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THE COLLEGE YOUTHS.

If there are among us any who are inclined to look despondently on the present state of the Exercise and to despair of its future when the war is over, they would have done well to have been present last Saturday at the anniversary luncheon of the Society of College Youths. The function by its very existence is a source of inspiration, for it carries the mind back in unbroken sequence for more than three hundred years, and seems to give an assurance that so long as ringers are true to their calling their art will not fail. The days are dark and uncertain now, but there have been days just as dark. To the men of those times it must often have seemed that the best of change ringing was over. Yet the storms were weathered and the Exercise came out in the end stronger than ever. It would be idle to pretend that the silence of the bells, now for more than a year, will not seriously affect ringing. It would be foolish to pretend that when peace comes we shall be able to pick up the threads just where we dropped them. Some ringers will be found to have lost their enthusiasm, and some will enter the bell-fries no more. Some, alas, have gone abroad who will never return. Bands will be depleted and all of us will be older.

These things we must face, and we must face them, not in a spirit of pessimism, but as part of the price we are called on to pay for England and for freedom. We are prepared to pay that price, but we must not stop there. We must make up our minds that we are not merely going to put up with difficulties, but that we are going to overcome them, and we shall best do that by keeping our heads high, holding fast to our art, and maintaining contact with our past history and our present friends.

That is where the Ancient Society of College Youths has deserved well of the Exercise. We look to it as the symbol and embodiment of our history and traditions. We look to it to maintain our connection with the great ringers of the past to whom we owe so much. And we are thankful to say it has not failed us. By holding its fortnightly meeting without a break and under very difficult conditions it has done good service not only to the few who are able to attend but also the many who, debarred themselves from meeting other ringers, can yet feel that the life of the London Exercise is still flowing. For this no small praise is due to the officers, Mr. Fenn the Master, Mr. Peck the hon. secretary, and not least to Mr. A. A. Hughes the treasurer.

And here we make a suggestion. Why should not the members of other associations, who are themselves by force of circumstances unable to hold as many meetings

(Continued on page 542.)

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as they would like—why should not they make a point of visiting now and then their friends of the College Youths? We know they would be welcomed, and perhaps a small seed might be sown which would lead after the war to closer co-operation among London ringers and a federation in which, while all the societies kept their own individualities and traditions intact, they would unite for closer friendship and the common weal. Gone, and we hope gone for ever, are the days when one society considered it could prosper only at the expense of others. When the war is over, London ringing will need all the co-operation that is possible, and it can best come about if the other societies are willing (and why should they not be willing?) to work together under the primacy of honour of the senior society, the College Youths.

KENT COUNTY ASSOCIATION.

MEETING AT CHISLEHURST.

The annual meeting of the Lewisham District of the Kent County Association was held at the Church of the Annunciation, Chislehurst, on Saturday, October 25th, when about 30 members and friends from Bromley, Crayford, Chislehurst, Dartford, Erith and Lewisham attended.

This date being the dedication festival of the church, the members attended the special evensong, at which the Vicar (the Rev. Canon R. S. Greaves) officiated.

Afterwards the Vicar entertained the members to tea and gave them a very warm welcome to Chislehurst. He also presided at the business meeting which followed.

Mr. T. Groombridge, sen., referred to the loss sustained by the local band by the recent death of its secretary, the late Mr. F. O. Earney.

The Chairman paid tribute to Mr. Earney's memory and asked the meeting to signify its esteem in the traditional manner.

Mr. E. Barnett read a letter from Mr. Isaac Emery saying he was leaving hospital that day, and thanking the members, individually and collectively, for the kind messages he had received while undergoing treatment; also a message from Mr. 'Pat' Murphy, who is serving with His Majesty's Forces abroad.

It was decided that the district secretary should write on behalf of the meeting to both Mr. Emery and Mr. Murphy.

News, without definite addresses, was passed on about other serving members in various parts of the Empire, and training in America, and these also were remembered gratefully.

Mr. A. G. Hill (district secretary), Mr. T. Groombridge, jun., and Mr. E. Barnett (district representatives) and Mr. T. Groombridge, sen. (Ringing Master) were re-elected without other nominations being made. In the case of Mr. Groombridge, sen., this reappointment continues an uninterrupted occupation of office in the district beginning as long ago as 1903.

The next meeting, to be held in January, was left to be arranged as circumstances allow, no definite place being selected. Mr. Wheadon undertook to try to arrange a visit to Dartford, and the chairman assured the meeting that Chislehurst would be available if desired.

Mr. T. Groombridge, jun., expressed the opinion that the decision that church bells must be regarded as luxuries when the time comes to consider what rebuilding should be undertaken at the close of the war was deplorable. He was quickly aware that he enjoyed the backing of the meeting. After hearing a lucid explanation of the difficulties surrounding this question, given by the Vicar, who had attended the proceedings of the body appointed to consider its various aspects, there was a discussion, and it was decided that the district secretary and representatives in collaboration with the secretary of the association should take the necessary steps to register regret and disapproval of the finding.

A vote of thanks to the Vicar for the use of the belfry, for his generous hospitality and for presiding at the meeting, and to the ladies for their help at tea, was carried enthusiastically. The Vicar responded and declared the meeting closed.

Further handbell ringing filled the time until 7 p.m., when the members dispersed, after thanking Mr. E. Barnett for bringing his handbells for their use and entertainment.

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THE YORKSHIRE ASSOCIATION.

On Sunday, November 2, 1941, in Two Hours and Fourteen Minutes,

AT A.R.P. POST, 82, GREEN BANK,

A PEAL OF BOB MAJOR, 1666 CHANGES;

Tenor size 12 in F.

*HAROLD SENIOR... ..	1-2	FRED HODGSON	5-6
LESLIE W. G. MORRIS ...	3-4	ERNEST B. BETTS... ..	7-8

Composed by H. J. TUCKER. Conducted by LESLIE W. G. MORRIS.

* First peal on handbells. First peal on handbells as conductor.

OXFORD.

THE KENT COUNTY ASSOCIATION.

On Sunday, November 2, 1941, in Two Hours and Thirty Minutes,

AT NEW COLLEGE,

A PEAL OF BOB MAJOR, 5640 CHANGES;

Tenor size 15 in C.

*BETTY SPICE	1-2	JOHN E. SPICE	5-6
†WILLIAM L. B. LEESE ...	3-4	‡ELEANOR J. MACNAIR ...	7-8

Composed by E. M. ATKINS. Conducted by J. E. SPICE.

Witnesses—Mr. and Mrs. G. H. Spice.

* First peal of Major. † First peal on an 'inside pair.' ‡ First attempt for a peal. The average age of this band is 19 years and 8 months. The ringer of 7-8 was elected a member of the association before starting.

CAMBRIDGE.

THE CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY GUILD.

On Tuesday, November 4, 1941, in Two Hours,

AT SELWYN COLLEGE,

A PEAL OF BOB MINOR, 5040 CHANGES;

Seven different extents. Tenor size 17 in A.

*REV. A. C. BLYTH (Selwyn)	1-2	ROGER LEIGH (St. Cath's)...	3-4
†KENNETH S. B. CROFT (St. John's)			5-6

Conducted by ROGER LEIGH.

* First peal of Minor 'in hand.' † First peal on six bells. The conductor's first peal and first attempt.

LONDON.

THE ANCIENT SOCIETY OF COLLEGE YOUTHS.

On Saturday, November 8, 1941, in Two Hours and Thirty-Five Minutes,

AT THE BELL FOUNDRY, WHITECHAPEL,

A PEAL OF GRANDSIRE TRIPLES, 5040 CHANGES;

HOLT'S ORIGINAL. Tenor size 17 in A.

ERNEST C. S. TURNER... ..	1-2	JOHN THOMAS	5-6
WILFRED WILLIAMS	3-4	DONALD G. CLIFT	7-8

Non-Conducted.

Umpire—Charles W. Roberts.

LEICESTER.

THE MIDLAND COUNTIES ASSOCIATION.

On Sunday, November 9, 1941, in Two Hours and Thirty-Eight Minutes,

AT 202, FOSSE ROAD SOUTH,

A PEAL OF STEDMAN CATERS, 5065 CHANGES;

HAROLD J. POOLE	1-2	PERCY L. HARRISON	5-6
G. STEDMAN MORRIS	3-4	ALFRED BALLARD... ..	7-8

JOSEPH MORRIS 9-10

Composed by F. W. PERRENS. Conducted by HAROLD J. POOLE.

