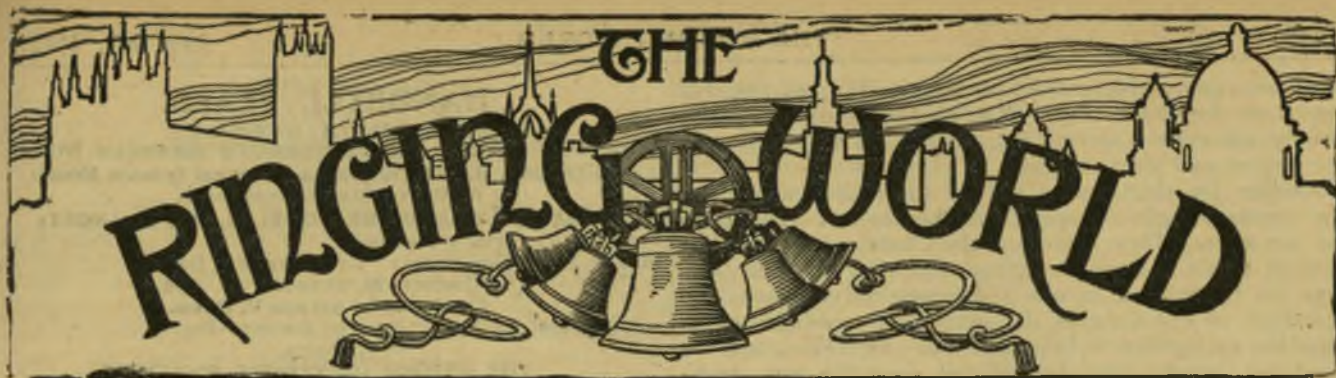




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THE CENTRAL COUNCIL.

A remark by one of the 'speakers' in the Conference, that if the Central Council 'had had some influential church official at its head it would not have failed us when the testing time came,' calls for some comment. With what the sentence says on its surface we do not propose to deal; the Conference is for the free discussion of matters and the most diverse and debatable opinions have their proper place in it. What we want to call attention to is the implication that the Council has been tested and that it has failed. The speaker assumed that there is no doubt about it and that everybody knows it.

We do not know whether this opinion is held by any number of our readers. Certainly there has been some criticism, like that which said the Council was hopelessly apathetic and the present representatives should make way for others more energetic. Such criticism, however ill informed and unpractical, is not likely to do much harm, but it would be unfortunate, and bad for the Exercise after the war, if an impression did get about among unthinking ringers that the Council could and ought to have done something which it has neglected to do.

The Central Council occupies a definite and important place in the organisation of the Exercise; but its functions are designed for peace times, and they must, and should, be in abeyance during such times as these. It is not merely that its members have, for the most part, other things to do, or that conditions do not permit of their holding meetings. It is that the things with which the Council is concerned and for which it exists are temporarily suspended, and there is nothing it can do or should try to do. Of course, it is most essential that the life of the Exercise should be kept alive and interest in change ringing maintained until better times come, but that is a task which is not laid on the Council, but on other people; not on any centralised body, but on individuals and the rank and file. The Exercise is, in fact, in the position of a motor-car which has had its engine cut off. It must run on under the momentum it has acquired until it is possible to start the engine again.

It is significant that critics who call loudly on the Council to do something do not suggest anything that it could do, except that some of them seem to think it ought to have secured the removal of the ban on church bell ringing. The ban is a bad thing; that we all agree, but it does not follow that it ought to be removed. The people of England, through Parliament, have given to the men in authority power to make such orders as they think the safety of the country calls for. Of the need they are the final judges, for they alone know all the circumstances. They decided that the use of church bells

(Continued on page 258.)

must be reserved for certain purposes. We, as ringers, may and do doubt very much whether those purposes will be adequately served, but we are not the judges in the matter and must submit.

Neither for that matter are we the people who have the greatest right to speak on the matter. The bells are not ours. They belong to the Church, and it is the Church which is most concerned with their silence. We may be thankful it is so. As everybody knows, the secretary of the Council did everything possible to induce the authorities to raise the ban. He failed, and we need not wonder that he did fail since the late Archbishop of Canterbury, and more than one Member of Parliament, tried and failed also.

The ban is like the black-out, an unmitigated evil, but an evil which must be endured. The Central Council has not been tested and has not failed.

THE EDITOR.

The news of the death of Mr. J. S. Goldsmith, which it is our sad duty to report in this issue, will be received throughout the Exercise with the profoundest sorrow. For thirty-one years he had been the Editor of this journal, which he founded in the year 1911, and his influence on the art of change ringing has been very great; but that is not the thought which to-day will be uppermost in the minds of our readers. They will think of him in other and more intimate terms. To scores of ringers he was a close, personal friend, loved and valued for rare qualities of kindness, sympathy and generosity, and even among those who had not in like measure the privilege of personal friendship, it was what he was, perhaps even more than what he had done, which endeared him to people. How strong was the affection felt for him among all ringers was most strikingly shown by the extraordinary response to the recent appeal made for him. There had been nothing like it before in the history of the Exercise, and while we regret that he was not spared to enjoy the result of the appeal, we are glad to know that it touched him to the depths of his being, and in no small degree lightened the tedium of his long illness.

John Goldsmith came of a family which for generations had been connected with Southover, Lewes, Church. His father was parish clerk and his grandfather before that; and his mother carried on the duties after her husband died. It was she who, as he was fond of telling us in after years, first sent John Goldsmith to the belfry and made a ringer of him. He had thus change ringing in his very bones. At a very early age he showed a great aptitude for the art. He took the fullest advantage of the nearness of the famous Brighton band. The fact that he was a ringer among ringers, sharing his fellows' opinions and ambitions, helped in no small degree to make him the success he was, but all that would not have availed without the deep sympathy and wide vision, the limitless patience and goodness of heart which were his very own.

HANDBELL PEALS.

BOURNEMOUTH, HAMPSHIRE.

THE WINCHESTER AND PORTSMOUTH DIOCESAN GUILD

On Thursday, May 14, 1942, in Two Hours and Seventeen Minutes,

At BRAYSTONES, SOUTHBORNE.

