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PRINCIPAL BELLFOUNDERS

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JOHN TAYLOR & Co. LOUGHBOROUGH

These famous bell-founding firms have kindly consented to this adaptation of their advertisements to meet the pressure on our space, due to the compulsory reduction in the number of our pages this week.

THE BAN IS LIFTED.

The ban on ringing is lifted. To many people, and not only to ringers, the news has come as a welcome surprise, for most of us perhaps had reconciled ourselves to the idea of having to endure it so long as the war lasts. Yet to anyone who had carefully followed the debate in the House of Lords, and especially the speeches of Lords Geddes and Mottistone, with the expressed determination of the Archbishop of York not to let the matter rest, the cancellation of the order should have seemed inevitable.

The Government's decision has been generally welcomed by the Press, but we do not ourselves agree with the construction some papers put upon it. 'The Daily Express,' 'The Daily Mail,' and to a more cautious degree, 'The Times,' see in it evidence that the Government are now convinced that a full-scale invasion of this country has passed beyond the bounds of possibility. It is certainly true, and has been for nearly two years, that there is no immediate fear of invasion. To conquer this country by the landing of armed forces is a very difficult matter, so difficult that during nine centuries it has never been attempted, and only on two occasions has been seriously contemplated. The difficulty can be summed up in one word—the enemy must gain control of the seas, and control of the seas means not only being able to pass an army on to our shores, but to supply and reinforce it. That difficulty has remained the same throughout the ages, but in one important respect conditions in this war have altered greatly to our disadvantage, and have largely robbed us of the security we enjoyed for so long. Control of the sea in such a restricted area as the English Channel now depends as much, possibly even more, upon mastery in the air as upon the supremacy of ships. Germany could not hope to rival us in war vessels. She could and did hope to overwhelm our air force.

The attempt was made and it failed. How badly it failed was perhaps better realised in Berlin even than in Whitehall; and when Hitler turned to bombing our towns, and later threw his armed might against Russia, he confessed that a full-scale invasion of England was not then practicable, just as Napoleon did when he broke up his camp at Boulogne and turned upon Austria. This is not to say that another attempt at invasion cannot and will not be made, but first there must be vast preparations which cannot be hidden.

All this, of course, was known to our military authorities, and it is a poor compliment to their intelligence to suggest that they have only just realised it in the

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three or four weeks since Lord Croft made his statement in the House of Lords.

If we may judge by the wording of the original order, there never was any intention to use church bells as a general warning in the case of an attempt at a full-scale invasion. For that no special means of warning is needed. As the Prime Minister said, the news would 'leak out' somehow without it. What was at first thought useful was to reserve the bells for warnings in the case of limited raids, especially by airborne troops, much of the same class and scope as those made by our commandos on places in France and Norway. So far, Germany has not attempted any on this country, but she may do so at any time, and the chances are as great now as they ever have been.

The ban has not been lifted because of any dramatic change in the character of the war, but because it is known that bells would be useless as warnings. It is quite certain that this has been known for a long time, almost from the beginning; for the military authorities have left them out of their calculations, have not included them in any of their tests, and have taken no adequate steps to find out whether they would be available or effective.

The soldiers ignored the bells. The people at the War Office sat tight, and no one was found able and willing to take the responsibility of reviewing the matter.

But when the thing was brought into the light of day by the debate in the House of Lords, the Prime Minister took the matter into his own hands and did what some other authority ought to have done long ago. He called the Chiefs of Staff together and asked them plainly whether they relied on church bells as an essential part of their defence plans. When they told him they did not, there was an end of the matter. The use of bells as warnings disappeared and nothing was put in its place. It was a small matter compared with the great issues of the war, but it shows the value of having a strong and able man in supreme control.

HANDBELL PEAL.

BURSLEM, STAFFORDSHIRE.

THE NORTH STAFFORDSHIRE ASSOCIATION.

On Saturday, April 17, 1943, in Two Hours and Twenty-Two Minutes,

AT SNYD VICARAGE,

A PEAL OF BOB MAJOR, 5040 CHANGES!

Tenor 15 in C.

| | | | |
|--------------------------|-----|-------------------------|-----|
| ROBERT S. ANDERSON... .. | 1-2 | REV. HUGH G. BENSON ... | 5-6 |
| JOHN WORTH... .. | 3-4 | ANDREW THOMPSON ... | 7-8 |

Composed by E. M. ATKINS. Conducted by JOHN WORTH.

Umpire—Charles H. Page.

* First peal in hand. First peal on handbells for the association and believed to be the first ever rung in North Staffordshire.

'BRING BACK THE BELLS'

By one of the happiest of coincidences, Mr. Churchill's announcement of the removal of the ban on church bells coincided with the publication of Mr. A. P. Herbert's new book of verse, 'Bring Back the Bells.'

This is the title of one of the many delightful lyrics in the book, and contains the following lines:—

If we can not inform the town
That parachutes are coming down
Without inviting Huns to search
For targets in the parish church,
The old inventive British brain
Had better, surely, think again.

These lines are dated November, 1941; even then the case against the ban was unanswerable.

JONATHAN WILD.

A NOTORIOUS 18th CENTURY CHARACTER.

One of the most notorious characters of the early eighteenth century was Jonathan Wild, who founded and for long maintained a very flourishing business as a receiver of stolen goods and a patron and organiser of thieves. He also acted as a thief-taker and a receiver of stolen property, and he combined the different branches of his trade in a very efficient manner.

