

**London Ringers and Ringing in the  
Seventeenth and Eighteenth  
Centuries**

**Volume VII**

**Trollope, J. Armiger**





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(Of Norwich.)

Supplement to "THE BELL NEWS"

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London  
Ringers and Ringing  
in the  
Seventeenth & Eighteenth  
Centuries

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Volume Seven  
Chapters Nine & Ten.

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By J. Armiger Trollope.

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1938.

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" How did you contrive to grasp  
The threads which lead you through this Calyinth  
How build such solid fabric out of air?  
How on so slight foundations found this pale  
Biography, narrative? "

Robert Browning.

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For Appendices to Chapter Ten see  
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## Chapter Nine.

### The Turn of the Centuries.

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As I have pointed out elsewhere, the division of the history of fencing into the centuries is something more than a convenient Chronological arrangement, for it does in a very real sense mark the great epochs in the development of the Exercise. But these epochs are neither clean cut in themselves nor do they exactly coincide with the Chronological divisions. Though they have both beginnings and endings, the times are not easy to fix. The life of the Exercise has been a continuous one and the ideas and achievements of one Century are carried on into the next. The

can say that these epochs overlap 17  
each other and one merges into the next;  
or we can say that between the two there  
is a period of transition which belongs in  
almost equal degree to both.

This is a quality which in its little way  
the history of ringing shares with the  
general history of the country, and indeed  
the stages in the development of the Exercise  
coincide almost exactly with the stages in  
the development of the political, social, and  
religious <sup>life</sup> development of the English people.  
Perhaps the former depended on the latter  
to a greater degree than at first sight  
seems likely.

In the general history of England the  
sixteenth century may be said to have ended  
in 1588 with the defeat of the Spanish Armada

The seventeenth Century begins with the coming of the Stuarts in 1603 and ends with the Revolution of 1688. The eighteenth century begins with the final triumph of the Whigs and the protestant religion <sup>in 1714</sup> and lasts until the industrial revolution, or, politically, until the Battle of Waterloo or the Reform Act of 1832. The nineteenth Century is covered by the reign of Queen Victoria. Between these periods are a number of years, in every case big with events of supreme importance for future generations.

The history of ringing follows much the same lines. We have first a long and indefinite period covering at least the fifteenth and sixteenth Centuries in which ringing and the Exercise were born, and

in which both were given certain  
indelible characteristics which still profoundly  
influence the ringer's attitude to his  
art, to his fellows, and to the Church.

It is a profound thought that many of  
the problems which still exercise the minds  
of some men have their origins in pre-  
reformation times. The parson who is  
concerned because his ringers do not  
go to church regularly naturally thinks  
that it is a matter which affects a dozen  
or so men, here and now. He would have  
difficulty in realizing that because of  
conditions and ideas which existed at  
the time of the Wars of the Roses, ringers  
do not recognize that the mere fact of a  
man being a ringer implies any obligation  
of churchgoing.

The seventeenth century begins with the invention of the Lutes about 1610 and ends about 1690 when the developments shown in Steadman's Campanologia had been accepted by the Exercise and with the accomplishment of the first five-thousand; which, whether true or not, foreshadowed the aims and ambitions of the following Century. The previous period had fixed the general character of the Exercise; this period fixed the general character of the art and science. In both instances one simple fact emerged, which, though not itself inevitable, made all subsequent development inevitable. There seems no reason why ringing, ostensibly done for the service of the Church, should have been from the beginning a secular

athletic sport; nor why ringing, ostensibly done as a branch of music, should have adopted a purely mathematical basis. But as soon as these two were established what followed was a matter of logical development.

The eighteenth Century is the period of ringing as a highly intellectual sport uncontrolled and uninfluenced by any other consideration. No thought of worship or Church work entered into the minds of those who rang or of those who heard. To say that the ringers of that time were more preligious or more undreadful of their duties than those who went before them, or who followed after them, would be grotesquely untrue. The duties did not exist.



The eighteenth Century begins with the accomplishment of the feat of Grandmaster Bob Triples by the Norwich Scholars in 1715 and lasts until the time, somewhere about 1825, when it began to be clear that the forces and influences which had created and sustained change-ringing as a peculiar sport were no longer sufficient.

A period of decline set in, which was only arrested by bringing in other and new influences and ideals; and it was these influences which, working slowly, and silently, but surely, have made the Exercise and the art what it is today.

Between the years 1690 and 1715 is a period of twenty-five years, a period of which we know almost nothing but which was of the greatest importance in

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The history of the Exercise. In 1690, though (then as always) the ringers belonged mainly to the lower classes, there was a number of gentlemen and persons belonging to the better classes who formed the leaders and supplied the brains of the Exercise. These men existed at the Universities and the Inns of Court, among the country gentry, and in some of the towns. Where there were enough of them they formed themselves into societies, which were partly social clubs, and partly means by which the members could practise ringing as a sport. In the country these men formed bands from the tenant farmers on their estates and from their neighbours. In 1715 both the societies and the class of men who formed them had largely disappeared.

The influence of this better class on the

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Exercise and its early fortunes was great, and without them it could hardly have been the thing it was. It was due to them in no small measure that so many churches, great and small, in town and village possessed ringing peals of bells; for where they did not themselves give them (and such was often the case) it was usually through their influence that the money was raised to install new rings or augment old ones. And it was largely due to them that ringing as an athletic sport was possible. For though vestries would not have been very willing to spend money to keep the bells in order so that common folk might enjoy themselves, they had no objection when the ringers were worshipful men or gentlemen of the parish or members of

their own class. <sup>①</sup>

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The rise and passing of so important an influence on the history of ringing would be worth investigating, but the material at our disposal is very scanty. Not very long ago it would have been fine to say that nothing whatever was known about it, and probably I have given in my early chapters all that can be known. It may be worth while however at this stage, at the risk of repeating some of the things which have been said, to place in the light of the evidence which has unfolded itself, the rise and development of the Exercise up to this point.

Ringing in the sense that the word was used by the ringers of old time and is used by present day ringers cannot

I think be much older than the latter part of the fourteenth century. Bells of course had been used in churches during many years previous to that and, so far as any pounding of bells is ringing, they were rung. But for ringing in the more restricted sense of the word three things are necessary.

In the first place you must have a number of bells (at least three) in a tunable peal.

In the second place they must be "rung up", not necessarily to a peal full as in modern ringing, but sufficiently high to clapper <sup>on</sup> both sides.

And in the third place they must be rung in due order and time one with another.

All the various uses of single bells, all curfew and knells and sanctus, all

Chiming and tolling are outside ringing. There are many references to these things in parish accounts in pre-reformation times and later, but they did not concern the ringers, and when these latter are mentioned, and when ringing is mentioned, something else is referred to. And the promiscuous clashing of bells usual on the Continent would not have been tolerated in an English tower in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and would not have been considered to be ringing.

There were tunable rings of bells in England as early as Saxon times but they were in monastic houses and we must not look for the beginnings of ringing there. How soon parish churches possessed more than one bell we can hardly say

but perhaps we should be right in thinking that threes became common in the fourteenth century and fives toward the end of the fifteenth. <sup>(2)</sup>

Nor can we say how soon bells were hung so that they could be rung up. It is pretty certain that bells were swung almost from the first, for that would be an imitation of the ringing of a hand bell, but at the beginning a lever was used and it was not until it had developed into a half wheel that the bell could be swung high enough for ringing. Perhaps again we may place this about the fourteenth century. <sup>(214)</sup>

It was out of the ritual ringing during the processions before high mass that modern ringing seems to have directly

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Come. This ritual ringing was used in very early times and is mentioned by Durandus as a Catholic custom; <sup>(3)</sup> but the ringing he knew was the unrelated sounding of as many bells as possible at the same time, the sort of ringing as is still used on the Continent.

In England the ringing of the bells was part, and a very important part, of the duties of the clerks. <sup>(4)</sup> So long as this ringing was of one or two bells, before the services, for knells, curfew, and the like, so long the clerks could do it themselves. But when several bells had to be rung during processions they had to depute the work to other people, and quite naturally they picked a few strong young fellows from the parish and sent them up into the tower to pull the ropes.



The strong healthy young Englishman  
 has never been a particularly religious person.  
 No doubt the ringing before high mass was  
 part of the divine service, but to the ringers  
 it must have appeared to be not so much  
 the sounding of the trumpets of the eternal  
 King<sup>(5)</sup> " for to praye the Devils away<sup>(6)</sup> " as  
 a first class athletic sport which taxed  
 their utmost strength and, as soon as they  
 had learnt to ring the bells in Concord and  
 order, taxed their utmost skill. And so  
 they enjoyed the ringing for its own sake  
 and practised it when there was no need  
 of it for religious or social purposes. Today  
 that would be called "practice" ringing;  
 in older times they were quite honest  
 and called it "pleasure" ringing.

I was, at one time, inclined to the

opinion that this pleasure ringing <sup>31</sup>  
was a direct result of the secularization  
of the use of bells at the time of the  
Reformation; <sup>(7)</sup> but though it undoubtedly  
was much strengthened by that event,  
the thing itself was older, and probably  
as old as ringing. <sup>(101)</sup>

In Queen Mary's reign, Dr. Tristram <sup>(25)</sup>  
thought that there was no better way of  
appealing to the students at Oxford than  
promising to make the University feel  
the finest in England. <sup>(8)</sup>

In the opening years of the fifteenth  
Century there occurred several disputes  
between monastic houses and parish Churches  
about the ringing of bells. <sup>(9)</sup> Some of these  
disputes were referred to the King's Courts  
and some to Rome, and there were many

more which did not get so far. In 32  
all cases the monks complained of the  
nuisance caused by bell ringing at  
night; sometimes they said it hindered  
them from saying their prayers, but at  
Spalding they were honest enough to say  
that they did not like their sleep to be  
disturbed.

Evidently this night ringing was a new  
thing; evidently it was practised all over  
the country; <sup>(10)</sup> and evidently it went on  
all through the year. But what was  
the purpose of it?

It was customary, and had been for  
centuries, to ring all night long on  
All Hallows eve "for all crystyn solle"  
and in some places on the eves of Christmas  
day and other festivals. To this the  
monks could not reasonably object.

What they complained of was ringing done without evident necessity, and the only conclusion we can come to is that this was the beginnings of pleasure ringing, and that the ringers were practising to amuse themselves and for no other reason. And since the monks were important and influential people whose wishes were not lightly to be opposed, the ringers must have had the backing of the leading townsmen. It is pretty certain that the better class people had already discovered the delights of bell ringing and that here we have the first of the gentleman ringers (amateurs they would have been called in later years) who were to play so important a part in the development of the art.

How much this love of ringing as a sport was responsible for the great number of bells that were hung in the towers of English parish churches in the century before the Reformation it would be hard to say; but probably it was a great deal more than most people would think possible. It must have been the deciding factor which saved the bells when, in the spoliation of Edward the Sixth's reign, the churches were stripped bare of everything else which could be turned into money; and it certainly was <sup>the</sup> cause of so many rings being installed and augmented in the seventeenth century.

It was among these gentlemen ringers that the first ringing societies were formed. When that happened is not known. There

was the long tradition of the guilds  
 to make the idea of such a thing familiar,  
 and they indirectly furnished the model  
 on which the societies were based. But  
 in the first place any formal organizations  
 were hardly needed. Ten or a dozen men  
 who knew each other could agree to  
 meet together at a tower to ring and  
 among them there were sure to be one  
 or two who were naturally qualified to  
 be leaders. It was probably toward the  
 end of Elizabeth's reign when people of all  
 sorts were forming themselves into clubs  
 that the idea of ringers' societies took root,  
 and the object was as much for social  
 intercourse as for ringing. During the  
 whole of the seventeenth century these societies  
 formed the most important feature in

(12)

organization of the Exercise,

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but their numbers included only a small fraction of the ringers of the country (though by far the most influential fraction) and outside was the great mass of ringers who did most of the ringing in the steeples of towns and villages, and who followed at a greater or less interval in the steps of their betters.

This was the state of things at the close of the seventeenth century, but when we pass over another twenty years we are conscious of a very great change. The looks of the ringers are indeed the same as they always had been, but the leading societies have either disappeared or have altered in character, and the gentleman element has shrunk to

negligible proportions. Henceforth 37  
for a hundred years the Leaders of the  
Exercise are men of the Lower middle class.  
Most noticeable is the decay of the art  
at the two Universities and at the Inns of  
Court; and this undoubtedly was the  
proximate cause of the failure of the  
gentleman element in the Exercise. In  
the seventeenth Century leading societies  
like the College Youths and the Esquire  
Youths had largely been composed of  
Lawyers, but all that was now changed.

The reasons for these changes are of  
course obscure. No one can say why  
fashions and fancies alter in the matter  
of sport and other such things; why the  
Young men of the Universities are interested  
in this thing at this time, and that thing



at the other; but in the case of  
 ringing two general causes may be suggested  
 one arising out of the social and intellectual  
 conditions of the time, the other out of the art itself.

The reign of Queen Anne was one of the  
 most brilliant periods in the history of  
 England. It was a time not only of military  
 triumph, but of also of great intellectual  
 activity and achievement. The writings of  
 men like Newton and Locke and the  
 architecture of Wren had widened men's  
 minds and altered their outlook, and they  
 were not disposed to go on doing things just  
 because it ~~was~~ had been the custom to  
 do them. It was an age comparable to  
 the age of Bacon and Shakespeare, and  
 no doubt it was the same spirit which in  
 one invented the Lutes and so gave us

the science of Change-ringing, that 39  
in the other turned these men's minds away  
from ringing to other things.

The other reason is that ringing had become  
far more technical and difficult and so  
more and more the pursuit of a selected  
minority. In earlier days any young fellow  
with strong muscles and a sense of rhythm  
could enter a bellry and take his place  
at the ropes with the best. It was so no  
longer. Change ringing is a hard mistress.  
She has many favours to bestow, but she  
does not bestow them for the asking nor  
to everyone. The learner has to go through  
a long course of instruction and has much  
technique to acquire before he can be a  
ringer. Some men have a natural aptitude  
for the art, to others it seems almost a

hopeless task, and the line which divides the two classes cuts across almost all other distinctions. Neither social position, nor education, nor muscular strength, nor intellect will make a ringer. Often a really first class ringer is a man without any claims to distinction in other things, and very many men who possess outstanding ability in other things fail as ringers. <sup>(13)</sup> The university men had probably neither the opportunity nor the inclination to devote the time and patience needed for learning the art, and in the country the squire would not seldom find himself outdone in skill by some of his farm hands. The English gentry could and did mix freely with their social inferiors in matters of sport, but we may be sure

that the belfry had little attraction for them when they had to take a subordinate part there. There were however some who were devoted to bell ringing and though not themselves very expert at it were content to play the role of patrons and derived satisfaction not so much from their own skill as from that of the bands they got together. The three best known gentlemen of later years Theodore Eccleston, John Powell Powell, and Leonard Proctor, were of this type. All three rang bells but all three in a rather humble capacity. <sup>(114)</sup>

The societies were social clubs as well as organizations for ringing. One feature was as important as the other, and while there were some members who cared for the ringing much more than for

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the social intercourse, there were others to whom the social intercourse was the really important thing. There seems to have been a tendency in some of these bodies to develop the social side and neglect the ringing side. As time went on and the interest in the art waned among the members, men who were not practical ringers were elected and eventually the society ceased to be a ringing company except in name. <sup>(15)</sup>

That happened to the St. Stephen's Company of Bristol, and probably <sup>at</sup> about the time we are dealing with. <sup>(16)</sup> There are signs that the Society of College Youths went through something of a similar phase only with them the divorce between

The belfry and the club house was  
 new complete and at the critical time  
 the influx of a number of young and  
 enthusiastic members, including one  
 man of genius, paved the Society and  
 re-established its ascendancy on a new  
 basis. But between the Society when Sir  
 Watkin Williams Wynn was a member  
 and the Society when William Laughton  
 was a member the contrast is startling,  
 and the chasm must have been deep.  
 For the first was elected in 1717 and the  
 other in 1724. When Laughton was  
 writing in 1734 the tales of gentleman  
 ringers were already fables, and he  
 poked fun at the pedion at Newington  
 for telling "such damned unaccountable

Eyes' about them and their paying 44  
them less fortunate companions five shillings  
each when they took them out ringing. (17)  
There were then living several men besides  
Hymn of good social standing who were  
members of the Society of College Youths,  
but we may be sure that Laughton  
had never met them. He was far too  
vain a man not to mention it.

The society which seems to have kept  
a ~~set~~ high social level combined with  
just class proficiency in ringing longer  
than any other is the Society of London  
Scholars, and it is a pity we know so  
little about it. No account of its  
beginning or of its ending has survived,  
for the claim of the Cumberland Youths  
that they are the same society with

altered name is <sup>(18)</sup>baseless. The London 45  
Scholars were founded some time towards  
the end of the seventeenth Century, and  
in 1702. Solomon and his Colleague  
dedicated their Campanalogia to  
them. For many years they were one  
of the two leading Companies in London,  
the equals of the College Youths socially,  
and probably their superiors as ringers.

These two societies were the first to  
practice Grandire Bells and in 1718  
they made another big advance in the  
art possible by giving two bells to St.  
Brides' Fleet Street to complete the twelve.  
This was not the first ring of twelve in  
England. York ~~had~~ Minster had that  
number as early as 1655 but they were  
a very unsatisfactory lot the tenor being



63 Cwt and the pebbles only about 3 cwt. <sup>(97)</sup> 46  
The ring at Cirencester was increased to  
twelve in 1722; <sup>(19)</sup> but though both in that  
town and at York a great interest was  
taken in bell ringing, in neither was there  
a band sufficiently advanced to practise  
Cinquies; and it was the ring at St. Brides  
which first made change ringing on  
eleven and twelve bells possible.

It also showed that the limit to which  
it is possible to increase the number of  
bells in a ringing peal had been reached.  
There always have been, and I suppose  
there always will be, discussions and  
disputes as to which is the best number  
of bells in a ring. Some maintain that  
in eight you have a complete octave,  
and whether you add to it or take from

if the result will be something  
 imperfect and therefore musically inferior.  
 Others point out that, be the theory what  
 it may, yet practical experience proves  
 that the two trebles in a ring of ten give  
 a greater range, more expression, and a  
 larger brilliancy of tone. But, few,  
 perhaps will be found to advocate twelve  
 bells on purely musical grounds, and none  
 to desire further extension. It is no  
 doubt largely a matter of use and custom.  
 The practised twelve bell ringer who has  
 trained his ear to the greater musical  
 range and longer rhythm, finds musical  
 effects in Cinques and Mascines of which  
 the smaller numbers of bells are incapable.  
 But such men are necessarily few.  
 The ear of the ordinary ringer, and, much

more so, the ear of the non-technical 48  
and outside listener does not readily  
adapt itself to so wide a range. It is not  
that the number of notes (an octave and  
a half) is particularly great, but that  
twelve bells ringing has to be done in a  
bar of twenty-four beats which means  
a very long drawn out rhythm. An  
analogy may be found in the line in  
metrical poetry. There is a limit below  
and above which the ear is not satisfied;  
and the rhythm of Cinques and Masculines  
is in ringing much the same thing that  
Iscameters and Aléscandrines are in  
English prosody: the limit beyond which  
it is not safe to go. (25)

There are also the very real and practical  
difficulties of getting small bells to speak

sufficiently clearly among big bells; 49  
and also of accurate striking.

When the London Scholars and the College Youths gave the pebbles to St. Bride's they were not thinking of the musical effect of twelve bells, nor were they making an offering to the service of the Church. They wanted greater facilities for practising change-ringing, and we need not suppose that they disguised from themselves or from other people that they had no other and higher motive. It was quite in accord with the spirit of the times that they kept the two bells chained up and denied their use to other ringers as long as they could.

But we need not waste any time in

Condemning them or in pretending  
that we are so much better than they.  
Human nature and men's motives are  
much the same now as they were then;  
and I think it is true to say that the  
reason why rings of twelve are being  
installed in increasing numbers is not  
altogether because men are really convinced,  
or have proved, that they are musically  
superior to rings of ten, or that they serve  
the Church and the glory of God better;  
but because of the fascination that twelve  
bell ringing has for some ringers, and  
the laudable desire of such church  
authorities as can afford it, to have the  
best and biggest that can be gotten.

The London Scholars and the College

Youths were not the only societies,  
 nor the first societies, to give bells to a  
 London church. When in 1714 Richard  
 Phelps cast a ring for the new tower of  
 St. Magnus the Martyr the two trebles  
 were the gift of the Eastern Youths and  
 the British Scholars. Of these two  
 Companies we know little or nothing.  
 They evidently consisted of good class  
 people; probably they practised at St.  
 Dunstan's in the East and afterwards  
 at St. Magnus; and had been founded  
 in the early days of the eighteenth Century  
 soon after Rudhall had hung the bells  
 in the former steeple. Each gave its name  
 to a ring bell method and as they were  
 the composition of Benjamin Stnoble,<sup>(20)</sup>  
 it is likely that the two Companies were

still ringing in 1725 and possibly even later. <sup>(100)</sup> It may be that they were the linial ancestors of the Society of Eastern Scholars afterwards so prominent in the history of the London Exercise.

Of any peals or other performances rung between 1690 and 1715 we have no accounts whatever. That a true five-thousand was accomplished we have no reason to suppose; but it does seem likely that the false peal of Grandire Triples was rung more than once. It seems however that the London men knew quite well that the peal was not true and thus had less inducement to practise it than the men in the country. <sup>(98)</sup>

The most important event of the period was the publication of the Campanalogia

This we have already fully dealt  
with in Chapter V.

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The leading man in the Society of College  
Journeis at this time seems to have been  
Peter Bradshaw. He joined the company  
in 1682, was steward in 1688 and master  
in 1694. It was he who in 1699 made  
himself responsible with the two stewards  
of the year for recasting the ninth at St.  
Sepulchres Snow Hill, <sup>(21)</sup> and in 1723 when  
as it seems the society was at a crisis in  
its history and was near dissolution he came  
to the rescue and for the second time held  
the office of master. I have not been able  
to trace any further particulars about him  
but he must have been a man of some  
standing and position.

After he held the office of master of the



College youths in 1682 we hear no more of Fabian Hedman as a ringer, but we may be sure that for several years he was an honoured and welcomed attendant at their meetings. And then as he got older and his contemporaries passed away or lost interest in ringing he lost touch with the art and the Exercise, until in 1700 he and his books were to men like Doleman and Patrick little more than memories of a half-forgotten and obsolete past.

It is the usual fate of great men that if they have been recognised by their own age the next generation should be unduly critical. It seems to have been so with Hedman. Doleman was rather contemptuous in his reference to so unnecessary a book as the Campanalogia, but Hedman's

name was not only firmly based but deserved; and after a short time it began to grow and, aided not a little by legend, has continued to the present day.

He had long been settled as one of the clerks in the employ of John Birch <sup>(23)</sup> the auditor of Excise and we get one or two glimpses of him in the Treasury Books <sup>(22)</sup> In 1690 he and George Birch are mentioned evidently as the two principal clerks in the office when they are granted an allowance to cover a fasc. Birch (who afterwards called himself Brewer) and Kidman were closely associated for a very long time. In 1691 when John Birch died, the two carried on without an official head and themselves did the

audit for six months. Nine  
years later the two sent a joint petition  
to the Treasury asking for an increase of  
salary and giving as the reason the great  
increase in the business of the office owing  
to new taxation. The petition was  
favourably received, and the then  
Auditor General, Sir Basil Diswell  
was ordered to pay them £60 per annum  
which had been allowed for additional  
salaries. Previous to that Pruere's  
salary seems to have been £100, and  
Hidman's £60.

George Pruere evidently died before  
Fabian Hidman, but the long connections  
of the two with the Audit of Excise and  
their close personal friendship is shown by  
Hidman's will. Bartholomew Pruere is

a legatee and John P. Quere one of the 59  
two witnesses

These details do not add much to our knowledge of Hedman but they rather confirm the impression we get of the man from his book and his will. He strikes us as a quite studious man, intellectual but unambitious, thorough and trustworthy in his profession, considerate and kindly, but a bachelor by nature.

When he died in 1713 the world regarding as he knew it had long passed away; and all his compositions except the Principle, which was to keep his name and fame alive had be superseded by the works of younger men. The two most important of these were Doleman and John Patricks and of Doleman we have already said

The little that there is to be said.

58.

John Patrick seems to have been a man very similar to Fabian Hedman and to have held a position in the London Exercise not unlike that of the older man. He too left a name and a legend behind him; but though his reputation as a Composer was great he produced nothing like Hedmans Principle to make his name familiar to every singer.

By profession Patrick was an inventor and maker of barometers and thermometers. He advertised a newly invented pendent barometer in which the variation of the mercury amounted to twelve inches instead of three as was usual in those instruments, and of

Course marking more accurately  
and minutely the changes in air pressure.

He also made an excellent diagonal  
Barometer wherein the mercury moved in  
an oblique tube for the space of thirty  
inches instead of three as in the Common  
ones; and was so nice as to divide an  
inch into one hundred parts."

To attract the Custom of Ladies and  
gentlemen he advertised a Looking glass  
flanked on either side by Thermometer  
and Barometer so that the fortunate  
purchaser "at the same time they dress  
may accomodate their habit to the  
weather." Of more practical utility was  
a Barometer which could be used at sea.  
which apparently was invented by a  
D. Hooke<sup>(27)</sup> and made by Patrick.

60  
Patrick submitted his inventions to  
the inspection of the members of the Royal  
Society and by them they were "approved  
and applauded." Although he was a  
tradesman, living and working at his shop  
in Ship Court in the Old Bailey, he could  
meet these learned men on the common  
ground of science, and he may have been  
acquainted with at least one member of  
the Society who in his younger days had  
been an active member of the College  
Youths. <sup>(28)</sup>

Two of Patrick's six-bell methods find  
a place in the Central Council Minor  
Collection;—London P.D. and Albion  
Delight (the latter under the name of  
Lytham P.D.)—but otherwise his compositions  
have dropped out of the fingers repertoire.

Fourteen or fifteen minor methods and half a dozen seven bell methods are given in the J. D. & C. M. Campanalogia. <sup>(29)</sup> Generally they show a great advance on Hedman's methods in one important thing. — the bells work with much more freedom, and the stagnation of the older methods, where bells lay for several whole pulls in the same position, is avoided. But Patrick did not realise the importance of "Bob Major Lead Ends", nor distinguish between the essential natures of a plain lead and a bobbed lead. Knowledge of those things came to the Exercise only gradually and after many years of practical experience.



Patrick joined the Society of College Youths in 1679 and so was for some years contemporary with Hedman. He cannot fail to have been influenced by the older man. He held the office of steward in 1684, and of master in 1692.

In later years there were several men of the name of Patrick who held prominent positions in the London Exercise, and though there is no proof, there is at least a strong probability that they were all members of the same family.

A second John joined the College Youths in 1730, was steward in 1733, and master in 1736. Most likely he was a grandson. Later on we shall come across the names of George Patrick,

Robert Patrick and James Patrick

63

Abraham Rudhall of Gloucester is famous as the founder of many fine rings of bells and is connected with the history of London ringing chiefly because he cast the bells at St. Dunstan's in the East, St. Bride's, St. Martin's in the Fields and Fulham. But he was a keen ringer too and a composer though all his figures are lost. Edward Southwell Secretary of State for Ireland in a manuscript memorandum of a journey from Kingstons, Gloucestershire to Kenlock in Shropshire during October 1715 states that when at Gloucester he spent an evening with Rudhall<sup>(30)</sup>. They talked of bells and bell ringing. A foundation ringer, said Rudhall, is

one who rings at sight, and there are not many of them. It would be very interesting to know what he meant. Was he referring to what today we call rope sight? If so that would seem to show that in the early years of the eighteenth Century Change ringing properly so called was still the possession of but a small minority; and the bulk of the ringing, (where it was not round ringing, as it was in the west,) was either Plain Changes, already in the form of Honey, or some simple Cross Seal learnt by heart.

They talked of bell founding. Seven pounds per hundredweight was the price of his metal and he used tin-glass <sup>(32)</sup> to get a bright tone in his trebles. He designed and cast his bells to half a <sup>note and</sup> finished

them with the tuning hammer. In tuning he used pitch pipes, for the modern tuning forks were not available. It was with pitch pipes that the "waiters of the City" took the notes of St. Michaels bells when they went to Whitechapel in 1588 to test the new tenor that Robert Skel had cast; and the use of pitch pipes is recommended by Fabian Hedman to those ringers who wish to understand the tuning of bells. <sup>(33)</sup>

Like Abraham Rudhall, all bell founders had for centuries tuned their bells by chipping them by hammer and chisel. A later member of the family was the first to invent and use a tuning lathe. It was driven by steam and differed from the modern lathes by having the bell

fixed and a revolving cutter.

66.

Abraham Rudhall was born in 1657 and cast his first bell in 1682 for Oddington. He joined the Society of College Founders in 1698. He died on January 25<sup>th</sup> 1736 and was buried in the nave of Gloucester Cathedral where there is a mural tablet to his memory. He was "famed for his great skill, beloved and esteemed for his singular good nature and integrity."