A PEAL OF GRANDSIRE DOUBLES, 5040 CHANGES;

Forty-two six-scores, ten callings.

Tenor in D.

MRS. F. JOHN MARSHALLSAY 1-2 | ARTHUR V. DAVIS ... 3-4

*JOSECELIN M. TURNER ... 5-6

Conducted by ARTHUR V. DAVIS.

* First peal 'in hand.' Rung on Ascension Day.

OXFORD.

THE OXFORD UNIVERSITY SOCIETY.

On Tuesday, May 19, 1942, in One Hour and Forty-Five Minutes,

At HERTFORD COLLEGE,

A PEAL OF BOB MINOR, 5040 CHANGES;

Seven different callings.

Tenor size 14 in E flat.

*PETER C. GIBBS (Hertford) 1-2 | WM. L. B. LEESE (St. John's) 3-4

JOAN HOULDSWORTH (St. Hilda's) ... 5-6

Conducted by WILLIAM L. B. LEESE.

* First peal.

SWINDON, WILTSHIRE.

THE GLOUCESTER AND BRISTOL DIOCESAN ASSOCIATION.

On Monday, May 25, 1942, in Three Hours and Twenty-Six Minutes.

At 6, REGENT CIRCUS,

A PEAL OF BOB MAXIMUS, 5016 CHANGES;

Tenor size 17 in B flat.

*IVOR C. N. BELL ... 1-2 | *WILLIAM L. B. LEESE ... 7-8

*JACK S. ROBERTS ... 3-4 | *REV. M. C. C. MELVILLE ... 9-10

*W. BERTRAM KYNASTON ... 5-6 | *DENNIS W. S. SMOUT ... 11-12

Composed and Conducted by REV. MALCOLM C. C. MELVILLE.

* First attempt for a peal on twelve bells. † First attempt for Bob

Maximus, and first attempt for a peal on twelve bells 'in hand.'

‡ 25th peal. First attempt for a peal as conductor on twelve bells.

The band are indebted to Mr. Leese, of Oxford University, for coming

over to Swindon, and thus making the attempt possible.

BUSHEY, HERTFORDSHIRE.

THE HERTFORD COUNTY ASSOCIATION.

On Tuesday, May 26, 1942, in Two Hours and Eleven Minutes,

At 50, RUDOLPH ROAD,

A PEAL OF OXFORD TREBLE BOB MAJOR, 5088 CHANGES;

Tenor size 15.

EDWIN JENNINGS ... 1-2 | ERNEST C. S. TURNER ... 5-6

EDWIN A. BARNETT ... 3-4 | HAROLD G. CASHMORE ... 7-8

Composed by J. PLATT. Conducted by EDWIN A. BARNETT.

ENFIELD, MIDDLESEX.

THE MIDDLESEX COUNTY ASSOCIATION AND LONDON DIOCESAN GUILD.

On Wednesday, May 27, 1942, in Two Hours and Forty-Six Minutes,

At 45, WALSINGHAM ROAD,

A PEAL OF GRANDSIRE CATERS, 5003 CHANGES;

Tenor size 16½.

MRS. J. THOMAS ... 1-2 | ERNEST C. S. TURNER ... 5-6

*ALBERT M. TYLER ... 3-4 | MRS. E. K. FLETCHER ... 7-8

Composed by A. KNIGHTS. Conducted by ERNEST C. S. TURNER.

* First peal of Grandsire Caters. First peal of Grandsire Caters

on handbells as conductor.

LEICESTER.

THE MIDLAND COUNTIES ASSOCIATION.

On Saturday, May 30, 1942, in Two Hours and Thirty-Eight Minutes,

IN THE BELFRY OF THE CHURCH OF ST. MARGARET,

A PEAL OF BOB MAJOR, 5152 CHANGES;

Tenor in C.

*MISS BETTY RAYFIELD ... 1-2 | EDWARD R. WHITEHEAD ... 5-6

*ALFRED BALLARD ... 3-4 | ERNEST MORRIS ... 7-8

Composed and Conducted by ERNEST MORRIS.

* First handbell peal of Bob Major and first attempt. Specially

arranged for Miss Rayfield, who now returns to Eastbourne, thence

to H.M. Forces.

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JOHN HOLT.**A GREAT RINGER.**

BY J. ARMIGER TROLLOPE.

Of all the members of the Exercise during its long history none has been more widely known than John Holt, and none has rendered greater service to the art of change ringing. Yet his career was quite short and his story is a simple one and soon told. Little definite information about him has come down to us apart from the entries in peal books and the figures of his compositions, but there are hints and allusions sufficient to enable us to put together a fairly full account.

He was born on March 11th, 1726, the son of Hugh and Mary Holt, and was baptised at Christ Church, Newgate Street, on March 31st. For that statement I have no direct evidence, since the name is a fairly common one and absolute identification is not possible. Having studied his life and taken all known circumstances into consideration, I came to the conclusion that he was born about the year 1725 and that in all probability he was a London man. I then searched the parish registers and when I discovered the entry at Christ Church in March, 1726, I had no reasonable doubt that it referred to the future ringer.

His family evidently were in very poor circumstances, and except for his natural parts he grew up without any advantages whatever. Doubtless he could read and write, for few Londoners have ever been without that qualification, but of education in the ordinary sense he had none. The 'Clavis' speaks of him as a 'poor unlettered youth.' By trade he was a shoemaker, like two other men, John Noonan and Joseph J. Parker, who later made names as composers comparable to his own. Socially he was on a lower level than the average member of the leading metropolitan societies; lower not merely than the 'gentlemen' such as Theodore Eccleston, Francis Popham and William Gardiner, but also men such as Benjamin Annable, John Cundell, and John Hardham. In the Union Scholars' book, which is now in the British Museum, his name is entered, not like the rest in ordinary Old English characters, but is highly ornamented and with every mark of distinction, so that Jasper Snowdon concluded that when he joined he must have been considered a very great acquisition to the society. But this is only an example of the difficulties which beset the historical investigator and of how appearances may lead astray even a very clever and careful man; for the entry was not made when Holt joined, but some years later after he had become the leading man among the Union Scholars and had shown something of the stuff he was made of. In 1745 he was a young and unknown man who came shyly knocking at the door of the Union Scholars because they were, just then, the least of all the big societies, and so the more likely to give him a welcome and find him a place.