He would arrange for things belonging to some wealthy person to be stolen, and when that was done he would approach the victim and offer for a substantial fee to get them back again.

He disliked the competition of rivals, and he had no use for thieves who worked outside his organisation, so he was quite willing to aid the authorities in laying them by the heels. Especially he disliked any of his own men who rounded on him. He would always help in securing a conviction against them.

There were then no proper police, and the law against receiving was vague and slack. The magistrates and other people knew all about Wild's activities and used him, and he managed for long to keep apparently within the letter of the law. In the end, however, he did slip and he was hanged at Tyburn on May 24th, 1725.

A man with a career like Wild was bound to become a legend. A lot has been written about him and many tales told. Most of them are the result of imagination and have no foundation in fact, and we do not think for one minute that there is any truth in the following, which comes from a book called 'Jonathan Wild, Prince of Robbers,' by Frederick J. Lyons, and published in 1936.

'There was the incident of the group of wealthy men who had formed a bellringers' club, and who frequently met for dinner at a well-known inn. To indulge their interest they also arranged visits to different cathedral towns to hear and compare the different bells and changes. Wild heard of the activities of this club and resolved to make its members victims of one of his coups.

'One night a big dinner was in progress. All had dined and wined exceedingly well, and one of the leading members had been disserting at great length on his memories of historic changes. Everyone was in the best of humour and one member was recounting to another famous feats of ringing that he could remember when up spoke a new member, "I and five of my friends will wager two hundred guineas on a match against any team in the room."

'The party had reached the stage when even the most fantastic challenge would have been accepted with alacrity. This one was accepted with acclamation. The newcomer made one condition, that he should be allowed to select the scene of the contest. No one was in the mood to quibble about such a modest demand, and Lincoln Cathedral was chosen.

'Soon after dawn the next morning the cavalcade set out for Lincoln, some on horseback and others, who felt more severely the strain of the previous night's carousal, by coach. The newcomer noted with satisfaction that the challenged carried, in addition to the two hundred guineas of the wager, a hundred guineas for their expenses.

As the Cathedral hove in sight, a few of the party rode ahead to make arrangements for the contest. Despite the length of the journey they had travelled, the challenged party insisted on the contest proceeding immediately they arrived. Dismounting, they lost no time in changing into the drawers, waistcoats and caps that constituted the ringing dress of the day.

'The challenger and his party were more leisurely. Before retiring to change they obligingly commanded their servants to remove their opponents' clothes to a safe place.

'They were away for a long time, and the challenged party occupied themselves in practising. Eventually one of them went to see how long the others would be. To his amazement they and their servants had vanished, and with them the clothes they had so kindly offered to put in a safe place, to say nothing of the better part of the three hundred guineas, besides watches, snuff boxes, tobacco boxes and other valuables.'

TWELVE-BELL TOWERS.

ST. MICHAEL'S, MACCLESFIELD.

To the Editor.

Dear Sir.—Here are the peals rung on the bells of St. Michael's, Macclesfield, since they were increased to twelve. The three peals of Grandsire were rung by the resident band, the rest by mixed bands.

JOHN WORTH.

Broken Cross, Macclesfield.

May 17th, 1924, Kent Treble Bob Maximus.

May 14th, 1927, Stedman Cinques.

April 21st, 1930, Cambridge Surprise Maximus.

June 3rd, 1930, Grandsire Triples.

May 28th, 1932, Bob Maximus.

July 15th, 1933, Oxford Treble Bob Maximus.

May 21st, 1935, Grandsire Caters.

October 13th, 1936, Grandsire Cinques.

December 26th, 1938, Bob Maximus.

W. Matthews called the Grandsire Cinques. John Worth called the Grandsire Triples and Caters and the second peal of Bob Maximus. Edward Jenkins called the others.

THE CUMBERLAND YOUTHS.

ACTIVE PEAL RINGING.

When the nineteenth century opened the elder George Gross was still the beadle of the Society of Cumberland Youths and the most important man in the company, though there were younger men, like William Shipway and John Hints, who were working on their own lines. Eighteen hundred and one was an active and prosperous year for the society. On January 11th Gross called 5,104 changes of London Court Bob at Whitechapel. It was the last peal in the method rung in London, though in the following years it was to a certain extent popular among the ringers of the southern and south-eastern suburbs. Shipway took part in the peal, but he does not give the composition and the figures are lost.

A month later Shipway called at Hackney the first peal of Triples in a new system which he had recently produced. The idea was to dispense entirely with dodging, and this he did by causing each bell, as it hunted up, to make a place immediately after it had passed the treble; and, as it hunted down, immediately before it passed the treble. The places were made alternately at handstroke and at backstroke, and as there was one in every change, the result was to turn the whole work of the bells above the treble into plain backward hunting. The defect of the method was that it was necessary for the bells that the treble turned and were turned by the treble from behind, to lie for three blows in sevenths.

The peal book says that 'the society to commemorate the Union of Great Britain and Ireland entitled the method Cumberland Imperial Place Triples,' but Shipway when he gave it in his 'Campanalogia' styled it simply Place Triples.

