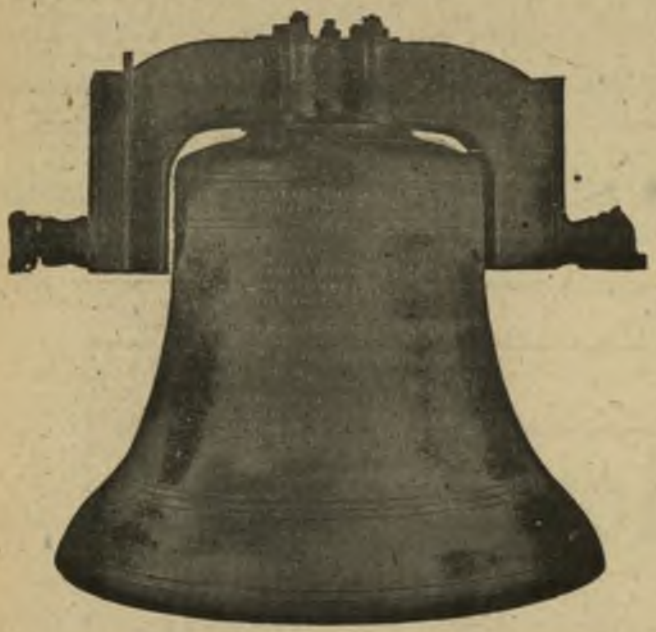
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THE EDITOR'S MESSAGE.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF WIDESPREAD SYMPATHY.

The first words I write for 'The Ringing World,' after returning home from hospital and so long an enforced absence from the editorial chair, must be to express my deep and heartfelt thanks to all those hundreds of ringers throughout the country who have sent me messages of sympathy in my illness and their good wishes for my recovery.

It is in times of adversity that one finds one's truest friends, and the widespread and wonderful display of kindly thought that has been exhibited towards me during the trying ordeal through which I have passed has been a revelation and one of the greatest sources of encouragement.

I regret sincerely that it will be a physical impossibility for me to reply individually to the innumerable letters and messages I have received, and I trust that all who have written will accept, through this channel, my warmest thanks for their sympathy and kindly wishes, which have cheered me through many dark hours and helped me back to the stage of convalescence. These thanks are no formal acknowledgment, but are as sincere as any that could be conveyed by private letter.

After one hundred days in hospital and an illness so severe, the period of recuperation is likely to be fairly lengthy, and resumption of normal duties may not be possible for a while yet, but I want to assure all those who have shown such kindly interest that there is every prospect of unimpeded progress to full recovery.

In the meantime, the task of carrying on 'The Ringing World' will continue to be in the capable hands of Mr. J. A. Trollope, to whose ungrudging labours during the past months not only I, but the whole Exercise, owe a debt of gratitude. Of that, however, I shall have something to say on a future occasion. For the moment Mr. Trollope is still carrying on.

J. S. GOLDSMITH, *Editor.*

BELFRY GOSSIP.

The handbell party which has been meeting at Aldershot will lose heavily by the departure, which has now taken place, of Sergt. John Freeman, who, in happier times, is, like his father and brother, a member of Lincoln Cathedral band. During his stay in the south Sergt Freeman has conducted several handbell peals, including a recent one of Stedman Caters.

The wedding of Mr. N. M. Newby, hon. secretary of the Furness and Lake District Branch of the Lancashire Association, and Miss S. E. Postlethwaite, of Swalkmoor, took place on Whitsun Tuesday. They will have the best wishes of all the association members and there may be a wedding peal in the future.

At Taunton the local band are carrying on by holding handbell practices every Monday evening at St. James'. With the assistance of Mr. T. H. Taffender, who is staying in the neighbourhood, they have rung Stedman Triples and Caters, Grandsire Triples and Caters and Bob Major. Mr. W. H. Lloyd is the organiser.

The Society for the Archdeaconry of Stafford was formed on June 2nd, 1883.

The first twelve-bell peal in Birmingham, one of 5,324 Grandsire Cinques, was rung on June 3rd, 1773, at St. Martin's.

John W Taylor, of the famous Loughborough bell foundry, died on June 4th, 1919.

On June 4th, 1762, the ten bells at St. Mary-le-Bow, Cheapside, were rung for the first time.

On the same date in 1898 Holt's Original was rung non-conducted at St. John's, Waterloo Road.

The Suffolk men rang Day's long peal of Treble Bob Major at Debenham on June 6th, 1892, and on June 8th, 1906, the Lancashire men beat it at Mottram. The numbers of changes were 16,608 and 16,800.

The record peal of Bob Major, 18,144 changes, was rung at Bennington, Hertfordshire, on June 5th, 1933. Mr. S. Carter conducted.

The first peal of St. Blaise Surprise Major was rung at Guildford on June 8th, 1927.

What was, we believe, the first double-handed peal of Minor on handbells in seven methods was rung on June 3rd, 1891, at St. Albans and conducted by Mr. John Christopher Mitchell. It contained Yorkshire Court, for nobody knew then and for some time afterwards that the method will not produce a true 720.

Fifty years ago to-day nine peals were rung. They consisted of Grandsire Triples 3, Caters 1, Bob Major 2, Kent Treble Bob Major 1, Oxford 1, and Minor 1.