Of his appearance we know nothing, but it is pretty certain that he was not one of those big, lusty, men like Annable, or Cundell, or Trenell, or Mainwaring, who delighted in turning in big bells. The heaviest he ever rang to a peal was the tenth at St. Bride's, which may have weighed some 15 cwt. Usually he was to be found at the light end and one is tempted to imagine him as a man of rather frail physique and not over strong; but apart from his early death there is no real justification for such a view.

The Union Scholars were an old and well-established company; but since 1718 they had not been able to produce a band good enough to ring a peal except when they were temporarily strengthened by deserters from the Eastern Scholars. The last of these visitations was in 1741, and of that band Sharp, Lovell, Dickenson and Simms had gone back and some of the others had dropped out of peal ringing. Holt's task was first to make a position for himself within the society, and then to gather together a peal-ringing band. He took two years to do it, and on October 27th, 1747, by calling a peal of Bob Major at St. Margaret's, Westminster, he inaugurated the last and most prolific period of peal ringing activity in the history of the Union Scholars.

In the five years between October, 1747, and September, 1752, the company rang twenty-two peals, all of which, save one, Holt called. They consisted of Plain Bob Triples 4, Plain Bob Major 9, Double Bob Major 3, Grandsire Triples 1, Grandsire Caters 2, Grandsire Cinques 1, Oxford Treble Bob Major 1, and Court Bob Major 1. Most of them were rung in the West End at St. Margaret's, St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, St. Giles-in-the-Fields, and St. Bride's. During the same period the Eastern Scholars rang thirteen peals, the College Youths three peals, and the newly founded Cumberland Youths fourteen peals.

Three of Holt's peals were rung on the front bells in twelve-bell towers, which shows that the company was short of heavy bell ringers, for there were men in other societies able to ring the tenors in those steeples to peals. Heavy bell ringing then was a feat confined to a comparatively few exceptionally strong and skilled men.

On December 5th, 1749, Holt called a peal of Bob Major on the largest eight bells at St. Sepulchre's, Snow Hill, the first of Major on the bells. To this Thomas Prior rang the tenor. Like most ringers at the time he had migrated from society to society and had recently come from the College Youths, who, at the time, were ringing no peals. The ringer of the treble was James Albion and this apparently was his first peal. He was a Hackney born man and was by profession a mercantile clerk and professional writer. He re-wrote the peal and name books of the Union Scholars and afterwards those of most of the contemporary London societies. His excellent work is still to be seen in the manuscripts in the British Museum and in the earliest of the books belonging to the Ancient Society of College Youths.

The only peal Holt rang in and did not conduct was called by Thomas Ward. He may have been a son of John Ward, who took part in Annable's first peal and for many years was a leading member of the College Youths' band. Thomas Ward rang in Holt's first peal and in a dozen by the Union Scholars, but he evidently was ambitious of leadership and deserted to the Eastern Scholars, with whom he called two or three five-thousands, including the last rung by that society.

Other interesting peals rung by the Union Scholars at this time included Grandsire Caters at St. Sepulchre's 'being,' as the peal book claims, 'the first ever performed in that method on those Bells,' a claim which no doubt was literally correct, but nineteen years before John Cundell had called a peal of Grandsire Caters in the steeple. Meanwhile, however, the bells had been recast by Samuel Knight. Five days after Holt's peal, George Meakins called a longer length.

YORKSHIRE ASSOCIATION.

EASTERN DISTRICT.

The annual meeting of the Eastern District of the Yorkshire Association was held at Howden on Saturday, May 23rd, and was attended by about 14 ringers from Eastrington, Goole, Hemingbrough, Hessele, Hull, Selby, York and the local company. Two welcome visitors were Mr. P. J. Johnson, the vice-president of the Western District, and Mrs. Johnson, of Headingley, Leeds.

A short service was held in church, at which the Vicar of Howden officiated and the Vicar of Wressell gave the address. Tea was served in the Manor House Cafe, where the hostess, as usual, looked after the company well by putting on an excellent meal.

At the business meeting the Vicar of Howden, the Rev. A. Woring, presided, and two new life members were elected, the Rev. A. Woring and the Rev. H. Firby, of Eastrington. Goole was selected as the next place of meeting, to be held in August if possible.

Mr. F. Cryer was re-elected vice-president, and Messrs. Walters, Hill and Sellers on the committee, all for a period of three years.

A hearty vote of thanks was passed to the Vicar for his kindness at all times to the association, to the Vicar of Wressell for his address, and to the organist. In his reply, the Vicar gave the association a hearty welcome to Howden, where they would always be welcome. A vote of thanks was passed to the local company, Mr. R. B. Smith responding.

Mr. C. Hill raised the question of the ban on ringing, and said he thought the association ought to bring the matter before the Central Council and persuade it to bring pressure to bear on the authorities to relax the ban and allow Sunday service ringing at least. After others had spoken the secretary promised to bring the matter up at the general committee meeting at Selby on June 20th.

Ringling took place on tower bells with clappers fastened and on handbells, and so ended a meeting small in numbers, but very pleasant and enthusiastic.

PETERBOROUGH DIOCESAN GUILD.

ANNUAL MEETING.

The annual meeting of the Peterborough Diocesan Guild was held at Kettering on Whit Monday. Service was conducted in the Church of SS. Peter and Paul by the Rev. A. T. Segger, of Walgrave, the Master (the Rev. E. S. Powell) read the lesson, and the address was given by the Rector of Kettering, the Rev. G. Holborow. Mr. S. J. Loasby officiated at the organ.

Fifty-one sat down to tea, after which the business meeting was held. The general secretary, Mr. R. G. Black, said he had just heard that Mr. G. W. Brafeld, leader of the Earls Barton band, had passed away the day before. He had been looking forward to attending this meeting. Only 33 years of age, he leaves a widow and a two-year-old daughter. As a token of respect the company stood in silence.

The officers were all re-elected. Discussion took place on the difficulty some of the branch secretaries are having in collecting subscriptions, which was most marked in those branches where no meetings were held.

