

Letters

(See also page 394)

CHURCH OF ENGLAND

Dear Sir,—I had not realised that my unscholarly historical comments on the Church of England would arouse such keen debate! I find Mr. Price's letter the most lucid and learned to date. None the less, if the Editor and readers will forgive my hogging the correspondence page again, I must point out that Mr. Price's view is only one side of a current debate. He rightly says that we are struggling with the unknown in the history of the early Church, and his comments are indeed well supported by evidence. But there is strong evidence for the other side, too, and at the moment historical opinion on this matter is divided.

What we are debating is whether or not an independent Church of England can be said to have existed before the Reformation. The idea that at the Reformation the Church was merely reverting to its ancient pre-Conquest independence is a very old one, first used by the Elizabethan apologists for the Church of England, notably her great Archbishop Matthew Parker, to whom we owe as a result the famous Parker Collection of mediæval church manuscripts at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. Perhaps I can sum up my own position by stating that in the light of modern historical scholarship I find such a view dubious, though by no means to be written off.

I don't think that in this I am guilty of confusing the Saxon and Celtic Churches. Few would deny their practical independence or the shining lamp of sanctity and evangelism that the Celtic saints and missionaries lit in those dark ages on the outer edge of the civilised world. But even the Celtic Church—and there is plenty of evidence for this—acknowledged itself part of a Universal Church and the supremacy (or perhaps "presidency" or "seniority" would be a better word), however nominal or theoretical at that time, of Rome.

I'm sure that everyone has had enough of my inexpert opinions in *The Ringing World* and I personally am not going to continue this debate; I can only recommend to anyone who is interested a recent book of essays on this very question from the beginnings of Christianity in England to the Reformation, by the most eminent historians in this field. This is *The English Church and the Papacy in the Middle Ages*, edited by C. H. Lawrence, published by Burns and Oates, London, 1965.—Yours faithfully,

J. R. N. LEBON.

Selwyn College, Cambridge.

GREAT PAUL

Dear Sir,—The item taken from *The East Anglian Times* re Great Paul being heard again for the first time in 30 years (R.W., page 254) appears to suggest that someone has slipped up. The bell was rung, frame high, for five minutes regularly every day at 1 p.m. by four members of the Cathedral maintenance staff as late as 1957, for during that year I personally took two schoolgirls, daughters of the then Vicar of Croydon Parish Church (and now Bishop of Repton) into the tower to view the bell in action, and we stood on the platform within a yard of it while it was being rung. I don't know how long after 1957 the regular ringing continued.—Yours faithfully,

F. E. COLLINS.

Ringwood, Hants.

"ENGLISH—AS SHE IS SPOKE"

Dear Sir,—I was entertained by P. T. Dale's letter, as I hope he intended.

English over the centuries has created and accepted new words so that it now enjoys an extensive vocabulary which can be used with effect in all situations. The ability to add new suffixes such as "fy," "wise," "ize," as well as "ing," "ly," "or," "ty," etc., can only further enrich the language.

I also dislike Americanisms such as "actuality," but the public will use words which are useful and keep the language fresh. No one will arrest the tide.

To "redify the town" may not be English today, but if the public chose it will be English tomorrow, and what will be the loss in that?—Yours faithfully,

K. J. EVANS.

Cambridge.

And from E. Boumfrey, of Carnforth, Lancs:

I do hope that no more of our bell-ringers who take ill or meet with accidents are going to be "hospitalised" (R.W., page 93). Do, please, Mr. Editor, send them to hospital in the good old-fashioned way. I would hate to read of any of my friends being "doctorised" if they were going to the doctor for treatment.

EXHIBITS WANTED

Dear Sir,—An exhibition is being arranged next year and it is hoped this will go on tour. This presents an opportunity for considerable publicity for bellringing and I would be grateful for any assistance and advice on what could be used in this way, particularly for the loan of a working model of a bell or bells.—Yours faithfully,

LESLIE D. MILLS.