Witness—C. W. H. Powell.

SHAFTON, NEAR BARNESLEY, YORKS.

THE YORKSHIRE ASSOCIATION.

(BARNESLEY AND DISTRICT SOCIETY.)

On Sunday, November 9, 1941, in One Hour and Fifty-Six Minutes,

AT 28, CHAPEL STREET,

A PEAL OF BOB MINOR, 5040 CHANGES;

Being seven different extents.

DANIEL SMITH	1-2	HAROLD CHANT	3-4
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*SIDNEY BRIGGS 5-6

Conducted by HAROLD CHANT.

Witness—Arthur Gill.

* First peal of Minor 'in hand.' Arranged specially and rung as a birthday compliment to Mr. D. Smith, whose birthday fell on the previous day.

DEATH OF MR. WILLIAM WILLSON.**A DISTINGUISHED LEICESTER RINGER.**

A great loss has been sustained by the Midland Counties Association, and by the Exercise in general, by the death on Thursday week of Mr. William Willson, of Leicester, at the age of 73 years. Mr. Willson had been in failing health for some time, but it was only recently that his condition gave rise to grave anxiety.

In the councils of the Midland Counties Association William Willson was for long a great force, and years ago his energies accounted for much of its activity in Leicestershire. He had been a notable ringer, composer and conductor, and had shared in many distinguished performances, both in the tower and on handbells.

He was born on August 12th, 1868, and began ringing at the early age of ten years, and in his long career he rang about 350 peals. His contribution to the Exercise has, however, by no means been confined to his activities in the belfry. Mr. Willson acted as editor of the short-lived periodical, 'The Bellingr,' and he contributed frequently to other ringing papers, including 'The Ringing World.' He wielded a trenchant pen and was a doughty fighter. He could take as well as give hard knocks, and when he entered a controversy the sparks usually began to fly. He was no respecter of persons and in the early days he was looked upon as a stormy petrel in ringing politics. His letters and articles were always entertaining, even if his views were not always acceptable, and he had a highly developed sense of humour which enabled him, when occasion arose, to write purely in lighter vein. He could, too, turn a neat verse, and some of his poetry in later years in serious mood has touched a high level.

NOTABLE PERFORMANCES.

Mr. Willson also turned his attention to composition and was the author of a number of peals of considerable merit, including Stedman and Grandsire Caters, and Double Norwich Major. He was the composer and conductor of the longest peal ever rung in this method. In 1899 a 17,024 was rung at Kidlington which aroused heated discussion. In 1904 Mr. Willson took a band to South Wigston with the intention of ringing if possible a 21,024, which he hoped in length of time as well as in number of changes would exceed the Kidlington performance. Owing to the illness of one of the band, however, the bells were brought round at 17,104—a longer length than the previous record, but rung in 10 hours 35 minutes against the Kidlington peal's 11 hours 12 minutes.

In 1909 Mr. Willson was one of the band who for the first time in history single handed 'rang the clock round.' This was the celebrated 13,027 Stedman Caters at Loughborough, which occupied 12 hours 18 minutes, conducted from the tenor by Mr. William Pye and in which Mr. Willson rang the 7th. Other long lengths which Mr. Willson had rung, and some of which he conducted, were 1,001 Grandsire Caters, 10,176 Kent Treble Bob Major, 10,192 Bob Major and 11,008 Double Norwich Major.

He was also one of a Leicester company which made handbell ringing history. The band rang 'silent' peals of Stedman Triples 'in hand' in 1896 and 1898; in 1900 the first silent peal of Stedman Caters on handbells, and capped the performance in 1903 by ringing the first silent peal on twelve bells, a peal of Stedman Cinques. The band who rang in the peal of Cinques consisted of J. O. Lancashire 1-2, G. Cleal 3-4, S. Cotton 5-6, William Willson 7-8, J. Buttery 9-10, Alfred Miller 11-12. Now Mr. Lancashire is the sole survivor of the party.

MANY ACTIVITIES.

He conducted the first seven-method peal for the Midland Counties Association and took part in the first peals of Double Norwich, Superlative, Cambridge and London Surprise in Leicester. He was Ringing Master at the Church of St. John the Divine, to which tower he generously gave two trebles to make a ring of ten bells.

Mr. Willson served during the war 1914-18 as an air mechanic and he organised the memorable pilgrimage of ringers to the Menin Gate, Ypres, in 1931, when in the presence of many hundreds of reverent strangers a short and impressive service was conducted beneath the shadows of the Gate by the late Rev. C. W. O. Jenkyn, handbells were rung and a memorial wreath deposited. It was during this visit that the first peals (on handbells) were rung in Belgium and a peal was also rung on French soil.

Mr. Willson served the Midland Counties Association in various capacities, having been honorary treasurer and afterwards one of the vice-presidents. He also at one time served as a representative on the Central Council, where his outspoken utterances were always listened to with interest. He held strong views on the six-bell peal questions and condemned departure from the old orthodox forms in no unmeasured terms. But William Willson's bark was worse than his bite, and often he would criticise with his tongue in his cheek. In his young days he held extreme views on some subjects, but he mellowed with the years and on some vital questions his opinions changed considerably. He was always a delightful companion on any expedition, and ringing in the Midlands owes not a little to his endeavours in years gone by.

He leaves two daughters (Mrs. Lilian Hardy and Mrs. Hilda Jacques), both of whom are ringers who have distinguished themselves among the ladies of the Exercise.

THE CENTRAL COUNCIL.

(Continued from page 521.)

THE LADIES' GUILD.

One of the most striking changes in the social life of the Exercise during modern times has been the advent of lady ringers. Fifty years ago they did not exist; to-day they number several hundreds. The break with the old traditions and ideas of the belfry was a profound one, and was a small by-product of a great development which was going on in the general social life of the people of England.

In mid-Victorian times the life of the working and lower middle classes was based on the family and on a general agreement that the man's duty was to work all day to provide the means of keeping the home going, and the woman's duty was to work all day looking after the house and the swarm of young children that usually were found there. For neither husband nor wife was there much time or opportunity for recreation or amusement, nor as a rule did they seek it.

The spread of education, the reduction in the size of families and the steady, if slow, raising of the standard of living, led to a demand for shorter hours of work and more recreation; and here it was inevitable that the men should benefit first. The marked improvement in the quality of ringers which began to be noticeable soon after 1890, may be attributed in no small degree to this. A class of men now began to appear in the belfries who a few years before would have had to devote their whole time and energy to work and the home. The mid-Victorian ringers (with, of course, notable exceptions) were not the class of men who were looked on as model citizens and family men.

The movement, begun among the men, spread in due course and, after a fairly long interval, to the women. They, too, began to seek some escape from the hardships of the Victorian family life; for it had hardships, though they were sweetened by many blessings. And so, as the nineteenth century drew to its close, girls, instead of setting themselves to get married as soon as they reached the age of eighteen (as their mothers had done), were everywhere taking up sports and recreations in the same way their brothers did.

It was a natural development, and probably would have attracted little attention, but it was complicated by another movement among a very small, but vocal, number of women who began to make a demand for what they called the emancipation of women and sex equality. These women were all of the middle class and the products of the higher education which had been introduced. What they wanted was freedom to enter the so-called learned professions, the law, and medicine and the like; and because they found obstacles and vested interests in the way they turned to a demand for political equality and votes for women. The Women's Social and Political Union was formed in 1903, and for the next ten years a small number of very earnest and devoted young women made themselves an increasing nuisance in their demands for the vote. There were scarcely any limits to which they were not prepared to go, and their exploits included such things as assaulting Cabinet ministers, damaging famous pictures, breaking windows, burning down houses and churches, and the like. They had many supporters, but the mass of the nation, both male and female, and especially the older people, resented the whole thing, and

looked with disfavour and displeasure on attempts by women to force themselves into spheres of life hitherto reserved for men.

What has all this, it may be asked, to do with the Ladies' Guild of Ringers? Well, it is necessary to understand it before we can appreciate the attitude of the Exercise to the advent of lady ringers, and the Central Council's reaction to the formation of the Ladies' Guild.

As we look back now we can see that lady ringers were inevitable, and had it not been for the strident suffragists they probably would have slipped into the belfries without much comment, though their advent did run counter to the tradition and prejudices of the older men. There were complications, too, caused by the objections of clergymen to women taking an active part in church;



MISS E. K. PARKER,
Principal Founder of the Ladies' Guild, 1914.

objections based on an age-long ecclesiastical custom, and going back to St. Paul. At St. Saviour's, Southwark, and elsewhere, there was a rule which forbade women to enter the belfry whether they rang or not. Some parsons, and Law James among them, while they tolerated women ringers, insisted on their wearing hats. Whether James was always able to enforce this rule I do not know.