The Master spoke of the duties as members of a Diocesan Guild; subscriptions should be paid, but it was more important still to keep in every branch a nucleus of keen members, who would have plenty to do, to re-establish ringing after the war. That would prove to be real hard work for someone.

The place of next year's annual meeting was left to the Central Committee to deal with.

Mr. J. C. Dean moved a vote of thanks to the Rector for the service and for his address, to Mr. H. Baxter for the greater part of the arrangements, and to Mrs. Kennedy and her band of helpers for producing such an excellent tea in these difficult times.

Besides those mentioned there were present Mrs. Powell, the Rev. W. R. M. Chanlin (Northampton), the Rev. C. R. Norcock (Weekley) and Mr. T. Tebbutt (Central Council representative), Messrs. H. Baxter, R. W. Butcher and J. C. Dean (branch secretaries).

Apologies were received from the Rev. J. H. Marlow, the Rev. F. V. Fenn and Mr. A. Bigley. Mr. E. C. Lambert and Mr. Higgins, of Cosgrove, discovered when they had got part of the way to Kettering that they could not get there in time, so they returned home.

LEEDS AND DISTRICT SOCIETY.

VISIT TO GUISELEY.

At the May meeting of the Leeds and District Amalgamated Society, held on Saturday, May 30th, at Guiseley, the starting time was fixed at 5 p.m. to enable those who were working late, and those who wanted to work in their garden after dinner, a chance of getting to the meeting. The same times will be tried again next month.

Mr. J. F. Harvey presided at the business meeting, and members were present from Armley, Bradford, Bramley, Idle, Drighlington, Shipley and the local company. A vote of thanks was passed to the Rector, churchwardens and the local company for permission to hold the meeting and other arrangements.

The next meeting will be held at Idle on Saturday, May 27th. The meeting will begin at 5 p.m., and the local company asks members to bring sandwiches or other food. Tea for drinking will be provided at 6 p.m., and the business meeting will follow.

BELFRY GOSSIP.

We are very sorry to learn that during the air raid on Exeter the tower of St. Sidwell's Church was cut in half by a bomb and has since been demolished. St. Sidwell's contained a fine ring of ten bells.

We much regret to hear that Mr. Tom Miller has been taken ill and has been removed to a Birmingham hospital. All his many friends will wish him a speedy recovery.

The two old churches destroyed in the air raid on Norwich were St. Bartholomew's and St. Benedict's. Neither was of any particular value. St. Benedict's had one of the four round towers in the city, with a ring of three bells, all by members of the Brend family and of different dates between 1573 and 1639. They were hung for ringing in ancient frame and fittings, and 50 years ago were occasionally rung to changes.

Last Monday was the thirtieth anniversary of a notable handbell peal. On June 1st, 1912, 14,031 changes of Stedman Caters were rung at Guildford by a band who scored many peals in the method. Mr. A. H. Pulling rang 3-4 and conducted; the others were A. F. Shepherd 1-2, W. Shepherd 5-6, J. Hunt 7-8, and F. Blondell 9-10. This was at the time the longest length in hand, beating 13,440 Bob Major rung at Pudsey 31 years ago to-day. In August, 1912, Mr. Pulling's band beat their own and everybody else's lengths on tower or handbells by ringing 19,738 changes in nine and a half hours.

The first peal on the twelve at St. Martin's, Birmingham, 5,324 Grandsire Cinques, was rung on June 3rd, 1773.

John W. Taylor, the famous bellfounder of Loughborough and a notable ringer, died on June 4th, 1919.

Holt's Original was rung non-conducted at St. John's, Waterloo Road, on June 4th, 1898.

Fifty years ago to-morrow was Whit Monday. Seven peals were rung—Grandsire Triples 3, Stedman Triples 1, Caters 1, Kent Treble Bob Major 1, and Oxford Treble Bob Major 1. The last was 16,608 changes at Debenham.

As an example of how things have changed, it is interesting to learn that James Motts, the conductor of this peal, rode the 14 miles between Ipswich and Debenham on a high 'penny-farthing' bicycle.

DEATH OF MR. J. S. GOLDSMITH.

We deeply regret to announce the death of Mr. J. S. Goldsmith, which took place soon after midnight last Monday. The funeral was at Pyrford Church yesterday.

THE COLLEGE YOUTHS.

The Master (Mr. E. G. Fenn) presided at the meeting of the Ancient Society of College Youths on Saturday, May 23rd, and was supported by the hon. secretary (Mr. A. B. Peck) and the hon. treasurer (Mr. A. A. Hughes). The following members were present: Messrs. R. Stannard, J. A. Trollope, C. W. Roberts, E. A. Young, C. H. Kippin, R. Spears, H. Hoskins, W. H. Pasmore, G. M. Kirby, R. F. Deal, W. T. Elson, E. Hartley, J. Chapman, H. G. Miles, C. C. Mayne, and Corps. K. Arthur and W. J. Coward, R.A.F., and Lt.-Corpl. W. J. Davidson, of Newcastle. A visitor was Pilot Officer Christopher Brown, R.A.F., of Chew Magna.

A letter was read from the Vice-Provost of Southwark Cathedral acknowledging a communication from the society respecting the safety of the bells, which are now on the floor of the two transepts. The writer said he appreciated the point raised and promised to consult the Cathedral surveyor.

Mr. W. H. Lawrence, of Little Munden, wrote sending greetings and his appreciation of many kindnesses he had received during 50 years.

Mr. Alexander Young was congratulated on his 77th birthday, which had fallen on the previous day.

The loss of two members of the society, Mr. A. V. Selby, of Kensington, and Capt. S. G. Armstrong, was mentioned, and members stood in silence as a mark of respect.

The Master brought greetings from Mr. Geoffrey Rice, and Mr. E. A. Young from Mr. Isaac Emery.

There was a considerable amount of handbell ringing, including a touch of Grandsire Triples by officers and N.C.O.'s of H.M. Forces.

The next meeting will be on June 6th at the Whitechapel Foundry.

MONS. JOSEF DENYN.

To the Editor.