For the greater part of his business career he was associated with his son, also named Abraham and the partnership produced most of the bells which made the Gloucester foundry famous. The younger man died on December 17<sup>th</sup> 1735, aged 55, and was buried in the churchyard of St. John's Church Gloucester. He left his

“  
workhouses and appurtenances” to 67  
his son Abel (1714-1760). After his death  
the business was carried on by three of  
his sons Thomas, Charles, and John.  
The foundry was nominally closed in 1828  
and the goodwill sold to Sears of Whitechapel  
but John cast a few more bells almost  
up to the time of his death in 1835. (99)  
Altogether the family cast 4521 bells.

In the early years of the eighteenth  
century two observant foreigners set down  
the impressions they had formed after  
visits to England and, like Frederic  
Gerschow <sup>(35)</sup> a hundred years before, both  
noted the English love of bells. Monsieur  
Misson classed ringing among the sports  
of the ordinary people and dealt with it  
between wrestling and football. Anthony

Wood, we remember, had referred to 68  
the three together as "manly sports."

"Wrestling is one of the diversions of the English especially in the Northern Counties. Ringing of bells is one of their great delights especially in the Country. They have a particular way of doing this; but their chimes cannot be reckoned so much as of the same kind with those of Holland and the Low Countries. In winter foot-ball is a useful and charming exercise. It is a leather ball about as big as ones head filled with wind. This is kicked about from one to another in the streets by him that can get at it; and that is all the art of it" (36)

César de Saussure also wrote that one of the great amusements of the people

was to ring the bells, and they enjoyed themselves in that way on every opportunity such as holidays and days of rejoicing. They formed themselves into societies for the purpose. Unlike Musson who preferred the Belgian Carillons, de Saussure said he did not believe that there was any country in the world with such fine bells as England. With six or eight bells of different tone the ringers in an hour would ring in many different ways. (37)

When the eighteenth century opened the Society of College Youths was still in a very flourishing condition and numbered among its members many men of good position and social standing.



Some of them - Henry Brel, Sir 70  
Thomas Samwell, the Dolbens, and the Cecil-  
we have already noticed (38)

Of the same class was Sir John Rolle, (42)  
Baronet, of Scampton, the fourth of that  
creation who was Member of Parliament  
for Lincoln from 1690 to 1701, and is said  
to have lived in great splendour. He  
joined the College Youths in 1688, died  
unmarried in 1714, and was buried with  
his ancestors in St. Swithin's Church London. (39)

Sir William Copeper, fourth Baronet, of  
Wakehurst, in Sussex, joined the society  
in 1691 and was steward in 1698. He died  
in March 1740 when the Baronetcy became  
extinct. (40)

Sir Michael Hicks of Hitchcombe Park  
Gloucestershire came of a very old family.  
He was the second son of Sir William

Hicks, the first baronet and 71  
ancestor of Sir Michael Hicks-Beach the  
well known Chancellor of the Exchequer  
in Lord Salisbury's government, and  
afterwards Earl of Aldwyn. Sir Michael  
Hicks was connected in some way with  
the parish of S. Botolph, Aldgate. He was  
born in 1645 and died in 1710. <sup>(41)</sup>

Sir Henry Hicks of Deptford Sir Michael's  
nephew and successor was also a member  
of the Society of College Youths.

The City magnates were represented  
by Hingsby Bethel and John Tash.  
Bethel who joined in 1716 was not the  
Hingsby Bethel who made something of  
name by his bold and advanced opinions  
in the seventeenth century, but it may

be, a descendant. He was connected 72  
with the parish of All Hallows, Barking,  
in which church there is still a sword  
rest with his coat of arms, erected by the  
vestry in his honour in 1756 when he  
became Lord Mayor of London. <sup>(43)</sup> He was  
Member of Parliament for the City in 1747  
and Sheriff in 1751. He was sworn of the  
Fishmongers' Company in 1749 and held  
the office of Prime Warden from 1756 to  
1758. <sup>(44)</sup>

John Tash was made a College  
Youth in 1711, and in after years took  
an active part in the civil life of London.  
He was Sheriff in 1719 when he received  
the honour of knighthood, and was  
Master Vintner in the same year. He  
was for long an Alderman for the

Wallbrook Ward. He died on October 13<sup>th</sup> 1735 and was buried at All Hallows the Great where there was a monument to his memory until the church was pulled down (45).

Tash was a Whig in politics but without any strong party feeling for he voted for the Tory candidates at the City election in 1713. (46)

The long connection of the Society of College Youths with the theatrical world which began at least as early as the time of Cave Underhill was continued by three men all well known at the time

John Eccles who joined in 1696 was a musical composer who wrote music for many plays including Congreve's Love for Love and The Way of the World in which Cave Underhill acted. Some

of his work was done in Collaboration <sup>74</sup>  
with Henry Purcell. In 1704 he was  
Master of the King's Music. <sup>(47)</sup> "His  
Compositions have a certain ease and  
grace which is quite enough to account  
for their popularity at the time they  
were written. <sup>(48)</sup> In his old age he retired  
to Kingston-upon-Thames, and died  
there on January 12<sup>th</sup> 1735. He held  
the office of Steward to the College youths  
in 1702. <sup>(50)</sup>

George Tack "first came upon the stage  
as a singer and being, as they say, a  
smock faced youth, used to sing the  
female parts in dialogue with that  
great master Mr Leveridge who had so  
many years charmed us with his manly  
voice. But Mr Tack was excellent in

many parts.

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"He had such an antipathy to water that he would sooner choose to go from the Haymarket to Lambeth round the bridge than just cross in a boat. (53)

"Mr Tack left the stage in the meridian of his life and set up a tavern near Charing Cross over against the Haymarket where he died having no wife or issue. (49)

The dates of his birth and death are unknown, but he was dead by 1749.

Benjamin Johnson was born about 1665. He was originally a scene painter and after playing in the Country, joined the Company at Drury Lane in 1695. He is said to have been a sound, judicious and competent actor, who never lost his hold on the public. He appeared in a great number of parts many of

them original. His acting was almost entirely confined to Drury Lane and The Haymarket, and he did not retire from the stage till his 77<sup>th</sup> year.

Once he was tried with Betterton and Mrs Bracegirdle for using profane and lewd language on the stage but though his companions were convicted he was acquitted. <sup>(51)</sup>

Practically the last of the long line of country gentlemen who were members of the Society of College Youths was Sir Wotton Williams Wynne. His name originally was Williams and he was the grandson of Sir William Williams the Speaker of the House of Commons who administered the reprimand to

17

Sir Francis Withers when the latter  
was expelled the House. <sup>(52)</sup> He was a man  
twenty five years old and still only  
Sir Williams when he joined the College  
Youths in 1717 but already a person  
of importance and Member of Parliament  
for Denbighshire a position he held  
until his death. In 1719 his Cousin  
Sir John Wynne left him large estates  
and the great house of Wynnstay and  
he became the most powerful and  
influential man in North Wales.  
At that time he took the name of  
Wynne in addition to his own. He  
was mayor of Oswestry in 1728 and  
of Chester in 1732.

Wynne was one of the leaders of the



Jacobite party in the House of 78  
Commons and a steady opponent of  
Sir Robert Walpole. At the time of the  
rebellion of 1745 he was one of the men on  
whose support the exiled Stuart's relied;  
but though he corresponded with Prince  
Charles Edward and sent him promises  
of help, when the time for action came  
he sat still and did nothing. <sup>(56)</sup> The  
Government had plenty of proofs of his  
treason but perhaps they knew pretty well  
how far he really intended to go, and  
wisely took no notice. <sup>(54)</sup>

Smollett in his History of England  
says that Wynne had the name of being  
a brave, open hospitable gentleman. He  
succeeded his father as third Baronet  
in 1740 and died on September 26<sup>th</sup> 1749

in consequence of a fall, when 79  
returning from hunting. He was buried  
in Reabon church. (58)

It would be interesting to know how many of these men were practical ringers; how many were patrons of the art; and how many were really honorary members of the Society of College Youths, and attracted only by the social life and the annual feast. Of this at the time we are dealing with we cannot be sure. When the Society was founded and in its early days all the members were actually ringers, but later on there were men who were interested in the art in their early manhood but lost touch with it as other and more important things claimed

their attention. There were others to whom the social side was the all important matter. Beside those people of whom we know something because they were distinguished in other walks of life, there were many of whom we know nothing, and we cannot be sure who were the really important people in the Society itself. Were Hymn and Polle and Cripeper members in the way that Lord Brenton and Clifford Clifton were members or only in the sense that in later years Sir Bartle Frere, Archdeacon Simpson and Sir Richard Cherry were members? Sir Henry Hicks was Master in 1731 but before then a great change had come over the Society. Hicks may

Have been a ringer but he was  
 outside the Company who were peal ringing  
 and making history in the tower. (208.)

Proof is lacking, but the impression we  
 get is that in the second decade of the  
 Eighteenth Century the Society of College  
 Youths went through an experience not  
 unlike that of a Century later. The  
 older men were getting slack in their  
 attendance in the belfry and fewer in  
 numbers. The supply of recruits from the  
 same class was drying up; and instead  
 there were a number of young men  
 inferior in social status, but far more  
 skilful and enthusiastic as ringers,  
 who were eager to join and take control  
 of the Society. We may be sure that

The older men viewed their influx with misgiving and only tolerated it because without them there would have been no ringing in the tower at all. Between the two classes of men there was little or no sympathy. In the Cefpy the new men at once took complete control, but how far the old order still survived in the club room and at the annual feast is doubtful; but it is significant that there is a break in the recorded list of Masters from 1703 to 1734.

The Society of College Youths of the seventeenth century with its aristocratic, exclusive, and Bohemian membership had come to an end. Henceforth it is an entirely

different society we have to deal  
with; - much lower socially and without  
any members who were distinguished in  
general society, but composed of men  
who took the leading part in the Exercise,  
and had a permanent effect on the  
development of the art.



Appendix  
to  
Chapter Nine.

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The  
Society of Saint Stephen's  
Ringers,  
Bristol.

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## Appendix.

### The Society of St. Stephen's Ringers, Bristol.

see page 42.

" Queen Eliz<sup>th</sup> arriv'd at Bristol on Sat<sup>y</sup>. Aug<sup>st</sup> 14, 1574 & the St. Stephens Bells were rung to Congratulate her on her arrival, for which she promised the ringers a charter wch was afterw<sup>ds</sup> granted by James 1<sup>st</sup> bearing date 17 Nov<sup>r</sup>. 1620. She was rece<sup>d</sup> by John Young the then Mayor of Bristol afterw<sup>ds</sup> Sir John Young. he resided at S. Augustines back, Bristol." (56) (57)

In the year 1846 Edward John Osborn paid a visit to the West with the idea of collecting material for the history of

ringing which he intended to write. The visit was a very successful one, for he not only secured the original manuscripts and peal books once belonging to the College youths and Union Scholars, but he also gathered a lot of information about early ringing in Bristol.

Especially he was interested in the Ancient Society of St. Stephen's Ringers, and he took back with him a copy of the rules printed by the Bristol Mirror in 1822, a broadsheet of the song the members sang at their annual feast - The Golden Days of Good Queen Bess - a dinner ticket <sup>(83)</sup> and as much as he could learn of the traditions of the society. The first are among his collections in the British Museum together with the reports of the annual

dinners in several following years.

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The last he wrote down in his note book in the words I have quoted above.

They give the tradition of the origin of the society which was then believed, and subsequent years have added nothing to our knowledge of the matter.

As we have already had occasion to notice, the story of early ringing is full of pleasant little tales and legends about the old societies. <sup>(58)</sup> Present day members sometimes recognise that there may be a good deal of fancy about these tales, but they like to believe them, and they incline to the opinion that so long as they cannot be proved to be false there is no reason why they should not be

Considered as true.

The historian has to take a different view. He knows how easily these legends grow up and how few will stand any serious testing. He is compelled to reject any which either have no contemporary corroboration or are not inherently probable. How does the St. Stephen's tradition stand this test?

Queen Elizabeth did visit Bristol in 1574. She arrived on August 14<sup>th</sup> when she was received by the Mayor, Aldermen, and Incorporated Companies formed under their proper ensigns. The Mayor carried the sword of state before her bare headed and attended her to her lodgings at St. Augustines Back <sup>(60)</sup>. During the progress and all the following days

until her departure there were  
 pageants and speeches, and military display,  
 and all the pomp and ceremony that the  
 great queen delighted in. <sup>(59)</sup>

And we may be quite sure that not  
 only St. Stephens bells, but all the bells  
 in Bristol were rung. That was a mark  
 of respect which was looked for as a matter  
 of course. The omission would have been  
 noticed and resented.

But as we have seen Elizabeth was  
 personally interested in the sound of  
 bells. <sup>(61)</sup> She liked to listen to them and  
 as she understood the art of making  
 herself popular, it is more than likely  
 that she did admire St. Stephens' bells as  
 she heard them across the water at her  
 lodging, and no doubt she expressed

her admiration. But I cannot think that it was for the ringers.

When any one hears and admires bells, it is seldom that he gives a thought to the men at the ropes. They are out of sight, and so out of mind. They reverse the role of the good child and are heard but never seen. When the queen admired St. Stephen's bells we may be sure that it was her host the mayor that she congratulated; but since she had passed the compliment it was not at all unnatural that the ringers should afterwards take some of the credit to themselves.

There is however the very circumstantial statement that she promised a charter. It was the tradition of the Society, it has been repeated many times, and is still believed today. <sup>(62)</sup> But I cannot think that it has the

smallest amount of probability about it. The usual thing, then as now and all along, is that when a man wants to notice the jingers he sends them something to get a drink with. That they can understand and appreciate. Elizabeth did not throw her money about recklessly, but on this occasion she sent 200 crowns to make a feast for the soldiers who had entertained her. Nothing is said about the jingers. They were few in number and perhaps they managed to get included with the others.

But what good would a charter have been to them? To grant a charter was not a way of conferring an honour. It was a royal act which created a legal corporation by which a number of men

could, as a body, carry out duties,  
 exercise rights, and hold property. But the  
 St. Stephen'singers had no property to hold;  
 for property meant real property, that is  
 land and its equivalent, and did not  
 include the few shillings which constituted  
 their "stocks". And no charter could give  
 them rights asingers which they did not  
 already enjoy. We must also remember  
 that the St. Stephen's Society was only one  
 company among hundreds, and there is no  
 reason to suppose that they had superior  
 claims to theingers in, say, London or  
 Norwich.

In any case no charter was granted by  
 the queen, and it is impossible to believe  
 that the promise she is supposed to have



made was redeemed by her successor.

James had spent the greater part of his life in Scotland where most of the bells had been destroyed, and where there never was, and never has been, any sentiment of ringing as in England. There is not the slightest reason to think that he was in any way interested either in bells or in the art.

Yet there is the very precise statement that the king did grant a charter, that it is dated November 20<sup>th</sup> 1620, and that it is still in existence. How did the legend arise?

That is quite easy to see. The Society possesses a Code of rules. These are set out on a document dated 1693 which <sup>is</sup> a copy of a document dated 1657, and that

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in turn was a copy of a document dated 1620. These rules state the Constitution of the Company and the general regulations under which it existed and worked. English words are often used rather loosely and there is nothing strange or unusual in this code being called the Society's Charter. (63) November 17<sup>th</sup> was the date of the annual feast. (65) People remembered the tradition of Elizabeth's kind words about the bells, and associated it with this Code of rules, and there you have the explanation of the Legend of the promise and the granting of a Charter.

Of course no Charter ever was granted for there is no record of such a thing among the official patents and documents.

We have therefore no direct early evidence about the Society except this Code of rules;

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but that does not necessarily mean  
that we can know no more about it than  
is supplied by guessing and conjecture.  
For the Society does not stand alone. It  
was one of dozens of similar bodies and  
is unique only in having preserved a  
continuous corporate existence from the  
early years of the seventeenth century  
until the present time. <sup>(64)</sup>

We must notice one or two legends, modern  
in their origin and based on conjecture  
which are believed and often repeated.

The first is that it is much older than  
1620, and was even then an ancient  
institution; the pingers had been probably  
a pre-Reformation guild for religious,  
benevolent and social purposes. <sup>(66)</sup>

This opinion is backed by the high authority

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of Toulemin Smith. The rules, he says  
"have every characteristic of those guilds that  
can be identified as flourishing in the  
14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Cent. Even, the amount of the fines  
as well as other internal marks carry  
back the date to the same time." (67)

It is noticeable that the members of these  
old societies do not seem to be satisfied  
with the authentic ages of their company,  
but try and push the beginnings back into  
the mists. The hand book of the Society of  
College Youths calls it the offspring of a  
still earlier society of priests or laymen.  
The Society of Cumberland Youths claims  
that it is identical with the Society of  
London Scholars save for the change of name.  
In both & cases a wish is the only father  
to the thought, and the suggestion that the  
Society of St. Stephen'singers is older than

the beginning of the seventeenth  
Century has no better foundation. One  
does not differ lightly from the author  
of English Guilds, but really the fact that  
the St. Stephen's rules are reminiscent of  
the fourteenth Century guilds proves nothing.  
The guild system had existed in England  
from Saxon times and the communal  
life of the people was saturated with it.  
The social and religious guilds were suppressed  
in 1547 and their property confiscated  
but they served as models on which later  
clubs were founded. It is quite certain  
that the early ringing societies were formed  
directly or indirectly on the model of the  
guilds, but the fact remains that they  
were new organizations formed for a  
very definite purpose. Whoever drew

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up the rules of the S. Stephen's  
Society in 1620 could scarcely have had  
any option in the matter. He was bound  
to follow the model of the guilds.

Now is there any reason to suppose  
that the Society was established on a  
religious basis or had inherited any  
particular religious traditions. Everything  
goes to prove that the ringing societies  
of the sixteenth and seventeenth Centuries  
were purely secular bodies, in the same  
sense that ~~any~~ the societies formed for  
the practice of any other sport were secular.  
The statement often made that there were  
guilds of ringers in pre-reformation times  
has no foundation in fact or probability. (68)  
And in any case since the reformation  
ringing had been entirely secularized.

Latimer's statement that the  
 S. Stephen'singers "had been probably  
 a pre-Reformation guild for religious  
 benevolent and social purposes is of course  
 incapable of proof or of disproof, but it  
 is something like saying of a modern  
 cricket club, without any evidence, that  
 it had probably been a nineteenth century  
 society for converting the heathen.

(69)  
 But these people point to rule 22 which  
 says that if any of the said Company shall  
 be so rude as to run into the Belfry before  
 he do kneel down and pray as every  
 Christian ought to do he shall pay for  
 the first offence pence and for the second  
 he shall be cast out of the Company."

Surely there is nothing strange about  
 such a rule in the second decade of the

seventeenth Century. A secular body is not necessarily an irreligious body; and this rule meant no more than the grace which was usually said before meals.

The Society of St. Stephen's Ringers, then, was a secular body, founded, so far as the evidence goes, in 1620, and was ~~at~~ one of many similar societies which were formed in all parts of the Country for the purposes of ringing as a sport and incidentally as a social club. It was not a Church organization; it owed no allegiance to the Church, and performed no Church duties. It has been remarked that there are no references to it in the vestry minutes <sup>(76)</sup>



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but it would have been strange if there were. Ringing for divine service is quite a modern thing and was not used in older times either before or after the Reformation. There had been ritual ringing during processions before Hugh Swass and there was always a lot of ringing on royal birthdays and anniversaries, on civic occasions and visits of great people. This was ordered and paid for by the vestry, but it was the clerks who were responsible for the ringing; they received the orders and employed whom they would. <sup>(7)</sup> The ringers had no recognised position in the church or parochial organization. Even if the

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Society of St. Stephen's Ringers had been in existence when Elizabeth visited the City, it would have been by no means a matter of course that they should have done the ringing.

How then, if they were a peculiar body with no connection with the church, did they get free access to the belfry? It seems at first sight strange and a mystery, but actually it was quite easy and quite a usual thing. All over England in almost every tower there was plenty of "pleasure ringing" done by all sorts of people. Vestries passed rules to regulate it and to restrict it within certain bounds, but they never dreamt of trying to stop it.

(72)

It was no unusual thing in some Churches for the bells to be rung almost every night in the week, different Companies taking their turns as the opportunity offered itself. It was unusual in a place like Bristol, where there were many bells, either for one Company to confine itself to one tower, or for any tower to be the exclusive meeting place of any one Company. <sup>(73)</sup>

To get admission to the belfry seems to have needed no more formality than to get the keys from the clerk or sexton. It was necessary of course to keep on good terms with that official and it was usually done by paying him a fee. In the St Stephen's Company the

section received an entrance fee from every new member and a proportion of the fines. Whatever rights the parsons may have had of controlling the ringing of the bells, they did not exercise them.

This may seem a very loose and indefensible state of affairs, but it existed from the earliest times down to living memory <sup>(14)</sup>

The men who did the "pleasure" ringing in the seventeenth century belonged to all classes of society. Some were gentlemen at the Universities and some were of the lowest of the people. In the towns they often were good class townsmen - tradesmen and members of the lesser professions - and such, most

Likely were the members of the Society 105  
of St. Stephen's Ringers.

The earliest extant copy of the rules (or as they are sometimes called the ordinances or the charter) is dated 1693, but it purports to have been transcribed at second hand from a manuscript dated 1620, and substantially it is the same code as was agreed to when the Company was founded.

There is nothing unique about these rules. They are similar to those of the other ringing societies which existed in early times. In the British Museum among the Sloane 1755. is the original manuscript with the rules of the Scholars of Cheapside dated 1603. (15)  
A copy of these rules (late 17<sup>th</sup> Cent.) is in the library of All Souls College at Oxford. (16)

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A Copy of the rules of the Society of St. Hugh, <sup>1612.</sup> is in the muniment room of Lincoln Cathedral; <sup>(77)</sup> and the original set of rules of the Society of Esquire Knights, 1662, is at Bloomsbury. <sup>(78)</sup> There are one or two other similar documents in the Bodleian. <sup>(79)</sup>

All these codes are strongly influenced by the traditions of the guilds, but there is nothing in them which does not belong to the early seventeenth century and, (pace Toullain Lomish,) nothing that necessarily carries the original dates back to the fourteenth or fifteenth centuries.

The government of the society is intrusted to a supreme officer elected for one year only and called sometimes the General and sometimes the Master. To assist him were two other officers called Stewards

or Wardens also elected annually. 107

Generally there was a permanent official called the Beadle and sometimes a Treasurer and a Warner.

The members were graded according to their status and standing in the Company. When first elected they were apprentices; in due time they became freemen, and after they had passed the Chair they were assistants of the Company. The organization was that of the trades guilds, the City Companies, and the ordinary social clubs of the time.

In all there was an elaborate system of fines graduated according to the nature of the offence. They relate to such things as refusal to take office, disobeying the

Masters' orders, misconduct in the 108  
belly or club room, bad language,  
neglect of duty, non attendance and  
such like. Since the social life was as  
prominent as the ringing, the rules  
relate as much to the club room as to  
the belly.

The chief event in the Society's life was  
the annual feast. It was held on the  
anniversary day and every member,  
not being held by sickness, was bound  
to attend on pain of being fined. The  
St. Stephens' rules make no mention of  
this annual dinner but it is quite  
evident that it was held and on the 17<sup>th</sup>  
of November. (86)

Another rule, like the last inherited



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from the guilds was the obligation  
to attend the obsequies of a deceased  
member, and after the funeral it was  
customary "to ring one knell peal either  
at the church where the burial took  
place, or else at the next parish church  
at which the company could conveniently  
be got together." <sup>(80)</sup> In pre-reformation  
times it was an ordinary thing to ring  
at a man's obit or the anniversary of  
his death, and money was often left  
for that purpose. The St Stephen's rules  
contain references to direct survivals  
of that custom. <sup>(81)</sup>

The Bristol rules have been transcribed  
several times and by men who did not  
fully understand them and it is likely

that some of them have become 110  
corrupt. <sup>(87)</sup> No 9 subjects the Master to a  
fine of one shilling if he "neglect or  
forget to warn the Company once within  
every fourteen days for his being a *Pissit*  
*pett feale*." The scribe evidently did  
not know what a *Pissit pett feale* was  
and so did not fix and modernise the  
spelling as with the other words. Probably  
he thought it was a technical expression  
and *Pissit* perhaps the name of some  
man.

But *Pissit* (which should not have  
been spelled with a capital P) is only an  
old variant of "beset", which in turn is  
an inflection of the very common English  
word "set". One meaning of beset (now

obsolete) was 'to arrange'; and so 111  
a *bessit pete peale* only meant the properly  
arranged ringing which the Company did  
once a fortnight.

Rule No 16 as usually printed is also  
obviously corrupt. It reads - "If any  
of the said Company shall take a  
rope out of a fellow's hand when the  
bells do ring well and do make a fault  
to fly off and come too near he shall  
pay for his offence one penny to the  
Company."

The reading given in *The Bristol Mirror*  
of December 7<sup>th</sup> 1822 is probably much  
nearer the original of 1620<sup>(82)</sup>. It is -  
"If any one touche a rope in hisse  
fellowes hande whenne the Bells do well  
ringe soe asse to make them fly offe

or Come for neare he shalle forfeit 112  
a pennie."

This rule cannot mean what at first sight it seems to say. It cannot mean that when ringing was going on, no one was to walk up one of the ringers and grasp<sup>b.</sup> the rope out of his hand. Conduct like that would not need a rule, and would have led not to a fine, but to hot words, and, like as not, a blow.

To understand we must realize how the bells were rung.

The general principles of bell-hanging were the same as at present; but the fittings were much rougher and cruder, requiring the outlay of very much more muscular strength, and there were no stays and sliders and but half wheels. The bells

Could not be raised and set before ringing as is usual today.

When the ringers began the bells were hanging mouth downwards and the object was "to raise the bells as quick as may be" <sup>(83)</sup> but keeping perfect time and Concord. It is not, I think, known how many bells there were at S. Stephen's in 1620 but probably there were five or six. One man would be put to the peals three to the tenor and two to each of the others. <sup>(84)</sup> At the start all the band had to exert their utmost strength, but as soon as the bells were raised high enough to clapper properly on both sides there was no need for more than one man to each rope. It was the duty therefore

of the assistant ringer to leave the 114  
bell to his fellow, for if he touched the  
rope in his hands, now that the bells do  
well ring, he might upset the striking.

This rule was intended to set a high  
standard of technical skill in the ringing  
and so was No 14 which reads as  
follows - "If any one shall misse  
toe strike hisse bells at the second swaye  
in the rising of a pealle he shalle forfeite  
a pennie."

We get a full explanation of this rule  
in Spedman's Campanalogia - "In  
raising a peal of bells all the notes  
ought to strike round at one pull, but  
mistake me not; I do not mean at  
the first pull; for at small bells 'tis  
usual to sway them all round at the

first pull without striking, at the 115  
second pull to strike them at the fore stroke  
and at the third pull at the back stroke.  
In raising a peal of more weighty bells  
'tis usual to strike them double at the  
fourth pull." (84)

To carry out this rule required a good  
deal of skill and the outlay of a very  
great deal of physical strength. It would  
be an almost impossible feat with a  
modern hung ring of eight, where the big  
bells are picked up into the stocks and  
the clappers of the little bells swing freely,  
unless the bells were very light.

For a hundred years or so the Society  
has existed as a body of men interested  
in bell ringing and meeting at regular  
intervals for social intercourse. No actual

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account of its doings during the  
first sixty years has perished, but the  
very fact that it did exist tells us  
sufficient.

Meanwhile ringing had altogether altered  
in character. The invention of the Lutes  
about 1610 had introduced the art of  
change-ringing which, aided by the publication  
of Richard Duckworth's *Tintinnalogia*  
in 1668, and Fabian Hedman's *Campanalogia*  
in 1677, after the Restoration monopolized  
the attention of the more advanced  
ringers. Instead of the athletic fascination  
of raising and falling and round ringing  
there was the intellectual fascination of  
ringing changes

But this development took place slowly



and only in parts of the Country. The <sup>117</sup>  
new art was born among the students  
at the two Universities and the Inns of  
Court, and was developed among the  
ringers of London, and Oxford, and  
Cambridge, Nottingham and Reading,  
and the Eastern Counties. In some parts  
ringers cling to the old style which even  
yet lingers among the round ringers of  
Cornwall.

For all the number of its bells, Bristol  
took no part in the early development  
of Change ringing, and that was probably  
the ultimate cause of the great alteration  
which at the close of the seventeenth  
Century or the beginning of the eighteenth  
took place in the character of the St.

Shepherd's Company of Ringers. It 118

ceased to be a society of ringers and became an ordinary social club.

We must remember that in the old societies the social life was as prominent and almost as important a feature as the ringing. The ringers were naturally sociable, convivial, and clubbable persons, so much so that, in the opinion of many of the sterner sort of people, they were a dissolute, disorderly, and drunken lot. The reign of Queen Anne was a great time for clubs. All over the country in every rank of society, men were joining together, appointing officers and drawing up rules and scales of.

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fines. The ringers had their  
organizations ready made, and when  
the interest in ringing waned among  
the members they could still carry on  
as a club and receive recruits who  
cared nothing for bells.

And interest in ringing did in some  
cases wane. Round ringing was ceasing  
to be a sport for gentlemen and the new  
change ringing was far more difficult  
and technical and appealed to a smaller  
and more select number of devotees.  
Had the St. Stephen's men taken to  
change ringing, the fascination of the  
art would have kept the society in  
touch with the belfry but that did

not happen and after a while  
the Company ceased to be ringers in  
everything but name.