In March George Gross called 6,160 changes of Bob Major at Watford, and in April the peal of Court Bob Royal at Shoreditch, which I have already spoken of. In May the younger Gross called 5,000 changes of Treble Bob Royal at Shoreditch with a band made up of the elder Gross, Samuel Cowling, James Nash, William Shipway, William Stephens, Thomas Freith, John Hints, James Barnard, and Malachi Channon.

In August the society rang the first peal at Hemel Hempstead. It was one of Grandsire Triples, and nine men took part owing to the bad going of the bells. In October two peals were rung—Treble Bob Major at Lewisham, and Tittum Treble Bob Royal at Shoreditch, both being conducted by the younger Gross. Two more peals completed the tale for the year—Royal at Spitalfields, and Major at Bethnal Green.

Since the year 1784 the record honours for long peals of Treble Bob Royal and Maximus had been divided between the two leading metropolitan societies. The Cumberlands' 12,000 at Shoreditch was the longest as yet rung on ten bells, and the College Youths' 7,008 at Southwark was the longest length as yet rung on twelve bells.

The College Youths were content to leave the matter where it stood, and had given up all hopes of regaining the double honour; but the Cumberlands were less inclined to rest on their laurels, and when they were joined by James Marlton, they had once more, not only a tenor man of outstanding ability, but a band capable of giving him adequate support. They therefore renewed the contest, and on March 22nd, 1802, by ringing 7,104 changes of Oxford Treble Bob Maximus at Southwark,

gained what was to prove the final and complete victory.

The younger Gross rang the second and called the bobs. The other bells were rung by the elder Gross, Peter Jones, James Nash, William Shipway, Thomas Reeves, James Barnard, Anthony Cavalier, John Hints, Malachi Channon, William Stephens, and James Marlton. Four of these men, Gross, Barnard, Reeves, and Channon, had taken part in the Shoreditch peal, and so had personally shared in the double honour.

The Southwark performance has always been considered as one of the very finest long-length and heavy-bell feats in the history of change ringing, and Jasper Snowden expressed the general opinion of the Exercise when he described the 'College Youths' and Cumberlands' peals as 'Wonderful instances of physical prowess,' and pointed out that 'though greater lengths have since been rung on twelve bells, yet, as they have all been accomplished on very much lighter tenors, it can hardly be said that any one of them can compare with the 7000's rung at Southwark.'

In recent years, since Snowden wrote, the old tenor at St. Mary-le-Bow has been turned in by William Pye to 7,392 changes of Cambridge Surprise Maximus. That is the only performance which can justly be put alongside the feats of Samuel Muggeridge and James Marlton.

A comparison of the times taken by these three peals is interesting. Muggeridge rang Southwark tenor to 7,008 changes in five hours and forty-eight minutes, or at the rate of 20.11 per minute. Marlton took eighteen minutes less for a peal two leads longer, the rate being 21.53 changes per minute. Pye turned the rather heavier tenor at Bow in to 7,392 changes in five hours and thirty-eight minutes, or at the rate of 21.87 changes a minute. The time given for Muggeridge's peal on the board before it was re-written was six hours and five minutes, which is at the rate of 19.20 changes a minute.

Marlton's peal was rung much quicker than the average rate for peals at Southwark during the eighteenth century, and Pye's peals were almost invariably rung much quicker than those of the earlier generations of ringers. It is an established fact, that provided a man has a good band in front of him, he needs less physical exertion to ring a tenor to a quick peal than to a slow peal, the quality of the striking being equal.

MIDLAND COUNTIES ASSOCIATION.

MEETING AT TICKNALL.

A pleasant and well-attended joint meeting of the Burton and Derby Districts of the Midland Counties Association was held at Ticknall on Easter Saturday, and among the representative gathering were members from Burton (St. Paul's), Derby (the Cathedral, St. Luke's and St. Peter's), Measham, Netherseal, Overseal and visitors from Loughborough and a former Burton district secretary, Mr. R. H. Dove, now of St. Michael's, Headingley.

During the afternoon handbells were rung and a variety of methods on the silent six tower bells.

At the business meeting the Vicar presided and welcomed the association. He referred to the pleasure with which the bells would be heard the following day and to the part they played in creating the proper atmosphere for Sunday.

The Burton District secretary, Mr. J. W. Cotton, reported that since the last meeting the association had sustained a severe loss through the death of Mr. John Swinfield, of Burton; they had also lost by departure to another parish the Rev. J. R. King, of Measham.

It was decided to hold the next meeting at Newhall on June 12th if suitable arrangements can be made.

Mr. Cotton proposed a vote of thanks to the Vicar and to the local company for all they had done to make the visitors comfortable. Seconding, Mr. W. H. Curson expressed the hope that action would be forthcoming by the Central Council to bring weight to bear in the proper quarter so that possibly by the next meeting the ban might be entirely lifted. Mr. Noble suitably replied.

BELFRY GOSSIP.

The announcement of the lifting of the ban on ringing was made at the most inconvenient time for 'The Ringing World.' Usually this journal is printed on Wednesday morning, and the latest hour at which anything special can be added is somewhere about 10 o'clock. Last week, owing to Good Friday, we had to go to press one day earlier, and the paper was being printed at the very time the Prime Minister was making his statement. It could not be helped, but it is something of a blow to our editorial pride that the most important piece of news of the year (for ringers) does not appear until ten days after the event.

