

A well read vicar

The Annual Striking Competition of the Salisbury Branch was held at Broadchalke in the lovely Chalke Valley. Well it would have been nice to appreciate it but the weather prevented that. Because of the rain we spent the afternoon running the gauntlet between the Hall and the Church. And, of course, the sun came out at tea-time! Just as at Avebury.

Undaunted we pressed on and there were enough teams to provoke a lively competition. The heavy six are not all that easy to ring but the marking was very close. It was interesting to note, from the Judges' timing of the set piece, that just three of the nine teams seemed to settle at the right speed for the bells. St. Martin's were the worthy winners with a nice touch of Minor. St. Thomas "B" won the Ted Brine Trophy for call-changes.

The Vicar, in his address during the service, made the usual effort to include references to bells but we were astonished to hear him quote the time taken to ring the extent on 16! Some million years, I think, but the exact figure escapes me. Apparently he had read it in the *Church Times*. Has *The Ringing World* been us-staged? Presumably the figure will appear in the new diary (Editor please note). Anyway it provoked an interesting response. One of our ringers, who shall be nameless, spent the tea-time checking it out! If you think about it, it can't be done on a pocket calculator, you have to do it the hard way.

Regrettably, we were not able to do justice to the sumptuous tea provided by the Broadchalke ladies.

After a short period of general ringing at Broadchalke it was off to Martin Club for the Annual Skittles Match and a different kind of striking. Not quite the record attendance of last year but, again, there were enough teams to provoke healthy competition so much so that a play-off was necessary. Poetic justice, I suppose, that Broadchalke won. Happily we had regained our appetites and were bale to enjoy the excellent meal provided by the Martin Club. Just the way to end a well-attended and enjoyable occasion.

J.D.D.

Close contest

The Norwich Diocesan Striking Competition was held on September 28th in the Lowestoft area. Four bands entered the call-change section at Somerleyton and nine bands entered the method competition at Oulton. The method competition ended extremely close with just 2½ points between the top three bands! The inter-district 8-bell contest was held at Lowestoft with results as follows:

8-bell inter-district - Eastern (33½), Southern (78½), Western (136½), Northern (142½).

Method - Mancroft (18½), Stratton Strawless (19½), Diss (21), Blofield/Acle (37½), Happisburgh (49), Norton Subcourse (63½), Colegate (73), Western Branch (103), Dickleburgh (109).

Call-change - Intwood (20), Colegate (28), Western Branch (31), Hickling (44).

Thanks to Jeremy Spiller and Rodger Lubbock for judging. S.J.D.

* * *

Heard after failure of peal attempt:
Conductor: "Well, we started off at a very brisk pace."
Tenor ringer: "We started off at a very brisk pace because I could not keep my blessed bell up!"

A great day at Chiddingstone

Sunday 8th September dawned fair and a good time was had by all. Our local newspaper has largely abandoned these classic items that should be in every description of a local dog-hanging. *The Ringing World* does better and may have become careless about the use of the second but is loyal to the former and any self-respecting item will lead off with a weather report. A correspondent has complained of reports which lack a geographical placing causing him to fly to "Dove", only to find there are other places of the same name. (Let no-one point out that Doves fly!).

Chiddingstone therefore is in Kent - just! If you get lost in the lanes you can stray over the county boundary into Sussex and if you are very careless you might drift through Edenbridge or Cowden into Surrey. It is the last parish to the north-west in the Diocese of Rochester.

The Ringing World of August 30th described the work to the bells and the last paragraph on page 830 anticipated the proposed celebrations. The Editor co-operated - he often will - in getting the horse before the cart. There is not much point in letting people know several weeks afterwards that they missed a bit of fun. Let them know in advance and hope they will attend. If they are then disappointed - hard luck! There was a disappointment - the Editor did not come but was taken away by his wife in search of sun and sand. This was a pity because (a) we would have found sun if not

sand at Chiddingstone; (b) he would have written this report instead of me.

In any endeavour it is important to finish as you mean to begin. Festal Evensong was indeed something to remember and in the parish at any rate will be long remembered. The stage directions in the printed service paper begin as follows:

"Welcome - The Rector

The Procession will enter by the West Door
 The Bishop's Procession will pause under the tower

Master Bellfounder: My Lord Bishop, I hand you this bellrope. Will it be your pleasure to rededicate these bells?

Bishop: To the Glory of God, we dedicate Bell no. 6 recast in memory of Philip Everest and Jane Streatfeild and we rededicate the remaining seven bells retuned and refurbished in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Processional Hymn

All People that on Earth do Dwell

First verse

The Bishop's Procession will pause at the entrance to the Nave from the Chapel

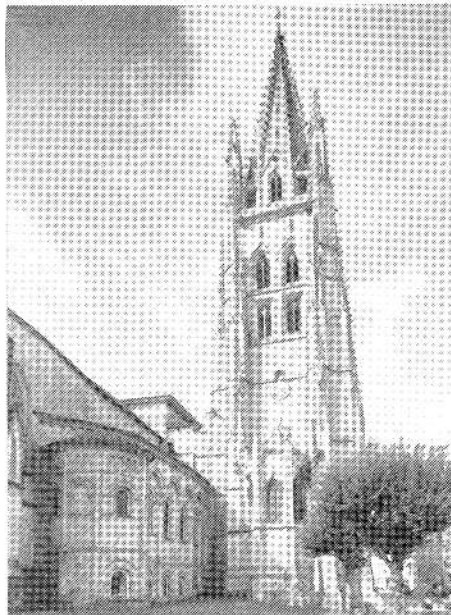
Architect: My Lord Bishop, will it be your pleasure to consecrate the Work of Restoration and Refurbishment of the Roof and Structure of this Ancient Church?