CHURCH BELLS AND INVASION.

The leaflet giving instructions to the public in the event of invasion, which has this week been distributed throughout the country, contains the following paragraph:—

7. What does it mean when the church bells are rung? It is a warning to the local garrison that troops have been seen landing from the air in the neighbourhood of the church in question. Church bells will *not* be rung all over the country as a general warning that invasion has taken place. The ringing of church bells in one place will not be taken up in neighbouring churches.

We were able to give details of this extract several weeks ago.

FORTY YEARS ON.

RECOLLECTIONS OF A MEMORABLE IRISH VISIT.

Hitherto Unpublished Sidelights.

Two paragraphs in 'Belfry Gossip' last week are another reminder of the flight of time. They recalled that 40 years ago 'J. S. Goldsmith conducted the first peal in a Surprise method ever rung out of England,' and that the first peal rung on the sea was completed between Ireland and Wales.

It doesn't seem 40 years ago that that memorable trip to Ireland was made, and I still have happy recollections of some of the incidents of those five hectic days. In these times of enforced inactivity, therefore, it may not be out of place to recall some of the sidelights (which, as far as I remember, have not hitherto appeared in print) as well as the main objectives of that visit, although, naturally, they can only be viewed through the mists of time.

Exactly how the trip came to be arranged I do not now precisely recollect, but—he will correct me if I am wrong—I believe Bill Barber (now so long 'of Newcastle') had been working in Dublin, whither Gabriel Lindoff went to take charge of the new St. Patrick's Cathedral bells, and as a result, on Bill's return to England, a peal ringing visit to Erin was discussed and eventually took shape at Whitsun, 1901. I was fortunate enough to be invited to be one of the party. I was easily the junior of the company, and almost a pygmy among ringing giants—William, Ernest and Bob Pye, William Barber, William Short, Isaac Shade, James George, names to conjure with even in those days, and John Buffery, who had much earlier made a name in Birmingham.

It was the first occasion on which I had met the Pyes, and I met them at three o'clock in the morning in the uncomfortable third-class cabin of the cross-channel steamer. I had reached Holyhead with the other two Bills some hour or two ahead of the London boat train, and we had tried to doze on the hard wooden seats of the cabin. Under the circumstances the dozing was, to say the least, fitful, and the London contingent, having searched us out aboard, found at least one owl-like traveller awaiting them. Later that day on arrival in Dublin we were a lot of very tired travellers, and I have recollections of some of us trying to snatch a little sleep on the hard boards up in St. Patrick's ringing chamber—but those who have tried that sort of nap know how difficult it is.

However, by evening we were ready for the fray, and in 3 hours 51 minutes rang a peal of Kent Treble Bob Royal at St. Patrick's, with a 45 cwt. tenor (there were only ten bells at St. Patrick's then and for many years after). This peal was recorded as 'the first peal of Treble Bob Royal rung out of Great Britain.' And thereby hangs a tale.

AN UNDISPUTED CLAIM.

A few years before there had been two incidents; one concerned a peal of Treble Ten at the opening of St. Patrick's bells in 1897 and was spoken of with almost bated breath, because, in the first place, there were men in the peal whose honesty was above suspicion, and, secondly, those who spoke of it seemed not quite sure of the facts. The second incident had occurred in 1899; it was the dispute over the 17,000 of Double Norwich Major at Kidlington. Both peals had been conducted by James W. Washbrook, who, at the time of our Irish visit, had become custodian and instructor at Arklow, Co. Wicklow, which church we hoped to visit.

Now the story about the Treble Ten at St. Patrick's was that the peal, as rung, was false. It was described in the official recording as a composition by Henry Johnson, but something must have happened in the calling to send the bells astray. They rolled home all right, but one man, at least, in the band observed that the peal, which had begun with a bob Wrong and thus with the whole plain course, had finished with a bob Middle, which produced the plain course again. How far this had been a 'wangle,' arising originally out of a mistake, or how far it was one of those acts of mental carelessness to which Washbrook, one of the greatest conductors of all time, was known to be susceptible, remains, I believe, untold. Eventually, however, it became known that the peal, as rung, was not true. But the record was never withdrawn, at least up to the time of our visit to Ireland, although I believe the conductor had admitted the facts in a letter to someone who had challenged him on the subject. Be that as it may, the claim which we made to the first peal of Treble Ten outside Great Britain was never disputed.

That peal was rung on the Friday night. On Saturday morning five of the 'brass hats' knocked off a peal of Stedman Caters on handbells, and in the evening we rang a short-course peal of Stedman Caters at Christ Church Cathedral. For some of the ringers this latter was tough going. The back-enders had their work cut out, and Gabriel Lindoff stood by as spare man. He came up into the tower at intervals to see how things were going, and on one visit brought with him an orange. Bill Pye, on the ninth, had apparently got thirsty. At an appropriate moment, when Bill's bell was up at back stroke, he opened his mouth, and Gay popped in a bit of orange. But he rather over-estimated the capacity of Bill's mouth, and it seemed quite a while, during which everyone was ready to burst with laughter, before Bill could shut his mouth again. It might have cost us the peal.

A DIZZY STAIRCASE.