Congratulations to Mr. E. Denison Taylor, who reached his 79th birthday last Monday, and to Mr. E. G. Fenn, the Master of the Ancient Society of College Youths, who was 62.

James Pettit, at one time so well known as the conductor of the St. Paul's Cathedral band, was born on April 25th, 1834.

The first peal of Bob Major was rung at St. Bride's, Fleet Street, on April 26th, 1725.

On April 26th, 1894, the then longest peal on handbells—11,200 Bob Major—was rung at Norwich; and on the same date in 1899, a band of College Youths rang on handbells at Barking 8,896 Kent Treble Bob Major.

The College Youths rang their famous long peal of Stedman Cinques, 8,580 changes, at St. Michael's, Cornhill, on April 27th, 1861, and on the same date, seven years later, at St. Matthew's, Bethnal Green, what was then the longest length in any method—15,840 changes of Kent Treble Bob Major. Both peals were conducted by Henry W. Haley.

The Cumberlands rang on April 27th, 1876, at St. Ann's, Highgate, the longest peal of Kent Treble Bob Major yet composed with the tenors together and produced by ordinary bobs.

George Gross called his long peal of Treble Bob Major at Edmonton (referred to in our columns last week) on April 28th, 1800.

On the same date in 1890, at Diss in Norfolk, the first peal of Kent Treble Bob Maximus on handbells was rung.

The record peal of Cambridge Surprise Major, 12,896 changes, was rung at Stoney Stanton on April 28th, 1925. Mr. Harold Poole conducted.

Mr. F. W. Perrins called the first peal of Stratford Surprise Major at Nuneaton on April 28th, 1938.

The first peal of Superlative Surprise Maximus was rung at Ipswich on April 30th, 1927, and the first peal of Apsley Surprise Major at Bushey on the same date in 1938.

THE CENTRAL COUNCIL OF CHURCH BELL RINGERS.

To all Secretaries of Associations.

Please notify to me the names and addresses of present representatives, and note that subscriptions became due on January 1st.

George W. Fletcher,
45, Walsingham Road,
Enfield.

LEEDS AND DISTRICT SOCIETY.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.

The annual meeting of the Leeds and District Society was held in the belfry of Leeds Parish Church on Saturday, April 17th. The attendance was disappointing in view of the fact that the meeting had been specially timed for 6 p.m. to enable those who had to work late to attend. Mr. Harvey presided, and members were present from Armley, Bradford, Headingley (St. Chad's), Idle, Leeds and Rothwell.

The nominations for officers for the ensuing year were confirmed. The secretary's report showed that the membership was 149, of which 87 were fully paid, 10 were honorary and 15 serving in His Majesty's Forces, leaving 37 members who had not paid their subscriptions. Thanks were due to the tower secretaries and companies (especially the Pudsey company), who had made the meetings enjoyable. The finances of the society were in a good and sound condition, and the net total showed an increase of 18s. 11d.

The next meeting will be held at Batley on May 29th.

Votes of thanks were accorded to the Vicar of Leeds and the churchwardens for the use of the tower, to Mr. Percy Smith for preparing the tower and to the retiring officers.

WOODDITTON, NEAR NEWMARKET.—At Sunny View, on Wednesday, April 21st, 1,280 Bob Major: R. Heath 1-2, A. E. Austin (conductor) 3-4, R. C. Sharpe 5-6, J. A. Acres, R.A.F. 7-8. Also recently several plain courses of Stedman Triples: R. Heath 1-2, A. E. Austin 3-4, S. Brown 5-6, R. C. Sharpe 7-8.

THE BELLS OF ST. PAUL'S, BEDFORD.

A NEW PUBLICATION.

Fifty or sixty years ago it was commonly said the towers and belfries of England generally were in a disgraceful condition. In contrast to the rest of the churches they were shamefully neglected, the floors and timbers rotten, the bells unringable, and the whole going to rack and ruin. 'How very shameful that any part of God's house should be so neglected!' wrote one clergyman in 1857. 'Why should towers be so desecrated? Are they not as much a portion of the church as any other part? Why should they be left to the sole occupation of unclean birds, and profane and irreverent ringers?'

Things certainly were pretty bad, so much so that the Central Council, under the influence of Sir Arthur Heywood, made a survey of all the steeples with eight or more bells, the intention being to publish it, and by bringing the facts before the authorities of the Church, shame them into doing something to remedy the evil.

But already influences were at work which in time were to make a vast improvement, and to-day neglected and dangerous towers and belfries are comparatively rare.

A CAUSE OF IMPROVEMENT

The chief cause of this improvement has been the greater interest taken by the clergy and laity in the bells in their steeples. At one time, though they never lost the inherited love of Englishmen for the sound of the bells, they were little concerned with the bells themselves, which hung so remote from the ordinary man's ways and vision. But as the care and thought which for some long time had been freely lavished on the body of the church was extended to the tower, people began to listen to the select body of archaeologists who insisted that in her bells the Church of England had a treasure of great artistic and historical value. The bells were looked upon once more, as they had been in the centuries gone by, as among the most important of the Church's possessions.

In increasing numbers the histories of ancient churches have been written, usually by men who have a personal interest in the buildings and opportunities for making the necessary local researches. These histories seldom fail to take notice of the bells, and the amount of good they do to ringing is comparable to that done by the large county histories of bells. Occasionally the bells are the main subject dealt with by the writer.