The alteration of course took place  
slowly and not all at once. When the  
society started it consisted of men  
all of much the same social status,  
but there are signs that in time it  
was found necessary to introduce men  
of a lower class so as to find enough  
ringers to man the ropes. In the lists  
of names in the minute books, which  
exist from 1682, a few members are  
entitled Esquire, the majority are  
entitled Mr., and the rest have no  
title at all. The division is not (as

has been suggested) into professional and amateur ringers, for that distinction has never, at any time, been recognised in the Exercise. In older times class distinctions were very much more marked and insisted upon than they are now.

A man was not called an esquire unless he actually was an esquire, not entitled Sir unless he was a man of some position and standing.

When the final link with the beehive was broken we cannot say, but throughout the greater part of the eighteenth Century the Society of St. Stephens Ringers was an ordinary club whose main concern was the periodical dinners. But that it still continued to exist and on the whole

to prosper is a tribute to its good 122  
fortune and to the character of its members.

The life of any one of these societies, whether a Company of Ringers or a social club was usually a not very long one and hung on a rather slender thread. It did not take much - a quarrel, the death of some of the members, waning interest, failure to secure new members - any one could easily wreck the society.

It is at the beginning of the nineteenth Century that we come to what we may call the Wardour Street or archaistic phase of the Society. It was the time of the romantic revival and the same spirit which built Fonthill Abbey and wrote

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The Haverley Novels made some of the members try to recapture the ideas and reproduce what they thought were the forms of the original Society. It was then, we may be sure, that vague memories and rumours were reinforced by conjecture and crystallized into the "tradition" about Queen Elizabeth and her promise. It was then that the old code of rules was first looked upon as the Society's charter and was solemnly read at the annual feast. It was then what the newspapers call the " quaint Customs of its early days " were invented and first performed.

Present day members like to think that these things are direct survivals from the sixteenth Century or at any rate genuine

revivals; but that most of it was 124  
deliberate if well meaning fake is  
shown by an account published in *The*  
*Bristol Mirror* for December 7<sup>th</sup> 1822 and  
quite obviously written by a leading  
member.

The writer gives the tradition of Queen  
Elizabeth and her promise, states that  
the Charter was obtained from King  
James, and proceeds to quote the majority  
of the rules. <sup>(90)</sup>

In so doing he does not copy the  
spelling of one of the genuine manuscripts  
but adopts an imitation of fifteenth  
orthography to give the thing an antique  
flavour. It is rather clever but altogether  
overdone. If genuine it would prove that  
the "Charter" was not the grant of James



but much older. But actually it does not take much study to see that the thing is not genuine, and the writer gives himself away by adding a Couplet of his own -

Maaye theye ringge pealles offe tripple  
Cobbes grandsires  
Tille the worlde ends in alle-consuming  
fiere.

'Tripple Cobbes grandsires is nonsense, and by the time that there were such things as Treble Bob and Grandire, English spelling had become much the same thing it is now. The writer could hardly be expected to know, and it may be somewhat pedantic to mention, that the ringers' traditional pronunciation of the word Grandire has, and always has had, a silent "d",

Grandire

and a very short "i". It rhymes 126  
with "cancer", not with "fire." (92) (96)

These things make us suspicious of the antiquity of the ritual which in itself is not convincing.

From the style and internal evidence it would seem that the song - The Golden Days of Good Queen Bess - is not older than the closing years of the eighteenth century. (93)

The suggestion has been made that the pageant called the Dow is a survival of a medieval Mystery play and, though that is doubted on good and sufficient grounds, it is said that we shall be fairly safe if we date the display from the time of the Armada, because all the characters are associated with that

great event. (94)

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That is asking us to believe that the Queen Elizabeth tradition is true and that the Society existed before 1620; otherwise there would have been no point in the ceremony, assuming it to have been "one of the quaint customs of early days."

Of course the pageant may have had an origin outside the Society and have been adopted by the members for some reason.

But why?

We must remember that the St. Stephen's Company was one of a number of Societies which were formed for a definite, practical, purpose. The members adopted an organization with officers, rules, and routine not because they wanted

to be "quaint" but because they 128  
wanted to hold their meetings in orderly  
fashion and get their business done.

There was plenty of pagentry in the  
Middle Ages but it all had a meaning;  
and there was plenty of drama at the  
time of Shakespeare and Jonson. But  
we cannot see what room there was  
for such a thing as the Don in the  
life of a ringing society. (95)

The Code of rules a society draws up  
is treated as the regulations under which  
it lives and which it modifies from  
time to time as occasion arises; not  
as a sacrosanct document to be solemnly  
recited before a dinner. In the early  
days the rule against omitting to strike

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a bell at the second sway meant something, but we may be sure that it was not read out before the dinner. It is only when it has long since meant nothing that it becomes quaint and so of value in a pageant.

It is instructive to compare the only two early seventeenth century ringing societies which still exist - The Society of College Youths, and the Society of St. Stephens Ringers. The first is what it always has been, a ringing society. It has kept its original objects, its original organization, and its original routine. It obeys for the most part its original rules, but those rules adapted to the changing years. There is nothing "quaint"

about the Society of College Youths 130  
but we may be quite sure that it is  
nearer in all essentials to what the  
Society of St. Stephen's Ringers was in 1620  
than that society is now.

The St. Stephen's pagentry is interesting  
and worth while, but has no remote  
connection with a ringing society of  
the early seventeenth century.

Notes  
to  
Chapter Nine.

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## Notes to Chapter Nine.

1. See Volume VI page 1615 In 1616 the churchwardens of Loughborough "spent in giving entertainment to the gentlemen strangers when they came to ring -- xjs."
2. See Volume IV. page 110.
3. Durandus - Rat. div. off. lib 1. cap. 14 See Volume III page 397
4. See the Constitutions of the Office of the Deacons at Holy Trinity Coventry, (Vol. VI. p 1684) Statuti de Officio Clericorum of S. Stephens Coleman Street, (Vol V p. 863), and volumes IV-VI generally.
5. Durandus
6. Jean Veron - The Huntinge of Purgatorie to Death, 1561 - See Volume III page 463.
7. The Colledge youths - page 2.
8. The Quarterly Review, 1854, page 308.
9. See Volume VI page 1619.
10. The prior of Nymondham alleged that the nuisance "was usual in divers other abbeyes and priories". See Vol VI page 1638.



- 11. See Volume V page 124.
- 12. See Volume II page 356.
- 13. This of course is true of many other things beside ringing.
- 14. Eccleston strapped the tenor at Southwark to a six-thousand of Grandeur Cakes (there were three men to the bell); rang the treble at Goddenham to Partridge's Triples; and in a peal of Bob Major in the same tower  
 Towell rang the tenor at Quess Park to a peal of Triples  
 Procter was a much more skilful ringer and took part in peals of Cambridge, Superlative and London Surprise. He left however the conducting to other men.
- 15. The story of the Hertford College youths should be considered in this connection. They however belonged to the closing years of the eighteenth century.
- 16. See Appendix page

17. See page

18. See Chapter XII. Volume page 199.

19. In 1678 there were eight bells at Cirencester -  
Anthony a Woods diary ii. 407.

The present twelve are all by Rudhall at  
various dates - 1, 1722; 2, 1713; 3, 1786;  
4, 1729; 5, 1787; 6, 1741; 7, 1718; 8, 1715; 9, 1746;  
10, 1734; Tenor 1736. The inscription on the  
second says it was "by a subscription procured  
by Mr. John Haster 1722." This was when the  
ring was made into twelve - Thomas Harris  
manuscript, 1868. Add Mss.

Chapter XI p. 110. 111.

Volume II p. 523. - Volume V p. 851.

1689-90. Treasury Warrant to Excise  
Commissioners to direct the respective  
Collectors of Excise to pay to the supervisors  
and gangers the rates (12d per £ of their  
salaries) assessed upon them the said  
Commissioners having prayed such allowance  
Jan'y 23 1689-90. Treasury Warrant to  
Excise Commissioners to extend to the inferior

officers of the Excise within the City  
of London and the Bells of mortality benefits  
of warrant of 14<sup>th</sup> inst.

Feb. 20<sup>th</sup>. Treasury warrant to Excise  
Commissioners to pay the 12d assessment  
charged upon George Burck and Fabian  
Hedman two clerks in the office of John  
Burck esq. Auditor General of Excise as  
was granted to the other inferior officers  
of Excise Janry 23<sup>rd</sup> last

1691. August 28<sup>th</sup> Treasury warrant to  
Excise Commissioners to pay to George  
Prucere £19-5-0 for 1691 April 15<sup>th</sup> to June 24<sup>th</sup>  
on the salary of £100 per an. payable by  
the Auditor of Excise to him as Deputy  
Auditor of Excise (on John Prucere's death  
April 15<sup>th</sup> last) the papers belonging to that  
office having been left in the said George  
Prucere's custody; And 15<sup>£</sup> to Fabian  
Hedman a clerk in that office being for  
the quarter ended June 24<sup>th</sup> last; all in

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regard that the said auditors salary for  
the said quarter is paid to the Crown, and  
that Bruce and Hedman are to make up  
the accounts both for that and the following  
quarter.

1699-1700. Report of the Commissioners of  
Excise to the Lords of the Treasury on the  
petition of George Brewer the elder and  
Fabian Hedman, clerks in the office of the  
Auditor of Excise expressing the opinion  
that Sir Basil Diswell who was auditor of  
Excise ought to make them a suitable  
allowance as he had £500 per ann salary  
and £200 for clerks. Dated 20 Feb. 1699.

Minuted. Sir Basil Diswell to be writ to to  
pay the allowance for mail & leather to  
George Brewer & Fabian Hedman who are the  
clerks that perform the service relating to  
these accounts.

1700. Apr. 26. William Lowndes to Sir Basil  
Diswell. Two of your clerks, viz. George

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Bruce sen<sup>r</sup>. and Fabian Hedman  
have petitioned for addition of salary in  
view of increase of business in your office.  
It appears that £60 per ann. is allowed you  
on the salary bills as an additional salary  
for the duties and shell and Leather. You  
are to pay same to them.

Treasury reference to the Excise Commissioners  
of the petition of George Bruce the elder  
and Fabian Hedman clerks in the Auditors  
of the Excise's office showing that by patent  
of 1691 July 3<sup>rd</sup> there is granted to the said  
Auditors £200 per ann. to pay three clerks  
(whereof petitioners are two) for doing  
business of Excise upon beer ale &c. but  
the said business is now very much increased  
by the double duty of 3. 3; the Duty of 18d  
for building of ships; the second years Double  
(nine pence) the 9<sup>th</sup> for 99 years, the Bank  
9<sup>th</sup> and the Lottery 9<sup>th</sup> and also by the

increase of the County Collectors 139  
from 36 (in number) to 55. Therefore praying  
an increase of salary. — Extracts from  
Calendar of Treasury Books.

Jan'y 31 1660-1 Treasurer Southampton  
to the Attorney General for a bill to pass the  
Great Seal to constitute John Birch the  
sole Auditor of the Excise and New Impost  
for life with fee of £500 per an for himself  
and £200 per an. for three clerks. — Calendar  
of Treasury Books. For some reason Birch  
altered his name to Bruere. George Birch  
or Bruere was for many years Hedman's  
fellow clerk in the audit of Excise, and  
among the legacies mentioned in Hedman's  
will are "Mr Edward Lerpencie a clerk  
in the Auditor of Excises office, and Mr  
Bartholomew Bruere also a clerk in the  
said office." One of the witnesses to Hedman's  
signature was John Bruere.

24. See Volume III p 181.
25. "A needless Alexandrine ends the song,  
That like a wounded snake, drags its  
slow length along." - Alex. Pope,  
Essay on Criticism, line 350.
26. Fresham, William, Vice Chancellor of  
Oxford University 1532-1547 and 1556 -  
1558. Died 1569.
27. Robert Hooke 1635-1703 was an early  
member of the Royal Society and an  
inventive genius. He is said to have  
anticipated Newton by a theory of general  
gravitation but had not the requisite  
mathematical knowledge to establish  
it. "Halley described his last invention  
a marine barometer to the Royal Society  
in February 1700" (D.N.B.). Patrick's adv.  
appeared in 1702.
28. John Houghion. See Vol II p 119.
29. See Chapter IV. Vol. III.
30. "Gloucester; at night had Mr Rudhall

the bell founder. A foundation  
ringer is one that rings at night; not many  
of that. He has picked a peam of changes, the  
bobs and common hunt. £7 per cow his metal.  
Tin-glass necessary to make sharp pebbles.  
He casts to half a note which is mended  
by the hammer. He takes the notes of them all  
by a blow pipe - Notes and Queries, Jan  
3<sup>rd</sup> 1891.

31. John Patrick's advertisement - A new  
Improvement of the Quicksilver Barometer  
wherein the quicksilver rises and falls  
(perpendicularly) above Twelve Inches  
instead of Three in the Common ones.

It discovers the most minute and smallest  
Alteration in the Air; its tendencies being  
plainly seen while observing.

It foretells the Change of the Weather much  
sooner and more certainly than any Common  
Barometer and this in an open Tube (without  
Cistern of Quicksilver at the bottom) showing



the Expansion and Contraction of 142  
the Column of Mercury near Three Inches  
(and this in the Equallest Tube I have  
met with) as well as rise and fall above  
a foot.

"The Invention has been Examined  
Approved and Applauded by several  
Persons of Quality of the Royal Society  
who thought it highly to Deserve the  
Encouragement of the Curious

"He has also made an Excellent  
Diagonal Barometre wherein the Mercury  
moves in an Oblique Tube for the space  
of 30 Inches instead of 3 in the Common  
ones; and so so nice as to divide an  
inch into 100 parts. For the same  
purpose as the former.

"It has a Thermometer on the same  
frame showing 90 degrees of Variation  
between the greatest Heat and the

greatest Cold.

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"Also a Looking Glass commodiously plac'd on the same Frame between the Barometre and the Thermometre whereby Gentlemen and Ladies at the same time they Dress may accomodate their Habits to the Weather. An Invention not only very Curious, but no less Profitable than Pleasant.

"The same Artist has made very compleatly in one Frame a Mercurial and a Marine Barometre fitted for Sea compounded of two Thermometers by D. Hooke which performs the same by Sea as the Mercurial one doth at Land; being so ordered that the motion of the Ship doth not make it Vibrate, as it doth the Mercurial one

"The Scale of this Barometre may be

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enlarged to a Foot or more if  
required. The use hereof is to foresee  
Storms at Sea and their abatement  
and for that purpose were found of  
very great Advantage by Capt Halley  
in his late Southern Voyage.

“These three prove the Verity of each  
other. All three are so contrived that  
they may be safely sent to any Place  
completely fixed. Printed Instructions  
will be given with every Glass that will  
fully Explain their Uses to the meanest  
Capacity.

These and all other sorts of Portable  
Barometers and Thermometers are made  
and sold in Ship Court in The Old  
Bailey near Ludgate by John Patrick  
and sold by John Marshall at the  
Archimedes and Golden Spectacles in

Hudgate Street. And at most  
Eminent Watchmakers in London"

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[ Captain Halley was

32. Tin-glass = an old name for bismuth, a reddish-white metal used as alloy.
33. See Vol. I. p. 785.
34. Campanalogia
35. See Vol. II. p. 41. 43.
36. M. Misson's Memoirs and Observations  
in his Travels over England. Translated  
by Mr. Ozell 1719. - p. 306.
37. Un des grandes plaisirs du peuple cest  
de sonner les cloches : il est charmé  
lorsqu'il en a quelque occasion, comme  
les jours de fête ou les jours de réjouissances.  
Ils se forme même des sociétés pour  
cela. Il est vrai que je ne crois pas  
qu'il y ait un pays au monde où il y ait  
des plus joli Carillons. Avec six ou huit  
cloches de différens sons ils Carillonneront  
dans un heure de plusieurs manières  
différentes - Lettres et Voyages de Mons<sup>r</sup>

César de Saussure en Allemagne 146  
en Hollande, et en Angleterre, 1725-1729  
page 298.

38. See Chapter III Vol II.

39. Burke.

40. Burke's Excluded Baronage, 1844 p. 145.

41. Burke's Scavage, 1925 p. 1971.

42. Sir John Bellis in College Youths' name  
book, and Sir John Bellis in Rule Book  
1928 ed.

43. See Vol IV p. 367.

44. Kingsly Bethel -

Joined Society of College Youths 1716.

M.P. for London City. Whig 1747.

Member of Fishmongers' Company 1749.

Sheriff 1751-52.

Lord Mayor, Nov. 11<sup>th</sup> 1755.

Prime Warden Fishmongers Company 1756

Died, Nov. 1 1758

Will proved, Nov. 14 1758. -

A. B. Beaven, The Aldermen of  
the City of London.

45. See Vol IV p. 358.

46. Sir John Tash -

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Sheriff 1719-1720

Knighted Nov 16<sup>th</sup> 1719.

Master Vintner 1719

Died Oct. 12 1735.

Will proved Oct 23<sup>rd</sup> 1735.

- A. B. Beaven.

47. Groves Dictionary of Music, Vol II p. 140.

48. Dic. of Nat. Biography, Vol XVI p. 140.

49. W. R. Chetwood, A General History of the Stage, p 208.

50. John Eccles was the son of Solomon Eccles a musician turned Quaker and fanatic who took to shoe making as a living and made himself notorious by public protests against the doctrine and ritual of the Church of England. During the Plague he ran about the streets naked except for a loin cloth with a bag of burning Coals on his head and crying out "Oh the great and dreadful God!" and said no

more but repeated those words  
Continually with a voice and Countenance  
full of horror." - Defoe, *The Plague in  
London.* 148

51. Both Pack and Johnson joined the  
College Jours in 1712.
52. See Vol II p 158.
53. There was then no bridge at Westminster.
54. "Principality of Wales. The twelve Counties  
of the Principality are entirely at the  
orders of the Dukes of Beaufort and Powis,  
Lord Berkeley, Sir Watkin Williams, and  
those who think with them; and they have  
all undertaken to hold themselves in  
readiness to take the saddle as soon as  
the first signal is given." - Report to  
Louis XV from Copies in French among  
the Stuart MSS. at Windsor Castle, quoted  
by L. Eardley Simpson
55. A portrait of Hymn is reproduced by

Eardley - Pimprose page 22.

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56. See Vol page 206.

57. Edward John Osborn - Notebook in the possession of the author

58. See Vol II page 250

59 " At the High Crosse in a disguised manner stood FAEM very orderly set forth and spoke as followeth by an excellent boy - "\*\*\*\*\*"

" At the next gate and near her Highnes Lodging stood iij other Boyes called SALUTACION, GRATULACION, and OBEDIENT GOOD WILL, and ij of these Boyes spoke as followe and all three drew theyr swords when it was named the Hoel plaet is reddie to defend a pesable Tryne \*\*\*\*\*"

" After these speeches wear ended iij hondreth soldiers well appointed wayted on her Highnes to her Lodgyng and



there, she being settled they  
 shot of their peeces in passing good  
 order" etc. [There followed speeches  
 and sham warfare] "The Prince  
 liking the handling of these causes  
 verie well sent ij hundred crowns to  
 make the souldiors a banquet" -

The whole Order have our Sovereign  
 Ladye Queene Elizabeth was receyved  
 into the Citie of BRISTOL in August etc  
 Thomas Churchyard quoted by Nichols.

- 60 John Nichols - The Progresses and  
 Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth.
61. Vol II. p 42.
62. "What the Queen readily consented  
 to give while staying here she forgot  
 after her departure" - H. E. Roslyn - The  
 History of the Antient Society of S. Stephens  
 Ringers, Bristol, page 1.
- 63 The Oxford English Dictionary gives as

a secondary meaning of the word - 151

Charter = A written evidence, instrument or contract executed between man & man.

64. The Society of College Youths is the only other ringing society which has existed from the early years of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century until the present time.

65. November 17<sup>th</sup> was the anniversary of the accession of Queen Elizabeth and was a ringing day in all parts of the Country long after her death. It was not unusual for ringing societies to hold their feasts on a general ringing day. e.g. the College Youths' feast was on November 5<sup>th</sup>.

66. " appears to have been drawn up in the closing months of 1620, but it is clear from the tenor of some of the rules that the Society was even then an ancient institution. \*\*\* the ringers had been

probably a pre-Reformation guild 152  
for religious, benevolent and social  
purposes. In 1620 the members were  
still exclusively bell ringers and the  
22nd. article of their Ordinary indicates  
the feeling that survived among them -  
John Latimer - *The Annals of Bristol*  
in the Seventeenth Century

67. Foulmin Smith - *English Gilds*, p. 292.

68. See Vol V p 886.

69. "Such limited information as we  
possess indicates that the Society was  
established on a religious basis. There  
is indirect proof of this in the name and  
direct proof in the Ordinances - H.E.

Roslyn, p 3.

70. "The monument Chests of ~~the~~ St. Stephen's  
are silent. How the Ringers came to  
have free access to the belfry without  
permission being recorded on the minutes

of the vestry, where other matters of far less importance were entered, would be a mystery, unless, as we believe the Guild was established before vestries came into being - H.E. Roslyn, p 3.

71. See Vol VI p. 1694 and in numerous accounts of Churchwardens.

72. Preston, 1588. - "No peals of pleasure to be used except it be at the request of a worshipful man or a gentleman of the parish  
Ashley-de-la-Zouch, 1628 - None shall be allowed to ring for pleasure and recreation above three in the week and that above the space of an hour at a time."

Stepney 1637 - A fee of two shillings and sixpence charged.

Twickenham 1711 - "No more ringing of bells for recreation, but two nights a week and not to exceed the hour of nine"

1 St Margaret's Westminster 1670 - 154  
No ringing in peal before seven in the  
morning or after eight at night.

73. But the St Stephen's Society do appear to  
have held all their regular ringing  
meetings in St. Stephen's Chelfy.

74. When I first started ringing as a boy  
at Norwich we used to make up a band  
go to one of the City Churches and ask for  
the key. There was no Sunday ringing and  
though we happened to be quite good  
Churchmen our Churchmanship had  
nothing to do with our ringing or with  
the Churches at which we practised.  
For some years just before the War I  
was one of a band that rang regularly  
peals and touches at St. John's Waterloo  
Road. We never rang on Sundays and  
never came in contact with either parson

or Churchwardens. There was nothing 155  
unusual about this.

75. Hoane MSS. 3463 The manuscript was written in 1636.
76. MS All Souls' College Library, no Cxix.
77. Printed in North's Church Bells of Lincoln.
78. Add. Ms. 28,504.
79. Society of Northern Youths, The Western Green Caps, The Greenwich Youths.
80. Rules of the Cheapside Scholars
81. See Vol III p. 384.
82. But see Toulmin Smith's opinion of the transcript of the rules as given by The Bristol Mirror. vide infra.
83. Fabian Pledman - Campanalogia
84. Ibid. It is quite likely that the rule was copied from Pledman's book, for the Code of 1620 would be revised and amended when it was re-written in 1657 and 1693.
85. The price marked on it is £1-1-0.

86. The eighteenth Century minute Books have references to Bean feasts held at different places - Roslyn.
87. 1809 - Wallion & Gwyer paid £2.5.0 for engraving the Articles and painting Bells thereon.  
1870 - paid Tricket, Son & Wallop for a new Copy of the Ordinances, written on vellum £3-10-0.
88. See the account of the ringing at St. Sepulchre's Snow Hill by the Cheapside Scholars - Vol II. p. 70.
89. H. E. Roslyn, page 13.
90. "The Society of 'Ringers' had existence probably many years before the visit of Queen Elizabeth to this City in 1574 when they obtained from her a promise of a Charter - or an Ordinance as it is called - for their guidance; and in fact obtained it from her successor, James I A. D. 1620." - The Bristol Mirror Dec 7<sup>th</sup> 1822.
91. See Foulmer Smiths English Gelds p.
92. On the Board at St. Peter Mancroft Norwich

A.D. 1715 the word is spell "Gransin".

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93. The reference to Victoria proves nothing for no doubt in earlier days it was "King George".

94 H. E. Roslyn, page 82. "The Ringers' Ceremony is more likely to have had its origin in a Chronicle-play or history in dialogue. These Chronicle-plays were the immediate predecessors of Tragedy and Comedy and were related to the Masques so popular in the sixteenth and seventeenth Centuries." - Ibid.

95. It is objected that these men would not have perpetrated a deliberate fraud but that is to look at the matter in an entirely wrong light. They were not antiquarians and they were not engaged on any serious business. They were a number of worthy gentlemen who met together to eat a dinner and have



a good time. Like the grown-up 158  
children that all healthy minded men  
are at times they played the game of  
let-us-pretend. For the whole thing, even  
where it was a genuine survival, was a  
pretence. They pretended that they were  
sixteenth Century ringers; that they were  
governed by a set of rules they did not  
understand and which had no meaning;  
that they derived in some mysterious  
way from Queen Elizabeth. It was natural  
almost inevitable that they should seek  
to heighten the illusion by fictitious details  
and the Don with his big red nose gave  
the touch of fun and burlesque which was  
appropriate to the occasion.

96 In Samuel Rogers poem in the Elms  
"Grandson" is rhymed with "bear".

97. Clavis, 1<sup>st</sup> ed. p. 272.

98. Its date as 1774 this peal was rung at Banishrook<sup>159</sup>  
in the Isle of Wight for added to the record in the  
peal book of the Union Society of Newport is the note -  
"In this peal there is a Repeat tho it runs the  
exact number" - Morris p. 161.

99. The Gloucester Journal of Nov. 3 1783 contains  
an advertisement of Charles and John Rudhall  
Successors to their brother T. Rudhall deceased.  
John Rudhall is said to be of Gloucester and  
Charles Rudhall of Brixhilmstone, Sussex.  
There is also a reference to Abraham Rudhall,  
mercier of Gloucester.

100 In the year 1751 a Company calling themselves  
the Society of Eastern Youths rang a peal of B.B.  
Triples the first on the bells of St. Mary Stratford.  
Some of the band were well known London  
ringers whose names appear in the records of  
the leading London societies. It was probably  
a band made up for the occasion from more  
than one society and they took the name of  
Eastern Youths rather than ring a non-society  
peal.

101 A distinguished modern historian, Mr Esme  
Kingfield-Stratford in his History of British  
Civilization speaking of the Church of England  
in the fifteenth century, refers to the rivalry

in bell ringing between parishes and parishes 160  
with its necessary competition in providing  
the bells and the towers to hold the bells."  
Unfortunately he gives no reference to his  
authority for the statement.

Chapter Ten.

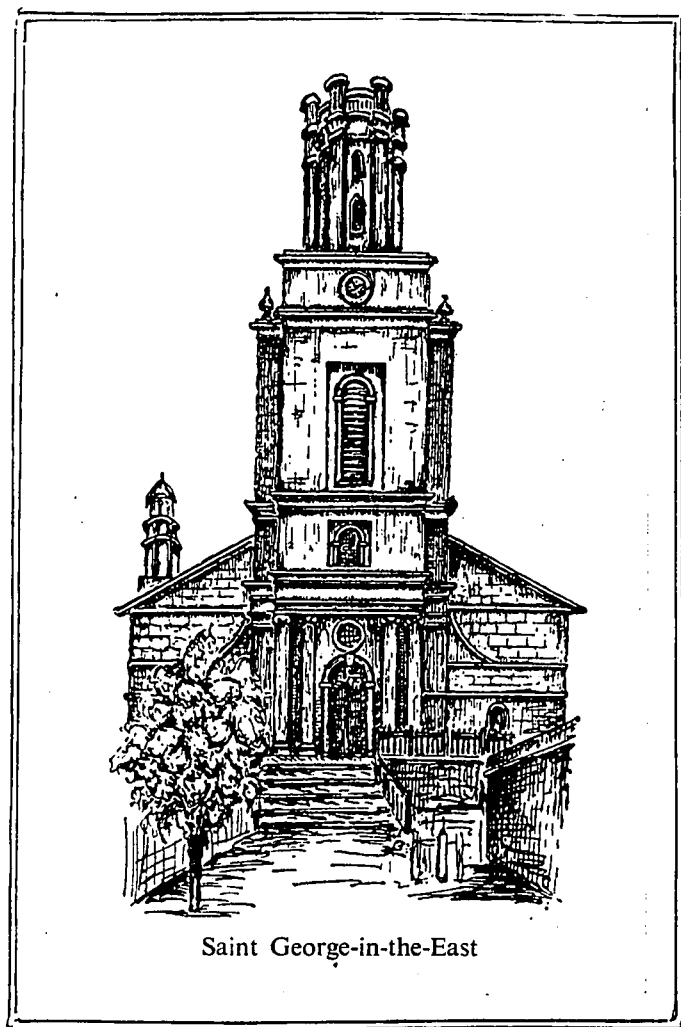
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Benjamin Annable  
and his Times.

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Written in 1933. Revised in 1938.

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Saint George-in-the-East

From The Times Lit. Sup. Jan. 22 1838  
for original sketch see Vol. VI. p. 1329.

## Chapter Ten.

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### Benjamin Stnoble and his Times.

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With the year 1715 we reach a new chapter in the history of ringing; and not only a new chapter but the historian is faced with an abrupt change in the material at his disposal and the story he has to tell. Up till now we have traced the early uses of bells, the birth of the Exercise, the invention and development of the art of Change ringing and the story of the early ringing societies.