On Sunday afternoon we made an attempt for a peal of Stedman Caters at the Roman Catholic Cathedral, but lost it for some reason which I now forget. There are, or were, one or two curious features about this tower, which was known as 'twenty-seven by twelve,' from its dimensions. The ringing chamber was more than twice as long as it was wide, and the ropes hung in straight lines along the walls, five on one side, three on the other, with one at each end.'

The ringing chamber was approached by a hair-raising iron spiral staircase—at any rate it was hair-raising for those who were not used to it. I have never visited the church since, but in my dreams I have more than once climbed that endless spiral, and saved myself by my eyebrows from falling from its dizzy height. The explanation of the installation of this stairway, if I remember right, was that the church was erected, the tower carried up as a continuation of the front of the building, the bells hung and the scaffolding dismantled before it was realised that no staircase leading to the ringing chamber had been provided. So the open iron spiral steps were carried up from a gallery beneath the tower. I remember even now seeing one very nervous ringer among the visitors negotiate the first part of the downward journey on his hands and knees, to the amusement of the rest of the party—who had already reached safety at the bottom.

On Whit Monday we went to Arklow as guests of the newly-formed Irish Association. It was a day of rare experiences. We attempted a peal of Superlative in the morning, which, to my surprise, I was asked to call. I felt that no greater compliment could have been paid to the junior member of the party. But after an hour or so a broken rope put an end to the peal. The ropes were fairly new; the cause of the break was a mystery which we did not attempt to probe.

The Earl of Carysfort, upon whose estate the church was situated, entertained the Irish Association that day to lunch, which was served in a large marquee. It was the association's annual meeting and the business was to follow lunch. Everyone was in the gayest of spirits, and, as is the wont on such occasions of hospitality, there were complimentary speeches and thanks. Then the company dispersed to enjoy ringing at the church and the beauty of the park and gardens.

Too late it was realised that the whole purpose of the gathering, which had brought ringers from many parts of Ireland, had been overlooked—the business meeting had been forgotten! I have never heard how Gabriel Lindoff recorded the proceedings in the minutes.

TWO GREAT RINGERS BRIDGE A CHASM.

The day provided many surprises, but one incident might have marred for us the whole visit. Happily it didn't. We visitors had had qualms beforehand, but the upshot brought a feeling of unqualified relief and satisfaction. It originated in the disputed Kidlington peal rung two years before. The facts are open for all to read who like to turn up the files of 'The Bell News' of the time, and the two chief figures have passed on, so that there is no harm in briefly recalling what had happened. On April 3rd, 1899, at Erith, a band, with William Pye as conductor, had set up a new Double Norwich Major record; on May 22nd, James Washbrook called a longer length at Kidlington. William Pye was a listener to that peal and immediately the record was published he disputed its validity on account of some of the ringing and avowed that a certain course end had been forced up.

This led to a bitter controversy and to the production of figures by Washbrook, which Pye declared were not those that were rung. The affair left these two great ringers, to put it mildly, thoroughly estranged. Now on this tour they would for the first time since the dispute come face to face. What would be the reaction? That was what troubled some of us.

They met; they shook hands; they smiled—and all was well. Afterwards they rang handbells together and the chasm which had previously yawned between them was closed. Looking back, that meeting, to those who knew how bitter had been the correspondence, was a great gesture by two great ringers and stands out in my mind as a striking example to those who, even in these days, are ready to nurse petty grievances in the belfry.

The following day was the last of our stay in Ireland and it was a successful one. The Superlative was rung at Bray on one of the most glorious rings of eight (the tenor is 30 cwt.) I have ever listened to. The official record stated that I 'conducted' the peal. It is true I called the bobs, but 'conducting' was unnecessary with a band which consisted of John Buffery on the treble, William Short, George R. Pye, Isaac G. Shade, William H. Barber, myself, Ernest Pye and William Pye.

MINOR CONTRETEMPS.

In the evening, with Messrs. R. R. Cherry and Gabriel Lindoff, we rang a peal of Stedman Caters at St. Patrick's, Dublin. Mr. Cherry was a member of the Bar and later became Lord Chief Justice of Ireland. He came back into ringing after more than 20 years' absence when St. Patrick's bells were installed, having learned to ring in his native Waterford and scored his first peal there in 1873. The peal of Stedman Caters and the conclusion of our successful visit naturally needed celebration, and we were entertained at Mr. Cherry's home on College Green. We English were a very tired crowd, more asleep than awake by the time we were seated round the table, so nearly asleep indeed that one (who shall still remain unnamed) put a plate of food upside-down into his lap while he nodded over the cloth.

(Continued on next page.)

FORTY YEARS ON.

(Continued from previous page.)

I, too, have to confess to an accident which has never been told in print before. Into a glass containing claret I tried to direct lemonade from a siphon. Alas, I had the angle of the glass wrong. The force behind the lemonade shot the lot over our hostess, Mrs. Cherry. Never have I wished more devoutly than at that moment that the floor would open and swallow me. But, lady that she was, Mrs. Cherry took the unfortunate contretemps in good part and laughed it off.

Coming across the Irish Sea the next day the first peal on the sea was rung—and there wasn't another until 1934 on the Mediterranean. The Pyes and the other two Bills made up the band. With James George and Ike Shade as umpires, they went down into a corner of the forward saloon and knocked off Stedman Caters. It was a daylight crossing and they missed the pleasure of the upper deck, but they made history, finishing in the nick of time as the ship glided up Holyhead harbour.