The latest of these publications, and in its own sphere one of the most complete, has just been issued. It is the work of Mr. F. W. Kuhlicke, and deals with the bells of St. Paul's Church, Bedford, of which he is churchwarden. It has obviously been written as a labour of love, but the specific object for which it is published and sold is to help the 'Bells Fund,' which is intended to raise the money required to take down the bells, to put them in a place of safety for the period of the war, and when once more they are needed for a peal of thanksgiving for peace and victory, to rehang them well and truly in their time-honoured place.

Such an object will meet with the approval of all ringers, and since the price asked for the book of over thirty pages is no more than 1s. 3d., post free, we do not doubt that many of our readers will be glad to have it to add to their collections of books on bells.

BEDFORD BELLS.

Mr. Kuhlicke starts with a short survey of the bells of Bedfordshire and Bedford town, and then gives a very detailed account of the bells of St. Paul's. He sketches the career of Thomas Lester, who cast the ring of eight in 1744, and the Loughborough family of Taylor, who cast the present ten.

He then goes on to deal with change ringing and especially the ringing at St. Paul's. With this the name of C. W. Clarke will always be associated, and a large number of the peals on the bells were conducted by him.

Mr. Kuhlicke concludes with a description of the various uses and customs connected with bells, and since the book is intended for the average person it is instructive and useful.

Mr. Kuhlicke disclaims any originality for his book, but he clearly has been at pains to consult the best authorities and as many as possible. To them and not to him is due the faulty history such as the statements that Fabian Stedman wrote the 'Tintinnologia,' that the College Youths were founded at College Hill, and that the Cumberland Youths were originally the London Scholars. But since all ringers believed these fables, and since they are repeated by such weighty authorities as the 'Encyclopædia Britannica,' it would be absurd to complain of their presence here. It will be long before these legends are finally disposed of.

THE LATE P. N. G. RAINEY.

The Bath and Wells Diocesan Association has lost in action one of its best ringers and churchmen, Percy Rainey, Grenadier Guards, was killed in action on March 17th last.

A native of Marston Magna, he did his first change ringing there. Later he joined the Yeovil band, but for a time he was at Aston, Birmingham. His Somerset and Midlands friends will mourn his passing.

J. D.

THE LIFTING OF THE BAN.

STATEMENTS IN PARLIAMENT.

Last week, in the House of Commons, the Prime Minister, replying to Mr. Greenwood (Wakefield), announced that the ban on the ringing of church bells would be removed. Mr. Churchill said: 'The War Cabinet, after receiving the advice of the Chiefs of Staff, has reviewed the question in the light of changed circumstances.'

'We have reached the conclusion that existing orders on the subject can now be relaxed, and the church bells can now be rung on Sundays and other special days in the ordinary way to summon worshippers to church.'

'The new arrangement will be brought into effect in time for Easter.'

On the following day the Press was informed that the Control of Noise Order, which had been amended to give effect to the Prime Minister's announcement, prohibits the use of church bells on days other than Sundays, Good Friday and Christmas Day, and provides that the bells may be rung only for the purpose of summoning worshippers to church. They must not be used for weddings and funerals.

A further statement by the Ministry of Home Security explained that the Government's object in restricting the occasions on which bells may be used was to avoid misunderstanding from any ringing at times when the public do not expect it.

NO REPLACEMENT.

On Thursday in the House of Commons Sir T. Moore asked the Prime Minister what arrangements had been made for ringing church bells as a warning of invasion.

Mr. Churchill replied: 'We have come to the conclusion that this particular means of warning was redundant and not particularly well adapted to present conditions.'

Sir T. Moore asked if any alternative arrangements had been made? Would the Prime Minister consider the use of sirens?

Mr. Churchill: 'We came to the conclusion that this means of warning was redundant. Therefore, replacement would not arise. For myself, I cannot help feeling that anything like a serious invasion would be bound to leak out' (laughter).

Mr. Stokes: 'Is the right honourable gentleman aware that the Secretary of State for War told me only three weeks ago that the sounding of church bells in case of invasion was the only signal he could think of?'

Mr. Churchill: 'The matter has been exhaustively reviewed and the Secretary of State fully accepts the conclusion.'

Sir W. Smithers asked whether the right honourable gentleman did not consider since permission had been given to ring at certain appointed hours of service, they would still be an effective warning if rung, say, in the middle of the night?

Mr. Churchill: 'The significance of invasion no longer attaches to the ringing of church bells.'

PRESS OPINIONS.

Mr. Churchill's original statement was received by the House with cheers and by the Press with general approval. In a leader 'The Times' remarked: 'The opinion was widely held that the silencing of the bells could no longer be justified on strictly military grounds, and that it should be possible to devise some other means of warning in the case of invasion.'

'Future historians may well look upon the decision as a milestone in a long journey, but those who in 1943 are concerned with home defence, whether as Regular soldiers, Home Guard or civilians, will not be so foolish as to neglect continued preparedness against invasion on a substantial scale. Lord Croft, in his reply in the House of Lords recently, implied that the authorities still regarded the ringing of bells as the only distinct and definite warning of invasion. Now that view has been changed, some new form of warning presumably will be substituted.'

'For the rest no one must expect immediately to hear a joyful clamour arising in the old places. Bellringing is a difficult business; badly rung bells would be a mixed blessing; and in war time it will not be easy to find those that are competent.'