The first lady to score a peal was Mrs. Williams, wife of Mr. George Williams, who rang the trebles to Grand-sire Triples on handbells in 1892. The first to score a tower-bell peal was Miss Alice White, who rang the treble to Holt's Original in February, 1896, when she was fifteen years old. She afterwards took part in about twenty peals.

Soon after the beginning of the present century lady ringers began to be fairly numerous. The attitude of the men was for the most part unfavourable. They feared, or said they feared, it would lead to the lowering of the standards of ringing and striking, and the relaxing of the discipline of the belfry, and they resented (though a good many of them would not have admitted it) the intrusion of women into a sphere they considered belonged to themselves.

But where the ladies scored was this: though nearly all the men objected to women ringers in the bulk, they did not usually object to the individual women ringers they

met. I imagine very few, if any, of these early lady ringers ever knew the general feeling of the Exercise about them. This general feeling did not matter in the least, for it was only a passive one, and where a lady did become a ringer it was almost always because she had the active support of the captain of the band, who not infrequently was her father.

The Ladies' Guild was formed in October, 1912, and in 1914 was affiliated to the Central Council. The whole thing went through apparently quite smoothly, and as a matter of course, but behind the scenes, there was no little amount of opposition and conflict of opinion. In the end the ladies scored an overwhelming victory over the feelings and prejudices of the great majority of the members of the Council, a victory so overwhelming and so complete that I doubt if they ever knew there was any opposition at all.

For their victory the ladies had only one person to thank—Miss Edith K. Parker, the founder and secretary of their Guild and its mainstay ever since. I said that Sir Arthur Heywood was the only man who could have founded the Central Council. It is equally certain that Miss Parker was the only person who could have given the Ladies' Guild its standing and position. She had not long been before the Exercise, but she had already proved herself able to take her place on terms of equality in any band. As ringer, conductor, and organiser, she could bear comparison with any man. Even as a heavy bell ringer, she largely made up by skill for lack of physical strength. She was in herself a flat contradiction to the widely held opinion that women would never be any good in a belfry. The new Guild sponsored by her could not be treated with good-natured contempt.

Miss Edith K. Parker was born on November 12th, 1891, at Crawley, in Sussex, where her father, Mr. James Parker, was leader of a very skilful band which rang many Surprise peals and among them the then record length of Superlative, 9,312 changes, in 1894. Mr. Parker had more than one exceptionally clever child, but the brothers did not take to ringing. They left that to their sister.

Miss Parker learnt to ring in 1908 at Edmonton, whither her family had removed, and she made such rapid progress, under the fostering care of her father, that she rang her first peal, one of Superlative Surprise Major, on May 1st, 1909. A year later, on June 11th, 1910, she called her first peal, one of Stedman Triples, from a non-observation bell. After that she went on to call Superlative and London Major. The present generation, who know her as Mrs. George Fletcher, do not need to be told of the position she holds in the Exercise to-day. Her full record is outside my present subject, but I must mention two of her performances so exceptional for a lady ringer. She rang the 24 cwt. tenor at Lincoln Cathedral to a peal of Stedman Cinques, and the 30 cwt. tenor at Wedmore, in Somerset, to a peal of Stedman Triples.

(To be continued.)

DEATH OF A WALKDEN RINGER.

The death took place on October 31st at his residence in Hodge Road, Walkden, of Mr. Matthew Berry, a well-known local ringer and a member of the Parish Church company.

Although not a great peal ringer, he was very regular in service ringing and in attending branch meetings. On the day before he died he was working and was taken ill after coming home.

The funeral was at St. Paul's Peel, Little Hulton, on November 3rd, and before leaving the house a plain course of Grandsire Triples was rung on handbells by Miss A. Potter 1-2, J. Potter 3-4, P. Crook, sen. 5-6, T. Jones 7-8.

Among the many floral tributes was one sent by the ringers in the shape of a bell. Deceased had rung 24 peals in the standard methods.

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BELFRY GOSSIP.

The whole Exercise will join us in congratulating Canon Coleridge, who reached his eighty-fourth birthday last Monday.

Three other prominent ringers also celebrate their birthdays this week—Mrs G. W. Fletcher and Mr. Harry Chapman on Wednesday, and Mr. George Cross, the Master of the Society of Royal Cumberland Youths, last Sunday.

Both Universities, Oxford and Cambridge, saw peals scored last week. At Selwyn College, Cambridge, a peal of Bob Minor, referred to elsewhere, was rung by the University Guild, and at New College, Oxford, a peal of Bob Major was scored for the Kent County Association.

In connection with the latter, it is noteworthy that Miss Macneair, the ringer of 7-8, knew nothing at all about ringing when she joined the Oxford University Society last March. As she has had no practice in vacations, she has only actually had 13 weeks of ringing.

Another handbell peal recorded this week was rung at an A.R.P. post in Liversedge, Yorkshire.

Capt. Wilfred Hooton, the hon. librarian of the Central Council, has recently undergone an operation in an Aberdeen hospital. We are pleased to state he is now making satisfactory progress.

In our list of bells destroyed by enemy action, we omitted St. Olave's, Hart Street, London. This was one of the most regrettable of the disasters, for the ring was a very handy one and was often available for peal ringing.

The Cambridge Youths rang on November 5th, 1725, at Great St. Mary's, a 'complete' peal of Grandsire Triples. Where the word 'complete' is used in these early performances we may conclude that the composition was the one from the 'J.D. and C.M. Campanalogia,' which is false as a 5,040. The next peal at Cambridge was described as a 'true' peal.

The famous Burton-on-Trent band rang 6,720 changes of London Surprise, the extent with the tenors together, on November 8th, 1888.

Six thousand and three changes of Stedman Caters were rung at Christ Church, Spitalfields, on November 13th, 1797, and on the same date in 1820, 10,080 changes of Kent Treble Bob Major at Huddersfield.

Jasper Snowden, author and historian of change ringing, died on November 16th, 1885, at the early age of 41.

Samuel Thurston called 7,360 Oxford Treble Bob Major at St. Andrew's, Norwich, on November 16th, 1837.

DEATH OF MR. GABRIEL LINDOFF.

As we go to press we learn with deep regret of the death of Mr. Gabriel Lindoff, of Dublin. Mr. Lindoff was one of the foremost men in the Exercise and was distinguished alike as a ringer and a composer.

ANCIENT OAK BEAMS.

To the Editor.

Dear Sir,—I notice in this week's 'Ringing World' an inquiry about oak beams and how bell frames are supported in large towers.

When our ancient cathedrals and churches were built there would be much more woodlands in England than at the present day, therefore a much wider choice.

The eight corner posts forming the lantern over the octagon tower at Ely Cathedral are 63ft. long, and, according to the guide book, probably came from Chicksand in Bedfordshire.

With regard to how bell frames were supported in large towers, I give Ormskirk Parish Church as an instance. This church has the unique feature of having both a tower and spire. The local legend is that the church was built by two old maids named Orm. As one wanted a tower and the other a spire, they got over the difficulty by building both side by side.

The tower is 26ft. square inside and contains a ring of eight, tenor 25½ cwt. The main beams carrying the bell frame are supported by oak struts 10in. square. There are seven on both sides. I do not think this has been done to get the thrust lower down the tower, as the walls are about 7ft. thick at the base.

S. FLINT.

Sefton Lume, Maghull, Lancs.

BARNSELY AND DISTRICT SOCIETY.

MEETING AT WATH-ON-DEARNE.

At the November meeting of the Barnsley and District Society, held at Wath-on-Dearne on Saturday, members were present from Eastwood, Eckington, Felkirk and the local company. Touches were rung on handbells in the afternoon until 5 p.m., when the ringers adjourned to a nearby cafe for tea.

The business meeting was held in the ringing chamber, at which Mr. S. Briggs presided. An apology for absence was read from the president, who was busy at work. Best thanks were extended to the local company for the arrangements made, and it was arranged to hold a committee meeting at Barnsley on Saturday, December 13th, to make arrangements for the annual meeting.

The methods rung on handbells were Treble Bob Minor, Grandsire Triples, Bob Major, Spliced Major, Bob Royal, and a course of Bob and Gainsborough Royal spliced.