We have seen how Contemporary 162.  
social and religious opinions affected  
and decided the nature and Conditions  
of the Exercise and we have given  
biographical <sup>details</sup> of many men who were  
ringers.

Our information has been gathered  
from scores of books of all sorts, from  
manuscripts, from parish accounts, and  
from Acts of Parliament. The interest  
has been supplied by the numerous  
points where the use of bells and the  
lives of ringers have come in contact  
with the general history of the people.

But as yet of the actual practice of  
the art we have had no account. Once  
in 1631 there is a record of S. Sepulchre's

bells being rung by a band of the  
 Cheapside Schollers whose names are  
 given, but what they rang we do not  
 know or can only guess at. <sup>(1)</sup> Later,  
 in 1690, we have the tradition of the  
 peal of Triples rung in same tower by  
 the College youths and the three 720's  
 of Minor rung in 1684 at St. Pavours;  
 but who the band were we do not  
 know. <sup>(2)</sup> And that is all.

In 1715 we have the earliest full  
 record of a peal and hence forth boards  
 and peal books give us an account of  
 the performances in the belfry which,  
 if not complete, is full enough to show  
 us what ringers were doing, how the  
 practice of the art was growing, and  
 what peals were accomplished.



Previously, though we have discovered <sup>11.4</sup>  
a good deal about the lives and doings  
of men who were ringers, very little of  
it concerns their doings as ringers;  
but now in addition to the bare  
records of peals we have one or two  
valuable sources of information which  
throw light on the character and  
opinions of ringers as ringers, and we  
see them, for a short while at least,  
as flesh and blood and not mere  
names and abstractions. In the  
advertisements and letters of the Norwich  
men, in Heames' diary, in Laughton's  
manuscript, and in D. Mason's Collection  
we have material which added to  
the peal boards and peal books enabled

us to reconstruct the story of the  
 second quarter of the eighteenth Century  
 in a more satisfactory manner than  
 that of any part of the history of the  
 Exercise down to modern times. If  
 we had more material of this sort  
 the history of ringing would be a  
 much more interesting thing both  
 to write and to read.

On the other hand our tale is no  
 longer concerned with things outside  
 the narrow interests of ringing. The  
 Exercise had become a little independent  
 world of its own, with its own ideas,  
 standards, and ambitions. There was  
 a time when the general public

166  
Could understand and take an  
interest in ringing much in the same  
way that the general public today  
can understand and take an interest  
in cricket and football; but as the  
art developed it became true that the  
only way to understand ringing is to  
become a ringer.

This does not mean, of course, that the  
people of England thought less of their  
bells. Nothing perhaps was so interwoven  
into the sentiment with which they  
regarded the life of their home town  
or village as the sound of the church bells.  
They could understand good striking and  
bad striking and they could take sides  
in the rivalry between neighbouring

villages, and matches and prizes 167  
ringing often supplied the chief sporting  
events in the lives of the common people.

But those ringers whose doings really  
counted in the advance of the art were  
comparatively few in number. The records  
are not sufficiently complete to tell  
us how many men during the first  
half of the century rang a peal in  
England or even in London but the  
number is surprisingly small.

It is these men with whose doings  
we are now concerned; and in contrast  
with the men about whom we have  
already written they are men who are  
distinguished as ringers but not in  
any other way. It is vain to search

Contemporary books or records, or 168  
state papers or parish accounts, in the  
hope of finding some reference to Strnabell  
or Garthow, or Helli or Mainwaring.

The earliest Company that we know  
as a band were the men who rang the  
peal of Grand sire Bob Triples at St.  
Peter Mancroft Norwich on May 2<sup>nd</sup>  
1715. The beginnings of the Society of  
Norwich Scholars are lost in the mists. <sup>(3)</sup>  
There is no scrap of evidence and not  
even the vaguest tradition of any  
ringing in the City during the seventeenth  
Century not even the meagre hints  
that we get from Steadman's Campanologia  
of the early development of the art in  
places like Cambridge, and Reading

and Nottingham. Yet we may 169  
be sure that Norwich was one of the  
earliest places in which change ringing  
took root and flourished. In wealth  
and importance it ranked as the third  
town in the County and its forty parish  
Churches possessed about twenty ringing  
peals of bells, five and upwards in  
number, besides many others all hung  
for ringing and all rung. Norwich  
was the Capital of East Anglia in a  
very real sense and its influence  
was spread over the surrounding Country.  
But East Anglia was a district which  
to a very great degree stood apart  
from the general life of the County. It  
had a very early and a very strong

tradition of Change ringing, but 170  
its influence on the Exercise at large  
was much smaller than might be  
expected. The Norwichingers gave  
to the Exercise two of the most important  
of the standard methods - Norwich Court  
and Tidman's Principle on the higher  
numbers - but in both cases the methods  
were unknown to <sup>the</sup> greater part of the  
Country until, at the end of the eighteenth  
Century, they became known to visitors  
from London. (14)

Nowhere perhaps was the old exclusive  
spirit more marked than among the  
Norwich Scholars. They considered  
themselves, not without reason, as the  
foremost band in England, and they

did not intend if they could help <sup>171</sup>  
it to have their performances cheapened  
by repetition or their supremacy challenged  
by giving other bands information which  
would make them as well off as themselves.

To this spirit, however, there seems to  
have been one early and notable  
exception. John Garthorn the greatest  
man as composer in the long history of  
Norwich ringing and one of the greatest  
composers in the whole history of the  
Exercise had composed the peal of Bob  
Triples which was rung in 1715. <sup>(5)</sup> He  
followed it by solving the still greater  
problem of a fine peal of Grandair Triples  
It was rung at Mancroft in August  
1718 and at once was made available  
for the Exercise at large. Less than a



month later it was performed in 172.  
London, and shortly afterwards at Lynn  
Coddensham, Lincoln and possibly  
other places. No one thing probably did  
more to make peal ringing a normal  
thing in the ringers' life than the  
knowledge that a fine peal of Grandmere  
Triples could be rung.

But though the Bob Triples is generally  
acknowledged to be the first fine peal  
ever accomplished (and evidently with  
truth) it was by no means the first  
five-thousand, nor was it claimed as  
such. The Norwich men had already  
twice rung the length and so had several  
bands in different parts of the country  
but ringers from the first recognised  
that repetition of changes makes all

the difference and that a false 173  
peal however well performed cannot  
rank with a true peal.

The Norwich men also set the example  
followed all over the Country of recording  
their performances on boards in the  
belfry.

No record and no tradition survives  
of any five-thousand rung by London  
men during the twenty seven years which  
followed the College Youths' peal at St  
Sepulchres in 1690, though it was a  
period of ringing activity and the  
possibilities of a five-thousand must  
often have been discussed among the  
ringers. The London Scholars were the  
first to break the silence and by  
achieving 5040 changes of Grand sire

Caters at S. Brides in 1717 they gained the honour of ringing what is generally recognised as the first true peal in the metropolis. A board was put up to record it, but unfortunately when the church was repaired in 1796 it was taken down and destroyed and so the particulars of the names of the ringers and Conductor are lost. ⑥

At the same time there was another London Company which although inferior in social status and prestige to the London Scholars was almost their equal in ringing ability.

The Society of Union Scholars was founded on May 1st 1713 and the names of the original members have been preserved. ⑦ It was only a small Company

just eight men were elected in the 175  
first year - but they were all keen and  
capable ringers. The most important man  
and first master was William Hodges;  
the others were William Baldwin,  
William Freeborn, Robert French, Robert  
Baldwin, John Medley, Thomas Goodridge  
and Thomas Knight. Baldwin was  
the most accomplished ringer in the  
band and he has earned an honourable  
place among composers, but whether  
because he was socially or financially  
in a worse position than the others, or  
younger, or for some other reason, he  
never held office in the society either  
as steward or master. ⑧

Why the band called themselves

Union Scholars we cannot tell. 176

It may have been suggested by the union between England and Scotland which took place in 1707 but more likely it was intended to refer to the union of the members in common interests and friendship. They certainly lived up to the name for five years later on September 12<sup>th</sup> 1718 seven of the foundation members took part in the second performance of Garth's peal of Grand sire Triples. This was at St Dunstan's in the East where Abraham Rudhall of Gloucester had in 1702 hung a ring of eight with a 24 cut tenor.

Garth's composition had very distinctive features and differed so much from the

peal of Grand sire so well-known to London ringers that it is likely that they would not admit that it was Grand sire.

Anyhow the Union Scholars rang it under the name of Hick Triples, taking that title from the hics which were the distinctive calls. William Hodges rang the treble and Robert Baldwin the seventh. No conductor is mentioned but it is almost certain that Baldwin called the bobs.

Garthorn's peal has three sorts of calls - ordinary Grand sire bobs, hics (which are fifth place Grand sire bobs) and two doubles. Baldwin attempted to simplify it and, as he could not get rid of the hics, he got rid of the plain Grand sire lead ends thus producing Union Triples

Whether the Union Scholars rang a 178  
peal of it or not is doubtful. There is no  
record of such a performance in the peal  
book, but that is not conclusive evidence  
for the book was not written until  
about 1750<sup>(8)</sup>; and when the College youths  
rang the earliest of which we have any  
knowledge they only claimed<sup>it</sup> as the first  
"done in that steeple." The method had  
a certain amount of popularity among  
London ringers<sup>(9)</sup>

Two months after their peal of Hicks  
Triples the Union Scholars achieved a  
still more notable performance. This  
was 5120 Changes of Oxford Treble Bob  
Major and was not only the first peal  
in the method but the first peal in any  
Major method. It was rung on December 27

1718 at St Dunstons - in the East. Few '79  
of the men that rang in the Triples took  
part in this peal. Baldwin was again at  
the seventh but Hodges and Balding  
stood down.

Oxford Treble Bob Minor was an old  
and well practised method, but it shows  
how indefinite were the rules for naming  
methods, that the Union Scholars did  
not hesitate to give their own name to  
the Major when they had rung it. For  
about five and twenty years it was  
known in London as Union Bob; then  
the older and more correct title gradually  
prevailed. In the provinces the older  
name was generally used. The 10.080  
rung at Stourchurch in 1727 was called  
Oxford Treble Bob, all eight in, or the



The figures of the 1718 peal have survived and are true which is rather remarkable because it was not until many years later that Composers realised the necessity of proving the internal rows in Treble Bb Major. In my next Chapter I discuss this composition and the things which, it seems to me, suggested it to the Composer. <sup>(10)</sup> Who he was is not stated and no tradition had survived to the time of The Clavis; but such indications as there are point to Robert Baldwin as both Composer and Conductor of the peal.

The performance was recorded in the belfry, but the board was taken down when the belfry was cleaned in 1820 and was not replaced. <sup>(11)</sup>

These men rang no more peals, or  
 at any rate none are recorded. It may  
 be that the peal book is incomplete. <sup>(2)</sup> of  
 Baldwin we hear no more save for one  
 or two references to him as a composer  
 in Annable's note book. A man named  
 Robert Baldwin died in 1728 and was  
 buried on September 29<sup>th</sup> at Christ  
 Church, Newgate Street. <sup>(13)</sup> There is nothing  
 to identify him with the ringer but he  
 may well have been the man.

Osborn suggested that the absence of  
 peals would be accounted for by the  
 members leaving the society, and he thought  
 that the presumption was that they  
 joined the Society of London Scholars,  
 but there is really no need for any such  
 supposition. Peal ringing was not for

them incidental to a ringer's career as it is to us, and as it soon was to become them. At five thousand was at least as rare as a fifteen thousand is today, and men could take a keen and life-long interest in the art without ever thinking of adventuring upon so great an undertaking.

Up to this date the College youths had rung no peals. That they were still active ringers and practical leaders of the Exercise is shown by their joint gift with the London Scholars of the two Trebles to S. Brides; and it is evident that they were still in the main men of money and position.

Between the two leading societies there was a keen if friendly rivalry and we should have expected that there would be a race between them to see which could

ring the first peal on the new twelve. 183

It may have been so, but there is no trace of it. The College Youths, pioneers in change ringing on ten bells, do not appear even to have tried to emulate their rivals peal of Grand sire Caters.

It is now that we are conscious of the great change I have already spoken of. We know nothing about the details, and there is no hint of anything of the sort in any contemporary writing or in any Caters tradition. But in 1718 the society is wealthy enough to give the five pebbles, and is aristocratic enough to include among its members men like Sir William Wynne, Sir John Tash, Sir Michael Hicks and Singoly Bethel; and in 1724 the company is made up of a number of

Young men belonging to the lower middle class

It may have been that there were really an enthusiastic peal ringing band and that the society as a whole retained for some time its old character both in the belfry and the club house. We should know more about that if we had the list of Masters but ~~but~~ with two exceptions the names are missing between 1703 and 1734. Between the picture of the London Exercise as it appears in Langhorne's "poem", and the picture of the Society of College Youths as it was in its aristocratic days the difference is profound and striking; and the only reasonable conclusion we can come to is that owing to social

and intellectual changes bell-ringing 185<sup>5</sup>  
had ceased to be a fashionable amusement,  
the better class members no longer took an  
interest in the Society, and there were no  
longer any recruits of the same sort.

The same thing must have happened  
to other ringing societies which simply  
lapsed. The Society of College Juniors  
might also have lapsed but room was  
found in it for a number of young and  
enthusiastic members who had exceptional  
talent as ringers and who included one  
man of genius. For a Century the Society  
had been the foremost in the Exercise  
by reason of the social position of its  
members; for the next Century it was to  
be foremost by reason of its members' skill  
as ringers.

The oldest member of the new band was Peter Merrygait's. He had joined the Society in 1711 and was now about thirty-five years old, a keen ringer, and evidently a man of some standing for he had been Steward in 1718, the year in which the two bells were given to St. Bride's. William Jackson who joined in 1717, had ambitions as Composer. All the others were under thirty years of age and some not much more than youths. They were William Woodruff (or Woodrove) and Matthew East who joined in 1718; William Thompson and Robert Catlin 1722; John Pearson 1723; John Ward and Edward Chadwell 1724; and - the man who was to supply the real driving force the spirit which was to weld a number of good ringers into one of the best bands

in the history of ringing - Benjamin 187  
Annable, who joined in 1721.

In the year 1704 a man named  
Benjamin Annable went to lodge with  
one Charles Matthews in Dove Court, in  
Gutter Lane a street which runs northward  
from Cheapside. He had with him his  
wife Margaret and a son just a year  
old who was named after his father.  
They were new comers to the parish and  
where young Benjamin was born, I  
have not been able to find out. Probably  
somewhere in the country for the name  
was not a very common one in London. (19)

By occupation the father was a porter  
and evidently was a steady sort of  
man and in constant employment  
for he was living at the same address



until his death.

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On April 16<sup>th</sup> 1704 his wife bore him another son who was christened Samuel on the 23<sup>rd</sup> at S. Vedast's Foster Lane.

Four years later another son was born and called Robert, and some time after that Benjamin Annable died, for his wife in 1713 married Edward Smith. (14)

Of Samuel and Robert Annable we hear no more. Young Benjamin received some schooling, and in after years was an excellent penman, but he was not educated in the sense that Tidman was educated. He was apprenticed to a baker, (15) and grew up strong, self-reliant, and competent, one who knew his own mind and a born leader of men.

He must have learnt his ringing

when only a boy, for the College 189  
Youths neither then nor at any time did  
any teaching, but took their recruits ready  
trained from lesser bands.

Benjamin Annable occupies a unique  
position in the history of Change ringing. No  
other man was able to impress his influence  
and personality on ringers and ringing as  
he did. There have been one or two names  
better and more widely known, that of  
Shedman for instance and John Hollis;  
but Shedman is chiefly known as the  
author of one of the most popular of the  
standard methods, and Hollis on account  
of his five-part peal of Grandure Triples.  
Annable was remembered not for anything  
particular that he did but as an

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outstanding personality. In his  
lifetime he was recognised as the foremost  
member of the Escercise, the greatest  
authority on everything connected with  
ringing. He was one of those men who  
are born ringers, who have a natural  
aptitude for the art and who from the  
very start have a grasp of its essentials.

The time was ripe for such a man  
both in the Society of College Youths and  
the Escercise at large, but it must have  
been no easy thing for one who was not  
much more than a youth, with no  
advantages of birth or education to gain  
gain a position of ascendancy in a  
society like the College Youths with its  
long conservative and aristocratic

traditions. It could only have been 191  
possible through the weakening of the older  
elements, and in a very real sense the  
advent of Benjamin Stinnable marks the  
close of the old era and the beginning  
of a new.

It is not difficult to picture the Stinnable  
of 1724. He was then a young man, barely  
turned twenty, very enthusiastic about  
things; full of new ideas and eager to  
put them into practice; knowing little  
and caring little for the long past and  
traditions of the Society; contemptuous  
of many of the old ways and not careful  
overmuch of who should know it;  
domineering; ambitious of leadership;  
and outspoken of tongue. Such a one

since he had real ability, was pretty <sup>192</sup>  
sure to get his own way, and to come to  
the front in the long run; but was certain  
to have much opposition and to make  
many enemies in the process. Between  
him and the older men of better social  
status there can have been little or no  
understanding or sympathy; and it is  
not likely that his own contemporaries  
were prepared at first to let him bear  
rule. Jackson had prior claims as  
composer and Matthew East as conductor.

For we must recognise that though  
undoubtedly it was due to Annable that  
the College Youths were the leading singing  
company in the eighteenth century, he  
could not have done what he did

had he not had the support and  
 cooperation of a very exceptional band.

On January 19<sup>th</sup> 1725 the first peal of  
 Grandire Cinques was rung by these men  
 at St. Brides Fleet Street. <sup>(7)</sup> It was the first  
 peal by the College Juniors and the ninth  
 peal of any sort by any society of which  
 we have any account. Matthew East rang  
 the eleventh and called the bobs; Henry Gair  
 was at the tenth and William Jackson at  
 the ninth. <sup>(16)</sup> The composition was by Jackson. <sup>(18)</sup>

Seven of the other bells were rung by  
 the men whose names I have mentioned  
 but it appears that the Society did not  
 contain quite sufficient competent members  
 and two outsiders had to be brought  
 in to complete the band. They were  
 Robert Carter who was at the seventh

and Thomas Rowlands who rang the 194  
tenor. Why they were never elected members  
of the Society we cannot tell. It may be  
that though qualified as ringers they  
were not considered eligible socially, or  
it may be that they were members of the  
rival Society of London Scholars. We  
hear no more of either.

Annable had not yet made good  
his position. He was a better conductor  
than East, and a better composer than  
Jackson, but he had to give way to their  
prior claims. He was a first class heavy  
bell ringer, but the second was the rope  
allotted to him. But once the Cinques  
was accomplished the older men seem  
to have been satisfied and content to  
allow their younger and more ambitious

Colleague to take the lead. Jackson 195  
though he still met the company, dropped  
out of the peal ringing band and East  
who was commendably free from jealousy  
was willing henceforth to be one of the  
rank and file.

Less than a month after the Cinques  
on February 15<sup>th</sup> 1725 at St. Magnus the  
Martyr, Arnable called his first peal.  
The method was Grandire Caters, his  
own composition; now that he had  
the choice he rang the ninth and in  
the rest of his peals was not often found  
far from the heavy end.

Except for Jackson and the two  
outsiders the band was the same as at  
St. Bride's, the vacant rope being taken  
by William Laughton.



Robert Catlin who rang the sixth <sup>196</sup>  
to the Cinques and the second to the Caters  
has left a name as a bell hanger and  
bell founder as well as a bell ringer. He  
came of a family which had lived for  
some years in Clerkenwell. There is a  
reference in a letter dated 1663 among  
the state papers to Catlin the carrier, <sup>(20)</sup>  
and in 1661 Thomas Catlyn, probably the  
same man married Mary Bennet at  
St. James's church. In 1698 Joseph Catlin  
married Barbara Cogdale and between  
then and 1719 they had thirteen children  
many of whom died in infancy <sup>(21)</sup>

Robert the fifth son and eighth child  
was baptised on November 29<sup>th</sup> 1709 and  
so was but a youth sixteen years old

when he took part in the Cinqes. 197  
He was employed by Samuel Knight as  
a Carpenter and Bell hanger, and for  
him he made the frames, still in the  
towers, at St. Saviour's Southwark and  
St. Sepulchre's Newgate. <sup>(22)</sup> His master  
had so high an opinion of his character  
and ability that he made him first  
his foreman, then his partner, and,  
after his death his executor and heir.

Five men joined the Society of College  
Youths in the year 1724 and all of them  
took part in peals. John Ward and  
Edmund Chadwell rang in the Cinqes  
and probably they joined for the purpose  
William Gardiner was one of dwindling

number of gentleman ringers (he <sup>198</sup>  
is described as an esquire). He may  
have been a relation of an older  
member Thomas Gardiner who joined  
in 1713 and probably was Churchwarden  
at St. Saviour's Southwark when the bells  
were recast. <sup>(23)</sup> William Gardiner was  
a Richmond man and in 1740 he gave  
the two pebbles to the parish church there. <sup>(24)</sup>

The other two recruits were two of  
the most interesting names on the long  
list of the Society's members. Both became  
famous ringers and we have a better  
opportunity of judging their character  
than that of any other ringer in the  
century.

William Laughton and John Hardham

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were men of about the same age,  
both were keen and capable ringers,  
and both naturally good natured  
men; but in almost everything else  
they differed widely. Laughton who  
was by trade a watchmaker and  
lived at number five Leather Lane,  
was an ordinary, a very ordinary  
person, and was thoroughly typical  
of his class and of his age. In more  
exalted circumstances he would have  
been a man about town; with his  
limited opportunities he was a bon  
vivant, a haunter of taverns and a  
Cockney hedonist. In morals and  
religion he professed an easy toleration  
which had no sounder foundation than

ignorance and want of any real principle. He was destitute of any sense of humour, vain, and in his cups inclined to be quarrelsome. He looked on ringing merely as a means of "diverting" himself; of its higher intellectual appeal he had no notion; and consequently although he has left us a minute and detailed account of the doings of himself and some other ringers during a period of sixteen months, it adds very little to our real knowledge of the Exercise. He would willingly give five pages of Laughton for one of Stornelle or Holl. With all his limitations he was a sociable

agreeable sort of fellow; and since  
fortune had decreed that the greater part of  
his time by far had to be spent in earning  
his daily bread, he was a worthy and useful  
member of society.

John Hardham was a different and  
altogether greater man. He came of an old  
West Susssex family and was born some  
time shortly after 1700 in the city of Chichester  
where his father was in business as a  
wholesale provision merchant and presumably  
was a person of some substance. Hardham  
was sent up to London to learn the trade  
of a <sup>(25)</sup> lapidary or engraver of precious  
stones but had no great success at that  
craft. For about the time we are dealing  
with, he was earning his living as a  
<sup>(26)</sup> servant. In after years he found his

niche in life, and became a successful 202  
and prosperous shopkeeper; but what really  
brought him the respect and affection of  
men of all classes, and incidentally led  
to fame and fortune was his sterling  
(27)  
benevolence and genuine goodness of heart.

The College Youths' early peal ringing  
band was completed by four notable ringers  
all of whom joined the Society in 1725.  
Of Samuel Jeacock and John Dearmor  
we know nothing apart from their ringing,  
except that Jeacock, like Catlin, was a  
(28)  
Clerkenwell man; but evidently they  
belonged to the lower middle class of  
society, and probably were skilled artisans  
of some sort.

Francis Geary was the only son of a  
country gentleman of no great substance

who lived at Cheddington in  
 Buckinghamshire. <sup>(29)</sup> In the tower of St. Giles's  
 church in that village there are five bells  
 which were already old in Gearsy's time,  
 and on them the boy most probably learnt  
 to ring. The bells are interesting as being  
 by little known founders: - the treble and  
 third are by James Keene <sup>(30)</sup> 1638 and 1634; the  
 second is by John Dyer towards the close  
 of the sixteenth century; the fourth probably  
 by John Saunders of Reading (1539-1539);  
 and the tenor by R. Chandler 1638. A few  
 years ago the bells still had their old frames  
 and fittings (if they have not got them still)  
 two of the wheels were of a very old pattern  
 and one of the stocks had a mortice cut  
 in it for the insertion of a lever, showing  
 that it dated from the time of the oldest



style of bell hanging. <sup>(31)</sup>

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Francis Geary who was baptised on October 14<sup>th</sup> 1709 was intended for the navy and the fifteen months or so when he was waiting for a ship were spent in London, presumably with his maternal grandfather Robert Parker. Then it was that he made the acquaintance of Benjamin Arnable and the College Youths; and he showed such aptitude for ringing that although no more than a boy of sixteen he took his place at once in the Company's leading band. He owed his rapid advance perhaps to something besides ability and social position, for he was a person of singularly sweet temper and of a lovable disposition though he was without any claims to intellectual brilliance.

Geary, when he was young, like most people knew little of his ancestors further back than his grandfather; but there came the time when he had achieved position and fame; and when his life was written the author must needs say something of his forefathers. The family we are told is an ancient one long settled in Cardiganshire. <sup>(32)</sup> But genealogy is now more or less an exact science and since Francis Geary himself was the founder of a line of baronets his correct pedigree has been traced and may be found in Purkes' Peerage. The family of Geary is said to be of great antiquity in Shropshire. There a Tascor freeman is named in Domesday Book in the manor of Eflritone (Albrighton) near Shrewsbury where the name occurs

in the twelfth, thirteenth and  
fourteenth centuries. John Geary of Keepe,  
Hugh Escall, had by his second wife, a  
son Robert, whose second son Francis  
married Judith daughter and heiress  
of Robert Barker of London and became  
the father of the future admiral. <sup>(33)</sup>

John Cundell was connected with  
the theatre and came of a theatrical  
family. At least I think so, for the  
following is given not as proven but  
as a suggestion which is probably  
true.

One of William Shakespeares' friends  
and fellow actors was a man named  
Henry Cundell. He, Burbage, Shakespeare  
and Hemming were among the Lord  
Chamberlains' men at the end of Queen

Elizabeth's reign and the great poet <sup>207</sup>  
in his will dated March 5<sup>th</sup> 1616 left  
legacies to "my fellowes John Hemmynges  
Richard Burbage and Henry Cundell  
to buy them ringes". In 1623 Cundell  
and Hemmings put the whole of humanity  
in their debt by collecting Shakespeares  
plays and publishing the first folio.  
Cundell who was a prosperous actor  
and lived in his own house, retired  
from the stage in 1623 died at Fulham  
in 1627 and was buried in St. Mary  
Aldermanbury Church where he had  
been a sideman. He was a married  
man and had begotten sons and (34)  
daughters, some of whom survived him.  
His name is sometimes spell Cundell

as in Shakespeare's will and his own, and sometimes Condell. 208

The copy of the 1736 edition of *The School of Recreation* in the British Museum has the name Thos. Cundale written on the fly leaf. Who he was I cannot say.

So far as I know John Cundell was not himself an actor, but he very well may have been; for, as we have seen, there was a certain connection between the College youths and the theatrical world and he certainly was interested in the theatre and later on, in his life he had charge of the box office at Covent Garden. <sup>(35)</sup> He too spell his name sometimes Cundell and sometimes Condell.

In the next generation there is another

Henry Condell. He was not an actor but a musician, a violinist and a composer whose whole work was spent in the service of Covent Garden, Drury Lane and the Kings Theatre. He was born in 1757 and died in 1824. <sup>(36)</sup> He very well could have been John Condell's son or grandson.

Now seeing how the name Condell though not exactly rare is not a very common one, and remembering how the tradition of a trade or a profession lasted in families in older times, how it was the natural thing for a son to follow in the same trade as his father I think it a reasonable supposition that all these men belonged to the same family and that in John Condell

The College Youths have a link, if 210  
but a small one, with William Shakespeare.

Cundall and Handham were united  
by the common interests of Belfry and  
Theatre; and between them a close friendship  
sprang up which lasted the whole of their  
lives and was not without effect on the  
fortunes of Arncliffe and the Society of  
College Youths.

This then was the material that  
Arncliffe had at his disposal to make  
his peal ringing band of, and certainly  
it was very good material indeed.

Probably in the whole history of the Exercise  
there never was a likelier set of fellows  
in a company. They were as far removed  
from being the profane and profligate <sup>(37)</sup>  
persons,

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The "drunken never-do-wells" that some writers supposed ringers usually to be as they were from being gentry who left the church after ringing each in his own carriage as the silly fops of later years had it. And as practical ringers these men take a high place in the annals of change-ringing. There is a temptation to compare their records with those of later years, but all such comparisons are futile and misleading. The conditions were utterly different, and a peal of Bob Major or Grandire Caters in the early eighteenth century was quite as meritorious a performance as a peal of London or Bristol Surprise is now and certainly for the average ringer



far harder to get. We have

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evidence from a critical and competent source <sup>(38)</sup> that in excellence of ringing, good striking and freedom from trips and mistakes they were quite the equal of any modern band.