Dear Sir,—News was received in Loughborough some six or eight months ago that M. Denyn had been accidentally killed by having been run over by a German military vehicle in Malines and that he was buried with the honours due to him as a Chevalier of the Order of Leopold.

JOHN TAYLOR AND CO.

MIDLAND COUNTIES ASSOCIATION.**HINCKLEY DISTRICT MEETING.**

A most successful meeting of the Hinckley District of the Midland Counties Association was held at Broughton Astley on May 23rd, when a strong gathering of ringers and friends met at the Social Hall. Untiring efforts have been made by the district officers since the ban to make handbell ringing interesting and attractive, and this combined meeting and social evening was a further enterprise on their part, the results with the assistance of the local band being highly successful.

Mr. A. Ballard presided and was supported by the hon. secretary, Mr. W. A. Wood, Mr. G. A. Newton and Mr. F. R. Measures. Members were present from Burbage, Croft, Coventry, Earl Shilton, Leicester, Sapcote, the local band, and a member of West Hartlepool ringers now in H.M. Forces and stationed in the locality. The Rector, the Rev. C. N. Turner, made an inspiring speech of welcome and said how much the visit of the ringers and the changes and tunes on the handbells were enjoyed. All looked forward to the time when the ban on the ringing of tower bells would be lifted. Mr. C. Cooke, choir-master, most aptly endorsed the Rector's remarks.

The methods rung on handbells included Stedman Triples and Grandsire Caters. Tunes were played by C. H. Webb (Coventry), E. G. Webb (Croft), G. Newton and E. Chesterton (Earl Shilton) and C. Brown (Sapcote).

The surprise item of the meeting was the showing by Mr. A. Hubbard of a film, 'Ringing of Grandsire Caters,' by a cast of all M.C.A. stars, featuring 'Josiah' (Old Joe to his pals at Leicester). Unfortunately, it was not a sound picture, but this was recompensed by the expression on old Joe's face as the tenors dodged, and, judged by the applause given, one would have thought Clark Gable was being screened.

Mr. A. Ballard proposed a vote of thanks to all who had assisted to make the meeting a success, and this was seconded by Mr. C. H. Webb. Mr. H. Fretter suitably responded.

A move was then made to a certain establishment round the corner, where a room was available and further ringing of changes of tunes took place. Some idea of the enthusiasm prevailing can be gathered from the action of the young lady member who, when grandfather left for home on the last bus, would not accompany him, and so had to walk nine miles home. All agreed that the venture had been most successful and enjoyable and was a happy token for the future of bellringing.

DEATH OF MR. T. C. TOMPKINS,**OLD STONY STRATFORD RINGER.**

We regret to announce the death of Mr. T. C. Tompkins, of Stony Stratford, who passed away at his residence on Sunday, May 17th, after an illness lasting only ten days. He was 74 years of age. He became a member of St. Giles' band about 1908, and under the conductorship of the late C. N. Valentine he soon became a most enthusiastic and proficient peal ringer as well as a regular Sunday service ringer. His peals numbered about 70, and among them was the first peal of seven Surprise Minor methods for the Oxford Diocesan Guild. He was also a member of the Peterborough and Bedfordshire Guilds.

The funeral took place at St. Giles' Church on Wednesday, May 20th, the interment being in the Calverton Road Cemetery. The hearers were four of his fellow ringers. The floral tokens included one from St. Giles' tower and from the North Bucks Branch.

Of a quiet and genial disposition, he will be sadly missed by his colleagues and the deepest sympathy is extended to his widow.

HOLT'S ORIGINAL.**VARIATION OR INNOVATION.****To the Editor.**

Dear Sir,—With reference to the handbell peal of Grandsire Triples rung at Bushey on May 23rd, conducted by E. C. S. Turner, in view of the note in Belfry Gossip, I would suggest that this composition is wrongly described as 'Holt's Original,' nor do I think it an interesting variation.

I would call it an 'innovation' and one which ought not to be allowed in a composition of this sort. If the peal is allowed to go through as Holt's Original it should most certainly have a footnote to the effect that the 'innovation' was made.

THOMAS H. REEVES.

136, Newton Road, Sparkhill, Birmingham 11.

THE RECENT AIR RAIDS ON BATH.

Altogether 14 churches and chapels have been destroyed or very badly damaged by enemy action. Two churches possessing peals of eight have been completely burned it. In one case a good peal by Taylors has been melted, and in another church in the centre of the city the bells are lying broken at the foot of the tower.

Mr. Tom King, who lived near Twerton Parish Church, had his house completely demolished by a direct hit. Although both he and Mrs. King were buried under the debris for some hours, they were practically unhurt, except for shock.

Mr. W. Prescott also had his house badly damaged. So far as we have been able to ascertain, there have been no casualties amongst the Bath ringers.

DEATH OF MR. GEORGE W. BRADFIELD.**CAPTAIN OF EARLS BARTON BAND.**

We regret to announce the death of Mr. George W. Bradfield, the captain of the Earls Barton band, who passed away on Sunday, May 24th, after a very short illness, at the age of 33.

The funeral took place at the Parish Church and was attended by many people, including Mr. W. Perkins, of Irthlingborough, Mr. F. Barber, of Doddington, and Mr. B. P. Morris, of Kettering, who represented the Peterborough Diocesan Guild, and Mr. T. Houghton, of the local company. The Vicar paid a tribute to Mr. Bradfield's love of bells and ringing and to his loyalty as a churchman. After the service a course of Bob Minor was rung on handbells by W. G. Callis, C. W. Partridge and W. Perkins.

When tower bell ringing came to an end Mr. Bradfield enthusiastically took up handbell ringing and was proficient in a number of Doubles and Minor methods. He leaves a widow and a little daughter to mourn their loss.

DEATH OF MR. GEORGE THOMAS GRANT.

We regret to record the death of Mr. George Thomas Grant, of Bishopstoke, Hants, who died on May 11th, at the age of 66.

Mr. Grant was taught to ring at the age of 17 at Fareham, Hants, by the late John Whiting, who did so much for ringing in South Hampshire at the end of the last and beginning of the present century.

In 1910 Mr. Grant moved to Bishopstoke and joined the local band of ringers. In 1915 he was elected captain and remained so to his death. He had taken part in about a dozen peals.