ANCIENT SOCIETY OF COLLEGE YOUTHS SUCCESSFUL ANNIVERSARY GATHERING.

Extraordinary War-Time Activity.

Despite the handicap of war-time conditions in London, the 304th anniversary of the Ancient Society of College Youths, celebrated on Saturday, was an outstanding success. Eighty members and friends gathered, not only from the London area, but from many distant places as well. Luncheon was served at Slater's Restaurant, Basinghall Street, and was presided over by the Master, Mr. E. G. Fenn, who was supported by Mr. E. H. Lewis (president of the Central Council), Canon G. F. Coleridge, Mr. A. B. Peck (hon. secretary), Mr. E. A. Young, Mr. J. S. Goldsmith, Mr. G. W. Fletcher (hon. secretary of the Central Council), Mr. C. T. Coles (hon. secretary, Middlesex County Association), Mr. R. Richardson (Master, Lincoln Diocesan Guild), Mr. E. P. Duffield (Colchester), Mr. J. A. Trollope and Mr. G. N. Price.

The hon. treasurer (Mr. A. A. Hughes) occupied the vice-chair, and others present included Messrs. G. W. Cecil (Junior Steward), H. R. Newton and H. G. Miles (Trustees), J. W. Jones (hon. secretary, Llandaff and Monmouth Association), F. W. Rogers (hon. secretary, Winchester and Portsmouth Diocesan Guild), G. H. Cross (Master) and G. W. Steere (hon. secretary, Royal Cumberland Youths), R. T. Hibbert (hon. secretary, Oxford Diocesan Guild), J. Lewis Cockey and E. C. S. Turner (Ealing), H. Hoskins (Greenwich), C. M. Meyer (Rochester Row), R. Stannard and H. R. Crick (Barking), F. C. Newman (East Ham), W. Claydon and H. Jordan (Reigate), C. Dean, D. Wright, D. Cooper, F. E. Collins and H. J. Skelt (Croydon), C. H. Kippin (Beddington), R. Bullen (Ely), C. E. Smith (Godalming), E. J. Taylor (Bradford, Yorks), E. R. Rapley and C. Longhurst (West Grinstead), G. E. Fearn (Birmingham), C. H. Dobbie (Teddington), L. R. G. Taylor (Bromley), F. Dench (Saffron Walden), B. P. Morris (Kettering), W. R. Melville (Kings Worthy), W. T. Elson (Fulham), A. H. Pulling (Guildford), A. W. Heath (Cardiff), W. Yeend, C. W. Martin, W. Williams and D. Cliff (Cheltenham), W. Hibbert and F. Munday (Basingstoke), Henry Hodgetts (Oxhey), J. Hoyle (Ashtead), J. D. Macdougall (Hornchurch), R. Post (Oxford), W. H. Coles (Hayes, Middlesex), H. Pitstow (Banstead), W. S. B. Northover (Bridport), W. A. Hughes, H. Reynolds, E. Owen, R. Wilson, H. Markwick, F. Shorter, W. Allen and R. Allen (St. Lawrence Jewry), J. Thomas (Enfield), G. Skeef (Spalding), L. Fox (Stepney), M. Atkins, R. F. Deal, J. Rumley, W. H. Pasmore and C. W. Roberts.

During the lunch the Master 'took wine' with the oldest member of the society present (Canon Coleridge), the members of over 50 years' standing (Canon Coleridge, Messrs. E. A. Young, R. T. Hibbert, H. R. Newton, R. Stannard and G. Skeef), the president of the Central Council, the Master of the Cumberland Youths and St. Lawrence Jewry band, who, although they have lost their tower and bells, still cling together. All were present at the luncheon save one.

After lunch, the toast of 'The King' was drunk with real enthusiasm.

SOCIETY'S LOSSES IN AIR RAIDS.

Mr. J. S. Goldsmith proposed the toast of 'The Ancient Society of College Youths.' He first conveyed to the gathering greetings from Mr. Frank Dawe, of Woking, who is now nearing his 80th birthday. The large gathering of the society, which had met under such unusual conditions, was not only a tribute to the heritage which had come down to them, but was also a tribute of admiration to their courage in holding on to their traditions during the past two years. They had severely suffered by air raids, but the old oak, planted in 1637, had stood up to the shocks of war very bravely, and though it had been blistered and scorched, it had only been toughened in its fibre. The society had lost many of the peals of bells on which they were wont to practise, their headquarters had gone down in the flames which swept over London and with it many of their cherished records. But in the face of great adversity they had never wavered, they had met regularly amid the ruins. He remembered attending one of their meetings, when in the nearby streets firemen were still turning their hoses upon the flames. All ringers must admire the tenacity of the old society and their devotion to the cause in the face of almost unsurmountable obstacles. A society which could carry on in such conditions need have no fear of the future. The College Youths would go on, and he was sure that when the war was over they would take their part in the reconstruction of the Exercise which must inevitably be undertaken. Pride in their past, steadfastness in the present and confidence in the future would ensure their continued success and prosperity.

The Hon. Secretary responded to the toast. He said that they had carried on under great difficulties, but he hoped that before long they would be ringing the bells again. Unfortunately, many of the bells on which they used to ring had been destroyed, and the fact that they had been able to hold their meetings regularly was due mostly to two things: the help they had received from their treasurer, Mr. Hughes, and from 'The Ringing World.' He thanked Mr. Hughes for his great kindness in coming forward when they had been bombed out of two places and really did not know where to turn for a new home. Mr. Hughes offered them his hospitality, in which Mrs. Hughes joined. When they returned to normal conditions again he thought perhaps they would not want to change. He thanked 'The Ringing World' for the way in which the meetings had been reported, and

he said they would not have been able to carry on without the aid of the paper because it would have been quite impossible to keep in touch with the members.

During the past year, continued the secretary, they had only rung two peals, both on handbells, and these by their provincial members. One was by a band in Swindon and the other was Bob Minor by Mr. Bullock and his two sons. In addition to the annual meeting, they had held 25 meetings during the year, three at The Coffee Pot—destroyed on Sunday December 29th—four at Holborn Buffet and six at Mr. Herbert Langdon's office, which was destroyed on the night of May 10th after a meeting there, and 12 at the foundry. At these 25 meetings the secretary had been present 25 times, the treasurer 24, the Master 23. Mr. E. A. Young had also attended 23 times and Mr. H. G. Miles 20. Altogether 77 members had attended the meetings, which he thought was a very good record. Mr. Peck went on to read a telegram from the Barking ringers wishing the gathering success, and letters from Mr. A. Prince (Bath), Mr. E. Murrell (St. Lawrence Jewry), who had met with an accident, Mr. W. J. Nevard (Essex), Mr. Roland Fenn (brother of the Master), Major J. H. B. Hesse, and one on behalf of Mr. Gabriel Lindoff, who was seriously ill.

PROVINCIAL SOCIETIES.

Mr. Nevard, in sending his good wishes, said he regretted not to be able to be present because of a slight accident to one of his fingers. He had just been looking through his attendances to the annual gathering, and he believed that the first was at the Bridge House Hotel, London Bridge, in 1899; he still had the programme of that gathering. There could be but few left now who had been present on that occasion. He had in his possession also 28 other programmes of anniversary gatherings he had attended since.

The Secretary also read a letter from Mr. Harold Warboys, who is serving with the Middle East Forces, conveying his good wishes and Christmas greetings to the Master and members of the society, especially those who had so staunchly supported the meetings through this troublesome period. It was very heartening to the members in the Forces to read of the meetings in 'The Ringing World.' He was pleased to report that he was well and as comfortable as desert life would allow. He had not met any other members out in the Middle East so far, and added, 'May our thoughts, prayers and efforts be directed towards our motto, Vivamus Unanimeter. May we soon assemble at the rope's end again.'

The Secretary concluded by reading a list of ringers who had died during the past year, among them 15 who were members of the society, and the company stood in silence for a few moments as a mark of respect.

Mr. H. R. Newton brought a message of apology and greetings from Mr. R. T. Woodley, of Lowestoft, a former secretary of the society, who had just celebrated his 82nd birthday and his golden wedding.

The company then drank to the health of Canon G. F. Coleridge, the oldest member of the society present, in anticipation of his birthday on the following Monday.