With arms lifted to clutch
The rattling ropes that race
Into the dark above
And the mad romping din.

'Some belfries have vanished altogether, in others there will have to be a reconditioning of bells and ropes. But however few and simple the chimes, it will be good to hear again what Lamb called the music bordering nearest heaven.'

(Continued in next column.)

EAST GRINSTEAD AND DISTRICT GUILD.

ANNUAL MEETING.

The sixteenth annual meeting of the East Grinstead and District Guild was held at St. Margaret's Convent, East Grinstead, on April 10th, the Rev. G. Golding-Bird being in the chair.

Two new members, Mr. G. Ryman, of Hartfield, an old member now in the Canadian Army, and Mrs. Bassett, of Wadhurst, were elected.

The balance sheet showed that expenditure had exceeded income by 4s. 9½d.

In the report, the committee urged that an effort be made to secure more vice-presidents with the object of creating more public interest and increasing the funds, so that the Guild could take an active part in the great work of reconstruction after the war. Mr. E. J. Oliver proposed that extra copies of the report should be printed and circulated by members to influential people in their own localities. After some lively discussion it was decided that copies should be sent to the incumbent of each parish in the Guild's area asking him to put it to the church notice board and to draw attention to it when giving out the church notices.

All the officers of the Guild were re-elected en bloc.

It was decided to hold meetings at Shaldon, Upper Hartfield, by kind invitation of Mr. and Mrs. E. J. Oliver, on June 12th, and at Balcombe on July 3rd.

The Chairman referred to the death of three old members, Mr. Manley, of Crawley Down, Mr. Latter, of Tunbridge Wells, and Mr. Haigh, of Etchingham.

A hearty vote of thanks was accorded to the Mother Superior for the use of the room, and to the ladies who prepared and served the tea.

The handbells were put to good use during the afternoon and evening by members, who attended from Balcombe, East Grinstead, Hartfield, Lamberhurst, Paddock Wood, Tunbridge Wells and Wadhurst. The methods included Bob Minor and Major and Grand sire Triples and Caters, with some tune ringing by the Balcombe band.

THE BAN IS LIFTED.

WHY DID IT TAKE SO LONG?

(Continued from previous column.)

'The Daily Telegraph' wrote: 'Gratitude to the Prime Minister and the War Cabinet for reaching the conclusion that the church bells can now be rung on Sundays and other days to call people to worship, is tempered with general wonder that the authorities have taken so long to make up their minds to restore the liberty of ringing. Like every other emergency measure, the prohibition was accepted with goodwill and has been patiently endured, but the public has never had any explanation how this particular form of warning would be effective.'

'The Daily Mail' said: 'For only the third time in thirty-two months the church bells of Britain, mute with a stunning suddenness since France fell, are to ring next Sunday.'

'Not as once for long and heartrending months we feared they might ring urgent clamant with alarm to announce that the silver frontier of a sea which had guarded us for a thousand years, had gone the way of all the frontiers of Europe. Not even as they rang with jubilation for the victory of El Alamein.'

'Next Sunday and thereafter the bells will ring as they have always rung. Their sound, sweet with distance as it drifts across the sunlit meadows, strong as it shatters in the city street, marks not an isolated but a permanent victory. Britain has repelled the threat of invasion. Henceforth the bells may fulfil their ancient function, "those golden throats that call the world to God."'

'The Daily Express' wrote: 'German air power silenced the British church bells in June, 1940. For three years, except for the celebration of Alamein, they have kept bells silent by the belief that Hitler could invade Britain.'

'What makes it possible for the church bells to ring again for Easter, 1943? British air power. It smashed the German invasion in 1940 and this year, with American air power, it is going to help in the smashing of German invasion power for ever.'

Last Sunday 'The Sunday Times' began a striking leader with the following passage: 'Bells at Easter! We scarcely expected to hear them except for some great victory, but there is a special appropriateness in the breaking of the silence of the steeples on Easter Day, for Easter bells are bells of Victory. They are a part of that annual rejoicing of Christendom over a triumph more momentous and decisive, according to its faith, than any other ever could be.'

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ST. NICHOLAS, NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE

AN ACCOUNT OF THE BELLS.

By ERNEST WALLACE.

The tower and bells of Newcastle Parish Church (now the Cathedral) have, since the earliest times, been in the care of the municipal authorities, who have maintained both in a state of good repair, in return for the use of the bells on such occasions as they desire them to be rung.

According to Bourne, a local chronicler, since mediæval times, the tower held five bells. These bells, later the 3rd, 4th, 6th, 7th and tenor of the ringing peal were in existence until 1892, when two were used in making the new ring of ten.

Three of the old bells (now hung in the tower above the ringing peal of twelve) were dedicated to St. Mary the Virgin, St. Michael and St. Nicholas (the patron saint of the church).

One of the bells (since melted down) was the '8 o'clock bell,' used for wakening workmen at 6 a.m. and closing down fairs at 8 p.m.

St. Michael bore a chevron between three vases or covered cups with handles and spouts, a replica of which is found on one of the bells at St. Bartholomew's Church, London, which, perhaps, gives a clue to its approximate age.