Bishop: To the Glory of God, we dedicate the skill, craftsmanship and application of all who have engaged in the work of restoration, in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The Procession proceeds to verses 2-5 of the Hymn."

If you want a rent-a-crowd for a congregational service, get some bellringers. The singing, whatever its musical merit or lack of it, sent a tingle down the spine. The Order of Evening Service was according to the ancient rite and was led by the Rector. The Psalm, *de rigueur*, was no. 150. The First Lesson, Ecclesiasticus 44 vv. 1-11, "Now let us praise famous men. . . ." was read by Mr. Ronald Taylor, Churchwarden, Chiddingstone Causeway and the Second Lesson, St. Matthew 6 vv. 24-34, by Mr. Philip Corby, Churchwarden, St. Mary, Chiddingstone. The Collects were read by the Rev. Jean Lorimer, Honorary Assistant and a short Litany of Petitions and Thanksgiving was led by Mrs. Anne Portsmore, Pastoral Assistant. Anne is a ringer, having learned at Sevenoaks some 30 years ago. Grandsire Caters was rung somewhat badly on handbells. The bells were rather too heavy for change ringing but non-ringers, unaware of the standard of the ringing, were enchanted by the magnificent sound of the bells, which really are superb.

(Continued overleaf)



Saint-Eutrope, Saintes, France

This splendid tower and spire dominate the town of Saintes in a similar fashion to that of St. Wulfram's at Grantham. The tower and spire are 85 metres (275 ft.) high. There are no details of bells available but a meaty-sounding (about 1 tonne) clock bell struck the hours.

Similar towers in this area of France have four or five bells hung for electric swing-chiming. Often there are no louvres, so these are usually in very poor condition due to exposure to the weather and infestation by pigeons.

It seems a shame that such a superb tower at Saint Eutrope has no ringing bells, so it might be a good candidate the next time there is a redundant 12!

PAUL FLAVELL

Kingston-upon-Thames

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CHIDDINGSTONE - continued

After the prayers the choir had sung, most impressively, "God be in my head. . . ." In his notices and thanks the Rector, the Rev. John Lee, paid tribute in detail to the many who had made this day possible. Let it suffice for this record that the first lesson had contained a reference that fits the occasion ". . . some there be who have no memorial but their name liveth for evermore. . . ." The article in *The Ringing World* of August 30th gave some idea of the mammoth personal contributions that were made but names were omitted in deference to the wishes of those who insisted their satisfaction would come from the knowledge of a job well done and truly to a very high standard.

For local journalists any preacher worth his salt will preach "an inspiring sermon". The Bishop of Rochester, on his first official visit to Chiddingstone since his appointment in 1988, did just that. He had in the morning preached at St. John, Waterloo Road, South London - Cardboard city where, as you emerge from the church you step over homeless and deprived people. The Bishop felt we ought to be unrestrained in the enjoyment of our great day but the distress of the deprived would not go away.

The other hymns in the service were "Bright the Vision that delighted. . . ." and "Now Thank we all our God. . . ." during which the collection for the Homeless Charities was taken without deduction of expenses. In defiance of the Archdeacon of York the collection was taken by eight women sidesmen and when the offerings had been received at the altar all stood for the singing of the Vesper Hymn "Saviour again to thy dear name we raise. . . ." followed by the Bishop's blessing. This was intended to round off all the fun of a happy day.

As had been anticipated the Feast of St. Mary-the-Virgin had begun with Sung Eucharist at 10.00. Certain distinguished visiting ringers arrived in good time to ring for the service. A past President of the Central Council had called bobs in a touch of Stedman Triples. He called a bob either a whole pull early or a whole pull late - who cares which as it was wisely ignored. This involved a calling-round job. Trollope (J. Armiger not Anthony) said there are two positions from which it will come round and two it won't (Shut up, Pladdys. I haven't looked it up and I don't know what he really said and wouldn't understand it anyway!) At all events "Bob - no make it a Single" did the trick. Chris Pickford did say the Central Council was a useless body and he doesn't like my book reviews - I am very fond of his. The Rector put us right on Mariology and we awaited the arrival of the East Grinstead Guild at 11.45 to ring the first quarter peal on the restored bells. Most happily and appropriately this was conducted by Robert Everest with the band stationed as follows:

1260 Grandsire Triples: R. Jean Osbon 1, Margaret A. Large 2, E. J. Ladd 3, B. E. Jeffery 4, A. King 5, R. J. Everest (C) 6, A. N. Brock 7, R. P. Sherlock 8. By Officers and Vice-Presidents of the East Grinstead and District Guild.