The Master next proposed a toast to the 'Provincial Ringing Societies,' and mentioned that in that gathering societies were represented from as far North as Yorkshire and as far West as South Wales. He thought such a representative company showed the spirit of goodwill and fellowship which existed among ringers everywhere. He referred to the loss of the bells in the City of London, and he said he felt quite sure that when it was possible to ring church bells again some of the provincial societies who had not suffered quite so badly as the College Youths would be ready to lend them their bells, so that the College Youths could carry on their practices (applause).

THE BAN ON CHURCH BELLS.

Mr. G. W. Fletcher, hon. secretary of the Central Council, responded to the toast. He would, he said, have preferred the president, who was present, to have replied to it because, as president, he could speak for all the societies, but since it was left to him he thanked the society for honouring the toast. He assured them that the Council was endeavouring to do what they could to get church bells ringing again. Those, however, who were in the Services knew perfectly well that when the heads of the Services made up their minds to do a thing they did it and it did not matter what anyone else said. He thought it was now well known that the responsibility for imposing the ban on church bells ringing rested with Mr. Anthony Eden. Mr. Eden thought about it and thought it would be a very good thing. Mr. Fletcher did not know whether Mr. Eden discussed the matter with his departments: his information was that he did not discuss it with the Minister of Home Security, and when the ban was made it was too late to do anything more about it. There was, he believed, under consideration another method of giving warning in the event of airborne invasion. He did not know whether it would eventually be used in every district, but he was hoping that if it was adopted it might be possible to ring the bells again in some places. He said he wanted to clear up one or two things connected with the difficulties which seemed to have been created. It had been stated that the public did not know what to do when they heard the church bells ring. That was perfectly true, but they were not supposed to know. The warning was for the Services, and the Services knew what they had to do if they heard the bells. Then again it had been said that the use of bells would prove most unsatisfactory. The responsibility of deciding whether they would be satisfactory or not for giving a warning rested with the Minister of War. Apart from that, how-

(Continued on next page.)

FUTURE OF LONDON RINGING.

(Continued from previous page.)

ever, he believed there was some doubt whether they would allow bells to be used, because the ringing of the bells might interfere with certain listening services. He was quite sure everyone would agree if there was any doubt about this they would be the first to say, 'We will do without our bells.'

Continuing, Mr. Fletcher said they all knew perfectly well that the College Youths had suffered very heavily in the loss of bells in the raids, and, speaking for the eight or nine societies in and around London, when the time came that they could get back to the belfries they would see that the College Youths' organisation and activities could go on until such time as their own towers were in a state when they could be used again (hear, hear). When that time came he hoped that as far as London ringers were concerned they would all meet together and be 'good boys' so that they could meet in all the towers whilst still retaining their own identity. He felt perfectly sure that this would lead to a revival of ringing as far as London was concerned. He suggested that it might be possible to set up some sort of organisation in this connection so that ringers coming to London from the provinces could be directed to the towers where they could get the type of ringing to which they were used instead of, for example, the six-bell man going to St. Paul's Cathedral and coming away disgruntled because he was not asked to ring, which, of course, he should not be. The provincial societies on their part would, he assured the College Youths, do their utmost to help them over their present difficulties with regard to bells (applause).

ABSENT FRIENDS.

The Master next proposed a toast to 'Absent Friends.' He said he knew that, though they were absent in body, they were present in heart and spirit, and from that meeting the society sent their greetings and good wishes.

The Master proposed 'The Ringing World.' He said that Mr. Goldsmith had a very difficult job in carrying on his work, but he had succeeded marvellously well. How he found the material, let alone the paper, passed his comprehension. It was, said the Master, very pleasing to see Mr. Goldsmith among them again in good health, and he hoped he would be spared to carry on 'The Ringing World' for many years to come. He appealed to all the members of the society, and indeed to all ringers, to support the paper by purchasing a copy every week.

Mr. Goldsmith (the Editor), in replying, said there were a great many difficulties in producing the paper every week, especially in view of the fact that there was practically no ringing being done. However, with the help of his friend, Mr. Trollope, they had up to the present time been able to produce a readable paper every week. He paid a public tribute to the service which Mr. Trollope had rendered, not only to 'The Ringing World,' but to the Exercise at large, in carrying on during the early months of this year. But for Mr. Trollope's services during his (the Editor's) illness there would have been no 'Ringing World' and the Exercise would by this time probably have been without any paper to hold it together.

MASTERS OF CENTURIES AGO.

Mr. E. A. Young next submitted a toast to the Masters of the Society of 100, 200 and 300 years ago. This toast, he said, had been introduced since they celebrated their tercentenary, and he hoped the sentiment that prompted it would go on until they were able to include the Master of 400 years ago. Mr. Young proceeded that the Master of a century ago was Thomas Britten, and some of those present that day had been acquainted with members of the society who knew Thomas Britten. He was a contemporary of that famous historian Osborn and was elected to the society in the same year as Richard Mills, who did so much to set the society going after it had been through one of its periods of low water. Thomas Britten rang several peals and was in the peal of Treble Bob for which Mills himself gave eight silver medals, one or two of which were still extant. One of these medals was worn as the badge of the Master up to the tercentenary and was now worn by the Immediate Past Master.

Going back to the eighteenth century, they found that in 1741 the Master was Thomas Overbury. They could not say much about him, but he had left them a memory. He was elected in 1718, in which year a dozen members were elected. Eleven of those members became quite famous, and four of them, including Overbury, occupied the Master's chair, while five of them were stewards. One was Matthew East, who called the first peal at St. Bride's in 1724. Overbury was not famous as a peal ringer, but then very few peals were rung. He must, however, have been very interested and have been a great deal amongst the members that they should honour him by putting him in the chair.

When they made another leap back of 100 years, shortly after the society was founded, the Master was Thomas Joyce. He was one of the founders of the society and in the name book his name appeared fourth in the sequence of members. That made him (the speaker) rather suspect that the name book which came down to them was in its early days a survival of the record of the Masters of the society. The original records were lost, but it might be in more leisured times they would be able to find out more about this interesting point. Although they did not know what these men were endeavouring to do by way of ringing bells, they did know they were laying the foundations of the Exercise.

The toast was drunk in silence.

GIFTS TO THE LIBRARY.

This concluded the toast list and the business meeting of the society was then held, with the Master in the chair. The secretary informed the meeting that he had received a letter from Mr. Ernest Morris, of Leicester, with which he had forwarded the ringing books he had promised to the society to replace some of those which they had lost in the fire. If by any chance any of the books were duplicated, Mr. Morris said he would be glad to have them returned to him so that he might place them in St. Margaret's belfry, Leicester. Mr. Morris asked the secretary to convey to the members his greetings and sincere good wishes and express the hope that when better times prevailed he would be able to meet them all again.

The Master proposed a very sincere vote of thanks to Mr. Morris for his kindly act towards the society. They were very keen to replace their library which was lost, and they appreciated more fully than he could express Mr. Morris' generosity.

Mr. A. A. Hughes, in seconding, said they owed a debt of great gratitude to Mr. Morris. He, Mr. Hughes, had the books in his possession now.

The following is the list of books sent by Mr. Morris:—

- 'Clavis Campanologia,' 1788 edition.
- 'Key to the Art of Ringing,' William Jones, John Reeves and Thomas Blakemore.
- 'Art and Science of Change Ringing,' William Banister, 1874, with the Rev. H. T. Ellacombe's book plate on cover.
- 'Change Ringers' Guide to the Steeple of England,' Troyte, 1879.
- Reprint of Stedman's 'Tintinologia.'
- Troyte's 'Change Ringing,' two editions.
- 'Elements of Campanology,' William Sottanstaal, 1867, two volumes.
- Shipway's 'Campalogia' reprint.

The following were nominated for election as members: Messrs. Ernest C. S. Turner and G. J. Strickland.

OFFICERS RE-ELECTED.

Mr. E. H. Lewis then occupied the chair for the election of officers for the ensuing year. He said he was sorry he had not been able to attend many meetings in the last two years, but he had been with them in his thoughts quite a lot. The reason for his absence was that he had been away from London. For a time he was in Scotland, during which his house was taken over by the War Office, and since then he had been living in Buckinghamshire, which brought him within Canon Coleridge's district. Moreover, he had not been able to give much time to ringing, as he thought everyone should be giving everything possible to get on with the war job first. If they had any spare time after that, ringing naturally came next and everything else a long way behind. Mr. Lewis then submitted the names of the officers nominated for the year, namely: Messrs. E. G. Fenn, Master; A. B. Peck, secretary; A. A. Hughes, treasurer; J. A. Waugh, senior steward; G. W. Cecil, junior steward; H. R. Newton and H. G. Miles, trustees.