That evening we rang at Bangor the first Surprise peal in Wales and then parted company. I stayed on in Bangor with relatives until the end of the week to visit some of the beauty spots in North Wales.

The reminiscences of this trip would not be quite complete were I not to add a personal note which has nothing to do with the actual ringing. I was employed on a newspaper in Eastbourne at the time, and was naturally more than keen to be able to accept the invitation to take part in the excursion. My greatest anxiety was to know how to get the necessary leave, in a firm where holidays were only grudgingly given. Whitsuntide, too, in a seaside resort was not a good time to expect to be allowed to be absent from work. In making my request, therefore, with a bit of special pleading to be away 'over Whitsun' I was most careful not to say how long over Whitsun; to have told the whole truth would have been fatal. And so I went without leaving any address that would find me in order that I could not be recalled. I reached home on Saturday; on Sunday I met a colleague who immediately wanted to know 'where I had been all the week' and warning me of the wire consequences that awaited me when the 'gov'nor' met me the next day.

I went to the office with some trepidation, was questioned by my editor, who refrained from verbally chastising me because, I think, of what was to come from the 'boss,' who, I was told, had been storming at my absence all the previous week. Presently the boss' ponderous footsteps came through the outer office; I expected to be metaphorically slung into the street; I tried to console myself in those few moments with the thought that my holiday had been worth even that. He strode into the editorial room; I don't know if I actually quaked, but all he said in his deep gruff voice was, 'Hello! I thought you were lost!'

And that is how I got away with it. J. S. G.

SILENT APPARATUSES.

To the Editor.

Dear Sir,—Before the war I was experimenting with three types of bell silencers. A, the Launton type, consisted of a clapper bar fitted with a small striker operated by centrifugal force at handstroke and by gravity at backstroke. After much trial and error I succeeded in making the apparatus strike the bell at the same moment as the clapper whatever position the bell is in after it has been raised slightly. The principle aimed at was to produce the nominal or fifth partial tone of the bell commencing from the bottom, and not to let the bell, as a whole, vibrate. It succeeded admirably and we found the apparatus very useful at Launton, especially as one could teach a beginner to rise and fall as well. The effect was that the bells sounded an octave higher than normal, and the sound not being of a penetrating nature, while reasonably loud near the bells, would not carry more than 100 yards approximately from the church.

The second type (type 3) is or was in use at All Saints', Oxford, and consists of a wooden device to restrict the movement of the clapper so that it gives the bell a very light blow. The same applies to Type C or the portable type, which is made of leather and within certain limits can be carried about in a small attache case and in a few moments easily adjusted to fit any bell. Type C was used for the peals at Bray and Sherborne Abbey, and a great number were in use before the war in all parts of the country.

Unfortunately, all types are of no use under the conditions imposed by the 'ban,' as the bell is struck in each instance; but the device in Type A could be used as a switch for an electrical apparatus, and as it operates at the same time as the clapper would normally strike whatever position the bell may be in should be useful. I will gladly put this device at the disposal of the Exercise.

FREDERICK SHARPE.

Derwen, Launton, Bicester.

ENDOWMENTS FOR BELL ROPES

To the Editor.

Dear Sir,—Referring to the article on endowments for bell ropes in 'The Ringing World,' page 245, may I say that the endowment at Yaxham, Norfolk, of 1s. per annum for bell ropes is still in existence.

E. W. BLYTH.

Northrepps Rectory, Cromer.

LONG PEALS ON HANDBELLS.

To-day is the thirtieth anniversary of a peal of Bob Major, 13,440 changes, at Pudsey, which at the time ranked as the longest in hand. Altogether only five peals of over 10,000 changes have so far been rung on handbells, but the record has reached 19,738, and we imagine it will be long before that is exceeded.

On Tuesday, October 16th, 1883, the Birmingham Amalgamated Society rang 10,176 changes of Grandsire Major in four hours and fifty-five minutes. Grandsire on even bells had been for long popular with the Birmingham men, and they rang 6,720 changes of Major on handbells in 1880. John Carter composed and called the long peal, which had the 120 course ends and the tenors together throughout. The band was Thomas Russam 1-2, John Carter 3-4, Thomas Miller 5-6, and Joseph W. Cattle 7-8. Mr. Miller, happily, is still with us.

In 1894 a young band at Norwich attempted to gain the record by ringing the extent of Bob Major with the tenors together. They started on March 15th, but, the weather being cold, the bells were allowed to run round at the half-way. A second attempt was made on April 26th. This time one of the umpires turned up late and the peal had to be shortened to 11,200 changes, which were duly rung in five hours. The band was J. A. Trollope 1-2, George P. Burton 3-4, John E. Burton 5-6, Charles E. Borrett (conductor) 7-8.

The intention was to complete the full length, but it never came to anything, and it was not until 17 years later, on Whit Monday, June 5th, 1911, at Pudsey, a band of the Yorkshire Association completed the 13,440 changes. The time was seven hours and seven minutes, two hours and seven minutes longer than the Norwich peal with 2,240 extra changes. The band was: William Frederick Thorpe 1-2, Frederick W. Jones 3-4, Ernest Maun (conductor) 5-6, Ernest Hoyle 7-8.