23 Colchester Road,
Bures, Suffolk.

[Any offers and suggestions to Mr. Mills, please.—Ed.]

ST. GEORGE'S BELLS, PERTH, W.A.

Dear Editor,—On behalf of the ringers of St. George's Cathedral, Perth, Western Australia, could you please publish in *The Ringing World* that St. George's bells (the front six) are still rung on Wednesday evenings (6.30–8 p.m. practice) and Sunday mornings and evenings for services, as recent arrivals to the "booming State" have been labouring under the impression that ringing had ceased altogether. Amongst these have been Miss Sandra Cox, from Somerset, a very useful young ringer. We did manage to ring all eight bells for New Year's Eve ringing and also whilst Nelson Sloan, from New Zealand, was here recently, when Bob Major plain courses were rung. Our captain, Basil Potts, and his wife have been on holiday in Melbourne, thus reducing our number; however, we usually manage to keep the bells ringing.

Recent correspondence from Tom Lock informs us that Ringing Towers subscribers in England are concerned at non-arrival of their copies. I received the two latest copies last week (two issues together), so persons in England subscribing to Ringing Towers will be receiving their copies soon. The delay has been caused by change of editors.

I am leaving Western Australia after ten years here to return to England via Panama, and look forward to meeting old friends and also those who have passed through Perth since we started ringing (other than chiming) here in 1961. I hope to be ringing at my old tower, St. Thomas's, Salisbury, in late May.—Yours faithfully,

BRIAN LAWES.

Medina, Western Australia.

Obituary

MR. E. WARNER

It is with deep regret we record the sudden death on April 12 of Ernest Warner at the age of 76.

Ernest was a ringer at St. John's, Peterborough, for over 30 years and during that time rang a number of peals and quarters on the treble or tenor. He retired from ringing in 1965 but attended church every Sunday. A peal of Grandsire Triples rung on February 3, 1967, was in honour of his golden wedding and was conducted by John H. Bluff.

Ernest was a Main Line passenger train driver in his younger days, and in the 1914–18 war served with the Royal Engineers.

The bells of St. John's were rung half-muffled after the funeral on April 16 and a quarter peal of Grandsire Triples was rung in the evening, also conducted by Mr. Bluff.

MR. HAROLD BIRTWELL

It is with deep regret that we have to report the death of Harold Birtwell on April 7, 1971. He became a ringer at Whalley (Lancs) Church in 1924, and since then had been a regular Sunday service ringer until his health began to fail in recent years. He was a member of the Parochial Church Council for a considerable period and during his ten years as tower secretary did much to ensure that ringing continued at Whalley. He joined the Lancashire Association in 1926, and was made a life member in February this year.

The funeral service was held at Whalley on April 13, the bells being rung half-muffled, and this was followed by cremation at Accrington. J. P.

A RINGERS' GALLERY

"In the faith of Jesus Christ we dedicate this Ringers' Gallery to the Glory of God and to the benefit of His Holy Church, in memory of Frederick John Farr." With these words the Bishop of Dorking (Rt. Rev. K. D. Evans) pronounced the Blessing and followed it with a supplicatory prayer for the ringers "to be filled with reverence and continue in holiness of life."

The occasion was the dedication of the new ringers' gallery in the Church of St. Michael and All Angels, Camberley, Surrey, on March 28 and a crowded church first took part in this and the blessing and dedication of the choir vestry, which is under the ringers' gallery and was previously the ringing room.

The long draught of rope previously necessary always caused difficulties, and there is no doubt the new floor fitted is a great improvement. The ringers themselves have done a considerable amount of work and have raised much money (supplemented by a legacy from Mr. F. J. Farr's will) to have the work carried out.

Following the dedications the service of Holy Communion began, the vicar (Rev. Paul Barber) being the celebrant, and the Bishop assisting and pronouncing the final benediction.

A peal of Glasgow Surprise Major was rung the following evening, and Camberley now has passed another milestone in its history—for it has a very go-ahead community.