Their election was carried unanimously and was acknowledged by Mr. Fenn, who said he would continue to do his best in the office and to carry out the traditions of the Ancient Society.

Mr. Lewis proposed a vote of thanks to the retiring officers for what they had done in the past year and said the list of attendances was perfectly marvellous in the conditions under which they had met. The best way the members could show their gratitude was not only by re-electing them, but by giving them all the support that was possible during their next year of office.

Mr. R. T. Hibbert also added thanks to the officers and urged the members to back them up in the forthcoming year. Although he could not attend every fortnight, he came up to London as often as he could and was always pleased to meet his friends, whether of the College Youths or any other society. He did not care what society they belonged to as long as they proved themselves men. What he asked them to do between now and the next gathering was loyally to back up the officers and enable them to carry on as efficiently as in the past.

Mr. G. E. Steere (hon. secretary, Royal Cumberland Youths), speaking on behalf of the visitors, thanked the society for permitting non-members to remain for the business meeting.

The Master said they were always pleased to see members of any society at their meetings and they were always welcome.

This concluded the business and handbell ringing was then indulged in.

Holt's Original non-conducted on handbells is always a formidable job to undertake, and it must be fourfold so immediately after the excitement of an annual dinner. Nevertheless, as our peal column shows, four members of the society achieved the task last Saturday. They had one false start, which lasted about 35 minutes. After that all was plain sailing. Mr. C. H. Roberts was the umpire and Mr. W. H. Coles heard a good deal of the ringing. Two or three others arrived at the foundry in time to hear the finish and congratulate the band.

HISTORY.—Between us and the old English there lies a gulf of mystery which the prose of the historian will never adequately bridge. Only among the aisles of the cathedral, only as we gaze upon their silent figures sleeping in their tombs, some faint conceptions float before us of what these men were when they were alive; and perhaps in the sound of church bells that peculiar creation of mediæval age, which falls upon the ear like the echo of a vanished world.—James Anthony Froude.

ANNIVERSARY OF MEMORABLE PEAL.

LONG LINK IN AUSTRALIAN RINGING.

Last Tuesday was the seventh anniversary of one of the most memorable peals in the annals of change ringing; at least it will always appear so to those who took part in it. On Armistice Day, Sunday, November 11th, 1934, the first twelve-bell peal ever rung outside the British Isles was accomplished at St. Paul's Cathedral, Melbourne, Australia. It was the principal goal of all that long journey made from the Motherland by nine English ringers, and it was a tremendous achievement to score the peal in face of numerous difficulties and some previous disappointments.

On the day that the peal was rung, the Duke of Gloucester had opened the magnificent Shrine of Remembrance erected to the memory of the 18,000 Victorians who went out in the Great War and did not return. The peal was the main object of the tour, but it was found on reaching Australia that there would be difficulties in the way of fitting it in with the services of the Cathedral and the other celebrations. Two attempts were therefore made prior to Armistice Day, one of which was lost through some interested spectators coming into the belfry, and the other because the clapper of the 11th broke. It was fortunate, as events proved, that these attempts were made, otherwise it is almost certain that the 11th clapper would have gone on the vital occasion.

The band was made up of six Australian ringers (who until the arrival of the visitors from England had never before rung more than a plain course on twelve bells) and six English ringers. Saint Paul's Cathedral bells are a really magnificent peal, and the ringing was fully worthy of them. There was never one really seriously anxious moment until the last course, when unexpectedly there was a trip among the big bells and the whole thing was in jeopardy. However, the peal was saved with not more than one lead of bad ringing, and never was the conductor more thrilled than when he called 'This is all' at the end of three hours and thirty-nine minutes' ringing. Only one of the band, the leader of the party, Mr. W. H. Fussell, had ever rung a peal of Grandire Cinques before, seven of them had never rung a peal on twelve bells, and the Australian lady, Miss Frey Shimmin, had never rung a peal of any sort.

There was another memorable feature about the band, and that was that Mr. James L. Murray took part in the peal nearly 45 years after having called the first peal ever rung in Australia. It is interesting also to know that Mr. Murray still puts in a frequent appearance for ringing at St. Paul's Cathedral despite his great age; he is now about 80 years old.

Mr. Murray tells an interesting story about that first peal, which was rung at St. Philip's Church, Sydney. Seven of the Melbourne men went up to Sydney for a holiday and travelled by sea. They rang at St. Philip's Church on Sunday, and, on coming out of the church, saw a man standing outside looking at the tower. Harry Adams, an old Kidderminster man, asked him if he was a ringer, and to everyone's surprise he said he was. He was Jabez Horton, an old Cumberland Youth. His services were at once enlisted, a peal of Grandire Triples was fixed up, and Mr. Murray had the distinction of calling the first peal in Australia.

FELKIRK RINGER MARRIED.

The wedding took place at Felkirk on Saturday, October 18th, of Corpl. Cyril Cook, R.E., son of Mr. and Mrs. W. Cook, of Ryhill, and Miss Elsie C. Dixon, only daughter of Mr. and Mrs. F. Dixon, of Birkenhead. The Rev. Canon H. R. H. Coney, Vicar of Thornhill, officiated. The bride was given away by her father. The service was fully choral and the organist was Mr. C. Butterwood.

Immediately after the ceremony handbells were rung in church by Messrs. D. Smith, H. Chant, P. Woodward and R. Ford, four members of the local company. Mr. A. Gill, of Wath-on-Dearne, was present.

A reception was held at the Wesleyan Hall, Ryhill, and many gifts were received.



MR. JAMES L. MURRAY.

LONDON CITY CHURCHES.

To the Editor.

Dear Sir,—Your leader of the 7th inst. has brought to mind only too acutely what has been in the thoughts of many of us for some time past. Mr. Summerson has virtually asked the question, 'Why should the bombed parish churches be restored?'

From the purely materialistic viewpoint the answer must be 'There is no reason to restore them and a very good one for their non-restoration.' Should this view prevail with the authorities the whole of the City churches would be scrapped as opportunity offered and their sites sold for considerable sums of money. This sounds ridiculous to the average Briton, but not so much so to anyone who has been in Church circles in the City for any length of time. We have seen the continual 'nibbling' away of one after another on doubtful pretences, the last being 'All Hallows', Lombard Street. Besides there remains still green in our memory the attempt to get rid of 19 of them at one swoop. Great sums of money would be realised for their sites. No doubt this is a very potent argument with the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, and what a fine opportunity the present situation is for carrying it out. That this is no vision may be gathered from the fact that a site like St. Lawrence Jewry is worth probably £70 to £100 per square foot, or round about £250,000.

Let us now consider what evidence we can find to justify restoration from the utilitarian point of view. I am afraid there is very little. Without doubt there are far too many for the resident population, which has gradually dwindled as large modern buildings replace the old houses with their resident 'housekeepers.' In addition, the City is no exception to the general decline in churchgoing. Beside the residents there is also a number of outsiders who become attached to a certain church or parson, but come from a distance. Their allegiance is doubtful and they go as fancy dictates, mainly. They are not a great number and it will be found that if the congregation of St. Michael's goes up by ten, then that at St. Peter's has gone down by about the same.

I will go so far as to assert that the total Sunday congregation of the City churches could be easily accommodated in St. Michael-upon-Cornhill alone. The same thing applies to the weekday services by which the churches endeavour to justify their continuance. The same people who go at 1.15 p.m. to St. Stephen's, Coleman, will be probably found the next day at St. Margaret's, Lothbury, or St. Stephen's, Walbrook. There is a class of habitual churchgoers which varies little in number, but certainly not large enough to justify all the churches being fully unattended.

There is still a third point of view, i.e., the æsthetic. He would be a bold man who would dare to dogmatise as regards the æsthetic value of the churches generally. However, the average man would not be seriously perturbed at the disappearance of certain of them. It would be quite another thing if St. Mary-le-Bow, St. Bride's and others went, however. Why, they are London, or at any rate an essential characteristic of it. Unfortunately this viewpoint usually gets lost consideration, and historic claims also are brushed aside for the sake of expediency.

But what has all this to do with bells and bellringers? In the first place if there are no towers there can be no bells. Not that all the churches in the City had bells, or even if they had could ring them. In fact, the church bells in the City, apart from three or four bright spots, have been scandalously neglected for years past—the excuse being the usual one: no money. It is quite obvious we cannot go back to the days of Annable and Holt when it seems all bells, or nearly all, were ringable, but if the old societies like the College Youths and Cumberlands are to flourish there must be facilities for practice apart from headquarters. In this respect the College Youths have suffered severely in the loss of so many towers where the bells were ringable.