Just before the last war there was a very skilful handbell band at Guildford who extensively practised Stedman. On June 1st, 1912, they set up a new long length record for handbell ringing by scoring 14,031 changes of Stedman Caters in 7 hours and 3 minutes, four minutes less than the previous Bob Major. Three months later, on August 31st, in order to make certain about the matter, they started for 22,222 changes, but after ringing 19,738 in nine hours and thirty-two minutes, when all records either on handbells or on tower bells had been passed, the bells were brought round. The band was: A. F. Shepherd 1-2, A. H. Pulling (conductor) 3-4, W. Shepherd 5-6, J. Hunt 7-8, F. Blondell 9-10.

ST. NICHOLAS', LIVERPOOL.

Last Wednesday was the one hundred and twenty-seventh anniversary of the opening peal on the twelve bells at St. Nicholas', Liverpool. Four years earlier, on February 11th, 1810, 'a few minutes before the commencement of divine service, while the bells were ringing the second peal,' the old tower collapsed in ruins. Part of the congregation was already in the church, and masonry, falling through the nave roof, killed 25 people, of whom 18 were children.

When the new tower was built, William Dobson, of Downham Market, Norfolk, had the order to supply a ring of twelve bells, which were to be a replica of the twelve at St. Peter's, Mancroft. Dobson was an excellent founder and cast many good bells, but Liverpool were not among his best.

At the opening 'a numerous assemblage of amateurs were invited,' and a competition was held, with a 'beautiful silver cup, value twenty guineas,' as the prize. The contest was won by a mixed band, made up partly of Sheffield men and partly of Birmingham men, with James Dovey, of Stourbridge, and Samuel Lawrence, of Shifnal. William Hudson and William Booth were among the Sheffield men, and Alexander Sanders and Henry Cooper among the Birmingham men.

The winning touch was 3,000 changes of Grandsire Cinques, and 14 men were required, which shows that the heavy bells had not 'settled down to their bearings,' as the saying was. Next day a full peal of Grandsire Cinques was rung.

Although the band was a mixed one, the touch and peal were rung as St. Martin's Youths' performances, and the silver cup went to Birmingham. It was placed in the custody of Henry Cooper, but after a time it disappeared. Cooper was a silver plater by trade, and not unnaturally suspicions were aroused of his honesty in the matter. Nothing was proved, but his reputation suffered badly.

St. Nicholas' Church was severely damaged in some of the early air raids on Merseyside, and was entirely burnt out, but fortunately the steeple and the bells have so far escaped. The front eight were rung with tied clappers during a recent meeting of the Lancashire Association.

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THE STANDARD METHODS.

THE TERM SURPRISE.

The word Surprise has been used in the Exercise as a sub-title of methods from at least as early as the beginning of the eighteenth century, but only in the last thirty or forty years has it had its present meaning. The old ringers used it as a sort of claim that the method they had rung was a more difficult and intricate one than those generally practised, but they made no attempt to set any bounds to what should be reckoned as a difficult method. To do so would have been an impossible task, and is so still.

This old meaning is quite accurately defined in the Glossary, which says that a Surprise method is a Treble Bob method in which the work of the course is highly elaborated and more or less difficult of execution. The great Oxford English Dictionary adopted this definition, and it is a pity the Exercise did not leave the matter so. But when the Central Council was founded there was a great eagerness among its leaders to reduce everything to precise order, and among other things to classify methods so that each should be put neatly and definitely into its own group. They thought it could be done, and in much the same spirit an attempt was made to assess the value of peals by allotting so many points to each. Experience showed in the end how futile this latter was, and after some years the Council dropped it. Greater knowledge has also shown that the idea which lay behind the attempt to classify methods was equally futile, but that cannot be undone so easily.

In the nineteenth century there were nine recognised standard methods; of them Cambridge, Superlative and London stood out unquestionably as the most difficult, and therefore they were justly labelled Surprise. Up to that point it was quite all right, but when many more methods were known and rung, it became clear that, except for the fact that both are on the Treble Bob principle, London differs more from Superlative than Superlative does from Double Norwich. When we take all the possible Treble Bob methods into consideration, so far from Superlative being one of the most difficult, it is one of the simplest and easiest. The proper thing would have been to recognise that the art of change ringing had outgrown the meaning of the word Surprise, and it should have been left as an ornament to those methods which had earned the right to it by long possession.

That course could not be taken, partly because ordinary ringers still attached more importance to methods which were called by the magic word Surprise than to any others, and partly on account of the urge for tidying up things we have referred to. So the term must have its precise definition and several attempts were made to find one. Earle Bulwer tried his hand, as was explained in ' The Ringing World ' lately. He failed because his definition did not cover London, and shortly afterwards the present definition was put forward by the Methods Committee and was generally adopted by the Exercise.

Our readers will have noticed that when we give the figures of Treble Bob methods as illustrations we always divide the lead by horizontal lines after every group of four rows. Each group of four rows is called a section, and the change which divides two groups (and is represented by the horizontal line) is called a cross section. According to the definition, a Surprise method is one which has at least one place made at every cross section (the lead-end and half-lead-end are not technically cross sections).