After they had rung the Grandsire Caters and Cinqes, Arncliffe and the College youths turned their attention to Plain Bob. They did not ring a peal of Grandsire Triples. The reason was that they had no composition which suited their purpose. There was indeed Parson's peal which Arncliffe knew and understood but it differed widely from the Grandsire Triples they were accustomed to practise in touches. Probably they would have accepted a peal on the three course plan

with ordinary Cobs and singles, but in 1725 such a thing had not yet been Composed. The idea may have occurred to men like Baldwin but it was not until some years later that John Tenmead, John Vicars and Annable himself ~~participated~~ in Composing a peal. (39)

But probably the real reason was that Idemans' false peal had been rung so many times that the method had got a bad name among the College Youths and the prejudice against it was so strong that even after Holt's peals had appeared and been accepted by the society, no peal of it was rung by them until 1771 when Annable and all his contemporaries were long since dead or had given up active ringing.

Plain Bob is of course almost the oldest method in change ringing. On five and six bells it was from the first the most widely practised. But though it had been extended to eight bells as early as Hedman's time the Major had been little rung before 1725 and the Royal probably not at all. The reason seems to be that until Arncliffe showed that it was possible to get long touches and peals of it without parting the tenors, the music appeared to ringers to be a mere jumble and far inferior to odd bell methods where the covering tenor resolved all the unharmonious sequences. As I have pointed out ringers following

(40)

the precedent of peal bell Compositions 215  
chose the small bells as the half and  
quarter hunts and left the positions of  
the big bells to chance. Robert Baldwin  
had indeed shown a more excellent  
way in his peal of Treble Bob Major,  
but his example was not followed.

Now however Annable produced his  
famous three part peal <sup>(W)</sup> and at once  
the method became the most popular  
and widely rung of any

The College youths rang this Composition  
on the largest eight bells of St. Bride's  
on Monday April 26<sup>th</sup> 1725. They followed  
it up seven months later with 5040  
Royal and in the following February  
with 5280 Ascimus; both in the same

Lower. Thus in thirteen months 216  
these men had scored the first feals  
of Major<sup>(L2)</sup>, Royal, Cinques and Mascimus  
and the second feal of Calers ever  
accomplished.

Strable rang the tenor and Composed  
and Conducted the three feals of Plain  
Bob. The band for the Major consisted  
of Ward, Geary, Chadwell, Laughlin,  
Woodruff, Merrygarts, Thompson, and  
Strnabe standing in that order.

These men rang exactly the same bells  
to the Royal except that Ward rang  
the treble to both feals. The two extra  
ropes the second and third were taken  
by Catlin and Hardham. For the  
Mascimus Dearnor and Jeacock were  
added to the band and it rather looks

as if they were brought into the  
Society specially for that peal.

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A month after the Ascensus (March  
17<sup>th</sup>) the Company rang 5094 Grandsire  
Caters on the old ten at St Giles'  
Cripplegate, "the first that was done  
in that steeple". The same men took  
part except that the tenor was rung  
by Thomas Fernyhaugh and John  
Lundell. It was Lundell's first peal  
and the first occasion on which a bell  
was rung double handed to a five-  
thousand.

On June 27<sup>th</sup> in the same year, Stronable  
called what seems to have been the first  
peal longer than the ordinary five thousand.  
This was 6832 Changes of Bob Major, on  
the new bells at St. Mary's, Lambeth,

and the band was Woodruff, Ward  
 Geary, Deamon, Jeacock, Merrygale,  
 Laughton and Annable. The Composition  
 is lost and the length - 61 Courses - gives  
 us no clue to its nature. We may assume  
 however that no singles were used and  
 so the tenors were parted for some of the  
 time. There would also appear to have  
 been something distinctive about the peal  
 for the same length and probably the  
 same Composition was rung in after years  
 at Skelake.

With this performance Francis Geary's  
 brief peal ringing came to an end, and  
 thenceforth much of his time was spent  
 afloat; though he still kept his interests  
 in ringing and in 1744 held the office

of steward to the Society of Colleges 219  
youths. A brief account of the rest of his  
life may conveniently be given here. (43)

The European politics of the eighteenth  
Century and the concomitant wars form  
a tangle which is not easy to unravel  
but all through there was the rivalry  
between France and England and  
the struggle for trade and Colonies in  
India and America. In these wars  
the English fleet played an important  
part. Geary first saw service on the  
Revenge when in 1727 Sir John Norris  
was sent to the Baltic as a demonstration  
against Russia. Spain in the same  
year laid siege to Gibraltar and the  
Revenge was dispatched with other



vessels to support it. An armistice 220

was concluded almost immediately and Geary saw no actual fighting.

He remained in the service and was

promoted Lieutenant in 1734. <sup>(210)</sup> Then in

1737 war broke out with Spain amid

the general rejoicings of the people. That

was the time when Sir Robert Walpole

made his famous pun - "They are ringing

their bells now. They will be wringing

their hands soon." Geary served as

Lieutenant on board the Victory and

in 1742 he was appointed to the Command

of the Squirrel of 20 guns in which he

captured a richly laden prize homeward

bound from the Spanish Main. The

Seven Years War had now broken out

in which England and France 221

took opposite sides. In 1743 and 1745  
Geary commanded one or two frigates  
on service in the English Channel,  
capturing or assisting to capture several  
French and Spanish ships. Early in  
the summer of 1745 he was ordered out  
to join Commodore Warren at the siege  
of Louisberg and on the surrender of that  
place was sent home express with the  
news thus losing a share in the rich  
prizes made shortly after its capture.  
He was then in command of different  
battleships in the Channel Fleet under  
Sir Edward Hawke and was promoted  
to the rank of rear admiral of the White.  
His ship the Sandwich was compelled

to put into port and so he missed  
 by a day or two the great victory of Quiberon  
 Bay fought on November 25<sup>th</sup> 1758. For  
 two years he was Port Admiral at  
 Portsmouth, and held the same appointment  
 again in 1770, meanwhile being successively  
 advanced to the ranks of vice-admiral  
 of the blue and admiral of the white.  
 In May 1780 he was appointed to the  
 Command of the Channel Fleet, but  
 though urged on by Hawke in a private  
 letter he did nothing of importance  
 and at the end of the year resigned  
 his command on ground of ill health.  
 He was a man of calm and equable  
 temper and kindly disposition, but

quite without the pitiless energy 223  
and dogged determination necessary for  
a great Commander. Though he was  
considered Capable of Commanding for a  
time the main British battle fleet during  
war, he missed all the major operations  
and it was fortunate for England that  
she had other admirals like Hawke  
St. Vincent and Rodney.

An incident in the life of Admiral  
Geary throws a good deal of light on  
his character and outlook. One day  
when he was in command of the fleet a  
number of vessels were sighted and as  
they were believed to be the French fleet  
they were chased and the English fleet  
prepared for battle. Geary's flag captain

was Richard Kempenfelt who 224  
afterwards lost his life in the sinking of  
the Royal George. Kempenfelt as fleet  
captain had been keenly aware of the  
deficiencies of the system of ~~of~~ signalling  
then in use which had been in vogue  
since the days of Charles II and he  
introduced radical improvements which  
were afterwards adopted in the navy.

Now that a big fight was toward he  
began to get ready his signals when  
Geary went up to him and said - "Now  
my dear, dear friend do pray let them  
alone for today. Tomorrow you shall  
have as many signals as ever you please."  
The French fleet turned out to be only  
a Convoy of merchantmen and so the

big fight did not come off.

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On his retirement Geary was created a baronet, and after some years spent in honourable retirement died on February 7<sup>th</sup> 1796. He married Mary daughter and heiress of Philip Bartholomew of Oxon Heath, Kent, which estate is still held by his descendants. <sup>(114)</sup>

In 1726 James Gibbs' fine church of St. Martin in the Fields was completed.

There had been no lack of money and the parish wished everything connected with it to be as good as possible. At

first it was decided to have a ring of eight bells and a vestry resolution to that effect was passed in October 1724.

That did not seem good enough for some

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people and a month later it was decided to have two more. And then during the next year, since the money was available the number was increased to the full twelve.

The Consecration of the Church was fixed for October 20<sup>th</sup> and it seems probable that the bells were rung, on and off, throughout all the previous days of that week and by different companies of ringers. Strinables band had their turn on the Sunday and rang 5076 changes of Grandire Caters "the first that was done in that steeple". The band was the best that the College youths could produce - Woodruff, Catlin, Dearnor, Ward, Thompson, Sherrygaris, Laughlin, Strinable, East, and Ferryhaugh who rang the tenor singlehanded.

Caters was rung not Cinqes; because Rudhall had difficulty in casting two trebles suitable for the other ten, It was not until the next year that the twelve were completed, <sup>(45)</sup> and even then the bells supplied were not satisfactory.

The difficulty in casting good trebles to rings of ten and twelve was one experienced by all the old founders. In their bells the hum note or the octave below the strike note was not a true octave as is usual in modern bells, but more or less of a seventh. In the larger bells this apparent discord did not matter very much, in fact in the opinion of some authorities it was an improvement; for the lower note does not obtrude itself on the ear. But in small bells when



The note is higher than E the hum 228

note is as prominent as the strike note. (26)

The two were seldom in accord and where the divergence was great the result was the "wild" trebles which spoil many a ring.

The ring at Innes Park is a notorious instance and there the effect is not so much of the bells being out of tune as being in no sort of tune at all.

Probably in the most satisfactory light trebles of the old style the tuning of the two notes is a compromise - they are not very far from each other and neither is quite true with the strike notes of the bigger bells.

A year or two ago St. Martins bells were more familiar to the general public than any other through the wireless broadcast

They were then chimed by the  
 Ellacombe apparatus which brings out  
 the over and under tones in a different  
 proportion to what ringing does, and many  
 listeners must have wondered where  
 Redhall's bells got their great reputation  
 from. ~~(200)~~ (117)

Three months after the St. Martin's peal  
 on the old bells and in the old Church  
 of St. Dunstan's in the West, the College  
 Youths rang the first peal of Double Bob  
 Major a method which all through the  
 Century was very popular in London;  
 but apparently was very little practised  
 any where else or after about 1780.

The band was Dearmor, Ward, James  
 Richardson, Laughlin, Jeacock, Sherrygarts,  
 Annable and Cundell. It was Cundell's

first feat except for the time he 230  
stripped the penon at Cripplegate, and  
Richardson was a new-comer

In 1727 the College Youths visited  
Cambridge. This is the first definite  
notice we have of the Society's annual  
summer outings, but there is little doubt  
that it is one of a long series which  
extended back far into the seventeenth  
Century. Parnell's statement that the  
company sang Spidman's Principle at  
St. Benet's in 1657 cannot be accurate as  
it stands, but probably the tradition  
was founded on more than one visit, for,  
as we have seen in Chapter II the College  
Youths had a good deal of intercourse  
with members of the University, and there

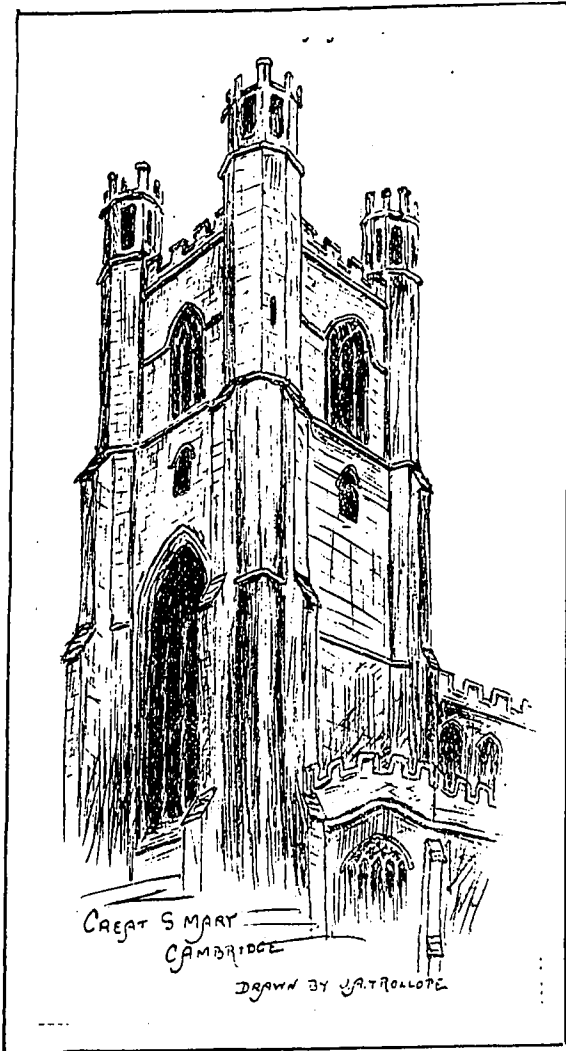
were a dozen and one reasons why 231  
Arncliffe and his men should visit the  
town besides the obvious and immediate  
one that Richard Phelps had recently  
(in 1724) installed a new ring of ten in  
the tower of Great St. Mary's.

Cambridge was one of the earliest homes  
of change ringing and the Exercise owes  
much to the old ringers of that town.

It would however be a mistake to suppose  
that changes were invented there, still

more so to suppose that Fabian Hedman  
was the originator of the art. Change ringing

sprang up simultaneously in different  
parts of the Country, and in its development  
London, Exeter, Nottingham, Reading, and  
probably other towns like Norwich and



GREAT ST MARY  
CAMBRIDGE

DRAWN BY J. A. T. ROLLOPE

Ipswich had an equal share. But 232  
the influence of both Cambridge and Oxford  
through the university ringers on London  
and the general Exercise was real and  
important.

Cambridge never had so many bells as  
Oxford. From very early times Great St.  
Mary's was the principal tower the university  
church and the place where most of the  
ringing was done. In 1478 the present  
building was begun on the site of an older  
church and in 1519 it was finished; but  
the tower was not completed until 1608.  
In 1595 there were four bells which were  
recast into five in 1611 and increased to  
eight in 1667, the year it is interesting to  
note in which Richard Duckworth wrote  
the *Tintinnalogia*. Holy Trinity had four

pre-reformation bells; S. Edward the  
 Confessor six in 1669; S. Andrew's five;  
 and S. Benedict's a mixed lot which were  
 increased from five to six in 1663. <sup>(49)</sup>

This latter tower is of course specially  
 associated in the minds of ringers with  
 Fabian Hedman and was the place of the  
 recent memorial to him; <sup>(51)</sup> but it comes  
 as somewhat of a surprise to realize that  
 actually there is no real reason to suppose  
 that he was more connected with those  
 bells than any of the others in the town.  
 Gannell merely said that the College youths  
 on a visit to the town rang the Principles  
 at S. Benedict's, which very likely may be  
 true though the date he gave is certainly  
 wrong. But if the College youths were on

a visit to the town, they would 234  
naturally ring at all the available  
towers; and if they were going to ring a  
new method it would have to be at one  
but which one would be settled by chance.

It might have been S. Mary or S. Edwards  
or S. Andrews; actually it was S. Benet's.

But that does not mean that Lidman  
himself normally rang there more than  
at the others. Rather the probabilities  
are that since the usual custom was for  
one band to serve all the towers in the  
town and since the belfry at S. Benet's  
was a dark inconvenient place, reached  
by a ladder, while S. Mary's was the  
most important tower and had eight  
bells it was in the latter and not in the



former that most of Hedman's  
ringing was done.

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But there is the definite statement that  
Hedman was parish clerk of S. Benet's  
and if that is true of course he was specially  
associated with S. Benet's bells even though  
he practised in other steeples. But I do  
not think it is true. The only evidence  
we have is the statement by C. H. Cooper  
in Memorials of Cambridge that "Fabian  
Hedman, clerk of this parish about 1650  
invented the art of change-ringing. Hedman  
Principle, Hedman How Course, Hedman  
Caters Triples and Hedman Caters are well  
known, as also is the Cambridge Surprise.  
His Campanalogia or the Art of Ringing  
improved was published 12mo. 1677." (50)

"About 1650" is very vague and shows that Cooper was not relying on any contemporary evidence he had discovered but upon some other writer and I suspect that his only authority was Ellacombe, and Ellacombe misunderstood.

According to an old tradition which was supported by some ancient and fragmentary manuscripts there was a singing society at Cambridge which dated from the time of Queen Elizabeth and consisted chiefly of youthful members of the university. <sup>(51)</sup> It probably was so, but it had faded away by 1700 <sup>(206)</sup> and at the beginning of the eighteenth century Cambridge had ceased to supply recruits to the Exercise.

In 1724, a year which showed 237  
the beginnings of so important an activity  
in the Society of College Youths, there was a  
renaissance of the art and on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of  
August the Society of Cambridge Youths  
was established. It was symptomatic of  
the changing social status of the leading  
members of the Exercise that it was composed  
of townsmen and not of University men,  
though like the leading London societies  
it included a sprinkling of them during  
the Century

The new Company showed their skill by  
ringing at St. Mary's on November 5<sup>th</sup>  
1725 a peal of Grand sire Triples. Two men,  
who rang the treble and the seventh, were  
gentlemen - Henry Skellern and William

Anderson. The others were - Thomas 238  
Scare, a cabinet maker; Hewes Carter, a  
watchmaker; John Tuck, a bricklayer;  
John White, vergier of Trinity College; Robert  
Barber; and Thomas Cornwall a pauper.

Anderson was the leading man in the  
Company and probably the Conductor.  
What Composition they sang is doubtful  
but most likely it was Boleman's false zeal.

Another man, who did not take part  
in this performance but who afterwards  
was to become the most distinguished  
member of the society was Charles Shanon  
of Trinity College. He was born at Ires  
in Shropshire 1699 the son of Charles Shanon  
He went to school at Hem, and at the age  
of 19 entered Trinity as a pensioner. He  
matriculated in 1718, was scholar in 1720,

and he graduated B.A. in 1723, and 239  
M.A. in 1726. (52)

There was another Charles Mason who joined the College Youths in 1696, a Robert Mason who joined in 1693, and Elijah Mason who was steward when the Society undertook to recase the vault at St Sepulchres. They evidently were men of substance and probably belonged to the same family but though we should like to think that they were related to Charles Mason of Cambridge it is at the best doubtful.

There was thus a good band to welcome Annable and his men when they paid their visit to Cambridge. They took their best company and according to their wont spend a day or two ranging at the various towers. Their main performance

and the central object of their visit, 240  
was a peal of Grandure Bells, 5040 Changes,  
at Great St. Mary's which was rung on Tuesday  
May 25<sup>th</sup>. They stood as follows - Woodruff,  
Trand, Hardham, Jeacock, Richardson,  
Dearmor, Laughlin, Merygarts, Annable,  
and East.

The band, and especially Annable, left  
a good impression behind them when  
they went home; and Charles Mason  
and Henry Mulliner joined the Society  
of College Youths.

Nine years later the Cambridge Youths  
rang another five-thousand of Grandure  
Triples with Charles Mason at the peal.  
It is described as a "true" peal (the other  
was a "complete" peal) and I suspect  
that Mason, who took a great interest

in Composition, had found out

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that the first peal was false and had substituted

this time Vicar's *post-part* Composition

which we know from his manuscripts

he had proved.

Some of the men who had rung in the first peal took part in the second; there were

also John Ball, who was a gardener,

John Savell, who was a baker, and Samuel

Roe who rang the tenor, was Master of

Trill, Fellow of Trinity and afterwards Vicar

of Stotfold in Bedfordshire. <sup>(53)</sup> He was the

author of a controversial book entitled

"Enthusiasm Detected Defeated with previous

Considerations Concerning Regeneration,

The Omnipotence of God and divine grace

&c." It was written against John Wesley

and the Methodists and was published,

(so he tells the reader), as the most 242  
probable means to banish corrupt notions  
out of our Thoughts, by suppressing the  
wild and impure Torrent of Enthusiasm.

In another pamphlet he gave further  
Considerations Concerning the Spirit of  
Enthusiasm and the dangerous Consequences  
which do ever attend it in "a reply  
to M<sup>R</sup> J\*\*\* W\*\*\* L\*\*," and he tells that  
famous preacher that "your principles,  
whoever you borrowed them from, are  
very erroneous and wicked." Like all  
such books on dead and gone religious  
controversies it is exceedingly dry and  
arid, and I am quite unable to form  
any opinion of the Reverend Samuel  
Roe as author and dilectician for the



sufficient reason that I could not read his book. Roe was the son of William Roe of Pitchford, Shropshire. He entered Trinity College in 1721, at the age of 18 as a subsizer; matriculated in 1731; was sizer in 1732; and graduated B.A. in 1735, and M.A. in 1745.

Charles Mason attained to a position of considerable dignity in College and University. He became Fellow of Trinity in 1725, Bachelor of Divinity in 1736; Doctor of Divinity in 1749; and Woodwardian Professor of Geology 1734-1762. From 1760 to 1762 he was also senior dean of Trinity, an office which in later years was held by another distinguished member of the Exercise, the Rev. A. H. Bousley, sometime

(1918-1920), President of the Central  
Council.

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Dr. Mason's interests were scientific rather than classical, when such a mental attitude was comparatively rare in the English universities, and it was said of him that "owing to his devotion to mechanical art generally, and in particular to ringing he sacrificed to Vulcan much more than to the Graces." (54) In the Library of Downing College there are three manuscript volumes which contain his notes and (55) and investigations into Change-ringing. He died on December 18<sup>th</sup> 1770 in his seventy-second year. Henry Sullivan died on October 29<sup>th</sup> 1785, aged 85 years.

In 1727 John Trenchell joined the 245.  
College youths and for many years he was  
one of the most active of the peal band  
usually ringing the tenor or one of the  
heavier bells. He rang the tenor to five  
peals in five new methods during the  
next year - S. Dunstan's Triples, at S.  
Dunstan's-in-the-West, on January 27<sup>th</sup>;  
and Union Triples, at S. Lawrence, Jewry,  
on February 17<sup>th</sup>.

S. Dunstan's Triples was the first method  
composed by Annable which was rung  
to a peal, and this was the first and only  
five-thousand rung of it. It is a method  
with a plain hunting treble and six  
working bells and would be at least  
as difficult for a modern band as

Superlative Surprise. <sup>(56)</sup> The band for 246  
the performance was - Richardson, Laughlin,  
Dearmor, James May (another new comer)  
Jeacocke, Sherrygaris, Stinnable and Trenell.

The 5040 of Union Triples at S. Lawrence  
was the first in the method of which  
we have any record, but as I have pointed  
out it is by no means improbable that  
one had already been accomplished,  
perhaps by the Union Scholars, perhaps  
by another band.

The College Youths band was Dearmor  
Thompson, May, Laughlin, Jeacocke, Stinnable,  
Cundell and Trenell. It was the first  
year by the society in which Felix Sherrygaris  
had not taken part.

Meanwhile, all this time the 247  
London Scholars were at the height of  
their activity and fame. In contemporary  
opinion they and the College Youths were  
"the only Performers in Europe to whom  
all Preference in the Art must be given." <sup>(55)</sup>  
It is likely that while they admitted no  
inferiority to their rivals as practical  
singers, in them the "gentleman" element  
was stronger; and that in their case there  
was not the abrupt change that we notice  
in the others. A contemporary newspaper  
speaks of them as consisting of "gentlemen  
and others" <sup>(56)</sup> Class distinctions were  
very much more marked in the seventeenth  
and eighteenth Centuries than they are

now. Men who were entitled to 248  
write "esquire" after their names could  
and did mix freely with the lower orders  
for purposes of sport, but there was no  
pretence of any social equality. The  
gentlemen took the lead as of natural  
right quite irrespective of any other  
qualification. In those sports where traditions  
go back to the eighteenth century or earlier  
the same thing though dying is not wholly  
extinct yet. In cricket we have still the  
"gentlemen" and "players" and two entrances  
from the pavilion the Centre one for the  
gentlemen and the side one for the players.  
The rule is still that if there be but one  
gentleman in a team and he the least  
competent, yet he and he alone must be

Captain. The great war has killed 249  
much of this spirit and still more so the  
colossal sums earned by American golf  
and tennis professionals which enable  
them to outshine any amateurs.

The distinction between amateur and  
professional was a social one and was  
most marked in rowing. It was never  
formally recognized in ringing for the  
Constitution of the old societies presupposed  
social equality of the members. What did  
happen was that the leading Companies  
did not admit to their ranks any who  
were below a certain status. Then the  
time came when the supply of recruits  
from the better classes began to dry up  
and the gentlemen if they wished to go

on ringing had to dilute their bands 250  
with "others". If we may believe the tale  
the old session of Newington sold in 1734  
they used to pay them five shillings  
a day. <sup>(59)</sup> That share of it existed among  
the College youths passed quickly and  
abruptly. Annable, and Cundell, and  
Hardham were not the sort of men to  
play second fiddle to less competent men  
for the sake of a few shillings. But  
perhaps the ultimate extinction of the  
Society of London Scholars was largely  
due to the fact that they tried to carry  
on the old style after the conditions  
favourable to it had passed, and could  
not or did not adapt themselves to  
the changing social conditions of the



The records of the Society of London Scholars are lost and in their absence we cannot tell what five-thousands they rang, but it is most unlikely that the activity of their rivals did not spur them to emulation, or that they did not ring a peal on St. Bride's twelve bells or that they had not the entire into some belfries such as St. Clement, Danes, or St. Dunstan's in the East, or Christ Church or St. George's in Southwark which was denied to the others. It is well to remember that had it not been for the industry and great good luck of Osborn in discovering and securing the peal books now in the possession of the Ancient Society

of College Youths and the manuscript 252.  
now in the British Museum, we should  
have known no more about the early  
feats of the College Youths, than we do  
about those of the London Scholars. Our  
only sources of information would have  
been feat boards and a vague tradition.  
There remain only two boards recording  
performances by the College Youths in  
Annables' time, <sup>(60)</sup> neither feat was conducted  
by him and only one gives any particulars.  
The feats of Plain Bob Major and Minimus  
at S. Prides were dimly remembered but  
all the rest were forgotten. <sup>(61)</sup>

In 1728 the Curia uses for a brief  
moment and we have a glimpse of the  
relations between the two Companies.

A match was arranged to take place at St. Martins-in-the-Fields where Rudhall had recently completed the ring by adding the two pieces. Whether it was the result of a challenge, or by invitation of the parish authorities we do not know, but probably it was the latter. <sup>(227)</sup> And what the terms of the contest were we do not know, but most likely there were none, and it is certain that there was no prize or stake money. The London Scholars were asked to ring first and they gave their best. The College Youths followed and tried to do better. <sup>(62)</sup>

On Thursday March 14<sup>th</sup> the London

Scholars accomplished "the first 254  
complete peal of Lisc Thousand Cinqes" <sup>(63)</sup>  
They started at one o'clock according  
to the newspaper report and finished  
at 6.30, which if the times are correct  
was slow ringing, at the rate of nearly  
four and a half for a five-thousand.  
Probably the timing was only approximate;  
the board says nothing about it. <sup>(65)</sup>

Next day the College Juniors held  
it 5 hours and a quarter. They rang  
"6314 changes of Cinqes the Congest  
that had been rung at that time; and  
as "it was allowed to be the finest yet  
known of that nature" <sup>(64)</sup> presumably they  
claimed the match. But the others were  
well satisfied with themselves, and

erected a large and costly frame  
in the belfry to commemorate their performance.  
They seem to have had more money for  
that sort of thing than their rivals

The frame is now hung on the wall of  
the church crypt and gives the names of  
the ringers, but since few of them are  
found elsewhere the list conveys very  
little information. William Underwood (66)  
who rang the second was one of the best  
known of London ringers and left a son  
as famous as himself. William Saunders  
the tenor man next year joined the  
College youths. He was assisted by  
William Price, and if the name were  
not quite so common a one, I should  
be inclined to identify him with a  
William Price who was a painter of

glass windows, and in 1722 and 1935 was employed to fix some windows at Westminster Abbey, and also had done extensive repairs to the famous window now in the chancel of St. Margaret's. He died in Kerly Street, Hatton Garden in 1765. (67)

The College Youths Band was - Woodruff Catlin, Richardson, Dearnot, Laughlin, Thompson, Jackson, Jeacock, John Edwards, (whose name appears as a peal ringer for the first and only time,) Berrygaris, and Annable, with Trenell at the tenor and Andrew Sulham as strapper.

Both Companies had to put two men to the tenor, although seventeen months before Ferryhaugh had rung her single handed. The truth was she was not

going as well as she should have done, and six months later one of the gudgeons broke, and the bell came down with a crash. The scared ringers left their ropes and ran to the windows and sides of the belfry; but the floor stopped the bell and no further damage was done. (68)

A week after the St. Martin's peal Annable called 5040 of College Triples at St. Clave's Southwark, the first ever rung in the method. (74) It was also claimed to be the first true peal ever rung in that peal which seems to show that another company had rung a five-thousand there. Perhaps it was Grandure Triples.

On May 18<sup>th</sup> 1728 the College 258.

Youths accomplished another fine performance by ringing 10800 Changes of Bob Major at St Mary Magdalene Bermondsey. It was claimed to be the longest that ever was rung at that time by the Society, and so far as our present information goes, it was the longest rung at that time by any society in any method. For the previous year the Norwich Scholars had rung 10,080 changes of Oxford Treble Bob Major at St. Michaels Coslany, but no other band had approached that length. The number of changes in the Bermondsey peal is rather curious - namely ninety -



six Courses and three extra Leads - 259  
and suggests a doubt whether 10.800  
is not a mistake and should be 10.080. <sup>(69)</sup>  
The first figures are given in both the  
Society's seal book and the manuscript  
in the British Museum but as the former  
was copied from the latter that does not  
prove anything. The times at S. Michaels  
and at Bermondsey were about the same  
weight and the times taken for the seals  
about the same - six hours and twenty  
eight minutes for the Treble Bob and  
six hours and a half for the Bob Major.  
The times of three early five-thousands  
rung at Bermondsey were - 1724, 2 hours  
59 minutes; 1746, 3 hours 6 minutes; 1751

3 hours 5 minutes.

