



Bellfounders' Gift Page



Editorial

Mr. Neville Unwin of Waltham Abbey recently took out a subscription to *The Ringing World* - a good move Mr. Unwin! There was no available slot for a "U" on the RW computer-base so "U 012" was created and was the 4,000th record. Mr. Unwin's subscription has therefore been extended for an extra 12 months and the Essex Association benefitted with a £5 donation to its Bell Restoration Fund.

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Four extra pages have been included in this issue to help deal with the surge of December ringing, especially peals, and next week's issue will hopefully "mop up" most of the remaining 1991 peals. Our thanks to those waiting patiently to see the results of their January ringing published - a start on this will be made in the February 14th issue after which the situation should rapidly improve.

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A lady from Kent has asked us to make yet another plea to thoughtless ringers who visit a tower, adjust ropes and then do not bother to return them to their previous length. A recent visit to her tower from a Saturday band resulted in an extremely "stretch-ful" experience for the local youngsters who came to ring for Sunday Service the following day. Last year we set Barry Peachey loose on the unauthorised tower grabbers - beware lest he turns his attention to the unthinking rope adjusters who could find themselves sentenced to quite a long "stretch"! Alternatively we could just publish an occasional black list. . . .

Progress at Bishopgate

Not so long ago Osborn bells were mentioned in *The Ringing World*, and I attempted to bring the 200-year-old original peal at Bishopgate to the fore with little success. However, now they are considered "unique" and have been taken out by crane and despatched to Taylors for overhaul and eventual re-hanging lower in the clock room. Very eminent ringers have given service in the past at Bishopgate: James Davis 50-65 years ago and E. Duffield, J. Crampion, J. Prior, P. Corby, F. Darby, T. Shorter together with Mrs. D. Kelly, C. Roberts and Miss Christine Rimmer. I remember so many, and sadly so many have now passed on.

Fifty-five years ago I recall noticing that with 4, 3, 7 and 8 along the north wall hung to swing E/W, the tower sway made them very unpredictable, and with plain bearings the 3 and 4 in particular were very hard to control unless a regular beat (28 per minute or so) was maintained. More recently stone movement was noted at the top of the tower, but this has all been repaired - the old rusty, crumbling material was inspected by Mrs. V. Payne, Middlesex C.A. historian, before removal.

At Christmas the bells and fittings were therefore covered in dirt and dust which took me some time to clear, but we managed to have the bells rung several times before Christmas. The last quarter was then rung on 30th December.

The old iron frame is to be left in the tower unless needed elsewhere, and the bells will be rehung in a new frame in April. Much of the old fittings and headstocks have gone to Taylors, but there are some sliders and pulleys left, plus a great deal of dirt still to clear. Any help or donations would be most welcome.

JOHN EUSTON

28 Fairmile Avenue,
Streatham, London SW16 6AG

Bishopgate, City of London. 30 Dec, 1260
Grandsire Triples: Sara C Phelps 1, P I Butler 3, P J Ellis 3, J J Hardy 4, J Euston 5, J S Ashcroft (C) 6, M J Trimm 7, J P Adams 8. Last quarter on the bells prior to their renovation during 1992. £1.60

With great pleasure

I have two pieces of GOOD NEWS for RW readers. First - the *One-per-Learner Book* is being produced in Braille by the RNIB. Anyone knowing a visually handicapped ringer who might be interested should direct them to the RNIB Braille Library.

Secondly, a further £1,000 has recently been given to Guild and Association BRFs, bringing to £10,000 the "profit" handed back since the books were launched six years ago. Sales of the three books have passed 55,000, of which 38,000 have been "wumpers".

Recipients on this occasion were: £100 Oxford DG; £58 Kent County Assn; £36 Salisbury DG; £34 each Worcestershire Assn, Yorkshire Assn; £32 Bath & Wells DA; £28 each Essex County, Hereford DG, Winchester & Portsmouth DG; £26 Ely DA; £24 Bedfordshire Assn; £22 each Devon Churches, Durham & Newcastle DA, Guildford DG, Norwich DA; £20 each Hertford CA, Southwell DG; £18 Leicester DG; £14 each Gloucester & Bristol DA, Suffolk Guild, Surrey CA; £12 each Beverley & D, Carlisle DA, Derby DA; £10 Lichfield AS, Llandaff & Monmouth DG, Scottish Assn, Swansea & Brecon DG.

Smaller amounts have been held over for Chester DG, Lancashire Assn, Lincoln DG, Middlesex & London, North Staffs, Peterborough, Shropshire, Dorset, Midland Counties, Irish Assn, Truro DG and the North American Guild.

The remaining £230 for which purchasers did not specify a fund, goes to the "home team", Coventry Diocesan Guild.

PAM COPSON.

Christmas Day peal at Westhoughton

On 29th November 1990 the main body of St. Bartholomew's Church was destroyed by fire. Almost miraculously the tower survived with very little damage. It is only recently that the ringers at Westhoughton appreciated how close to destruction the tower and bells actually came. The engineer in charge of strengthening the tower informed us that the fire had been within one inch of burning through the floor of the ringing chamber, and if it had broken through nothing could have prevented the fire destroying the whole tower. Much of the credit for saving the tower goes to the firemen who, having despaired of saving the main part of the church, turned all the hoses on the tower in the nick of time.

Although the main structure of the tower remained sound, the north side of the tower which was attached to the church required considerable reinforcement before the bells could be rung again. The total cost of the necessary work on the tower was in the region of £40,000, most of which was raised by public appeal. A substantial contribution was made by donations from ringers from many parts of the country and from an "Open Day" last August which was well supported. The ringers at St. Bartholomew's would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who contributed in any way.

The Rector of Westhoughton, Rev. Simon Tatton-Brown, made the restoration of the tower an immediate priority, and at an early stage expressed the hope that the bells would be ringing again by Christmas 1991. The necessary work progressed on schedule and on Tuesday, December 17th, the bells were tried out in the presence of the structural engineer and Taylor's representative. The tower was declared safe and the bells were then rung for Sunday service on 22nd December and then at midnight on the 25th to welcome Christmas Day. Finally, later on Christmas Day, a peal of Cambridge Surprise Major was rung to mark the official re-opening of the bells. This was also the first peal ever to be rung on Christmas Day on Westhoughton bells and by most of the band. The peal confirmed that the bells are in excellent order and remain one of the finest rings in the area.

The future situation is that the tower will be free-standing with a completely new church to be built on the site of the old one. It is unlikely that the new church will be in the same Victorian style as the old, and the tower will be the only remaining evidence of the old St. Bartholomew's Church.

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First peal congratulations

Basil Guppy, Andrew J. Harris, Rev. Preb. Anthony D. Fensome, Jonathan Clarke, James H. Clarke, John E. Dowling, Edward Randall, Jenny A. Lee and Joanne Attwood.

Donated by:

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