Finally, would it not be wise for ringers and ringing societies to 'go' moderately and not be found in the camp of either of the extreme viewpoints? In other words, let us try to obtain restoration of some churches and bells.

Stanmore, Middlesex.

E. MURRELL.

THE FIRST PEAL RUNG.

To the Editor.

Dear Sir,—As peal ringing takes a prominent part in the activities of most ringers, it would be interesting to know with some degree of certainty when the 'first ever' was accomplished.

The interesting article on the early days of the College Youths makes the claim that the first peal was rung in 1690 at St. Sepulchre's, Snow Hill. Most ringers have, I believe, been under the impression that the first peal was rung at Norwich some 20 years later than that date.

Mr. Trollope is probably the only person who can put the facts before us to judge, and presumably the claim that the 1690 peal was the 'first ever' is backed by further facts not printed, since the facts which are given are not very convincing.

Perhaps we can have further light shed on the subject so that we can settle when and where the first peal was rung.

J. E. BAILEY.

20, Swaisland Road, Dartford.

[We think we can promise an article on the lines asked for by Mr. Bailey.—Editor 'The Ringing World'.]

CHURCH BELLS ARE NECESSITIES.*To the Editor.*

Dear Sir,—Mr. Leslie W. Bunce says the question is, 'Should parishes treat bells as necessities and insure them against enemy action or should they treat them as luxuries and trust to good fortune?' The answer is obvious. The Government have for the past 16 months considered bells as definite necessities, even to the extent of 'reserving' them for their prior use. Mr. Bunce prefers the word 'reserved,' so a little enlightenment on this cherished word may serve to clear his mind on the entire subject. My dictionary informs me that 'reserve' means 'to retain,' or 'keep in store,' and 'retain' indicates to 'keep in possession.' All bells hung in church towers for ringing are reserved, i.e., in possession of the Government, and, therefore, a charge on the State, as are all other Government possessions. If, as Mr. Bunce states, the number of bells damaged or destroyed is small, then the amount of compensation due from the Government is correspondingly small.

Mr. Bunce says we can expect that the same spirit and generosity that supplied the bells will replace them, yet he affirms in his next paragraph that they are not private property, but belong to England. This, in my opinion, should be construed as 'the property of the Church of England' (which unfortunately, or otherwise, does not embrace the whole of the English people), and are, therefore, private property, held under the trusteeship of the Church.

As to church towers becoming 'military objectives' and the opinion of Mr. Bunce 'that no German bomb has been dropped with the intention of damaging a church tower,' I presume that this opinion is also extended to cover railway stations, yards, bridges, docks, warehouses, power stations, oil drums and gasometers, etc. If this applies, it is a very poor opinion of 'German thoroughness.'

Finally, I would like to draw Mr. Bunce's attention to a resolution on this subject, passed unanimously by the annual meeting of the Kent County Association, held at Gravesend on June 29th (which I attended), and printed in 'The Ringing World' on July 11th this year, and which was to be circulated to all Kent Members of Parliament, the president of the K.C.A. (the Archbishop of Canterbury) and the diocesan authorities.

In conclusion, may I take the opportunity of thanking 'Anti-Silent' and Mr. Bunce for bringing this matter to the notice of the Exercise, and trust that the discussion has clarified any doubts as to luxuries, necessities and liabilities.

FREDK. E. PITMAN.

Bromley.

THE SMALLEST BELL TOWER.*To the Editor.*

Dear Sir,—In answer to question No. 3 by your correspondent 'Enquirer' in this week's 'Ringing World,' from a long professional experience of bells and towers, the smallest tower to contain a ringing peal of bells that I know of is at St. Ewe, near Mevagissey, Cornwall.

The dimensions are as follows; Height, approximately 40ft.; walls at base, 8ft. thick.

The inside dimensions are: Belfry, 6ft. 6in. x 6ft. 6in. x 7ft. high; ground floor to belfry level, 5ft. 10in. x 5ft. 10in. x approximately 30ft. high.

The bells are a ringing peal of six, tenor 7 cwt. 16 lb., cast at Croydon, 1926. The frame, an iron one, is in three tiers, the top tier being in the belfry proper, and the middle and bottom tiers in the 5ft. 10in. spans.

The ringing is done from the ground floor, the ropes being in a 4ft. 6in. diameter circle. It has surprised many that in so small a space the ringing is comfortable. It is an easy matter to get among the bells, and there is an equal balance of sound of all the bells, both inside and outside the tower.

I think this must be the tower your correspondent has heard of.

SYDNEY R. ROPER.

Croydon.

A LIGHT RING OF SIX.*To the Editor.*

Sir,—In reply to 'Enquirer' in your issue of November 7th. may I say that at the Church of St. Nicholas, Brockenhurst, Hampshire, there is a ring of six bells, tenor 4 cwt. 1 qr, 12 lb. They are rung for ringing and several peals have been scored there.

GEORGE PULLINGER.

Bishopstoke, Hants.

HANDBELL RINGING AT BOURNEMOUTH.

On Saturday, November 8th, at St. Peter's Hall, Bournemouth, a quarter-peal of Grandsire Triples, 1,344 changes: Herbert Mitchell 1-2, Mrs. F. J. Marshall 3-4, Arthur V. Davis (conductor) 5-6, Miss Faith Childs 7-8. The ringing was an 'au revoir' to Harold Roberts, of the Bournemouth St. Peter's band, and also a compliment to Mr. and Mrs. R. A. Reed, of Eastleigh.

The band was disappointed not to record the 'quarter' on Reg. Reed's wedding day, November 1st, but that attempt broke down after a thousand changes had been rung. Miss Mary Davis witnessed the performance.

WELLS CATHEDRAL.*To the Editor.*

Dear Sir,—In reply to 'Enquirer,' there is a very light ring of five at Tibberton in this county, all cast by Warners, 1877. The diameter of the tenor is 29 inches, and I estimate the weight as about 5 cwt., though a friend of mine who also saw it said he did not think it weighed that much. It is a very narrow tower and the bells are difficult of access. I do not say they are the lightest five, but they must be pretty close.

There are one or two heavy fives in Somerset with tenors close on 25 cwt.

Your article on the bells of Wells Cathedral is very interesting, but seems to imply that, apart from the Treble Ten and a very few peals of Stedman Caters, nothing else has been rung. In the Rev. F. E. Robinson's book, 'Among the Bells,' page 223, there is an account of a peal of Grandsire Caters. Washbrook rang the tenor and called the peal, and this was the first time this ponderous bell had been rung to a peal single handed. He went there again later and turned her in to Treble Ten, a wonderful feat. A few years ago Mr. Walter Farley called a peal of Grandsire Triples on the back eight, and if I remember correctly the footnote stated they were the heaviest eight rung to a peal.

With reference to the first peal rung there (Stedman Caters), I once heard an old hand say that he could never understand why Washbrook turned the tenor over to Greenleaf, as he was not done up at all. He just handed his rope over and stood by the tenor box and finished the calling of the peal.

The actual weight of Wells Cathedral tenor is 56 cwt. 1 qr. 14 lb.
E. V. RODENHURST.

Prees Green, Prees, Salop.

OTHER PEALS.

Dear Sir,—There was a slight mistake in your account of Wells Cathedral. I have had the pleasure of ringing both Caters and Triples there. The eight are a noble ring.

A. H. PULLING.

The Royal Grammar School, Guildford.

CHURCH BELLS AND 'AIR RAIDS.**THE SOUTHAMPTON RINGS.***To the Editor.*

Dear Sir,—I was very interested in your list of destroyed rings, and was surprised and sorry to see that St. Mary's, Southampton, bells are gone.

I went over to Southampton last week to see what had happened to all the rings of bells in the town, and noticed at St. Mary's that although the church was completely burnt out, the tower appeared to be untouched, as the louvres were still in the belfry windows and the glass in the ringing chamber windows was intact. I, therefore, concluded, apparently wrongly, that the bells were safe.

Of the other rings in the town, that of Holy Rood Church, in the High Street, has unfortunately been completely destroyed, I believe, together with the restored 14th century church. These bells were a ring of eight, tenor 144 cwt., and were cast at various times between 1742 and 1847. The dates were: Treble, 2, 4 and 6, 1742 by Thomas Lester; 3, 5 and tenor, by Thomas Mears in 1843; and 7 by C. and G. Mears in 1847.