During the afternoon another quarter peal was rung by a band of "Who you know" ringers:

1260 Stedman Triples: J. G. A. Prior 1, Renee Armstrong 2, Emma St. John Smith 3, J. S. Mason 4, J. Hill 5, J. Armstrong 6, P. A. Corby (C) 7, K. J. Matthews 8.

For the evening service a quarter peal was rung by members of the Tonbridge District of the Kent County Association:

1260 Stedman Triples: Ann Jenner 1, Catherine M. Lewis 2, R. T. Pankhurst 3, P. F. Romney 4, E. Roughley 5, S. Jenner 6, F. W. Lewis (C) 7, C. J. Mundy 8.

There was a considerable amount of ringing between the quarter peals and after the service, most of it of a very good standard. David Aitchison of the Village Shop afterwards said it was much better than Monday nights.

When we were making the arrangements for the day we hoped many people would come, as indeed they did both from the village and away. We wanted them to be welcome as guests and we were determined not to assault them for money raising. Thus the collection at the service was for the homeless and the barbecue lunch on the cricket ground and afternoon tea were provided free. Sadly we did not feel able to extend this to the bar but sales at the outdoor bar counter were brisk.

The cricket match was a great success with the home team winning by a whisker. There were raised eyebrows that the Bellingrings of England included an Australian but it was felt this irregularity should be overlooked in view of the recent success of the striking contest at the Central Council weekend. Chris Rogers proved to be a worthy scorer and one of the umpires was a wily Welshman invited by a fellow firewatcher of some 50 years ago when he learned to ring Grandsire Triples on handbells to pass the hours but failed to take up ringing properly after the war. Two umpires were arranged by the locals but anticipating the opening sentence of the second lesson at Evensong one withdrew, leaving the field to the Archdeacon of Tonbridge - "No man can serve two masters. . . ."

Other diversions included Mike Hayes Steel Band, Clowns, Bouncy Castle, Stunt Bikes, and in the Church a Flower Display and the Kent County Association Display stands. The biggest gamble of the day paid off - the weather was "perfick" It was a great delight that Alan Hughes and his wife and their young daughter could be with us for the day. Alan was able with some satisfaction to hear the bells rung well so he could register the greatly improved tune and tone, and could honour the parish by handing to the Bishop for reconsecration a very satisfactory restoration project.

Dr. Charles Brown and Mrs. Brown were with us, having absented themselves from the Patronal Festival celebrations in their own parish. Dr. Brown was married in Chiddingstone Church and is always a good friend. Ringers may remember his part as Architect to Coventry Cathedral in the restoration of the bells there. He is also Architect to York Minster. I have never dared to go into much detail with him about David Potter but I think he liked him. It was a particular pleasure that Nicholas Davies and Brenda, chairman and chairwoman of the Kent County Association, Phil Young, the Secretary, and her husband and son were all present. Very welcome guests were Mr. Graham Pledger of English Heritage and his wife. They and their family are very active at Edenbridge Church, where Graham rings with the local band.

The Rector and Churchwardens hope as soon as possible to write formally to the generous helpers and supporters who made everything possible. In the meantime, bless all of you who came on September 8th. Thankyou for your support, we hope you had a good day.

P.A.C.



Helen and Tim Burchell.

Much rejoicing

There was much rejoicing amongst ringers of North Oxfordshire when Tim Burchell and Helen Hadley announced their wedding plans. A week before the wedding they both rang their first peal (together with Hook Norton, Oxon). Tim had picked a band from the ringing friends they have done most of their ringing with. Tim had taken Helen to ring three years ago.

The wedding was held on September 21st at Swerford: a quarter peal was rung prior to service. The bride duly arrived on time (instructed) as Swerford bells are not the easiest to ring. The service was conducted by Rev. Robert Bolton, former chairman of Banbury Branch, O.D.G. After the service the guests followed the bride and groom to Manor House Hotel, Moreton-in-Marsh. During the main photo session in the garden, nearby Moreton bells were rung by members of the Four Shircs Guild, of which both bride and groom are members.

The guests then moved in to the hotel for an excellent meal. After the usual speeches, toasts and much pleasant conversation the bride and groom left for Stow-on-the-Wald and then on to an undisclosed destination for their honeymoon.

Their many friends wish them a long and happy marriage as they set up home in Swerford, Oxon. 21 Sept, 1260 Doubles (B) Brown 1, Sue Burchell 2, Sally A Franklin 3, Withey 4, G J Clifton (C) 5. Wedding completed by Tim Burchell and Helen Hadley.

GRAHAM CLEGG

Swerford, Oxon. 21 Sept, 1260 Doubles (B) Brown 1, Sue Burchell 2, Sally A Franklin 3, Withey 4, G J Clifton (C) 5. Wedding completed by Tim Burchell and Helen Hadley.

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