Mr. Grant had been a member of church choirs from his school days, first at Fareham and afterwards at Bishopstoke. He was a very regular Sunday service ringer, and his genial personality and friendly smile will be sadly missed.

The funeral service was held at the Parish Church on May 15th. Mr. G. Williams (Master) represented the Winchester and Portsmouth Diocesan Guild, and Mr. G. Pullinger the local ringers. The many floral tributes included one from the local ringers.

DEATH OF WELL-KNOWN LANC'S RINGER.**MR. J. H. RIDYARD'S FATAL ACCIDENT.**

We deeply regret to announce the death of Mr. Joseph H. Ridyard, who met with a fatal accident when cycling to his work on May 21st.

The funeral was at St. Mark's, Worsley, on the 25th, and was conducted by the Vicar, the Rev. J. Renshaw. Mr. E. Derbyshire, the Vicar's warden, was at the organ, and Mr. H. Chapman, the people's warden, read the lesson. The Vicar paid a tribute to Mr. Ridyard's life-long service to the Church as a bellringer, and after the last hymn a course of Grandsire Triples was rung by R. Allread 1-2, P. H. Derbyshire 3-4, F. Grundy 5-6, and Peter Crook, sen. 7-8. The local ringers sent a floral tribute and acted as bearers.

Mr. Ridyard joined the Lancashire Association in 1911 and had rung 121 peals, the majority of which he conducted. He had been hon. secretary of the Manchester branch for six years and was a keen ringer and conductor. He will be greatly missed. He leaves a widow and a son to mourn their loss.

A FAMILY GATHERING AT EAST ILSLEY.

On Whit Sunday, at the old Church of St. Mary, East Ilsley, the baptism of two granddaughters of Mr. W. Hibbert was solemnised. The father of one is doing his bit somewhere in the East, the father of the other being Mr. C. J. Hibbert, the conductor of the local band. As no touch or peal could be rung in the tower, the handbells were brought into use and a touch of 209 Grandsire Triples was rung double-handed, after which several plain courses, in which grandfather and father, great-uncle and aunt and three second cousins participated. The health of the fathers, mothers and daughters were toasted in a well-known 'house of call' before the family separated.

FAREWELL PEAL TO REV. M. MELVILLE.**BOB MAXIMUS AT SWINDON.**

The handbell peal of Plain Bob Maximus rung on May 25th at Swindon, and reported in this week's 'Ringing World,' was a farewell peal to the Rev. Malcolm Melville, who left the next day to join the staff of Lichfield Cathedral. It was rung at the new headquarters of the Highcliffe Society, and after the peal Mrs. Bell kindly entertained the ringers to tea.

The three-and-a-half hours' peal ringing was apparently not enough for the ringers, for after tea they kept it up until a late hour in a variety of methods: Treble Twelve, Double Norwich Royal and Major, Grandsire Cinques, Little Grandsire Caters, Little Bob Royal, London Surprise and several other Plain Major methods. Hopes were expressed that it would not be long before Mr. Melville returned for a visit and perhaps a peal.

DAGENHAM, ESSEX.—At 108, Gay Gardens, on Friday, May 22nd, 1,440 of Bob Minor in 33 minutes: L. Bullock (age 12) 1-2, J. Bullock 3-4, T. Bullock (age 15, conductor) 5-6. A birthday compliment to J. Bullock.

A FAMOUS LONG PEAL.

TREBLE BOB AT DEBENHAM.

To-morrow is the fiftieth anniversary of a performance which, though it has since been beaten, will always rank high among long peal records. On Whit Monday, June 6th, 1892, eight men belonging to the Norwich Diocesan Association rang in ten hours and thirty-two minutes at Debenham, in Suffolk, Thomas Day's peal of Oxford Treble Bob Major, 16,608 changes.

The band was a picked one, and came from several towers. James Motts, the conductor, his brother William, Robert Brundle and Frederick Tillet belonged to St. Mary-le-Tower, Ipswich; Arthur Aldham, formerly an Ipswich man, was at the time living in Leicestershire; David Collins and his brother Edgar belonged to the village of Worlingworth; and William Crickmer to Earl Soham. Of these men Messrs. Brundle, Tillet and Crickmer happily are still with us.

The peal was not rung at the first attempt. Ever since the same composition had been rung to the Kent Variation at Mottram in Lancashire in the year 1883, it had been the ambition of the Suffolk men, and many attempts had been made, ten by James Motts' party and some by rival bands under Charles Mee and others. In the previous year the band who were ultimately successful (except that Mr. W. P. Garrett took part instead of Edgar Collins) rang 12,320 changes, and then failed owing to a misunderstanding about the calling of a bob.

EXCELLENT STRIKING.

The performance was specially marked by the general excellence of the striking and the complete absence of anything in the nature of a muddle or even a trip. For that there were reasons. The band were, as we have said, picked men, and they belonged to a district where there was a long tradition of ringing and where the standards of striking were higher than almost anywhere else in England. In East Suffolk men then rang Oxford Treble Bob Major and little else except Oxford Treble Bob Major. All the skill and experience that later men devoted to ringing more difficult methods they devoted to striking. In addition, conducting, as some moderns understand it, did not exist. The conductor was expected to call the bobs at the right places and to make sure that there was no shift of course. He was not expected to drag the band through a muddle; he never attempted to do so, nor would an average band have tolerated such a thing. Anything more serious than a missed dodge or a temporary lapse in striking meant a lost peal.

The result was that fewer peals were rung, but the average quality was high. This was the reason why so many attempts had to be made before the long peal was achieved.

Fifty years ago Treble Bob was just coming to the end of its long supremacy as the most popular of Major methods. The Oxford variation had already been superseded by the Kent everywhere except in East Anglia. The merits of Double Norwich were beginning to be widely appreciated, and the more advanced bands were turning to Superlative, which authorities like Arthur Heywood and Earle Bulwer were proclaiming as the 'queen' of methods. Oxford Treble Bob died slowly in East Anglia, but its time had come, and the long Debenham peal served as a fitting climax to its supremacy.

SUCCESSIVE RECORD LENGTHS.