It was a clever definition. It was clear, precise, easily understood, and easily applied. It covered fairly well all the methods then considered to belong to the class, and it was a thoroughly bad and mischievous definition. It made no distinction between easy and difficult methods (in the circumstances that could not be done), it lumped together as equal in style and complexity the most diverse methods, and in effect it put on a lower plane a great number which have every right to rank as the equals of those it included. It drew a purely arbitrary line through the Treble Bob methods, and the result has been that those which are on the wrong side of the line are not even considered, let alone practised.

If the definition is as bad as all that, why, it may be asked, was it ever adopted? The people who introduced it were not altogether fools nor completely ignorant. They had begun to understand something about method construction, but they had reached as yet only a limited understanding. They thought that the essential things in the construction of a method are the places. We discussed this matter in our article of March 21st, and we pointed out that there was at one time a group of men who held that places are the only things that really matter in a method. ' Get the places right and everything else follows automatically. Places are the method.' Of course, there is some truth in this, but it becomes false when it is pushed too far; and it was pushed too far in the definition of a Surprise method.

Places made at a cross section may have no more value than places made in the interior of the section. That is made quite clear by our recent examination of Cornwall, Ealing and other Surprise methods.

The present definition makes no distinction between easy and difficult methods, nor between good and bad methods; and therefore is not only useless, but actually misleading. Ringers still think of Surprise methods as the most complex of all, whereas many of them are quite easy. Still, as far as Major ringing is concerned, no great harm is done. The group is so large, and so varied, that it gives ample scope for development. But on ten and twelve bells it is different. Though Surprise Royal and Surprise Maximus methods are the most highly esteemed, they are, generally speaking, the most unsuitable for actual practice. Both for interest in ringing and for outside effect, the Plain Royal and Maximus methods are far superior, and they should receive more attention from ten and twelve bell ringers. Plain methods, we may point out, are not necessarily easy methods.

Before the war some of the Plain Major methods were beginning to receive attention, and bands were beginning to realise that there is much more in some of them than in the average Surprise method. That was all to the good.

There is no need to alter the present definition and, in fact, any attempt to improve it would probably only make matters worse. Let it stand as it is. What we should do is to realise that any attempt to classify methods is a mistake, and let us treat the sub-titles—Surprise, Court, Bob and the rest—as ornaments and nothing more.

FIRES AND BELL FRAMES.

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE.

To the Editor.

Dear Sir,—You ask a most interesting question in your leader of this week's 'Ringing World': 'How far does an iron frame afford a safeguard to the bells against fire?'

It seems obvious that it provides little more protection than a timber frame, for it all depends upon the intensity of the fire in the rooms below the bell chamber.

The solution to the problem of fire that will generally be advanced probably will suggest clearing all inflammable material out of the tower and substituting concrete and steel—concrete floors, steel tables and chairs, not even a peal board of wood—a somewhat dreary ringing chamber, I would suggest. But the greatest drawback will be a resonant ringing chamber, owing to the reinforced concrete that may be used in the reconstruction. Ringers cannot put the best into their art in a resonant belfry.

Whatever happens with a fire in a tower, one thing is certain, that even if the bells escape, the frame is most likely to be ruined. A good illustration of what happens to steel is shown by the effects of fire on the steel framework of modern buildings. It is a fact that timber of heavy section is more fireproof than steel.

Now let us get this problem of fire in its right perspective. Ignoring the results of this war, what percentage of our belfries have been destroyed by fire? The percentage will prove surprisingly small; in fact, almost negligible.

To deal with the problem of the present emergency we can only clear out as much of the inflammable material and take all the precautions that are possible. This is a mere palliative and not the remedy. The remedy is for all men and women, church officials and ringers to see that, once peace is gained, war is banished from this world for ever.

When we rebuild our churches we must plan for peace and not for the incendiary bomb. We must be guided by the principle that only the best is fit for the house of our God. If timber proves to be more lasting than steel it should be used. The question of fire will hardly enter in the problem, as it did in the pre-war days. Our motto must be, 'To do all to the glory of God.' G. P. ELPHICK.

Southover, Lewes.

THE LATE MR C. H. HORTON.

HERTS ASSOCIATION'S PRESIDENT'S SUDDEN DEATH.

As was recorded in our last issue, the death has taken place of Mr. Charles H. Horton, president of the Hertford County Association and hon. secretary of the Watford District.

Mr. Horton died suddenly while on the way to his allotment. He had not been ill previously, but no doubt the loss of his business in London in the 'blitz' worried him, and a weakened heart gave out. He was 65 years of age and leaves a widow in bereavement.

As already mentioned, in addition to the offices he held in the Hertford County Association, Mr. Horton had been intimately associated with the College Youths for many years, and was a past Master of the society. He was held in high esteem among Hertfordshire ringers for his hard work and patience as secretary of the district, and his efforts in arranging district meetings even in the extreme difficulty of war conditions was much appreciated.

The funeral took place at Watford Cemetery on Tuesday, May 27th, when the service was conducted by the Rector of Bushey.

The mourners were the widow and friends, while ringers were represented by Messrs. E. Jennings and J. Rootes (Bushey), F. W. Brinklow (Oxhey), S. H. Hoare and R. Bell (Watford), T. Clark and W. Ayre.