260

The band at Permondsey was - Laughlin, Ward, Richardson, Jeacock, Seamon, Scrygair, Trenell, and Stannable.

On October 10<sup>th</sup> 1929 Stannable conducted the first peal at St. Dionis Backchurch, on Phelps' ring of ten which were afterwards moved to All Hallows, Lombard Street, and are now (1938) awaiting another home.

Directly after this we have the first piece of one of those many quarrels which were so frequent in the history of the old ringing societies. For five years or so the College Youths had hung together as a united band under the leadership of Stannable, and had had

unprecedented success as peal  
ringers. Peter Scryggaris, though he  
was much the older man and though  
he had higher standing in the Society  
and probably was socially of a much  
better class, had given him loyal and  
steady support and had rung in all  
the peals except one. Then something  
happened, what we know not. A bitter  
dispute flared up which had important  
consequences both immediate and  
remote. Scryggaris left the College  
Youths and joined the London Scholars  
and with him went William Thompson  
and most likely others as well.

Dr. Hren's new power at St. Michael's

Cornhill, Richard Phelps hung a 262  
ring of twelve bells and they were rung  
for the first time on December 4<sup>th</sup> 1728.  
On the following February 4<sup>th</sup> the London  
Scholars met at the Three Tuns Tavern  
in Cornhill "where a handsome dinner  
was provided for them" and afterwards  
the more energetic of the members  
"diverted" themselves by ringing St. Michaels  
bells which they reckoned very fine  
and musical and not inferior to any  
in the City or suburbs. <sup>(70)</sup> At St. Martins  
a match was arranged at Cornhill  
between the two leading companies.  
This time the College youths had the  
first pull and on November 7<sup>th</sup> they

scored 5216 Grandsire Cinqes in 263  
4 hours and 8 minutes. The following  
Monday the London Scholars started for  
a pic-thousand but lost it after  
ringing 4200 changes. They began at  
ten minutes to twelve and broke down  
at five minutes past three. A fortnight  
later they started again and this time  
they accomplished 6204 changes in  
4 hours and 44 minutes, "the rounds  
before and after included." <sup>(71)</sup> It is rather  
curious that the peal should have been  
short by pic leads of beating the length  
rung by the College Youths at St. Martins;  
but perhaps they had not the necessary  
composition, and the extra weight of  
metal was held to more than counterbalance

that difference and the Cornhill 264

peal took its place as the greatest performance of that kind that ever was known" (72)

Both bands had trouble with the tenor. The College Youths put three good men on to her including Annable himself who was the first (and for long the only) man to conduct a peal from the Covering Bell. The London Scholars had five men to the tenor and two others in the belfry whom they called "assistants", and whose job evidently was to lend a hand where and when it was needed. Peter Skerrygar's was one of these assistants and William Thompson also rang in the peal. Most of the others in the band were men who had rung in the St. Martins six-thousand. Underwood rang the fourth and William

Spice was the second assistant.

265

There is no indication of who was the Conductor.

The London Scholars put up a Board to record their performance but a hundred years later it fell down, was broken and was ultimately destroyed; but not until Osborn had made a copy of it.

More than fifty years had to elapse before a peal could be rung at St. Michaels with only two men to the tenor, and a full century <sup>(75)</sup> before that bell could be rung single handed, which is one indication of the great difficulty the old craftsmen had in hanging bells of any weight exceeding thirty hundredweight. It was largely a matter of luck whether a heavy tenor went well and could be turned in single handed

to a peal; or whether it took two or even three of the strongest and best of the band to ring her behind. Good workmanship did not decide the matter, it depended on factors beyond the bellhangers' control. His difficulty consisted first in getting hold of a piece of elm for a stock, rigid enough not to sag with the weight of a two-ton bell; and secondly to get his gudgeons true and to fix them so they should remain true. To do that he had neither a lathe nor had he bolis and nuts. He had to adjust and true up his work by experiment and with the file; and to fix everything he had to use keys and wedges which in dry weather were very liable to become loose. With a modern iron



stock a bell can be picked up, thus 267  
enormously reducing the centrifugal force  
exerted by the swinging bell, but to pick  
up a bell with a wooden stock, is to  
run the risk of having a weak stock,  
and one that will "spring" when the bell  
is rung. These things must be remembered  
when we are comparing heavy bell feats of  
years ago with those of recent times.

All Christmas time in 1729 Stannable  
and his band went down to St. Albans  
and rang at St. Peter's Church 5040 changes  
of Bob Major on the bells which had just  
been hung there. It was "so well perform'd  
as to gain the applause of all the auditors"  
and was claimed as the first true peal

ring in the County of Hertfordshire. (75) 268

Five years previously at All Saints, Hertford,  
the local ringers had accomplished the  
whole feat of Tripples "evidently the false feat  
from the 1702 Campanalogia" (76)

The band at St. Albans was - Richardson  
Gardiner, Dearnor, Laughton, Ward, Jeacocke,  
Annable and Cundell.

The quarrel of 1729 had left Annable  
victorious; at any <sup>rate</sup> in so far as he  
remained leader of the feat band, and  
his chief opponents had left the society.

But the echoes had not altogether died  
away; and now we begin to see signs  
that John Cundell was pushing himself  
forward, and of a rivalry between him  
and Annable which was to last with

varying intensity as long as they both 269  
lived and so have permanent effects on the  
fortunes of the Society of College Juniors.

The materials for forming an estimate of  
Annables' Character are scanty. Yet there  
are sufficient hints to convince us that he  
was a man of domineering temper, who  
not only had outstanding abilities, but was  
determined to have his own way and be  
ruled. He set great store by good striking  
and he was one of those men, by no means  
uncommon in the Exercise, who seldom or  
never make a mistake themselves, and are  
intolerant of those that do. A slip or a  
missed dodge was sure to bring down on  
the offender a sharp rebuke. Now there  
are other men, really first class ringers  
whose minds are more mercenary, who

Lack the Concentration of the other 270

sort. Their fancy is apt to wander when they are ringing especially when good striking and the rhythm of the bells has dulled their attention, and then they make trips.

Being good ringers, when they do, they know it and can put themselves right before anyone else can tell them, and it very often annoys them to be shouted at; the annoyance being usually with themselves rather than with the man who shouts. Incidents like this happen constantly and in every bellry. Usually they pass without further results, but sometimes they lead to high words, quarrels and the breaking up of bands.

This was at once Annables' strength

and his weakness. His strength 271  
because no one would make trips while  
he was ringing if he could help it, and  
so the standard of ringing and striking  
was higher among the College Joints than  
anywhere else; his weakness, because  
the sharp word too often left a soreness  
behind. Annable was followed, honoured,  
and respected, but I doubt if he was ever  
loved. His position in the Society was  
entirely a personal one, he had no official  
status, <sup>(11)</sup> and when there arose a question  
between him and some other, he often  
found that men who were quite content  
to follow him in the belfry, and to make  
use of his great gifts as a Conductor, were  
on the side of his rival.

In many respects John Cundell 272.  
was a smaller edition of Annable. His  
ambition was to be Leader and Conductor,  
and he had done something in the way  
of Composition. <sup>(98)</sup> Probably he had greater  
social advantages than Annable, and  
he certainly was not inferior to him as  
a tenor and heavy bell ringer. He had  
as many friends and supporters in the  
Society as the other.

But Annable was by far the bigger  
man. So long as he could keep on friendly  
terms with the average member the force  
of his personality gave him the Leadership.  
It was only when some occasion of friction  
arose that his rival got any chance.

And in 1730 some such occasion did

arise. What it was we do not know; 273  
we can only see the result.

Early in the year Rudhall's eight bells were hung at Fulham, and in due course the College youths were asked to attempt the first peal on them. William Skellion who had been mainly instrumental in the bells being put up, and who was a prominent member of the Society, of course had the arrangements and from the band Annable was dropped. Cundell was the Conductor and tenor ringer, and his friend John Hardham who had practically given up peal ringing, stood in the band. William Thompson came back from the London Scholars for the occasion, and the other ropes were taken

by Laughlin, Jeacock, Richardson, 274  
Dearnot and Trenell none of whom  
considered that their loyalty to Annable  
debarred them from the chance of a peal.  
Laughlin had had more than once cause  
to resent Annables sharp tongue.

The disagreement, whatever it was, was  
patched up. There was nothing small or  
petty about Annable. His love of ringing  
was genuine, and he was big enough to  
be able to make concessions when necessary.  
All through his career he was steadfast  
in his loyalty to the Society of College  
Youths; he did not, as did so many others  
desert to another company, or attempt  
to form a new and opposition band.

On the other hand Cundell was not



yet strong enough to try and oust 275  
his rival altogether. It is not likely that  
the ranks and file who knew how much  
they owed to the skill and knowledge  
of Stormable would have followed him  
so far.

And so another famous performance  
was possible before the end of the year  
This was a peal of Bob Triples at St. Saviour's  
Southwark, the first in the method (save  
for Garthorn's peal at Norwich in 1715,)  
and the only one on the old ring of eight  
in St. Saviour's steeple. Three men had to  
be put to the tenor (which weighed 49 Cwt,)  
with Trenell on the bass; Cundell rang  
the seventh single handed; Stormable  
conducted from the sixth and the other  
bells were rung by Ward, Dearmer, Laughton,

John Hayward and Jeacocke.

276

Hayward had joined the Society during the previous year.

The Composition, *Arnables* well-known six-part peal, has since been rung scores of times and ranks as one of the classic compositions of change-ringing. <sup>(79)</sup> Like Hollis' ten-part, or Parker's twelve-part, it cannot, within its own sphere be improved upon, though it has been imitated many times. *Psalm Triples* is not rung now-a-days but if ever seven-bell methods with six working bells come into fashion (and they may) the value of *Arnables* peal will again be apparent. It resembles his three-part peal of *Major* in being on the 5-Course plan and one is tempted to suppose that it was suggested by the

earlier feat. Actually however 277  
Annable took a hint from Fabian Hedman  
and his six extreme bells do the work of  
a 720 of Reverse Court Minor at the lead  
ends.

The truce between the rivals was short  
lived. Annable had conducted every  
feat he had rung since the Grandire  
Caters at St. Magnus, and he was not  
willing to stand in a feat with another  
conductor. In course of time he had to  
give way in the matter, but so far as  
Cundell was concerned he was adamant.  
So the quarrel broke out again, and  
Cundell finding sufficient support in the  
band took a company to St. Mary-le-  
Bow in Cheapside and repeated the

300 Triples there.

(219)

278

The record does not claim this to be the first peal in that famous steeple, but we have no account of any previous one. Three men were required for the tenor, <sup>(88)</sup> Cundell had Richardson to help him at the seventh, and the other bells were rung by Ward, Dearmor, Laughton Hayward, Jeacock, and Trenell. Cundell conducted and presumably, for want of another composition (if for no other reason), called his rivals' peal. The third tenor man was Levens Kendall whose membership of the Society went back to 1718, the year that Matthew East joined.

Four months later on May 8<sup>th</sup>, as if

to show Arnable that he was not 279  
indispensable the Company went to St.  
Martin's in the Fields and rang there  
5280 Changes of Bob Mascimus, the first  
in that peep. Cundall called and  
rang the tenor with assistance; Catlin  
who had practically dropped out of the  
peal band rang the second, and William  
Jackson the seventh. It is rather significant  
that these two should stand in a band  
from which Arnable was dropped. It  
may be that Jackson was a little sore  
at having been so completely displaced  
from his position as the leading Composer  
in the Society.

A new Comer, Richard Spicer, who was  
to be a very active member of the Company

rang the eleventh, and another 280

new-comer William Pickard rang the sixth. The other ropes were taken by the regular members of the Company.

A week later the same band without Catlin and Jackson, and still without Struble, rang 5040 Changes of Grand sire Catlin at St. Sepulchres. The peal was

rung on the old ten bells and was claimed

to be the first that was rung in that steeple but whether they meant the first of Grand sire Catlin or the first peal of any sort is not quite clear. In any case the

Bo Triples of 1689, even if it had been rung was now forgotten. This was the only peal ever accomplished on the old ten which had played so important a part

in the early development of Grandure 281  
on seven and nine bells. Cundell conducted  
from the tenth and Trenell rang the tenor  
single handed

In 1731 William Laughton was one of  
the stewards, and as it was an ancient  
rule that the officers in turn should  
have the ordering of special ringing  
meetings, he exercised his right by  
arranging a peal of Bob Triples at St  
Stephen's Coleman Street and conducting  
it himself from the fifth. William Coster  
an old member of the Society of Union  
Scholars, and the man who had turned  
the tenor in to the first peal of Major in  
1718, rang the seventh; Matthew East  
rang the tenor; and the other ringers

were Richardson, Cundell, Trenell, 282  
Spicer and John Skonger one of Laughton's  
friends. It was the first peal in the  
method on the bells, possibly the first  
in any method.

In this same year, 1731, ringers were  
active all over England. Two peals  
of Grand sire Triples were scored at Tainmire  
and another at Kettering<sup>(80)</sup>; and at Norwich  
the five peals of Stedman Triples were rung  
by rival bands at Mancroft and Costary  
which lead to the lively and interesting  
controversy between Thomas Melchior and  
Edward Crane in the pages of the  
Norwich Gazette. <sup>(81)</sup>

All this time Annable was without  
the College youths' peal band; but it



does not mean that he had broken 283  
even temporarily with the society. Real  
ringing was still outside the normal  
life of the company, the more or less  
private concern of some of the younger  
and more energetic members. For the  
average College Youth the life of the  
society was in the regular gatherings.

Once a week at about six in the evening  
they met at the pavilion. Strangers were  
turned out of the room, the Master  
took the chair, and the prescribed  
ritual was duly gone through. Smoking  
and drinking and talking were indulged  
in and sometimes singing. After a  
while a move was made to the Celfry

where some touches were rung, 284  
and then back to the meeting place to  
finish the evening. But there were  
some feasts in which the whole society  
was interested. It concerned the Corporate  
Honour that the challenges of the London  
Scholars should be met. In such a  
case private rivalries must give way  
to the public weal, and so Annable  
once more took the lead.

As we have seen the 6204 of Grandine  
Cinques at St. Michaels had given in  
popular estimation the preeminence  
to the London Scholars. Whether they  
had gone one step further and beaten  
an number of changes the 6314 rung

at S. Martins' we do not know.

285

But now the College Youths proposed to put the matter beyond doubt by ringing 7018 changes at Cornhill. The band was well chosen. Three of their best heavy bell men - Annable himself, Matthew East, and William Coates - were put to the tenor. Cundell had the eleventh, and Trenell the tenth. The others were Rickard, Hayward, Richardson, Dearmor, Laughlin, Anthony Goodwin, Ward, Spicer, and Jeacock. It was rung on February 14<sup>th</sup> 1732, and took five hours and nineteen minutes. Annable called the Cobs.

A month later & on Saturday, March 11

they met at the Fleece Tavern in 286  
Cornhill where they had "a very handsome  
dinner in commemoration of that  
unequaled performance", and were  
accompanied by "many worthy gentlemen  
who delight in that Exercise." (82)

Annable was once more leader and  
for some years he kept the lead. Cundell  
dropped back into a subordinate  
position. The quarrel seemed to be over,  
but later it was to have another and  
a more serious phase.

In the following April the company  
rang two peals - Bob Major at Greenwich  
on the first of the month, and S. Simon's  
Triples at S. Brides on the fifth.

The Greenwich peal was the first on the bells which had been cast in the previous year at Whitechapel by Richard Phelps. A local band who called themselves the Kentish Youths was started in the town, and they made such progress in the art that before the year was out, (Dec: 1<sup>st</sup> 1732), they had scored

a peal of Grand sire Triples. <sup>(215)</sup> Daniel

Lucks

who rang the seventh was afterwards one of the Rambling Ringers though not a prominent member of the club, nor a very frequent visitor to its meetings.

The S. Simon's Triples was rung on the smallest eight at S. Bride's, which looks as if the tenor or one of the other big bells was unpealable, for there were

several men among the College youths who delighted in heavy-bell ringing and would not have fought shy of a bell just because she required hard work.

The method was the seven bell extension of S. Simon's Doubles, and except that it has the blemish of four consecutive blows behind at the lead end, is an excellent method. <sup>(83)</sup> It was the first peal that Laughton had missed since he joined the society. He was beginning to nurse a grievance and the effects of it were shortly to be seen.

Since the visit to Cambridge in 1927 we have no trace of any summer outing but that does not mean that none took

place. No record was kept unless a peal was scored, and that did not always happen. Apart from the fact that many of those who took these journeys were not peal ringers, it very often happened that when a peal was started for it was not finished. The chances against a five-thousand being got were then much greater than they would be now. The ringers could never be sure that the fittings or the ropes would last the time, and if we had a full account it would no doubt contain a sorry list of disappointments through bad going bells, faulty wheels, and rotten ropes. We shall presently

have an instance of this.

290

It was not an unusual thing after a new ring had been hung in some provincial town or village to invite one of the London Companies to visit the place and give an exhibition of their skill in change ringing. They were not paid professional engagements in the ordinary sense such as were fairly common in the next century. <sup>(84)</sup> The College Junks received no remuneration and no money for expenses, but of course were hospitably entertained during their visit.

In 1724 Samuel Knight had supplied a new ring of eight to S. Mary's, Dover,



and two years later another ring  
 to Canterbury Cathedral. At Dover there  
 was a man named Vincent Underdown,  
 a keen ringer, who had taken part in,  
 and possibly conducted the "whole feal"  
 of Grandure Triples at St. Mary's; no doubt  
 the false feal again. In 1731 Underdown  
 was in London, and, being a person of  
 some standing, got an introduction to  
 the College Youths, and joined the society.  
 He arranged that the 1732 outing should  
 be to Dover and Canterbury, and so, early  
 on Whitsunday morning a party of a  
 dozen or more ringers set out on foot for  
 the long tramp along Watling Street, and  
 through the green and pleasant fields of  
 Kent.

They had the whole week before 292  
them; they intended to get what ringing  
they could on their way; and so, when  
they reached Spood, twenty nine miles  
from London, they stopped at St. Nicholas'  
Church and rang a Six-score of Grand and  
Doubles. There are only three bells there  
now; eighty or ninety years ago there  
were six but, one being cracked, they were  
sold to pay for a clock. (83)

From Spood Annable and his men  
followed the main road through Rochester  
and Sittingbourne; but at Faversham they  
turned aside and taking the coast  
road came to Whitstable where in 1730  
Samuel Knight had hung a ring of six  
bells with a tenor of about 18 cwt; and

there they rang an escent of  
 College Sngle. Whistable is miles  
 from London and there we may presume  
 the party spent the night. They were  
 then only 6½ miles from Canterbury,  
 but next morning they went further  
 east to the village of Chisle, which lies  
 a little way inland from Herne Bay  
 and where there was another new ring  
 of six by Samuel Knight. Here they  
 rang another 720 of College Sngle, and  
 then turning south west came to Canterbury.

From very early times there had been  
 bells in Canterbury Cathedral. In the  
 earlier part of the twelfth century <sup>C</sup>prior  
 Conrad gave to the church five heavy

294  
bells which were hung in a detached  
bell tower, and sixty years later a sixth  
and still heavier bell was added by  
Prior Hybert. These six bells are said  
to have taken no fewer than eighty-  
five men to ring them. <sup>(86)</sup> This statement  
is hard to believe, but if it is correct  
the ringing was done by the men standing  
on planks in the same way that the  
great bell at Notre Dame, Paris, is still  
rung.

Prior Henry of Eastly dedicated in 1316  
a large bell weighing 8000 lbs, to the  
murdered archbishop, St Thomas; and in  
1430 Prior Adass dedicated another 105  
lbs greater in weight to St Dunstan. The

295

the earlier bells perished either in the fall of the bell tower in 1382, or in the spoliation at the time of the Reformation, but Dunstan, recast more than once, still hangs in the cathedral tower. <sup>(87)</sup>

Another famous bell, the Bell Harry hangs at the top of the central tower. It is said to have been the gift of Henry VIII, and to have been brought by him from France. Joseph Halich recast it in 1635.

Before 1726 there was a ringing peal of six in the north-west tower. Four of them dated 1636 were by Joseph Halich; one dated 1585 by Robert Noli; and one (the third) a pre-reformation bell which is said to have been inscribed - SANCTE THOURA.. ORA PRO NOBIS <sup>(89)</sup> In 1726 Samuel

296

Knight recast them into an eight  
and hung them in the south-west tower.  
It was the case with most of Knight's  
big bells the tenor had to be recast  
later which was done by Pack and  
Chapman in 1778; and in 1802 Thomas  
Shears added two trebles and so completed  
the ring of ten which hung in the Crichele  
tower until they were further increased  
to twelve as a memorial to the ringers  
of Kent who fell in the great war of  
1914-1918.

In 1732 there was a Company of ringers  
in the City and we may be sure that they  
welcomed the College youths with a flourish.  
The Londoners contented themselves that

day with 504 Changes of Grandeur 297  
Triples to ring the bells and ropes; but  
next day they rang 5040 of Bob Major  
in 3 hours and a half, the first peal on  
the bells. Stornale conducted from the  
seventh; Cundell rang the tenor with  
assistance; and the other bells were rung  
by Richardson, Pickard, Ward, Seamon,  
Spicer and Jacocks. A social evening  
followed and three of the local ringers  
joined the Society of College Youths.

It is probable that this visit helped to  
increase interest in Change ringing. Less  
than two years later the Cathedral band  
scored a peal of Grandeur Triples. <sup>(90)</sup>

On the Wednesday the Londoners covered  
the fifteen or sixteen miles further to

Dover where they rang at St. Marys 298  
three courses of Bob Major and 720 of  
Treble Bob Minor and at St. James, Bob  
Doubles, Steadman's Principle, and Grandfire.  
The old church of St. James had then a  
ring of six with a tenor about 18 cwt. by  
John Wilmar. When the new church was  
built in 1861-2 these bells were sold,  
and a deplorable set of six steel bells by  
Staylor, Vickers and Co. hung in the new  
tower.

On Thursday, June 1st the College Fourth  
rang 5040 changes of Bob Major at St.  
Marys, the same men standing in as  
rang at Canterbury except that no assistance  
was needed for the tenor. Hornable Conducia  
from the fourth and Cundell rang the



On Friday the party made a trip to France and probably for the rest of their lives they looked on it as one of their most romantic experiences. The distance between Dover and Calais is little more than twenty miles, and we can hardly realise what a tremendous barrier that short stretch of water was in the eighteenth Century. There was of course nothing parallel to the present Cross Channel service of steam boats. The only communications were by sailing vessels engaged in coasting trade or the illicit business of smuggling; and these means of transit, or at any rate the lawful ones, were of course interrupted by frequent wars between the two countries.

But there was peace in 1732. The ringers took their handbells with them, and when they landed at Calais they rang a course of Grandire Cinques; so the first changes on handbells that we have any account of happen to have been rung on foreign soil. On their way back and when they were, as they said, "half seas over" they rang another course.

In the absence of definite statement, we may take it that this was single handed ringing; double handed ringing had not yet been thought of.

On the Saturday morning the College youths started on their long tramp back again to London.

It is interesting to compare this outing

with a modern peal ringing four. 301

A band now-a-days would not think much of two peals of Bob Major as the total score for a week's ringing. They expect to ring ten or a dozen Surprise peals in the same time, and one wonders what they would think if they had to walk one hundred and sixty miles on their feet to get them.

There was a good band at Dover for many years, as long apparently as Vincent Underdown was with them; and five or three peals were at one time recorded in St. Mary's belfry. <sup>(91)</sup> One was Bob Major in 1736. Another was "a Complete peal of 5040 Triples consisting of 195 Bobs and 46 Singles, it being the first peal of the sort ever rung in England, which afterwards

was performed at Turckenham, and 302  
called Royal Triples." (27)

It does not require much acumen to come to the conclusion that this was a bob-and-single peal of Grandire Triples and if so can the claim be found that it was the first of the sort ever rung in England? I can hardly think it.

Annables' peal, and Vicars, and Denmeads had been composed long before 1750, and it is most unlikely that they had not been rung or that every one of the peals of Grandire Triples before 1750 (except Gauthons) was false. The statements made on old peal boards must not always be taken as correct. No other record of the Turckenham performance has survived.

The Dover ringers kept in fairly close contact with the College Youths, and from time to time some of them joined that society.

Up to now this chapter has been mainly concerned with the doings of the College Youths because they are the only people of whom we have any detailed account. But there were at the time other societies besides them and the London Scholars, and in 1732 we have a glimpse of a company called the City Scholars, which for a short while was very active. In September they rang 10,080 Changes of Bob Major at Bermondsey. It was so far as our present information goes the third

Seal of over ten thousand Changes  
 that had been rung. The time taken was  
 six hours and seven minutes, which may  
 be compared with the six hours and a  
 half taken by Annable and the College  
 youths on the same bells four years before.  
 The Correspondent of the Norwich Gazette  
 told his paper that it was a Seal that  
 had never been rung out of London, a  
 not very accurate statement for while  
 nothing approaching that length had  
 as yet been rung in London, the College  
 youths had at Bermondsey already  
 equalled or surpassed the number of Changes  
 and in the same method.

Two months later the City Scholars

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followed up the Bob Major with  
a peal of Grandure Calers at St. Giles  
Cripplegate, 6012 Changes, which took its  
place as the longest length as yet rung  
on ten bells. The band was - John Stroud,  
Jonathan Keate, Robert Hobbs, Thomas Nash,  
George Elin Hill, Joseph Griffiths, Samuel  
Thompson, William Hilliar, John Bose, <sup>(94)</sup>  
and Edward Nodes at the tenor with  
two men - Henry Macfarland and Aaron  
Newbold - to keep him. <sup>(93)</sup>

These two peals, rung within a little  
more than ten weeks, are all the records  
we have of the City Scholars, but the  
names of several of the band appear later.  
Hobbs joined the College Youths in 1733  
and rang several peals with them. See

years later he and John Box took 306  
part in a non-society six-thousand of  
Box Major at St. Andrews, Holborn. It looks  
as if Box was the conductor of all these  
performances.

Ellon Hill joined the College Youths  
in 1735, and though he did not hold  
office in that society, he apparently had  
a good deal of influence in the Company,  
and he had the distinction of being one  
of the very few men to call a peal in  
which Benjamin Annable took part.  
Griffiths and Thompson also both joined  
the College Youths, the one in 1738, the  
other in 1739, both held the office of  
steward (in 1749 and 1751), and both were  
supporters of John Halli. One wonders





Rev. Henry Channing

of Vardensburg in the county of Hartford, Conn.

if Samuel Thompson was the son or 307  
younger brother of William Thompson.

John Bosc afterwards belonged to the Eastern Scholars, and so did William Hillier. He probably was related to Ely Hillier who joined the College Jourths in 1731, was steward in 1738, and master in 1748. Edward Nodes <sup>(95)</sup> joined the College Jourths in 1737, and took part in several feasts including the Case that Annable rang with the society. Thomas Nash went to Oxford and rang there.

Evidently the life of the Society of Ely Scholars was as brief as it was brilliant and while it lasted it included men of superior class to the ordinary ringers.

In the early months of 1733 Annable's band accomplished two more notable performances - 5120 Gosford Treble Bob Major at S. Clement Danes on February 12<sup>th</sup>, and 5094 Double Grand sire Caters at S. Brides on March 1<sup>st</sup>.

The Treble Bob which was looked as Union Bob and therefore was Baldwin's true five-part composition, is the earliest peal at S. Clement's that we have any account of, but since it is claimed to be neither the first peal on the bells, nor the first peal in the method on the bells we may reasonably conclude that other bands had been there previously and pealed.

The band at S. Clement's was Richardson's

Lickard, Dearmor, Laughlin, Jarock, <sup>309</sup>  
Frenell, Spicer, and Annable. The same  
men with the addition of John Ward  
and Andrew Field among the Caters.

In our account of Fulham parish <sup>(96)</sup>  
church we had a reference to William  
Skellion who started life as a boy in  
the service of Bishop Compton and through  
that prelate's influence became an  
ecclesiastical lawyer and one of the  
leading inhabitants of Fulham. He  
had a son, also called William who  
was born in 1696 and educated at  
Oxford. He matriculated on July 19<sup>th</sup>  
1712 and was a Commoner of Christi  
Church. <sup>(97)</sup> He followed his father's

profession, and was a proctor in the 310.  
Court of Arches becoming Registrar to  
D. Gibson, the Bishop of London.

In his university days he practised  
ringing and probably had learnt the  
art as a boy on the old five at Fulham  
under the tuition of Hednott the parish  
clerk. Thomas Hearne gives him the  
name of an excellent <sup>ringer,</sup> and he joined  
the Society of College Youths in 1715, though  
he never took part in a peal with them  
For many years he was the principal  
man in the belfry at Fulham and it  
was mainly due to him that Rudhalls  
five ring of eight was hung in the  
steeple and that the two trebles were

afterwards added. (98)

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In 1733 he arranged a visit of the College Youths to Exeter with the idea of ringing peals in as many of the College towers as possible.

