

### Happier news from Woolwich

On 8th April last year (p.295) it was reported that, due to the unsafe state of the tower, ringing had ceased at St. Mary's, Woolwich. A detailed survey confirmed our worst fears and it was necessary virtually to rebuild the entire parapet at a cost of about £20,000. This work was completed before Christmas, but, due to infestation of tower roof beams, the bellframe sufficed as a temporary support while certain timbers were renewed and the bells were available to ring in the New Year. A further £6,000 has since been spent on the installation of steel ties across the nave to prevent further inclination of supporting columns, and damaged plaster work in the west gallery has been made good.

Such a large sum of money having been spent, it was deemed advisable to make another recording of tower oscillation during ringing, for comparison with the 1964 figures, and we are relieved to know that, with all eight bells ringing, *further deterioration has not occurred*. Ideally, the bells should be hung lower in the tower in a new frame but, as there is no immediate cause for concern, things will remain as they are for the time being.

On p.694 it is recorded that the bells were rung in full peal for St. Mary Magdalene's Day; this was the first attempt since the restoration and the sponsored extent of Triples has raised over £80 towards the annual cost of Ministry in the parish. (Funds have, understandably been seriously depleted by the above-mentioned structural expenses.) We take this opportunity to thank all our sponsors. Three locals rang but the otherwise diverse origin of the band (including one from

Boston, Mass.) did not permit credit of the performance to a particular association.

### OTHER EVENTS

Other events during the past year have included a DIY Christmas dinner (less costly and more enjoyable than some official functions), and an outing to the Ashdown Forest on the 1st July. The churchyard at Hartfield is immaculately kept and the tower houses a pleasant old ring of six; the 5th was reputed to change her tone with the weather and, quarter-turning effecting no improvement, she was recast in 1783. Well spliced Rudhall and Whitechapel was sampled at Maresfield, tuneful Gillett and Johnston at Fairwarp and Coleman's Hatch.

Although physically endeavouring to part company with the church for the past century-and-a-half, other ties to the tower have recently been strengthened by the new curate taking up the noble art. He is not our first campanological cleric; the Rev. W. T. Leadbitter, in 1933, was the first Rector of Woolwich to ring a peal on his own bells, and the present Vicar of Abbey Wood is a part-time member of the band. Other new recruits should also help to keep our bells ringing regularly, and visitors are most welcome on Sunday and Wednesday evenings (details in the County reports).

R. D. B.

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 47 Manor Road, Sidcup, Kent DA15 7HU.



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 EDITOR: C. W. DENYER

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### RIPPLES ON A POND

Mrs. Edna Grabham, of Bickenhall, Taunton, writes: "Isn't it amazing how far the ripples on a pond go! I taught Brenda Shire to ring handbells and tower bells when I taught my children to ring. Brenda later married Ray Arcscott. Using the same handbells, they have become quite 'famous' for their tune ringing and still use some of the original settings. My daughter Janie rang with them and then went off to Australia to do nursing. Now she is at Sydney Eye Hospital, is joining in quite a bit of tower-bell ringing, and hopes to teach them tune ringing on handbells.

"Ray and I have sent out some of our handbell music to help to get them started. I imagine that Janie will feel very strange ringing 'Hark the Herald' and 'Silent Night' in the middle of an Australian summer.

"Janie will be returning to England early next year, but she certainly is having a wonderful time out there."



Left:—

1978 St. Mary's, Prestbury, ringers.—Back row: Sue Robinson, Kate Greenall, Lois Cleaver; 2nd row: Sue Joy, Mary Lynch, Chris Hickey; 3rd row: Pat Hickey, David Lynch, Jacki Taylor, Dave Mundy, Pete Mundy; front row: Bernard Taylor, Audrey Lawson, Jo Mundy. Absent: Richard Tibbles, Graham and Malcolm Mags.



1886 Society of Prestbury Youths at the opening of the bells.