

SIXTY-ONE YEARS' SERVICE

Now 80 years old, Mr. Edgar Marlow tells us of his 61 years as a ringer at Wednesbury.

St. Paul's, Woodgreen, Wednesbury, in the Archdeaconry of Stafford, was built in 1874 by the Elwell family of four brothers (Alfred, Edward, Henry and Frederick). They also built about 40 houses and a schoolroom for their workmen, and Alfred taught some of them to read and write! They owned a firm of edge toolmakers and the works were at the bottom of Forge Lane (now St. Paul's Road).

The church was built without a tower. This and a ring of eight bells were added in 1887. The first peals were Grandsire and Stedman Triples, conducted by Samuel Reeves of West Bromwich. Mr. William Johnson of Darlaston taught a local band to ring Grandsire Triples and conducted several peals with the locals. Edgar Marlow joined the band in 1909 and rang his first peal in December, 1910. By 1915 he had rung peals in nine different methods.

An outstanding peal was one with the local band—Stedman Triples by men born in Elwells' houses. All worked at Elwells' works, five for over 50 years. Another peal was one by the local band—Double Norwich C.B. Major, first peal in the method by all except the conductor. The bells at present do not go very well, no bellhanger having been there since they were put in. Taylors have made a survey and sent a report, which states that work costing just under £1,000 ought to be done before the centenary in 1974.

Now in his 80th year, Mr. Marlow tells us that the ringing is not as good as it ought to be. He has been retired 14 years, having worked at Elwells' for 51 years. His son worked there and made the fifth generation of the family to do so. He has known all the vicars of St. Paul's. The first was there for 25 years and died in 1901, when Mr. Marlow was about nine years of age. In the 61 years he has been a member of the Archdeaconry Society Mr. Marlow has rung: Grandsire Triples 3; Stedman Triples 28, Caters 8, Cinques 2; Erin Triples 2; Bob Major 5, Royal 2; Kent Major 5, Royal 1; Maximus 1; Oxford Major 1, Royal 1; Forward Major 1; Double Norwich Major 5; Cambridge Major 5; London Major 2. Total 73.

Essex Association**25 YEARS AS SECRETARY**

A North-Western District meeting was held at Epping Upland on March 25, when the Rev. S. Derbyshire conducted the service, which was followed by tea and business. On behalf of members a presentation of a watch and book token was made by Mr. K. Wood to Mr. G. Blake in recognition of 25 years' service as secretary. Ringing continued until 8.45 p.m. at Nazeing.

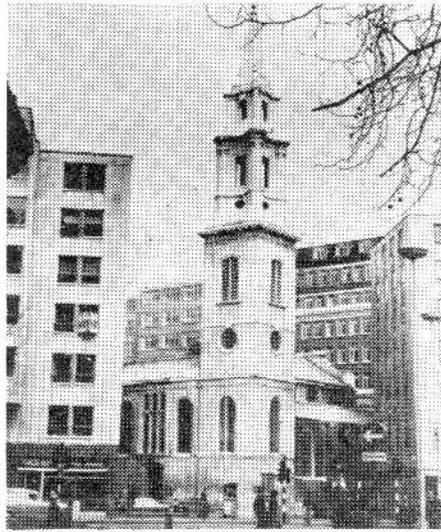
M. H. W.

UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL SOCIETY

The A.G.M. was held in Christ Church (City) on March 21. After two slight amendments to the constitution had been passed to allow for the election of officers, the following were elected: Katharine Maundrell (master), Susan Corry (secretary), Thomas Wheatley-Hubbard (treasurer) and David Roberts (tower secretary). A committee was set up to make a complete review of the constitution. The master (Richard Gray) and gen. secretary outlined forthcoming events and finally the present secretary (Katharine Maundrell) presented an electric kettle to the Master as a wedding present from the members of the society. Called upon to reply, Mr. Gray was speechless!!

THE CENTRAL COUNCIL

is, this year, meeting in London (May 26—30), and each week we shall publish an article on the different churches and places where ringing and events will be taking place during that week-end. We acknowledge the assistance of Dr. D. E. Sibson and Mr. W. T. Cook, who are supplying the necessary pictures and information.



ST. VEDAST, FOSTER LANE,

where the call-change ringing competition will be held.

This church, with its unusual dedication to St. Vedast, who was Bishop of Arras in the 6th century, stands almost in the shadow of St. Paul's. The name "Foster" Lane is a corruption of "Vedast"; until recent times the church was officially known as "St. Vedast, alias Foster."

As with so many of the City churches, little is known of the original building. We learn, however, that it was repaired and enlarged in 1614. Like most City churches, St. Vedast's was severely damaged by the Great Fire of 1666.

After the Fire, St. Vedast's was one of the many churches to be rebuilt to the designs of Sir Christopher Wren. The body of the old church was pulled down and a new one erected, 69 feet long by 51 feet broad and 36 feet high. The old steeple

was left standing until 1694, when it was found to be unsafe as a result of the injuries sustained in the Fire, and was pulled down. The present steeple was erected in 1697, at the south-west corner of the church, again to Wren's design. The tower is 20 feet square at the base, and rises to 90 feet. Above this are three stages, the lowest being unusual in that its walls are concave, while the stage above is convex, surmounted by an obelisk-shaped spire. The whole steeple is a most graceful and original design, one of Wren's most pleasing spires. Since the rebuilding of adjacent premises, the tower and spire can be seen to good effect.

It seems quite likely that such bells as there had been in the tower before 1666 were destroyed by the Fire, for the fifth of the ring of six which hung in the tower before the air-raid of December 29, 1940, had the following inscription on it:

"John Venport Benefactor 50 pounds, John Darbie made mee 1671."

The treble, 2nd and 3rd were cast by John Darbie in the following year, with these inscriptions:

Treble—"Glory to God on high."
2nd—"Feare God Honor the King."
3rd—"Good Peter Pickering Churchwarden Benefactor."

Evidently John Darbie cast a complete ring of six, which were at first hung in the old tower, then transferred to Wren's new steeple. The tenor was recast by R. Phelps in 1726, and was said to weigh 18 cwt. The fourth was recast by Thomas Mears in 1797.

These bells were rehung in about 1885, but, owing to the large number of eights, tens and twelves available in the City, were little used, and by the time the church was bombed in 1940 were practically derelict. I have no record of any peals being rung on the old bells.

The air-raid of December, 1940, left the church gutted by fire and destroyed the bells, but the walls and the tower remained standing. The church was repaired and restored after the war, and very beautifully furnished in a style which befits the architecture of the church. The tower was also restored, and a new ring of six (tenor 16 cwt.) was cast by Whitechapel in 1963. Since then, several peals have been rung on this melodious six.

W. T. C.



In February Mr. and Mrs. F. J. Lewis, sen. celebrated their diamond wedding and received a telegram from H.M. the Queen (illustrated right), and at Holy Trinity, Cirencester (Watermoor), Glos, on Feb. 15 a quarter of 1260 Grandsire Triples was rung by E. Harding 1, Mrs. W. A. Godwin 2, S. Pearce 3, W. A. Godwin 4, H. L. Cooke 5, A. Strickland 6, F. J. Lewis, jun. (cond.) 7, P. J. Lewis (grandson) 8. The ringers were afterwards entertained by Mr. and Mrs. Lewis, sen.