The 'Great' or 'Common Bell' was used especially for civic affairs. It was tolled continuously for six hours on the day of the election of the Mayor as a 'passing bell' for the retiring Mayor. It was used to summon meetings of the Town Guilds on Mayors' election days, for proclaiming a holiday at noon on Shrove Tuesday and for other special occasions. This bell, according to Carr, was cast at Colchester in 1593. Bourne states that it was recast at Colchester in 1615 and again in 1622, on which occasions it weighed 27 cwts. 3 qrs. 22 lbs. and 32 cwts. respectively. In 1754 it was recast and weighed 36 cwts.

In 1717 the Town Council gave three new bells to complete the ring of eight.

The first mention of any ringing is that the eight were rung muffled annually on the anniversary of the execution of Charles the First (an unusual custom which dated from the Restoration until 1810, when it was abandoned).

On February 7th, 1754, the 'Newcastle team of bell-ringers' rang 2,520 changes of Bob Triples in 1 hour 36 minutes, being 'the first time that ever was done in Newcastle, the whole peal being thought impossible because of the bad hanging of the bells.'

On April 11th, 1754, half way through a peal attempt of Grandsire Triples, the tenor cracked, and was sent to Lester and Pack in London to be recast. The recast bell, weighing 36 cwts., was rehung by 'Mr. Lawrence, a noted London bellhanger, who was specially commissioned for the work by the City Magistrates.'

He did his work so well that, on April 10th, 1755, a peal of Bob Triples, the first peal in the tower, was rung in 3 hours 13½ minutes (No record of the ringers, conductor and composer of this peal are extant as far as I know, but, by checking in all the old local papers, I hope to find a fuller account one day.) being the first peal ever rung in Northumberland.

The only other peals known to have been rung on these bells were all Grandsire Triples, rung by the Union Society of Gateshead and Newcastle, in 1808, 1809, 1842 and 1848. The peal in 1809, being 'the only peal rang in England in commemoration of His Majesty King George the Third entering into his 50th year of his reign over a free and loyal people.'

In 1791 the fifth bell, cast in 1717, was recast by Thomas Mears, and was a maiden bell 'untouched by hammer or chisel.' The bells remained thus, until, in 1892, they were all, with the exception of the three old bells, recast into the present ring of ten bells (later twelve).

In 1833, a large clock bell, weighing 5 tons 18 cwts., was presented to the town by Major George Anderson, and is known to this day as 'the Major.' This bell, of very poor tone, was the result of an experiment by the founder, James Harrison. It was cast in the foundry of Sir Robert Shaftoe Hawkes and Co. on November 23rd, 1933, by James Harrison, the son of the famous maker of clocks and chonometers. Being too poor to experiment on bells, he decided that the Newcastle bell was a good opportunity, so he added one cwt. of brass (copper and zinc) to the metal. The resulting bell was chiselled severely round the soundbow to give it tone, and hung above the ringing bells.

A good story concerning Harrison is told. One day he cast a ring of bells for a church, not far from the church itself. He was a very small man, and, being an addict to the chisel as a means of tuning bells, he one day began to chisel away at his latest ring. A clergyman, who was passing, seeing this little boy 'ruining' the bells, rushed forward and dealt the offender a resounding blow on the head. On asking the culprit what his business was, hammering away at bells, the culprit replied, 'I cast them.' 'I don't know the clergyman's reply to this news.

This brief account of the bells leaves much of interest untouched. The history of the tower and bells during the 'Border days,' when the Scots attacked the town repeatedly, is full of interest. Newcastle Corporation minutes and the 'Newcastle Journal' of later days, contains an, as yet untapped, wealth of information. The greatest problem to-day is to try and discover any information about the old 'Union Society of Gateshead and Newcastle.' This society, with the exception of its peal records in the various old towers, has left no trace of its activities, despite the considerable efforts of Mr. C. L. Routledge, of Newcastle Cathedral, to trace them.

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NOTICES.

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

HERTFORD COUNTY ASSOCIATION.—The annual meeting will be held at St. Albans, on Saturday, May 1st. Silent ringing at St. Peter's tower at 2.30 p.m. Choral evensong in the Cathedral 4 p.m. Preacher, Rev. D. Bickerton, Vicar of Redbourn. Tea and annual meeting at Waterend Barn, 5.30. — G. W. Cartmel, Hon. Sec., Duffield, St. Albans.

LINCOLN DIOCESAN GUILD.—The annual meeting will be held at Lincoln on May 1st. Meeting in the Cathedral Chapter House 3 p.m. Evensong 4 p.m. 'Silent' ringing on the Cathedral bells during the afternoon and evening. Will all members please make own arrangements for tea?—F. W. Stokes, Hon. Sec.

NORWICH DIOCESAN ASSOCIATION.—The annual general meeting will be held at Norwich on Saturday, May 1st. St. Giles' bells (silent) 1.45 p.m. Handbells in Cathedral 2.45 to 3. Evensong in Cathedral 3. Preacher, Rev. A. G. G. Thurlow. Tea and meeting at Cathedral Restaurant, 4.15.—A. G. G. Thurlow, Gen. Sec., 52, The Close, Norwich.

SURREY ASSOCIATION.—The annual general meeting will be held at Croydon on Saturday, May 1st. The tower of Croydon Parish Church will be open for handbell ringing at 3.30 p.m. Service at 5 p.m. Tea at the Parish Hall, Sylverdale Road, followed by business meeting.—C. de Ste C. Parks, Assistant Sec., 44, Torridge Road, Thornton Heath, Surrey.