The first long peal of Treble Bob Major was rung as far back as 1727 by the Norwich Scholars. It was a 10,060 and remained the record until 1800, when George Gross called 10,112 at Edmonton. Whether it was true or false there is no means of knowing. This was beaten in 1814 at Otley in Yorkshire, when Shipway's 12,320 was rung by eleven men, the conductor calling from manuscript. There followed 14,016 at Oldham in 1821, and 15,168 at Elland in 1831, the last with ten ringers and two conductors.

Thomas Day, of Birmingham, now turned his attention to the composition of long peals in the method, and obtained some lengths, including 15,840 and 16,608. The first was rung by the College Youths at Bethnal Green in 1868. The band included most of the men who were then the leading members of the society—Cooter, Pettit, Horrex, Matt. Wood, Murray Hayes, and Haley, who called. The peal has always been spoken of as first class in its execution.

Day's longer length was rung at Farsheaton in 1872, but during the performance the bells got out of their proper order and rounds were forced up at the end. The peal was correctly rung at Mottram in 1883. All these peals from that at Otley were in the Kent Variation.

When the Suffolk men started for their peal at Debenham they were not attempting a length longer than anything that had been rung, and the reason was that no such composition had been produced. It was not until the present century that a 16,800 was produced by Mr. E. Timbrell, and this was rung at Mottram in 1906 by the Chester Diocesan Guild. The truth of the performance was challenged, but with what justification we cannot say.

Longer lengths have since been rung, 17,280 of Kent at Over in 1923 and 17,824 of Oxford at Heptonstall in 1927. In 1922, 18,240 of Kent was rung at Mottram, but the composition afterwards turned out to be false.

The longest true peal of Major yet achieved was rung nine years ago to-day at Bennington in Hertfordshire. The method was Bob Major and the number of changes 18,144.

NOTICES.

LANCASHIRE ASSOCIATION.—Rochdale Branch.—Next meeting will be held in the schoolroom, Cross-stone, Todmorden, on Saturday, June 6th. Assemble 3.30 p.m. Subscriptions due. Reports to hand.—Ivan Kay, Sec.

ANCIENT SOCIETY OF COLLEGE YOUTHS.—The next meeting will be held on Saturday, June 6th, at the Bell Foundry, Whitechapel Road, E.1, at 3 p.m.—A. B. Peck, Hon. Sec., 1, Eversfield Road, Reigate.

LINCOLN DIOCESAN GUILD.—Northern Branch.—The annual meeting will be held at St. Giles', Lincoln, on Saturday, June 6th. Business meeting 3.30 p.m., 'silent' ringing afternoon and evening. Please make own arrangements for tea.—J. Bray, Hon. Sec.

MIDLAND COUNTIES ASSOCIATION.—Burton District.—Our next meeting is to be held at Rolleston-on-Dove on Saturday, June 6th. Handbells available at 4 p.m. Tea in the Church Room at 4.45 p.m., followed by meeting. Cups of tea will be provided, but members must take own eatables and sugar. Visitors warmly welcomed.—J. W. Cotton, Hon. Sec., Overseal.

LINCOLN DIOCESAN GUILD.—Elloe Deaneries Branch.—Quarterly meeting at Moulton on June 13th. Service 3.30. Tea 4.15, followed by business meeting. Bells available for 'silent' ringing. Handbells, bowls, etc., on Vicarage lawn. All who intend coming to tea must send their names to Mr. T. H. Charlton, Hogs-gate, Moulton, Spalding, not later than Tuesday, June 9th.—W. A. Richardson, Hon. Sec.

LANCASHIRE ASSOCIATION.—Liverpool Branch.—A meeting will be held at Huyton on Saturday, June 13th. Handbells and tower bells, with clappers removed, will be available from 3 p.m. A short service will be held at 5 p.m., after which tea and meeting. Tea will be provided only for those who send their names to Mr. W. R. Birchall, 68, Rupert Road, Huyton, on or before Wednesday, June 10th.—George R. Newton, 57, Amphill Road, Liverpool, 17.

KENT COUNTY ASSOCIATION.—Tonbridge District.—A meeting will be held at Leigh on Saturday, June 13th. Service in church at 4 o'clock, followed by tea and business meeting. All those requiring tea must let Mr. B. Pankhurst, The Chestnuts, Leigh, Kent, know by Wednesday, June 10th. If fine there will be a cricket match on the Green.—T. Saunders, Hon. Dis. Sec.

NATIONAL GUILD OF POLICE RINGERS.—A meeting will be held at Leicester on Saturday, June 13th. Assemble 12 mid-day at Hotel Belgrave, Loughborough Road (near tram terminus). Luncheon 1 p.m. Ringing, Cathedral (12), 2.30 p.m. to 4.30 p.m. Tea at Cathedral Church House 4.45 p.m., followed by meeting. Social evening, Hotel Victory, Great Central Street, 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. Notifications for meals to Inspector H. J. Poole, Hon. Sec., 150, Narborough Road South, Leicester, as early as possible, not later than first post Thursday, June 11th.

HERTFORD COUNTY ASSOCIATION.—Western District.—A meeting will be held at King's Langley on Saturday, June 13th. Room at the Blue Cafe, corner of Church Lane, for meeting, talking and handbell ringing. A service will probably be arranged. Those who require tea must notify me by June 10th.—W. Ayre, Leverstock Green.

OXFORD DIOCESAN GUILD.—Central Bucks Branch.—The annual meeting will be held at Chearsley on Saturday, June 13th. Handbells from 3 p.m. Service 4 p.m. Tea and meeting to follow. All are welcome.—F. Gibbard, Hon. Sec., 30, Horn Street, Winslow, Bucks.

HERTFORD COUNTY ASSOCIATION.—A meeting will be held at All Saints', Hertford, on Saturday, June 13th, at 3 p.m. Silent tower bell ringing, also handbells during afternoon and evening. Service at 4.30. Tea at 5.30 to all who send in their names to G. Radley, 18, Macers Lane, Wormley, near Hoddesdon, Herts, not later than June 10th. Short meeting to follow tea. All welcome. Please come early. — G. Radley, Dis. Sec.