At the close a well-struck course of Grandsire Triples was rung at the graveside by F. W. Brinklow 1-2, E. Jennings 3-4, W. Ayre 5-6, J. W. Rootes 7-8. Floral tributes were sent by the Herts County Association, the Watford District, the Oxhey tower and St. Mary's, Willesden.

Mrs. Horton asks us to state it is impossible for her to acknowledge the many expressions of sympathy she has received, and desires to extend her sincere thanks to all Mr. Horton's ringing friends who sent wreaths and letters.

Charlie Horton, writes a fellow officer of the Herts Association, will be sadly missed. His preliminary cough (how we listened for it!) and 'What would you like next, gentlemen?' will linger long in memory with us.

He was an indefatigable worker, very keen on principles, a wholehearted College Youth, and a faithful president of his association.

As a neighbouring secretary he was admirable to work with and always gave his support.

It is up to us all not to let his work be wasted. A finer memorial he would not wish to have. W. A.

LONDON CHURCHES.

THEIR STYLE CRITICISED.

To the Editor

Sir,—Permit me to raise a little criticism of what appeared in 'The Ringing World' of May 23rd. It is in reference to 'the architectural beauty' of London's churches.

Speaking of certain rings of bells in various parts of the country which are well known to ringers, a few weeks ago 'The Ringing World' remarked, 'Sad as would be the loss of these peals, should they ever be destroyed, they could certainly be replaced by something better.' This is how I feel about London churches, whose 'picturesque or architectural beauty' has, in my opinion, been grossly overestimated, and I speak as one who has been in over 900 churches in various parts of the country.

I shall never forget the first time I visited a London church and the remark I passed to a friend, who pointed out to me that that was St. George-the-Martyr, where we were going to ring. 'What,' I said, 'you never mean to say that's a church!' 'Yes, that's where we're going,' he replied. 'Why, it looks more like our Town Hall, an assize court or a corn exchange,' I remember commenting. My friend then informed me that that was how most London churches were. Later on we visited St. Lawrence Jewry. Here I remember remarking upon the musical quality of the bells, which to this day have always struck me as the best I have ever heard in London outside Southwark Cathedral, but I remember saying to my friend, 'I don't like the look of the building. It looks too much like a guildhall, with a clock tower built upon it, in a market square.' A little further on we came to Bow. Here again the whole building seemed to resemble a town hall on a street corner. The unique spire certainly struck me as picturesque, but beyond that I could see nothing to make it appear (without being told) that it was a church. The same impression I gained of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields—a guildhall with a clock tower on top; and as for the bells (like Bow) I thought what a poor lot they were. St. Andrew's, Holborn, was another church we visited. Here was certainly a little variation as far as the tower went, but the whole structure seemed to have nothing of the architectural beauty of thousands of churches outside London. Like all your other readers, Mr. Editor, I am sad to think that the time and money which has been spent upon these buildings for centuries has all to be raised again. But I hope when the time comes to rebuild, what will replace them will be on a different style to the old buildings, for between these and some of the present-day 'churches' for design there is little to choose, with the exception that the old London churches no doubt were stronger and of stone instead of red brick. Finally, when thinking of London churches as compared with most other town and village churches, I am reminded of the words of a well-known hymn, 'Within a hallowed acre.' The absence of such spoils what little bit of picturesque or architectural beauty may have been found on London churches, to my mind.

'TOURIST.'

MIDLAND COUNTIES ASSOCIATION.

BURTON AND LOUGHBOROUGH DISTRICTS.

Despite the showery afternoon, about 20 ringers and friends attended the joint meeting of the above districts, held at the Parish Church, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, on Saturday, May 24th, when the following towers were represented: Derby Cathedral, Shepshed, Ibstock, Hugglescote, Copt Oak, Burton (St. Paul's), Ticknall, Newhall, Overseale, Netherseale and the local company.

The Vicar, Canon H. D. Hanford, met and welcomed the members as they assembled, but regretted he was unable to stay for the meeting and tea.

Short touches and a few tunes on the handbells preceded the meeting, which was held in the belfry. Mr. A. E. Rowley took the chair for the Burton District business and the question of Sunday meetings was discussed. It was decided to arrange at least one such meeting at Ticknall on Sunday, July 13th. The Loughborough members present decided to hold their next meeting at Woodhouse Eaves, the date being left for the secretary to arrange with the incumbent.

Mr. J. H. Swinfield proposed that the secretary (Mr. J. W. Cotton) be instructed to write Mr. Goldsmith expressing sympathy with him in his illness and best wishes for a complete recovery.

Tea was served at Messrs. Radford's Cafe, after which the tower was revisited and further handbell ringing took place.

It was felt by those responsible for the arrangements that the meeting helped to keep alive and stimulate interest in the districts concerned, and further joint meetings will be held in the near future.

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

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NOTICES must be received NOT LATER THAN MONDAY.

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

ANCIENT SOCIETY OF COLLEGE YOUTHS.—The next meeting will be held on Saturday, June 7th, at the Bell Foundry, 32-34, Whitechapel Road, E.C.1, at 3 p.m., by kind invitation of the treasurer, Mr. A. A. Hughes. Handbell ringing and a good adjournment spot afterwards.—A. B. Peck, Hon. Sec., Branksome, Eversfield Road, Reigate, Surrey.