The remaining church in the town with a ring of bells, St. Michael's, has been miraculously preserved, though the surrounding area has been devastated. The bells are a ring of eight, tenor 17½ cwt., which have, I believe, been silent for several years owing to lack of ringers.

P. N. BOND.

HAMPSHIRE RINGERS' WEDDING.

The marriage took place on November 1st at St. Mary's Church, Bishopstoke, Hants, between Gunper Reginald A. Reed, R.A., and Miss Alice M. Scott. Both are members of the North Stoneham band of ringers and well known in Hampshire, the bridegroom being the Recorder of Peals for the Winchester and Portsmouth Diocesan Guild.

It was intended that the wedding should be celebrated at North Stoneham Church, but owing to war-time restrictions it had to take place at Bishopstoke, in which parish the bride resided.

The service was fully choral. The bride was given away by her father, who is a petty officer in the Royal Navy. She was attended by five bridesmaids—one adult and four small girls, who looked very sweet in red velvet dresses.

The best man was Pilot-Sergt. Harold P. Reed, R.A.F. (brother of the bridegroom), who was recently severely wounded during air operations over enemy country, but happily is making good progress towards recovery. Like his brother, he is a ringer belonging to North Stoneham band.

A large congregation was present in the church and included a number of local ringers, amongst those present being Mr. G. Williams (Master of the Guild), A.C. Leslie Treemer, R.A.F., and Mr. George Pullinger (district secretary).

The reception was held at the Anchor Inn, Bishopstoke, and during the evening Mr. and Mrs. Reed left for London, where the honeymoon was spent.

Mr. and Mrs. Reed will take up temporary residence at Appledore, Kent.

A RINGER'S LIFE AT SEA.**JOHN FREEMAN'S VOYAGE TO SOMEWHERE.**

A letter from Sgt. John Freeman, of Lincoln, now in the Middle East, has just reached a friend in the Army 'somewhere in England.' It describes his life at sea on the long journey and was written while anchored in sight of land when nearing the end of the trip. He was looking forward to landing and said, 'I shall be very thankful when we do this, because I am reasonably fed up at the moment. Not that the sea voyage has been unpleasant—far from it—but we have done practically nothing at all. That is all right for a week or two, but, after that, time drags somewhat. I shall be glad to get on shore again if only to do a little work.

'We changed ships at the last port of call. Both have been quite comfortable as far as we have been concerned, and the bunk was the most comfortable bed I have had since being in the Army; we even had sheets. The food was pretty good and we had such luxuries as cheese and pickled onions. We were able to buy any amount of fruit and chocolate at the canteen.

'Our journey has been uneventful, the most noteworthy times being when we have put into port. At our first port of call we were not allowed to go ashore, but it was quite interesting nevertheless. Every day natives used to come alongside in small boats, some selling fruit, baskets, etc., and others diving for pennies. We were not allowed to trade with them. For one day I was on police picquet to enforce this provision. When the traders grew too attentive the hoses were turned on them and they soon sheered off.

'At the next port we were granted shore leave and this was not unwelcome after several weeks on the water. . . . The place was a seaside resort and that made it very pleasant. Our time was spent in bathing, eating and drinking and visiting places of interest. The white people were very good to the troops and some of the fellows were adopted for the period of their shore leave and taken all over the place.

'On the first boat I met several chaps from home, including one who knows my brother quite well, and another who is the nephew of one of the ringers at home. I also met a ringer from Wisbech with whom I had rung one peal. Needless to say, we had plenty to "jaw" about.'

John Freeman is now somewhere in some desert in some distant land. His many ringing friends will wish him 'the best of luck.'

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY GUILD.

Members of Cambridge University Guild meet weekly for practice at Great St. Mary's on Wednesdays, making use of both the Seage apparatus and the handbells for teaching beginners.

At Selwyn College last week three members scored a handbell peal of Bob Minor. The peal was a personal triumph for Roger Reigh, the conductor, for it was his first peal, and he called it extremely well.

The Guild has a band for practising Major, and before the university year is over next June we hope to attempt a peal, as well as a peal of Minor in more than one method. This is a very gratifying prospect.

The members are grateful to the Rev. Blyth, the president, whose interest in ringing allows him to find opportunity in his already well-filled time-table to ring with them.

A CELEBRATION.

In St. Nicholas' Church tower, Liverpool, on Sunday morning, November 2nd, a quarter-peal of Stedman Triples, 1,260 changes (Dexter's): P. W. Cave 1-2, T. W. Hammond 3-4, T. R. Butler (conductor) 5-6, G. R. Newton 7-8. Also touches of Grandsire Triples, conducted by G. R. Newton. The ringing took place to celebrate the birth of a son to Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Hammond (son and daughter-in-law of Mr. T. W. Hammond).

CROYDON RINGERS VISIT ISLEWORTH.

Ten members from the St. Peter's, Croydon, band visited All Saints', Isleworth, on Sunday afternoon, November 9th, to ring handbells with the local band for evensong.

Ringing was enjoyed for about three-quarters of an hour, the methods being Rounds and Queens on twelve, Grandsire Triples and Caters and Bob Major. Then both bands attended evensong, and the visitors received a special welcome from the Vicar, the Rev. P. W. Shepherd-Smith, before he began his address.

After the service, tea and further ringing were enjoyed by all in the Mission Hall until black-out time.

The St. Peter's band are to be congratulated, as they are all beginners and are carrying on by themselves in the absence of Mr. Wills, their very able captain.

WATFORD. HERTS.—On Friday, November 7th, at the Parish Church, 720 Bob Minor: Dennis Laud 1-2, Charles N. Leman 3-4, Richard G. Bell (conductor) 5-6. First double-handed by D. Laud. First as conductor. A compliment to C. N. Leman on the birth of a granddaughter.

NOTICES.

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

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MIDLAND COUNTIES ASSOCIATION.—Hinckley District.—Next silent ringing meeting is at Earl Shilton on Saturday, November 15th. Bells at 4.30 p.m. Handbells, etc., at the Plough during the evening. All welcome.—W. A. Wood, Dis. Sec.

GLOUCESTER AND BRISTOL DIOCESAN ASSOCIATION.—Bristol City Branch.—The monthly meeting will be held on Saturday, November 15th, at the Haymarket Hotel. Handbells will be available from 3 p.m. Tea and meeting will follow at 4.15 p.m. All ringers are welcome.—A. M. Tyler, Hon. Sec., 5, Addison Road, Bristol 3.

OXFORD DIOCESAN GUILD.—Newbury Branch.—The annual meeting will be held at Newbury on Saturday, November 22nd. Service 4.30 p.m., Parish Church, followed by tea and business meeting. Will those requiring tea please notify Mr. H. W. Curtis, Church Road, Shaw, Newbury, by Wednesday, November 19th? —T. J. Fisher, Hon. Sec., Manor Lane, Newbury.

WORCESTERSHIRE AND DISTRICTS ASSOCIATION.—Northern Branch.—Meeting for practice at Cradley (D.V.) on Saturday, November 22nd, 3 p.m. Tower bells available ('silent'). Tea 5.15 p.m. Handbells and usual evening arrangements.—Bernard C. Ashford, Sec., 9, Bowling Green Road, Stourbridge.

GUILDFORD DIOCESAN GUILD.—Leatherhead District.—A district meeting will be held at Leatherhead on Saturday, November 29th. Bells (8, clapperless, tower) or handbells available from 3 o'clock. Service 4.30. Tea at the Duke's Head 5.15, followed by business meeting. Everybody is welcome, but if you require tea please send numbers to Mr. G. Marriner, 7, Poplar Avenue, Leatherhead, as early as possible.—A. H. Smith, Hon. Sec.

HERTFORD COUNTY ASSOCIATION.—Watford District.—Annual district meeting, Saturday, November 29th, at the Studios, Falconer Road, Bushey. Handbells from 3 p.m. Tea and business meeting 5 p.m. Names for tea to Mr. E. Jennings, 50, Rudolph Road, Bushey, by November 26th.—H. G. Cashmore, 24, Muriel Avenue, Watford.

ST. MARY'S CATHEDRAL (GLASGOW) SOCIETY.—Regular practice meetings on the tower bells (10) with the apparatus will now be held on the first and third Saturdays of each month at 3 p.m., followed by handbells. All welcome.—E. A. Stafford, Hon. Sec.

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