YORKSHIRE ASSOCIATION.—Southern District. —A summer joint meeting in conjunction with the Sheffield and District Society, the Barnsley and District Society and the Doncaster and District Society will be held at Wath-on-Dearne on Saturday, June 20th. Handbells will be available at the Church House from 2.30 p.m. Tea will be provided at Warburton's Cafe at 5 p.m. at 1s. 6d. per head. All those requiring tea must notify Mr. A. Nash, Holly House, Wath-on-Dearne, near Rotherham, by June 17th. This is important, so please do not fail. Business meeting at Church House, 6.30 p.m., followed by discussions and handbells. — Sidney F. Palmer, Acting Hon. Dis. Sec.

NORWICH DIOCESAN ASSOCIATION.—A meeting will be held at East Dereham on Saturday, June 20th. Bells, if possible, 3.15; service 4.30; tea 5.15 (bring some with you if you can!); followed by business meeting. Bowls afterwards, by kind invitation of the Vicar. Please send numbers for tea to Rev. A. G. G. Thurlow, 52, The Close, Norwich, by June 15th.

LANCASHIRE ASSOCIATION. — Manchester Branch.—A meeting will be held at Prestwich on Saturday, June 20th. Bells ready at 3 p.m. Meeting at 7 p.m. Nominations are required for branch secretary. The committee will meet at the same time. — W. H. Shuker, Gen. Sec., 36, Colwyn Avenue, Fallowfield, Manchester 14.

YORKSHIRE ASSOCIATION. — An important general meeting of the association will be held at Selby on Saturday, June 20th. The back eight bells at the Abbey will be available for 'silent' ringing from 2.30 p.m. General Committee meet in the Abbey Sacristy at 3 p.m. prompt. Service in the Abbey at 4.15 p.m. Tea can be obtained near the Abbey. The general meeting will take place in the Abbey Sacristy at 6 p.m. prompt. Business urgent and important. — L. W. G. Morris, Gen. Sec., 65, Lilycroft Road, Heaton, Bradford.

GOLDEN WEDDING.

WHITE—RHODES.—On Whit Monday, June 6th, 1892, at All Saints' Church, Cotgrave, Notts, by Rev. A. Hensley, William Edward, of Cotgrave, to Adelaide Marson, of Nottingham.

BIRTH.

CROSS.—At the Sussex Maternity Hospital, Brighton, on May 26th, 1942, to Irene Stella (née Turk, of St. Michael's, Aldershot), wife of Instructor Lieutenant R. G. Cross, R.N., a son, Michael Paul. Present address: 58, Fonthill Road, Hove, 4.

DEATHS.

DEXTER.—Ellen, the wife of Frederick H. Dexter, suddenly, on May 26th, at 4, Stuart Street, Leicester.

TOMPKINS. — On Sunday, May 17th, at his residence, 43, The Green, Stony Stratford, Thomas Charles Tompkins, aged 74 years.

As the death of Mr. J. S. Goldsmith has very much increased the administrative difficulties of producing 'The Ringing World,' we shall be very glad if all those who have any contributions to make to the Ringers' Conference on the subject of a National Association will post their contributions to us on or before Sunday next.

AIR RAID DAMAGE AT NORWICH.

CHURCHES AND ANCIENT INNS.

We are now permitted to publish fuller details of the damage caused in Norwich recently by enemy action. One of the churches wrecked by a direct hit was St. Benedict's, a flint building in the Early English style. Its round tower, cracked and badly scarred, stands out bravely against a background of ruined shops and houses in the street to which it has given its name. The tower and one of the walls of the nave are all that remain.

With its embattled tower and flint walls standing, the ancient Church of St. Bartholomew, Heigham, is also a blackened ruin, its burnt-out nave and chancel open to the sky.

As was the case with many churches in the city, the Cathedral suffered damage to tracery and windows. Most of the damage here was caused by a bomb which fell in the vicinity of the Close, some distance from the east end. Windows on all sides of the Cathedral were affected.

St. Martin-at-Oak, the ancient flint church in Oak Street, was saved from destruction by promptitude in tackling fire bombs, although it sustained some interior damage before a blaze near its west end was extinguished by sailors who were passing at the time.

It was fortunate that the valuable stained glass east window at St. Stephen's Church had been removed to a place of safety in the early days of the war, since this fine old church suffered badly from blast, which shattered most of its glass.

Nearly every church in the bombed areas suffered damage in varying degrees, among them St. Peter Mancroft, which lost glass and mullions, and St. Andrew's, which has a hole in its roof. One of the city's newest churches, St. Anne's, on the Earlham housing estate, was destroyed.

The old city wall on the west side of the city, facing the most severe onslaught of its career, stood up well to the attack, but the full force of a heavy bomb was too great a strain for the remains of St. Benedict's Gates. Although the gate pillar was swept away, with a small portion of the wall, other sections of the wall, both here and in the Chapel Field area, remain practically unscarred, almost on the edge of very large craters.

Among the most picturesque Norwich buildings wrecked by Nazi fury was the old Dolphin public-house, for long a popular subject with artists and photographers. Fire bombs have gutted this one-time residence of Bishop Hall, who lived there after his ejection by the Puritans, but its attractive south frontage, though blackened and scarred, is more or less intact, and this venerable tavern, scheduled for preservation as an ancient monument, is almost certain to be restored after the war.

More familiar to city visitors were the striking thatched and gabled lines of the Boar's Head in St. Stephen's Street, which succumbed to the flames only after a long battle by fire fighters. The history of this ancient hostelry dates from the 15th century, and although its front and picturesque roof had comparatively recently been restored, its ancient beams and timbered interior were largely original. Altogether Norwich licensed houses suffered severely.

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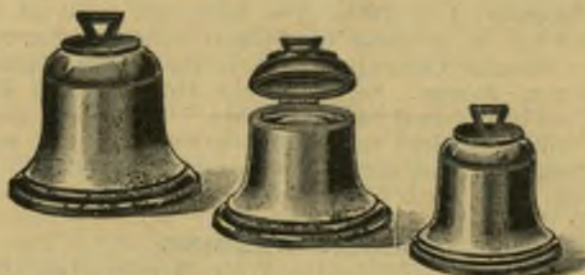
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