LINCOLN DIOCESAN GUILD.—Elloe Deaneries Branch.—Quarterly meeting will be held at Surfleet on Saturday, June 7th. Service 3.30 p.m. Tea at Mermaid Inn, 4 p.m., followed by business meeting. Handbells, bowls and topical talk on lawn at Glyn Garth.—W. A. Richardson, Hon. Sec., Glenside, Pinchbeck.

ESSEX ASSOCIATION.—North-Eastern Division.—A meeting will be held at Ramsey on Saturday, June 14th. Handbells 2.30 p.m. at the Vicarage. Service 4.30 p.m. Tea 5.15 p.m. All those requiring tea must notify the district secretary by June 10th, or bring their own teas. A good bus service from Colchester via Mistley. Visitors coming by car must obtain their permits before entering the defence area.—Leslie Wright, Hon. Dis. Sec., Lower Barn Farm, Dedham, Colchester.

MIDDLESEX COUNTY ASSOCIATION AND LONDON DIOCESAN GUILD.—North and East District.—A meeting will be held at Monken Hadley, near Barnet, on Saturday, June 14th. Handbells available from 3 p.m. Service at 4.30 p.m. Tea, for which notice must be received by me not later than June 9th, about 5 p.m.—T. J. Lock, 57, Holloways Lane, North Mimms, Hatfield, Herts.

GLOUCESTER & BRISTOL DIOCESAN ASSOCIATION.—Bristol City and Bristol Rural Branches.—A combined meeting of the two Branches will be held at Almondsbury on Sat., June 14th. Service at 4 p.m. Tea and meetings to follow at 5 p.m. Darts and handbells will be available for those who wish to show their skill. All heartily welcome. Buses from the centre (Gas Company's premises) at frequent intervals.—R. C. Gifford, Rural Sec., A. M. Tyler, Bristol City Sec.

OXFORD DIOCESAN GUILD. — Central Bucks Branch. — The annual branch meeting will be held at North Marston on Saturday, June 14th. Tower bells (silent) and handbells from 2.45. Service at 4. Tea and meeting to follow. — F. Gibbard, Hon. Sec., 30, Horn Street, Winslow, Bucks.

YORKSHIRE ASSOCIATION.—Western Division.—The summer meeting will be held at Almondbury on Saturday, June 21st. An attractive ramble has been arranged for 3 o'clock, starting from Conservative Club (against church). Tea in Parish Room (1s. 8d.) at 5 o'clock, names to Mr. W. E. Dransfield, 21, Westgate, Almondbury, not later than Tuesday, June 17th. Business meeting after tea. Annual reports now available. All welcome.—Frank Rayment, Dis. Sec., Bramley.

WORCESTERSHIRE AND DISTRICTS ASSOCIATION (Northern Branch) AND DUDLEY AND DISTRICT GUILD.—Joint meeting at Hagley (D.V.), Saturday, June 21st. Tower bells (8) available for 'silent' practice from 3 p.m. Service 4.15 p.m., followed by tea. Business meeting, handbells and social evening. Reports should be obtained and subscriptions paid at this meeting. Numbers for tea by Thursday, June 19th, please, to B. C. Ashford, 9, Bowling Green Road, Stourbridge.

SURREY ASSOCIATION. — A meeting will be held at Reigate on Saturday, June 21st. Members and friends attending are requested to meet at the **Village, Merstham,** at 3 p.m. From there it is proposed to walk to Reigate via Gatton Park. Service at Reigate Church at 5 p.m. Following the service, Mr. M. A. Northover has very kindly offered to provide tea and his house and garden will be at the disposal of the association for the purpose of the meeting. Will those who require tea please notify me by Tuesday, the 17th inst.? Don't forget caterers are rationed too! So if you intend to be present please send that card.—E. G. Talbot, Hon. Sec., 53, Birchwood Avenue, Wallington.

YORKSHIRE ASSOCIATION. — The annual joint meeting of Southern District, Barnsley and District and Doncaster and District Societies will be held at Wath-on-Dearne on Saturday, June 21st. Handbells available, Church House, 2.30 p.m. Tea 1s. 6d. each, Warburton's Café, 5 p.m., followed by business meeting, Church House, 6 p.m. Those requiring tea **must** notify Mr. A. Gill, 84, Doncaster Road, Wath-on-Dearne, nr. Rotherham, not later than June 18th. Hoping for a good attendance.—S. F. Palmer, D. Smith and E. Cooper, Joint Hon. Secretaries.

SOCIETY FOR THE ARCHDEACONRY OF STAFFORD.—The annual meeting will be held at the George Hotel, Wulfruna Street, Wolverhampton, on Saturday, June 21st. Committee meeting at 6 p.m. and general meeting at 6.30. Handbells. Subscriptions are now due.—H. Knight, Hon. Sec., 15, Rugby Street, Wolverhampton.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS. — The address of George W. Fogden is now 31, Canham Road, South Norwood, S.E.25. He will be glad to hear from any of his old ringing friends.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS.—The address of Mr. James George is now Quinton Hall, Quinton, Birmingham, 32.

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