Although we have no record, it is quite likely that this was not the first visit of the society to Exeter. In 1723 among the names of new members appears that of Arthur Lloyd, Carpenter and bellringer and the chief man in the band that did the not inconsiderable amount of paid ringing in the town. Lloyd may have been on a visit to London, but it is at least as likely that the society was on a visit to Exeter. On the Saturday before Whitsuntide

William Skellon rode down to  
Oxford to prepare the way, and very early  
the next morning Strnabe and his party,  
fifteen rangers in all, set out to follow him  
on foot. The distance is 63 miles, and  
three miles an hour including stops is  
pretty good going for such a journey, so  
that even if they started soon after  
midnight, it was very late in the evening  
that a tired and footsore party crossed  
Magdalen Bridge and made their way  
up the famous High Street. It was their  
wont on these occasions to stop and ring  
at places on the route. Whether they did  
so now we do not know but if they did  
probably it was at a church by the  
road side like High Wycombe.

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On the Monday the Oxford ringers rang a short touch as a welcome at Magdalen, and another at Christ Church in the evening, the Londoners resting during the day to recover from the effects of their long walk. On the Tuesday (May 15) they rang a preliminary touch of about 1500 changes of Grand sire Calers at New College, starting a little before eleven in the morning and finishing at noon; and the same at Christ Church in the evening. The ringing was done admirably well." Next day they started for a peal of Grand sire Calers at Christ Church, 5040 changes. They began at a quarter to twelve and rang until



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two o'clock, about 3200 changes,  
"incomparably well" when the gudgeons  
being bad, the penor fell down but looped  
in the pit. In the evening they went  
to Magdalen. It is not clear whether  
they started for a peal there or not,  
but in any case they could not proceed  
above half an hour owing to two or  
three ropes breaking. Heame does not  
tell us what method they rang, but if  
it was a peal attempt most probably  
it was Bob Major.

On Thursday they went to New College  
and started again for the Grand sire  
Caters. They began a little before twelve  
and rang about three quarters of an

hour, when one of the ropes broke, 315  
and so they were stopped. Afterwards  
they dined at "Weers beyond Friar  
Bacon's Study", and then some of them  
walked the couple of miles to Iffley,  
and rang a 720 on the six bells there.

The next day, Friday, was their last  
chance of attempting the feat. They started  
again at New College and again just  
before noon. This time they rang two  
minutes short of two hours, and again  
a broken rope put an end to the attempt.  
On the Saturday they started for home  
and took two days on the journey.

Hearne who was a competent and  
critical judge of ringing is emphatic  
about the quality of the Londoners' ringing.

Both at Christ Church and New 316  
College as elsewhere it was, he said, most  
surprisingly fine, without the least fault  
from beginning to end, such as never  
was before in Oxford. If it had not  
been for the faulty gudgeon and the  
broken ropes the feat would have been  
rung with the greatest ease imaginable  
for in the attempt there was not the least  
fault made. All were very sorry, and  
it was a scandal that the ropes should  
not have been in good order.

The visit of the College youths created  
a vast deal of interest in the City and  
stirred up the local men to attempt the  
first feat themselves. They had no lack  
of good ringers both collegiate and

townsmen, though they were not of 317  
the same class as Annable and his men.  
As we shall see presently they succeeded  
in ringing more than one peal of Grandine  
Caters. (99)

The visit of the College youths to Gosford  
was followed by a quiet time by the society  
so far as peal ringing is concerned, the  
only performance during the remainder  
of the year being 5040 changes of Union  
Triples at St. Paul's, Fulham. Hardham  
rang the tenor and Annable conducted  
from the seventh. The other ringers were  
Pearson, Spicer, Pickard, Laughion, Frenell,  
and Monger.

In this same year (1733) the "whole peal  
of Triples" was rung at Painswick (May 20<sup>th</sup>)  
and at St. John's Hillingdon, in Middlesex,

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the young band there <sup>"</sup>thrice performed  
the whole peal of Triples."

In 1733 also appeared the third reprint  
of the J. D. and C. S. Campanalogia.

William Coster had been one of the  
most important of the Union Scholars.  
Although not one of the foundation  
members, his name is the first that  
appears in the following year. He held  
the office of steward in 1716, and of master  
in 1717; and, being a strong lusty fellow,  
he was the first man to turn a tenor  
in to a peal of Major. He was now the  
landlord of the Bell, a tavern in Angel  
Alley, in Little Moorfields, a network of  
narrow streets, the site of which is today  
occupied by the Moorfields Station of the

Metropolitan Railway. Thither as 319  
was natural, many ringers resorted, and  
as Coster belonged to an earlier generation  
and had rung his peal when Annable  
was still but a lad, he had both the  
opportunity and the excuse to play the  
part of *laudator temporis acti*.

Prominent among his customers was  
William Laughton - Laughton who had  
for some time been nourishing an  
increasing feeling of soreness with Annable  
and the leaders of the College Youths. He  
was himself, of course, not the least man  
in that society, had been steward, and  
had actually taken part in more peals  
with the company, than any one else  
not excluding Annable. But he was of

a pious disposition, his loyalty to 320  
the College Joints sat lightly on him,  
and at any rate was no barrier to his  
ringing peals with other bands, or consorting  
with lower class men who belonged to  
none of the leading societies and formed  
the underworld of the London Exercise.  
A year or two previous he had taken  
part in fourteen eighteen scores on the  
six bells in the old steeple of St Giles-in-  
the Fields, a now-society peal and a most  
interesting performance for it is the earliest  
six bell peal of which we have any records.  
What methods were rung and other particulars  
we do not know, except that one of the  
ringers was James Newcombe who joined  
the Union Scholars in 1729. He was a

steeplekeeper at the Abbey and one of those that showed the tombs to visitors. He died on February 2<sup>nd</sup> 1734 "of a lingering distemper which held him sixteen weeks," and was buried on the 5<sup>th</sup> in the Dark Cloister, leaving behind him a wife and four children.

(100)

The immediate occasion of Laughton's quarrel with Annable does not appear, but the general cause is apparent. Laughton was an excellent singer but he was temperamentally unstable and fond of his glass, and as Thomas Heame pointed out a man "in liquor" will make mistakes, "and indeed there cannot be any true singing but by persons that come perfectly sober." Annable was no puritan, he



Could appreciate the social side of  
 ringing in its proper place, and even  
 himself ring a comic ballad; but he  
 held that when a man was in the bellfy  
 his business was to ring and not make  
 trips; and we have the testimony of  
 Heame as to how high his standard  
 was. There was the sharp rebuke for  
 the man who blundered. "But" said  
 Laughton, "whoever rings as well as he  
 can ought not to be blamed by anybody.  
 If they could tell a mistake before it  
 made I'd say they were lucky, but they  
 know no more than the pope o' Room who  
 make a fault before it's done, and what  
 a pose signifies calling out them when  
 the person knows it as well as they do.

It only serves to set people fretting 323  
and making more mistakes, and too  
often I've seen the consequences when  
I've been ringing." 102

Many another ringer before and since  
has thought and said the same thing as  
Laughlin, and often enough he harped  
on this chord among his friends at the  
Bell, especially on one evening in November  
1733. There were present six others besides  
Coster and Laughlin himself. Three of them  
were College Youths - Shonger, Dearmos,  
and Spicer - all of them good ringers  
but perhaps not of such importance as  
the society's meetings at the Parley Now 103  
as they were in the beepy and so not sorry  
to be in the more unconventional and

unrestricted atmosphere of Angel

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Alley. The other three were born companions of Laughton - Jeremiah Gilbert, Thomas Clark, and John Chapman.

The suggestion was made - no doubt it arose in Laughton's fertile brain - that visits should be paid to the lesser belfries in the City and suburbs, with the result that an informal club was formed which lasted for sixteen months, met weekly, rang three peals, and touched at thirty five different towers. Laughton afterwards wrote an account of it and in his epistle dedicatory to Mr. George Carbery he reminds that gentleman - "You are not insensible (being one of those worthy members your self) that a Company

of us made an agreement to Ring  
at all the peals of 3, 4, 5 and 6 Bells within  
the City of London and bills of Mortality,  
which we should find ringable, and to  
ring at a different place every time of  
meeting if we should think proper." This  
has somewhat the air of an afterthought;  
probably the beginning was a good deal  
more informal and casual, and it was  
not until the success of the Club was  
assured that the full programme was  
agreed upon. The members did not give  
themselves a name but adopted one which  
was bestowed on them in good natured  
derision - the Rambling Ringers' Club.  
Laughton again would have his readers  
believe that the club having done what

it set out to do, had pre-filled its 326

purpose and naturally and voluntarily  
came to an end. That we may well doubt.

Much more likely it is that it succumbed  
to outside pressure and opposition.

The account was never printed; probably  
there never was much chance or intention  
of printing it. But it was written in  
book form and circulated in manuscript  
among those people who were interested  
in it and what it had to say. Little  
seems to be known about its history. In  
1799 it was the property of James Wakefield  
of Romford and it is now in the Guildhall  
Library of the City of London. (104.)

The manuscript is in a small volume  
 $6\frac{1}{2} \times 3\frac{1}{2}$  inches in size and is written

in a neat and minute hand with 327  
as many as thirty lines to a page. Laughton  
we remember was a watchmaker and his  
eyes and fingers were trained to work  
on a small scale

The account is valuable because it is  
the only diary written by an eighteenth  
century singer that has come down to  
us; it is the only account we have of the  
ordinary week by week doings of the old  
London singers. It gives a description  
of all the meetings of the Ramblers, the  
names of the men, where they went and  
what they sang. Nevertheless it is a  
very disappointing document. It tells us  
much but little that we really want to  
know. It is, I suppose, unfair to compare

it with Hearn's Diary (the education and circumstances of the two men were so different) and yet the comparison is inevitable and is the measure of our disappointment with Laughton. But after all, he wrote to please himself and his friends, not us; and most of what we want to know they already knew. Hearn deliberately wrote for posterity. <sup>(209)</sup>

Laughton unnecessarily hampered himself by the medium he used. He chose to write the greater part of his book in verse. There have been many hundreds of people who suffered from the delusion that they were poets or at any rate versifiers, but none surely more pathetic than Laughton. He had not a single

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quality necessary for the task. His  
subject did not readily lend itself to poetic  
treatment and in the few instances where  
he tried to be poetical he only succeeded  
in being banal and bathetic. Of any  
rules of prosody, scansion or rhyme  
he was totally ignorant. He adopted  
the rhymed octosyllabic couplet with  
frequent redundant syllables, one of the  
easiest of metres to write in, but quite  
beyond his powers. Yet it is clear that  
he himself thought that his verse both  
rhymed and scanned, and in fact as  
he read it, it did rhyme and scan, at  
any rate near enough to satisfy his  
ear. The explanation is, I think, that



he was a man who had not read 330  
much and consequently his eye did not  
help him. Educated people will often  
write lines which look as if they rhyme  
but do not satisfy a really critical ear.  
Ignorant people write lines which look  
wrong. (130) Take Laughton's opening Couplet,  
which is as good as any he wrote -

Its ringing is a branch of music  
Let none despise those men that use it.  
Directly it is seen, either in print or in  
script the imperfect scansion of the first  
line and the faulty rhyme of the second  
are at once apparent. But if one reads  
it aloud and fairly quickly the faults  
are not nearly so obvious. So it is with  
the "poem" throughout; if it is read

aloud and quickly, as no doubt  
Laughton expected it to be read, some  
sort of metre and some sort of rhyme  
can be found in it.

The burden of Laughton's song, the  
object for which he wrote was the praise  
of the Ramblers, what fine fellows they  
were, what skilful jingers, and how  
superior to all others in every way. But  
two other themes run through it,  
neither of any particular interest to  
us now. One is the praise of the food  
they had to eat; the other a querulous  
Complaint of the disapproval of Strabble  
and the leading College Joints.

In the eighteenth Century eating and  
drinking were much more openly and

Consciously classed among the pleasures of life than they are now, and for Laughton they were among the most important things. He boasts that he and his companions "loved their bellies as you may see", and no small part of his verse is taken up with a detailed description of what they had for supper and how it was cooked and served. It is amusing and quaint at first but speedily becomes a bore.

The allusions to Stornable are much more interesting because indirectly they throw a lot of light on the position he held in the Exercise at the time, and the general conditions of the London societies. Stornable is never once

mentioned by name. For all that 333  
is ostensibly said there might not have  
been such a person, but as we read we  
cannot doubt that he was Laughton's  
bugbear and that <sup>Laughton</sup> he was afraid of him.  
Laughton gives somewhat the impression  
of a rebellious school boy who has broken  
away from authority, who knows he  
has done wrong and is shouting to  
keep his courage up. For there is no  
doubt about it that the Rambling Ringers  
Club was a defiance of authority. The  
old rule of the Esquire Juniors by which  
a member undertook not now nor  
hereafter to have anything to do with  
any other society was the rule of all the

London societies whether written 334  
or understood, and the man who went off  
and formed another band was not only  
guilty of disloyalty but might easily do  
mortal harm to his Company. It is not  
to be wondered at therefore that the official  
College youths looked askance at the  
doings of the Rambling Ringers. It  
first when Laughion and his party were  
meeting at five and six Bell Towers, where  
nobody else particularly wanted to go,  
and where there was little ringing except  
what was paid for, they professed to  
treat them with contempt. "Five fools  
at Baises <sup>(105)</sup> last week rung" said one of  
the wits at the Parley Show, and naturally

Laughton heard of it, and it hurt 335  
his vanity. He was loud in his protestations  
that he and his did not trouble their  
heads about "snarling critics" or what  
people said. But it is quite evident that  
he did trouble himself very much, and  
he had not sufficient sense of humour  
to see that the criticism was a tribute  
to the success of the club. For successful  
it was and from the first. Scarnor  
dropped out of the band after the first  
three meetings and Monger and Spicer  
soon after, (it may be under pressure  
from head quarters); but their places were  
taken by others, and speedily the club grew  
in numbers. Only two of the College youths  
besides Laughton were really active members,

John Trenell and John Hayward-- 336

but there were others who belonged to other societies or no society. A prominent member was George Carbery, to whom as we have seen Laughlin dedicated his book. He does not appear to have been one of Laughlin's close personal friends as Tom Greenwood and Jerry Gilbert were, and we must conclude that he was rather better socially than the rest. His name does not appear as a member of any of the leading contemporary societies and the temptation is to think that he belonged to the London Scholars who there is reason to suppose still existed though nearing their end. (218)

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In all, thirty nine different  
ringers took part in the meetings besides  
three men who were "odd" (i.e. honorary)  
members. Many of them came out of  
curiosity once only including three prominent  
College youths - John Ward, John Pearson,  
and William Tickard, the last two of  
whom shortly after held the office of master.  
For the most part the College youths held  
aloof; not merely the gentlemen like  
Skellion and Gardiner, but also Cundell  
Hardham, East, Jacock, and the recruits  
who were at the time joining the society.  
The majority of the members of the club  
belonged to none of the leading Companies  
and with them it was very popular.



It had an unconventionality and freedom from restraint which strongly appealed to them. There were no officers, no rules, no ordered ritual, no election for membership. A man had but to turn up at one of the meetings and he was treated as a full member. After a few weeks they developed the social side, a supper became a regular part of their proceeding and toward the end, said Laughton, "we've learned to meet unless we had something good to eat." Often one or another of the members provided the supper. Laughton calls it a "hang-up", which, I presume, at the time was a slang word for a treat.

I have not come across the expression in any contemporary books or writings, nor does it seem to be noticed in any dictionary of slang words and colloquialisms, but it is interesting to find from the Oxford English Dictionary that eighty years ago "hang-out" was a slang term for a celebration, and as late as 1893 was an American University expression for a feast.

The procedure of the Rambling Club was quite simple. They agreed to meet at a certain time at a tavern. After a drink or two they went to the belfry, rang a 720 or one or two pic-scores of Doubles, and then returned to the

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Tavern to finish the evening, sometimes with a supper, but if not with smoking, drinking, telling tales, handbell ringing and occasionally singing and dancing. As for getting permission to practise at the different churches, there seems to have been no more formality about that than merely asking for the keys. Once only they had trouble. It was at St. Peter le Poor, in Broad Street, a church that has since disappeared, but then had a ring of five bells. The person was a very stout lady, with a short temper and a sharp tongue. It is possible that Laughton may have interrupted her in some domestic duties, and anyhow he met with a

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Curt refusal, but he got his way  
by calling on the churchwardens and  
getting from them the necessary leave; and  
to punish the lady he wrote a most  
unflattering description of her in his poem.

It is hardly requisite to go through  
the doings of the Ramblers in any detail.

The reader can follow them in Laughton's  
own words. <sup>(106)</sup> The first meeting was at

St. Peter, Fink, on Thursday, November 29<sup>th</sup>

and then for few weeks they did not miss

a meeting on a Thursday. They did not

meet on February 7<sup>th</sup>, but after that they

continued weekly throughout the year.

The interval was probably due to the fact  
that in that week an official attempt

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was made by the College Juniors  
to ring a peal of Bob Major on the heavy  
bells at St. Mary-le-Bow. It was rung  
on Monday, February 11<sup>th</sup> in four hours  
and three minutes; it was the heaviest  
peal of Major yet rung; and in that respect  
has never been beaten, although in the  
same tower a peal of London Surprise  
Major has been rung single handed. (107)  
The Bob Major of 1734 was rung on  
Hodson's bells which were about the  
same weight as the Calver ring. Eleven  
men were needed. Spicer, Dearmor, and  
Trenell rang the tenor; Spurdell and  
Shobbs the seventh; Annable conducted

from the sixth; and the other 343  
ropes were taken by Richardson, Tickard,  
James Watson, Laughton, and Ward. It  
was the best band the society could  
produce, and contained men belonging  
to every faction.

At fortnight or so later what may be  
supposed to be Annable's party rang at  
St. Bride's, Fleet Street, the first peal of  
Double Bob Royal, or as they called it,  
Bob Major Royal Double. The band was  
Ward, Field, Richardson, Tickard, Watson,  
Jeacock, Dearmor, Hobbs, Spicer, and  
Annable who conducted. Neither Cundell  
on the one hand, nor Trenell nor Laughton  
on the other rang in this peal, and

indeed, Laughton never again  
stood in a peal with Annable.

344

Meanwhile he was pretty well satisfied  
with the Rambling Ringers. One Sunday  
he, Tom Clark, William Egles, William  
Nash, George Barber, and Trenell walked  
out to Newington and rang at St.  
Mary's Church, <sup>(108)</sup> a 720 of Oxford Treble Bob  
Minor. It was not of course rung for  
service. Afterwards they went to the  
Peacock and drank beer. They were  
joined by the parson and his man, whom  
Laughton in poetic vein called Simple  
and Aesop. Simple, being an elderly  
man, was moved to expatiate on the  
doings of his youth, and to tell tall

345  
sales of the Cong peals he had  
rung, and the gentlemen ringers he used  
to consort with; until his man could  
stand it no longer but roundly gave  
him the lie. Then the two old men  
started to quarrel and a desperate fight  
was toward had not some message  
come for Hesop, and so peace was restored.

As the summer drew on and the days  
lengthened the Ramblers extended their  
journeys. They marched across the fields  
to Hackney, but though the place itself  
delighted them, they found the bells hard  
to ring since the ropes slipped the wheels

They went westward to the Abbey and  
rang 720 Plain Bob and 360 College



326

Single there. So far they had  
Confined themselves to five and six bell  
powers but now they aimed at bigger  
things. On Sunday March 7<sup>th</sup> eight of  
them walked over to Lambewell with  
the intention of ringing a peal of Bob  
Major there, but they found the pebble  
out of its bearings and so they came back  
by Lambeth and at St. Mary's Church  
they rang 1008 Changes. Laughton says  
they rang the peal for their pleasure;  
which, no doubt, was perfectly true, but  
he would not have mentioned, had he  
not been under the impression that  
pleasure rhymes with Bob Major.

On Easter Tuesday, the same band

resolved to make another attempt 347  
at Camberwell. They met at the George  
in Houndsditch and walked to the  
Artichoke in Camberwell. Then they  
went to the steeple and proceeded to  
rehang the pebble and to do it they had  
to take the wheel off and afterwards  
refix it. Then all the ropes were too low  
and that had to be put right and the  
bearings oiled. That done they went down  
to the belfry and tried to pull the bells  
up, but Trenell found that something  
was wrong with the penes and when they  
came to look the gudgeon was loose in  
the stock. Nothing could be done, and  
so they went to St. Mary's, Bermondsey,

where they rang 5040 changes of  
Bob Major.

The band was - Jeremiah Gilbert, Thomas Greenwood, Thomas Clark, Joseph Bennett, James Benson, William Laughton, John Hayward and John Trenell. No Conductor is mentioned but probably Laughton called the bells.

Before the peal they called in at the Fox and Goose, and afterwards they went back to Houndsditch where they had supper and twenty-five of them sat down to it.

Rather less than a month later they rang another peal of Bob Major at St. Andrews, Holborn. It was the second peal on the bells and the first in which the 28 cur tenor had been rung single landed

The band was the same as at 329  
Bermondsey except that Thomas Smallshaw  
rang the treble instead of Gilbert and  
George Carbery replaced Joseph Bennett.

On May 16<sup>th</sup> the Ramblers visited  
St. Botolph's, Aldersgate Street, and  
Laughton is loud in his complaints of  
the bells and belfry. One thing he says  
strikes now-a-days rather curiously  
There were no straps to put one's foot in  
a very great inconvenience. Foot straps  
are seldom used to-day even in ringing  
heavy tenors. <sup>(109)</sup> That they were used then  
for light rings of five, shows how much  
harder the bells sometimes went and  
how much more pulling they required.

To Rotherhithe the Ramblers went 350  
by boat, sang a 720 of Plain Bob and  
an eighteen-score of Treble Bob and  
then returned to Saults Abbey to supper  
after which every man according to  
Custom, drank a dram, then told a  
tale or sang a song.

William Ibbot of Islington, having  
died, they went there on June 7<sup>th</sup> to ring  
a muffled peal for him according to the  
method which they had decided was  
most suitable. Ibbot was not a Rambler  
but an old acquaintance, a wheelwright  
and a very civil person. Laughton  
takes the opportunity of moralizing  
on the subject of muffled peals. It is

the last respect, says he, that a 351  
ringer can show to a ringer, and so  
it would be a pity to neglect it.

Most ringers when they die expect it  
and besides there are many people  
who like the solemn sound, and will  
come miles to hear a funeral peal.

It used to be the custom in many  
parts of England that the bells of the  
parish church should never be rung  
even on one of the great festivals if there  
was a person lying dead in the parish. (110)

An instance of this is related by Laughton  
for he and his friends went to Greenwich  
on a Sunday afternoon but they could  
not ring because two burials were

to take place there that night; so 352  
they went on to St. Nicholas, Deptford Cut  
found the bells in bad repair.

On Sunday, August 11<sup>th</sup>, eighteen of  
them walked down to Mitcham in Surrey.  
They stopped at the Spaggi's Head and  
had dinner in the garden under the  
fruit trees. After dinner they drank  
brandy and smoked while some of them  
rang a course of Caters on the handbells  
and then a party went to the Church  
Tower and rang a 720 of Cambridge  
Surprise. They paid their reckoning  
and were getting ready to start for  
home when Gilbert declared he was  
not going without another drink.

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That agreed pretty well with the general sentiment, and so they finished the day there. It so chanced that a crazier ~~happened~~ came in, and after a while he and Laughton proceeded to toss up for drinks. A shilling was spun, but on coming down it rolled beneath a rail, so that the tinkler queried the fairness of the cast, whereupon Laughton in the most puerulent mood threatened to beat him and knock his head off if he did not pay, which he thought prudent to do without further words, "otherwise" says Laughton, "I'd have surely milled him, unless two or three had not held him from



me." When at last they started 354  
for home evidently they all were pretty  
well far gone "in liquor", and they did  
not reach town without incident.

Four days later on a Thursday they  
attempted the feat at Camberwell,  
rang about three thousand changes  
and were then stopped by the bad going  
of the tenor. Then they went to the  
Crown, had dinner, and spent the  
afternoon playing skittles.

It was not until October 13<sup>th</sup> that  
they eventually succeeded in ringing  
the peal. The band was the same as  
made the attempt at Easter except  
that Trenell did not ring and  
Smallshaw stood in. Hayward

was at the tenor, and the time was 355  
2 hours and 55 minutes which was quite  
ringing for a peal of Major in those days.

No records exist of any earlier peal rung  
in the tower, but as Laughton makes no  
claim possibly some had already been  
accomplished.

The success after so many failures  
was due, if we may believe Laughton,  
to the fact that Clark one evening picked  
up an old horse shoe which they took  
with them and nailed up over the belfry  
door and so averted their bad luck -  
"for witch nor wizard cannot enter, nor  
o'er the threshold durst they venture,  
wherein that magic charm is nailed."

The ringing of the peal, we are told,

gave great offense to the Ramblers' 356  
enemies. "Some are giped because they're  
done, and out of spite have called us  
names"; but says Laughton magnanimously  
"will not call them so again, blackguard  
scoundrels" and he assures his readers  
that for his part he forgives them from his  
heart, but this much he must say that  
the Ramblers behave themselves like men,  
and are not "apontine" to any one, and  
it's hard that they can't be let alone;  
and after boasting that he and his friends  
always paid their reckonings however  
large he hints that it would be well if  
the same could be said of their critics.  
All of which is evidence of a very pretty  
little quarrel of which however, since we

know nothing about the other  
side we can form no opinion.

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To carry out their intention of ringing  
at every tower where the bells could be  
rung, the Ramblers went to five churches  
where there were only three bells. The first  
was Holy Trinity in the Minories where  
Laughton, Greenwood, and Benson rang  
fourteen dozen Lices. They raised the bells  
rang them and ceased them without  
standing. The ropes were small and had  
no pallies so the ringers had to chalk  
them to know where to catch. The other  
three-bell tower was St. Bartholomew the  
Less, then as now the church of St. Bartholomew's  
Hospital, and there Bennett, Benson,

and Laughton rang seventeen and 358  
a half dozen Lices or 1260 Changes, the  
longest feat ever rung on three bells.  
They had to make two attempts, the first  
coming to grief after six and a half dozen  
Lices through the tenor slipping wheel.  
Though three-bell ringing seems to us  
now a days very tame stuff we must  
remember that change ringing began on  
that number and that the men of the  
early seventeenth Century got a good  
deal of sport out of it. But Laughton  
had rung Scimus, and it is rather  
difficult to understand the pride he seems  
to have taken in these performances. He  
himself said that perhaps his tale might  
make his readers laugh, and some might

359  
say it was a childish thing to do. But his answer was that they did it to please themselves, which, after all, was a sufficient answer; and there is good sense in his plea for variety in ringing - because there are peals of twelve in town must the fives and sixes never be rung?

On one Sunday in October they went to Tottenham and while the more energetic of them went to the steeple and rang 720 changes of Cambridge Surprise the others went to a "boozing den" and drank gin, thirteen quarters, says Laughton "was fairly drunk." On the way back that night they chanced upon a merry Quaker.  
"By Jove he was a boozing friend, but we stitched him up," for after supper

and talk "much upon religion", 360

The Quaker proposed to toss for gin and  
Cosi. And then - whether he had begun  
before the others or whether he had not  
so strong a head - he succumbed, and  
the Ramblers left him snoring on the  
kitchen bench and continued their  
homeward journey.

On another Sunday in November  
they went to Hackney and the day being  
the anniversary of the accession of Queen  
Elizabeth which was still observed as a  
ringing day in many churches in  
protestant London they rang a 720 of  
Cambridge Minor "the first that ever was  
rung there." More than a score of them  
afterwards sat down to supper at the

Rising Sun where they had a merry 361  
time until ten o'clock when they started  
for home with two links before to give  
them light. Coming through Spitalfields  
eight or nine of them called at a spirit  
shop kept by a Frenchman and had  
a second supper and beer and spirits;  
but when Mounsier's wife wanted to  
charge them two shillings a pint for the  
spirits they flatly refused to pay. High  
words ensued and after they had squabbled  
about the matter " they paid just what  
they thought proper. Laughton's adventures  
that day were not yet finished. He and  
his friends set out for the George in  
Houndsditch the landlord of which was  
Edward Davis, one of the "odd" members



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of the Club, and, it seems, one of the party. To get there they went through some narrow lanes behind Petticoat Lane where they lost each other in the dark, and where Laughton stumbled and got over shoes in filth. The district was a slum inhabited by low class Jews and foreigners. In those days the best streets in London were badly paved, badly lighted, badly drained, and especially in wet weather filthy. The lanes in the slums literally stank, and the memory of that stumble in the dirt so incensed Laughton against the "plutish tribe" that lived in "those howd Cits" that he devoted thirty or forty lines to an indignant description of their mode of living, and

especially what they had to eat. 363

However in the end he got to Houndsditch where he sat down and drank a pint of special tipple and so finished for the day.

The Ramblers had now visited every five and six bell tower in town and a good many in the suburbs and they began to turn their attention to eight bell steeples though much of their ringing was still Junior. On the back six at St. Laurence Jewry, a ring that Laughton deservedly praises they rang a 720 of College Tingle. William Cosier, whose membership of the club had up to then consisted in being the landlord of the Tavern where they very frequently met,

showed what he could still do 364  
in the way of heavy bell ringing by ringing  
the 32 Cwt. Tenor in. They also rang a  
720 of Cambridge Surprise, and on another  
visit, a 720 of Morning Exercise on the  
largest six bells at Christ Church Spitalfields.  
At Hayward rang the fifth and Trenell  
rang the tenor (44 Cwt.) single handed  
these were notable performances.