ESSEX ASSOCIATION.—North-Eastern Division.—Saturday, May 1st, at St. Peter's, Colchester. Handbells in the belfry 2.30 p.m. Service 3.30 p.m. Tea and business meeting 4.15 p.m. at Crispin Court. Bring own food.—Leslie Wright, Hon. Dis. Sec., 113a, Great Thurlow, Suffolk.

MIDLAND COUNTIES ASSOCIATION.—Annual meeting at Leicester (not Burton), Saturday, May 1st. Bells of St. John's (10), near Midland Station, and Cathedral (12) open for silent ringing, 2 p.m. to 4.45. Committee meet 4 p.m. Tea 5 p.m., followed by general meeting, in Cathedral Church House. Handbells, etc., afterwards. — Ernest Morris, Gen. Hon. Sec., 24, Coventry Street, Leicester.

YORKSHIRE ASSOCIATION.—The annual general meeting will be held at the Leeds and County Conservative Club, South Parade, Leeds, on Saturday, May 1st, at 3 p.m. A social evening on the same premises from 6-8.30 p.m. Handbells available. Tea obtainable at the many city cafes. Reports will be available, and subscriptions are now due. — L. W. G. Morris, Hon. Gen. Sec., 65, Lilycroft Road, Heaton, Bradford.

ANCIENT SOCIETY OF COLLEGE YOUTHS.—The next meeting will be held on Saturday, May 8th, at the Bell Foundry, Whitechapel Road, E.1, at 3 p.m.—A. B. Peck, Hon. Sec., 1, Eversfield Road, Reigate.

KENT COUNTY ASSOCIATION.—Lewisham District.—The quarterly meeting will be held at SS, Peter and Paul's, Shoreham, near Sevenoaks, on Saturday, May 8th. Further particulars next week.—A. G. Hill, Hon. Dis. Sec., 53, Hengist Road, Erith, Kent.

SOCIETY FOR THE ARCHDEACONRY OF STAFFORD.—A meeting will be held at Sedgley on Saturday, May 8th. Bells (silent) available at 3 o'clock. Service in church at 4.45, with address by Rev. T. H. H. Kilburn, B.A. (Vicar). At 5.30 cups of tea will be provided; please bring own sandwiches. Handbells available.—H. Knight, 15, Rugby Street, Wolverhampton.

OXFORD DIOCESAN GUILD.—Reading Branch.—Annual meeting at Tilehurst on Saturday, May 8th. Handbells in tower from 3 p.m. Service at 5 p.m. Tea in Old National Schools at 6 p.m., 1s. per head, followed by business meeting. Please let me know by May 5th how many for tea.—E. G. Foster, 401, London Road, Reading.

BEDFORDSHIRE ASSOCIATION.—Biggleswade District.—Meeting at Sandy on Saturday, May 8th. Bells (6) silent at 5 p.m., also handbells. — C. J. Ball, 25, Tempsford Road, Sandy, Beds.

SUFFOLK GUILD.—Annual general meeting on Saturday, May 8th, in the ringing chamber of St. Mary-le-Tower, Ipswich, at 3.30 p.m.—H. G. Herbert, Hon. Sec., 61, Acton Lane, Sudbury, Suffolk.

MIDLAND COUNTIES ASSOCIATION.—Hinckley District.—Meeting at Broughton Astley, on Saturday, May 8th. Handbells in the church from 5.30 p.m., followed by meeting at 7. Further handbell ringing at the Bull's Head.—W. A. Wood, Dis. Sec.

KENT COUNTY ASSOCIATION.—Lewisham District.—Meeting at Shoreham, near Sevenoaks, on Saturday, May 8th. Belfry available for use from 3 p.m. Service at 4.45. Tea and business meeting to follow. Tea at reasonable prices for visitors who notify me not later than Monday, May 3rd.—A. G. Hill, 53, Hengist Road, Erith, Kent.

LANCASHIRE ASSOCIATION.—Blackburn Branch.—Meeting at Rishton on Saturday, May 15th. Tower bells (silent) from 3 p.m., also handbells. Meeting at 6 p.m. Please bring your own food.—F. Hindle, Branch Sec.

KENT COUNTY ASSOCIATION.—Tonbridge District.—Meeting at Hawkhurst on Saturday, May 15th. Further announcements next week.—T. Saunders, Hon. Dis. Sec., East Peckham, Tonbridge.

WORCESTERSHIRE AND DISTRICTS ASSOCIATION.—Western Branch.—Meeting at Hallow on Saturday, May 15th. Silent ringing from 3 p.m. Service at 4.15 p.m., followed by business meeting.—E. F. Cubberley, Park Cottages, Kempsey, near Worcester.

MIDDLESEX COUNTY ASSOCIATION.—Annual general meeting at St. Botolph's, Bishopsgate, on Saturday, May 15th. Church bells (silent) and handbells available from 2.30 p.m. Service at 4.30 p.m. Tea, at a charge of 1s. 4d., at 5.15 p.m. Business meeting to follow. To ensure getting tea, please send names to me by Monday, May 10th.—C. T. Coles, Hon. Gen. Sec., 21, Vincent Road, E.4.

ST. MARY THE VIRGIN, PUTNEY.—Ringing every Sunday at 10.15. All ringers heartily welcomed.—W. T. Elson.

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