At other times they visited St. Dunstan's  
Stepney, Christ Church, Spitalfields,  
St. Laurence, Jewry, and St. Giles, Cripplegate  
and rang Bob Major, Grandine Triples  
and Treble Bob Major. It began to look  
as if they were going to settle down into  
a regular eight bell band distinct  
from the older London companies; and

that no doubt proved their undoing. 365

For the older societies could not allow that to happen without the risk of suffering injury, and it is pretty sure that they took disciplinary measures.

In what form we do not know, but evidently the Ramblers were given the sharp option of either dropping the band altogether or of being expelled from their societies. And with that the club collapsed. It never had any real strength, for although Laughlin boasts of the numbers that attended its meetings a large proportion of them, especially towards the end came only for the suppers and did no ringing.

They saved their faces very well. 366

The last ringing meeting was on February 18<sup>th</sup> 1935 at Christ Church, Spitalfields, where they rang three Courses of Oxford Treble Bob Major, or as they called it Union Bob, the first in the method on the bells. The final meeting was on Saturday, March 8, at the Bell in Angel Alley, where sixteen months before the club had begun and this was the fiftieth time it had met. Laughton gave them a supper of a shoulder of veal and two plum puddings, and they spent the night talking of what they had done, and reminding each other what fine fellows they were.

When Laughton wrote his 367  
panegyric he quite fairly represented  
the life of the club as a completed whole.  
He agreed to attempt a certain task,  
he tells his reader. He performed it to  
the full. He met the round number  
of fifty times. And then our job ended  
in triumph we agreed to part. <sup>(112)</sup> Part  
just for the very reason that the thing  
had been such a success, and still was  
a success, we can hardly believe it  
was given up voluntarily. Perhaps the  
pace was too hot for some of them;  
and behind we can see the shadow of  
Annable's personality. No doubt he  
was tired of Laughton and his ways,

fired of the things he was 368  
saying about him in taverns and  
among rings up and down the town,  
and he made up his mind to smash  
him once and for all.

But Laughton did not fall without  
an effort. There were men, old friends  
of his among Annable's supporters. A  
peal was rung at St. Lawrence, Jersey,  
on May 17<sup>th</sup> and it looks as if it was  
intended as a reconciliation between  
the official College youths and the  
erst while Ramblers. Laughton, it will  
be remembered, had the entrée to that  
belfry, and we imagine, arranged the  
attempt. He and Trenell rang in it,

and Pickard, Hayward, Dearmor, 369  
Lucas, Hobbs, and Spicer. But Annable  
refused to take part and with that  
performance Laughlin drops out of the  
history of change ringing, and we hear  
no more of him.

The method was Court Bob Major  
the variation that afterwards was known  
as Double London Court <sup>(113)</sup>; it was the  
first accomplished; and Richard  
Spicer called the bobs.

It was to justify himself that Laughlin  
wrote his account. All through he is  
replying to criticisms, and hitting back  
as hard as he can. "It is well known,"  
he says, "that the first design of the  
club was not to affront any soul,



but only intended as a little 370  
innocent diversion; to ring at a few  
different peals of bells, though some  
people [he means Annable] have  
taken it very 'hainously' and been  
pleas'd to call names and endeavour  
to ridicule folks behind their backs.  
He will not cavil at any person in  
particular [he seems to have been afraid  
to mention Annable by name] but  
they that have been guilty of such good  
manners can take it to themselves.  
There are some men whose nature is  
"to huff and vapour and lord it over  
their companions call filthy names and  
curse and damn 'em." Which is his

reaction to Annable's sharp tongue, 371  
though probably not literally accurate.  
He comforts himself with the thought  
that "such wretches look odious, that  
they are hated despised and <sup>in</sup> the end  
forsook," wherein the wish is father to  
the thought.

But how different were the Ramblers!  
They never quarrelled. They abolished  
all sorts of discords and ill nature.  
Among them was seen naught but pure  
good love. And a good deal more  
to the same effect.

The Rambling Ringers Club was really  
a very unimportant incident in the  
story of the London Exercise and interests  
us mainly because of the light it throws

on the more intimate doings of the 372  
ringers. The famous exploits about which  
Laughton boasts so much, do not after  
all amount to a great deal, even  
when judged by the standards of those  
days. Three peals of Bob Major; some  
touches of Grand sire Triples, Bob Major  
and Treble Bob; some 720's of College  
Single, Plain Bob, Court Bob, Oxford  
Treble Bob, Morning Exercise and Cambridge  
Surprise on six bells; and some six-scores  
of Grand sire, Plain, New Bob, St. Simon's,  
and Cambridge Delight on five bells,  
complete the tally. The Cambridge Surprise  
is the best item in the list and this  
is the earliest account we have of its  
being practised though there is little

doubt that it had been rung for 373  
the past fifty years. Laughlin himself  
was a composer of pic-bell methods  
but out of the five that are extant, only  
one will produce a true 720 and so  
it was just as well his friends did not  
ring them. 114

John Trenell had made his peace  
with Annable and the Leading College  
Youths before the club broke up and  
was received back again into favour.  
He was a most excellent ringer and  
a likeable young man. For the rest of  
his career he belonged to the society's  
regular band and he took part in  
the last peal that Annable rang with  
the company. He did not ring in the

Cambewell feat. John Hayward 374  
did. He was included in Laughton's  
Condemnation, and like him drops  
out of history and is heard of no more.  
Now do we come across any further  
reference to Tom Clark, William Nash,  
Tom Greenwood, Benson, Bennett,  
Rippon or most of the other prominent  
Ramblers. That they gave up ringing  
with the break up of the club we can  
hardly suppose. There is reason to  
suppose that they formed the nucleus of  
a company not connected with any of  
the known societies which practised  
at Spitalfields, and five or six years  
later at Shoreditch, and from their

successors sprang the Society of 375  
Cumberland Youths. <sup>(115)</sup> Jeremiah Gilbert  
and John Harrington were among the  
original members of that society, and  
we also find the names of Samuel and  
Robert Green, Samuel Nash, John Coster,  
and John Carbery who probably were  
sons of men who had belonged to the  
Rambling Ringers Club. Gilbert in 1739  
rang a peal with the Eastern Scholars  
but does not appear to have been  
elected a member of that society. George  
Carbery's name appears in the list of  
Union Scholars just before they finally  
broke up. Laughton, as I have said,  
drops entirely out of sight and evidently  
he was dead or had given up ringing

When the Society of Cumberland  
Youths was founded in 1747.

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Twickenham from early times had  
a good band of ringers who called  
themselves the Twickenham Scholars.  
For many years they were in close touch  
with the College Youths, and so many  
of them were members that they may  
almost be said to have been a country  
branch of the London Company. On  
January 22<sup>nd</sup> 1734 they rang a peal  
in a method composed by Annable  
which they called *Siddlese Triples*.<sup>(116)</sup>  
The composer gives the following description  
of it - In this peal the alterations from  
Plain Bob Triples is this. Instead of the

bell in seventh's place lying still 377  
behind, the bell in fifth's lies two whole  
pulls there, and the two bells behind  
make a double dodge. In everything  
else it is the same as Plain Bob Triples.

No earlier peal on the bells is recorded  
but as we have evidence that ringing  
had been very popular in the parish  
since at least the early years of the  
Century one or more may easily have  
been rung.

In 1734 the Tainsworth men rang  
8064 changes of Grand sire Caters,  
beating the City Scholars peal at St  
Giles, Cripplegate; the band at Reading  
where there was an old ringing tradition  
rang Grand sire Triples; and the band



at Groydon rang Bob Triples.

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On September 17<sup>th</sup> Annable was married at St. Benet's Paul's Wharf to Elizabeth Hodgson of the parish of St. Andrew's Undercroft. He is described as a widower and of White Chapel Middlesex. <sup>(117)</sup> It seems curious that the wedding took place at St. Benet's seeing that neither bride nor groom was connected with the parish, but for some reason St. Benet's was at the time a very popular church for weddings, and Lord Hardwick's marriage act had not yet been passed by Parliament.

This domestic event may account for Annable's comparative slackness in peal ringing and for the Rambling

Club not being pulled up earlier. 379

Ten days after the ceremony Annable called the first peal - 1906 Major - at St. Dunstan's Stepney. The tenor which then weighed 49 cwt was rung by Cundell with Trenell to help him. Spicer rang the seventh single handed.

While the Rambling Ringers were in the middle of their activities another company comes into view, which had not only a long and distinguished career, but also very considerable influence on the history of ringing, for in a real sense it was the lineal ancestor of the present Ancient Society of College Youths. The Society of Eastern Scholars is

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said to have been founded in 1733.<sup>(118)</sup> That certainly is the earliest date in their records; but no Company, at any rate no Company of skilled ringers, can be formed at once out of nothing. It takes much patience, and time that must be measured by years, to collect and train a band competent to ring even a peal of Grandine Triples. And therefore we may be sure that the origins of the society lie much further back than that year.

We have seen that in 1718 the Union Scholars were practising and peal ringing at St. Dunstan's in the East, and that about the same time a Company called the Eastern Youths were meeting at the neighbouring church of St. Magnus. Then

381  
The Union Scholars shifted the centre  
of their activities further west and the  
Eastern Youths drop out of notice. But  
it is probable that a band of some sort  
or other still met at one or both of the  
towers. For though the College Youths did  
ring one peal at St. Magnus, that was the  
only one; and the obvious reason why  
they did not make more use of two such  
fine rings was that there were other men  
in possession. These men were content to  
live an uneventful and undistinguished  
life until there appeared among them  
a strong and energetic man who put  
new life into the Company, reorganised  
and re-created it, and formed a peal-

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ringing band which was its rival  
anything that the College Youths had done.  
It will be found that the fortunes of all  
all these old societies depended largely  
on the one man who happened at any  
particular time to be the real though  
not necessarily the titular leader. The  
College Youths owed their success and  
pre-eminence to Annable. The Union Scholars  
owed their success first to Robert Baldwin  
then to John Denmead, then to John  
Holl. The Cumberlands theirs to George  
Patrick. The mainstay of the Rambling  
Ringers was William Laughlin. So with  
other societies, and it is probable that  
the Eastern Scholars would never have

emerged from obscurity but for  
 Philemon Mainwaring. About him  
 practically nothing is known, except  
 that he must have been an extraordinarily  
 powerful man, and a very fine heavy  
 bell ringer, besides being a competent  
 conductor.

From their being able to present (in  
 part) the two trebles to S. Shagnus, we  
 may conclude that the Eastern youths were  
 men of a superior class, and it is likely  
 that their successors the Eastern Scholars  
 were also much above the average. At  
 any rate one of them was a man named  
 Francis Popham, who seems to have been  
 an ordinary, average member of the Company.

But in 1735 he joined the Union 384  
Scholars, and in the list of names of that  
society (written about 1750) he is described  
as an esquire. Now esquire in the  
eighteenth century was not just a mere  
courtesy title given to one who happened  
to be rather better off than his fellows.  
It was a definite rank, and the title  
was confined to those who had the right  
to armorial bearings. This enables us  
to identify Popham as a member of an  
old Somerset family. Sir John Popham  
(1531-1607) was Lord Chief Justice of  
England. <sup>(119)</sup> His son, Sir Francis was  
Member of Parliament and a politician  
of some eminence. Several of his descendants

bore the name of Francis, and the 385  
ringer was fifth in descent from the judge.  
He married the daughter of Matthew  
Hutton, Archbishop of Canterbury, and  
as he died in 1780 only a year after his  
father <sup>(120)</sup> he obviously was only a young  
man when he was ringing with the  
Eastern Scholars.

Theodore Eccleston, who joined the  
society a couple of years later was of  
similar rank, and so probably was  
John Bradshaw, if we may assume  
him to have been the son of Peter  
Bradshaw, the College Youth.

The "Eastern Scholars" first peal was  
one of "Grandine Tribbles" rung on March  
13<sup>th</sup>, 1734, <sup>(121)</sup> at St. Dunstan's-in-the-East.



The band was - Daniel Leg, 386  
Seymour Hussey, Stephen Wilmshurst,  
Philemon Mainwaring, Jacob Hall, James  
Götter, Samuel Vaughan, and John Long.  
Time 3 hours and 10 minutes. Mainwaring  
called the bobs, but what the composition  
was we do not know. Possibly, even  
probably it was the false peal from the  
1702 Campanalogia. Daniel Leg, most  
likely was the same as the Daniel Lucke  
who later in the year joined the Rambling  
Ringers on one occasion and who in  
1732 had rung the seventh at Greenwich  
to a peal.

In October 1734 the Eastern Scholars  
rang 5040 Changes of Bob Major at  
St. Dunstan's and in the following month

after a quarter peal as a practice <sup>387</sup>  
they scored 6012 Grandire Caters at  
S. Magnus, and in December 5600  
in the same method at S. Martin-in-  
the-Fields. Mainwaring called all these  
peals, ringing the tenor to the Major  
and the ninth to the Caters. Topham  
rang the tenor to the six-thousand  
single handed.

In 1735 Samuel Knight's new ring  
of twelve was hung at S. Pavous's  
Southwark. The College youths rang  
the bells for the first time on August 2  
but the Eastern Scholars were one of the  
first bands to practice in the steeple  
and they accomplished the first peal

there on November 28<sup>th</sup>. The method 388  
was Grand sire Cairns and, notwithstanding  
the weight of metal 6012 changes were  
rung. Mainwaring called from the  
ninth (the eleventh in the ring of twelve)  
and three men were needed for the  
tenor one of whom was Theodore  
Eccleston.

A little more than a fortnight  
later the College Youths rang the first  
peal on the twelve one of Grand sire  
Cinques, and to show that they were  
the leading band in the country and  
to beat all records they rang 8008  
changes. Annable conducted from the  
tenth, Cundell rang the eleventh  
single handed, and three men - East,

Wendleborough and Spicer - were 389  
put to the tenor. The other ringers were  
Pickard, Samuel Lee, Dearmor, Watson,  
Mobbs, Jeacock, Ward and Trenell.

It was East's last peal and thence-  
forth his name appears no more in  
our story, though we cannot doubt  
that for some time he continued to be  
a prominent member of the society. In  
the previous year he had been Master.  
The total number of his peals was only  
seven - three of Grand sire Caters, three  
of Grand sire Cinqes, and one of Bob  
Triples, and in five of them he rang or  
helped to ring the covering tenor; yet  
as the Conductor of the first twelve bell  
peal ever rung, and the first peal rung

by the Society of College Youths, he 390  
has a definite place in the history of the  
art.

In addition to the first peal at St.  
Michael's the College Youths had now  
rung four peals of Grandeire Cinques,  
one at each of the existing twelve-bell  
towers and every one a record - 5060  
at St. Bride's in 1725; 6312 at St. Martin's  
in 1728; 7018 at St. Michael's in 1732;  
and now 8008 at St. Savours in 1735.  
The last length was not beaten until  
1887 one hundred and fifty two years  
later when the Birmingham rang  
9020 changes at St. Martin's in the Bull Ring.

The incentive to the earlier of these  
performances was the rivalry between  
the College Youths and the London

Scholars: How far it operated in 39'  
the case of the latter peals, or how far the  
Eastern Scholars had taken the place  
of the London Scholars, we cannot tell.  
In 1735 the latter company was probably  
still in existence, but shortly afterwards  
it broke up and finally disappeared.  
In 1730 they were the leading company  
in England, the equals of the College  
Youths as practical ringers, their superiors  
socially. They assisted at the opening of  
Fulham bells and after that <sup>(122)</sup> we hear  
no more of them. It was common  
enough a thing for a society to be formed  
to ring together for a while, and then  
to break up. But the London Scholars

Had half a Century and more 392  
of tradition behind them and would  
not so easily collapse. Their undoing  
probably was the want of a leader of  
the calibre of Annable or Particks and  
the refusal or failure to attract young  
recruits. So long as there was enough  
of them, of men of their own class and  
generation to make a band, they were  
content. But when their numbers began  
to fall through death, or retirement,  
or the almost inevitable quarrel, the  
society lapsed.

Quite likely that did not happen  
till some years after 1730. Quite likely  
they still went on peal ringing. For in  
1746 William Underwood appears among

393

the College Youths, and just  
previously (in 1742 and 1744), two other  
men who had also rung in the London  
Scholars' peals of Cinques in 1728 and 1729 -  
Robert Powell and William Gordon -  
joined the same society. There is no trace  
of their having belonged to any other  
company in the meanwhile, and as both  
were active ringers, (Powell rang five  
peals with the College Youths) the  
presumption is that they came to that  
society when or shortly after the London  
Scholars broke up.

On February 18<sup>th</sup> 1735 when the Ramblers  
held their last meeting they went to  
Christ Church Spitalfields, and Trenell



394  
turned the 44 cwt tenor in to three  
courses of Treble Bob the first changes in  
the method ever rung on the bells. A  
year later on February 23<sup>rd</sup> 1736 the  
Eastern Scholars scored the first peal  
in the method in the steeple. Philimon  
Mainwaring called the bobs and rang  
rang the tenor single handed. It was  
a very fine heavy bell performance, and  
not until quite recently has a weightier  
tenor been turned in by one man to a  
peal of Major <sup>(123)</sup>. It was a challenge to  
the College youths which they quickly  
took up and only three days later a  
band of the society rang what they called  
a "fine peal" at Christ Church with

Trenell at the Tenor. Both Bands 395  
rang Baldwin's five part composition.  
The Eastern Scholars Band included  
Andrew Field who had come from the  
College Youths, William Hillier, the old  
City Scholar, Francis Topham, and  
Samuel Vaughan. The College Youths'  
band was Richard Wendleborough,  
Samuel Lee, Benjamin Annable, James  
Stuckbury, Robert Hobbs, Richard Spicer,  
George Elion Hill, and John Trenell.

Elion Hill conducted the peal, and  
this was the first since the Cinques of  
1725 that Annable had rung in and  
not called.

The ringers of the fourth does not seem  
to have taken part in any other peal  
we rather wonder if he was an ancestor

of the James Stickney who was a 396  
prominent member of the London Exercise  
at the beginning of the nineteenth Century.

The Eastern Scholars had rung the first  
peal at Southwark, but it was Colers. Their  
ambition was to score a peal of Cinques  
and in January 1736 they rang half a  
peal as a practice, but they were baulked  
of their full ambition by a quarrel which  
split the company into two factions.  
Laughton boasted that the Ramblers  
were the only band in the town free  
from dissensions and that the members  
of the other societies were always quarrelling  
That seems to have been largely true  
and if we had a full story of these men  
a good deal of it would be concerned

with their rivalries and differences. 397

The Eastern Scholars were no exception.

A rivalry sprang up between Mainwaring and John Denmead. Denmead was the more recent member. He had neither the opportunity nor the physical qualities to compete with the other as a penwinger, but he did consider that he was the better conductor, and so the society was divided into two factions. Denmead took his party to Camberwell and called a peal of Bob Triples there; and the other took his party to St. Dunstan's-in-the-Forest and called a peal of Bob Major there.

Thomas Bennett was the only man who was either sufficiently friendly with both rivals, or sufficiently indifferent

to their claims, to ring in both 398  
feats.

Two rival feat ringing bands within the same society would now-a-days be quite a usual thing. It was otherwise in the eighteenth century. The social life was too intimate for that to be possible for long. And so Benmead's party left the Eastern Scholars and joined the Union Scholars. The latter society since 1718 had had a quiet and uneventful existence. It now again comes into the story and takes its place as one of the leading London companies.

In 1735 a man joined the Society of College Youths, who although he did not take any active part in the life

of the London Exercise deserves 399  
mention as he was among the most  
distinguished men who have been ringers.

Richard Dawes was one of the chief  
Greek scholars that England has produced.  
He was a Leicestershire man, born in  
1708 near Market Bosworth. He  
matriculated at Emmanuel College,  
Cambridge as a sizar in 1726 and joined  
the Cambridge Joints on April 15<sup>th</sup> 1731.  
Although he never held any office in  
the society nor rang in any of their feasts  
he kept his love for ringing throughout  
his life. He took his degree as seventh  
wrangler in 1729, was elected fellow of  
his college in 1731, and proceeded M.A. in  
1733. He came forward as a candidate

for the office of Esquire Beadle, 400  
but was not elected the reason for his  
rejection being thus given by his biographer:  
"When care for his health compelled  
him to rouse himself out of the state of  
bodily inactivity into which his leisure  
and studies had brought him, he  
chose bell-ringing as an exercise; and  
being of a strong athletic frame of body  
and impelled in everything in which  
he engaged by such a genius as could  
not stop at mediocrity he quickly became  
leader of the band, and carried the art  
to the highest perfection." But our author  
goes on to tell us that Margaret, daughter  
and heir of John Duke of Somerset, ~~the~~  
grandson of John of Gaunt, was said

to have bequeathed a certain

401

allowance of ale to the pingers of Great St. Marys, <sup>(124)</sup> "in which Dawes made no scruple of indulging after a long lesson in Campanology, and on such occasions he seasoned the nutt crown draughts with a spicing of wit and humour, in which he was rich and overflowing when his spirits were high enough to bring him into the kind of company in which he delighted".

D. Paley's father is given as the authority for the above, and the writer goes on to say that this "associating with companions pursued to a gowrsmen and amusing them with humour and opinions which became the subject of



Conversations, and were at variance 402  
with the prevailing opinion of the University  
led to his being rejected when he offered  
himself for the office of Esquire Beadle. (125)

The author was writing in 1828, and  
was judging the early Cambridge froths  
by the rings and standards of his own  
time. Dawes's companions included  
Dr. Mason, the Reverend Samuel Roe,  
and the Reverend Mr. Windle, besides  
a number of worthy and respectable  
tradesmen, but he evidently had strong  
and not very complimentary opinions  
of some of the great men in the University  
and was not over particular as to who  
should know it. That he should criticise

The University heads in the Company 403  
of townsmen and in the parlour of a  
public inn, was to some people an un-  
pardonable offence, and, we may be  
sure, what he said lost nothing in  
the repetition.

In 1738 Dawes was appointed master  
of the Grammar School at Newcastle-on-  
Tyne and master of St. Mary's Hospital.  
He held those offices for over ten years  
but was not a success in them, and  
his life was not a happy one. He was  
continually at war with the governors  
and in quarrels with his neighbours.  
He resigned the school in 1749 and  
retired to Howorth, three miles from  
Newcastle and there in 1766 he died

Having become practically insane 404  
before his death. Besides ringing his  
favourite amusement was rowing on  
the river. The book on which his fame  
rests is the *Miscellanea Critica* a learned  
work on the Greek Language, written  
at Newcastle and published at  
Cambridge in 1741. Charles Mason  
helped to see it through the press. It  
has been reprinted four or five times  
including an edition which appeared  
at Leipzig. Richard Dawes was one  
of those rare men, who, both in greatness  
and in weakness, stand outside  
ordinary society, and cannot be judged  
by ordinary standards. (126)

The Society of Union Scholars had 405  
once more an active peal ringing band,  
and on February 11<sup>th</sup> 1736 a company  
consisting for the most part of the men  
who had come with Denmead from  
the Eastern Scholars, with Captain  
Raeph Hill, the master for the year,  
rang 5040 changes of Bob Royal at  
St. Martins-in-the-Fields, the church  
which for the next twenty years or so  
was to be one of the society's regular  
meeting places. Denmead conducted.

He continued peal ringing with the  
Union Scholars for three years during  
which time they scored seven five-  
thousands. Two of them were Plain Bob  
Royal, two Plain Bob Major, one Plain

Bob Triples, one Grandire Triples, 406  
and one the name of which it is  
impossible to read in the feal book.  
Denmead called them all and composed  
most of them. The Grandire Triples  
raises a rather interesting speculation.  
It was rung on the front eight at St.  
Martins, picked and called by Jn Denmead  
who rang the sixth. There is a Bob and  
Single feal, the composer of which is  
unknown and which was printed by  
the authors of the Clavis. It has always  
been associated with Hollis' feals, has  
often been rung as Hollis', and yet it is  
not his. Is it not likely that it came  
to the Exercise with Hollis' feals from  
the Union Scholars and is Denmead's feal? (126)

The Bob Triples was rung at St. 407  
Martins on May 20<sup>th</sup> 1738 and although  
it is not so stated it also was probably  
on the Light eight. It is described as  
5040 Bob Major Trebles containing the  
Treble Leads and Bobs of yr. Compleat peal  
of 40.320 Bob Major, Eight-in. (128)

The name of the unknown method was  
read by Osborn as "Hack Trebles." Snowden  
and Tuke although they had every reason  
to read it "Hick" considered "Ham" nearer  
the mark. (129) It may have been Garthorn's  
peal but the style of Albion's ornamental  
writing makes it impossible to say what  
it was.

One of the peals of Bob Major was the  
first of the  
many famous performances in the present

steeple of St. Giles in the Fields. 408

Langhion had rung a peal of Minor in the old tower, as we have mentioned.

Denmeads' East recorded peal was 5040 Changes of Bob Royal, at St. Paviers, on February 19<sup>th</sup> 1739. His old rival Gilesmon Mainwaring had temporarily fallen out with the Eastern Scholars, and had come over to the Union Scholars. He rang the 51 Cut. Tenor single handed the first time she had ever been turned in to a peal. It ranks high among the heavy bell feats. It is a moot point whether it is more difficult to ring a 51 Cut Tenor to Bob Royal, or a 44 Cut. Tenor to Treble Bob Major. Mainwaring did both. Trenell turned Spitalfields

penon in to Major and rang 409  
Southward penon behind; and Cundell  
turned St. Saviour's penon in to Mascamis;  
but Shawwaring was the first to show  
that these things could be done.

One of the three men who rang St.  
Saviour's penon to the Eastern Scholars'  
peal of Baters in 1735 was Theodore  
Eccleston. He was a wealthy young  
man twenty years old, who came of  
a Quaker family. His grandfather  
(also named Theodore) was a City merchant  
who had large interests and acquaintances  
in the American Colonies, a man of <sup>(221)</sup>  
weight and substance and greatly  
honoured and trusted. In 1704 Thomas



Baron of Enfield appointed him 410  
one of the overseers (i.e. executors) of his  
will. In 1708 Patience Ashfield of Stains  
left him "a piece of broad gold", and appointed  
him overseer, and in a Codicil made  
a bequest to John, Son of Theodore. Richard  
Hoskins of the Province of Philadelphia  
also appointed Theodore his executor. (131)

John Eccleston had five children, four  
of them daughters and the younger  
Theodore. When he died his property was  
equally divided between the widow and  
the five children. The widow had a brother  
Henry Harwood son of John Harwood  
another wealthy City merchant. He  
received a grant of arms from the Herald's

College, purchased an estate 411  
in Suffolk and so became a Country  
gentleman. Harwood died intestate  
in 1738 and his sister succeeded to the  
whole of his estates. She in turn left  
them to her son Theodore for the term  
of his life with ultimate remainder  
to an American Cousin.

By this means Eccleston became  
possessed of Crowfield Hall and Bocking  
Hall in Suffolk, and Dickleburgh Hall  
near Diss in Norfolk; with Lands in the  
parishes of Crowfield, Wetheringsett,  
Brocksfield, Stionham Aspall, Mendlesham,  
Earl Stionham, Goddenham, Wratisham  
and Ringshall. <sup>(132)</sup> He did not become

the owner of these until after 412  
1743, but previously he was living at  
Crowfield Hall as the squire.

Crowfield parish church has no tower  
but at Coddenham, Eccleston installed  
a ring of eight bells with a tenor  $16\frac{1}{2}$  cwt  
cast at Whitechapel by Thomas Lester;  
and at Stonham Aspal a ring of ten  
bells with a tenor 24 cwt from the same  
foundry. These were really munificent  
gifts. The only rings of ten in the  
Eastern Counties at the time were at  
St. Peter, Mancroft, Norwich, and Great  
St. Mary, Cambridge

The tower of Stonham Aspal church  
is a small one, the belfry being reached

by a ladder and a trap door. 413

There was no room for ten bells; no room for eight of any size; and the way the difficulty was got over was ingenious but not to be imitated. The top of the tower was pulled down to the bottom of the windows of the bell chamber. The frame was then set on the walls, and the whole roofed with a wooden, weather-boarded structure. <sup>(213)</sup> The ten bells are thus hung on one level, but they are <sup>(133)</sup> very difficult to hear inside the belfry.

The inscription on the ninth bell tells the story as follows — "In this tower hung 5 bells, the tenor weighing 10 cwt. 2 qrs 0 lbs. In the year 1742 they

L14

were taken down and with ye  
addition of 3 tons 10 hun of mettles were  
recast into ten att ye expence of  
Theodore Eccleston, esq. of Crowfield Hall  
aged 27 years. He also gave a new frame  
att ye same time 1742. Thomas Lester  
made us all." (134)

Pieces without ringers are of little  
use and consequently Eccleston set  
himself to get a band together. There  
were enough men on his own estate to  
supply the rank and file. Some of the  
local farmers joined him and among  
them John Ball and Samuel Anderson.  
For instructors and bob-callers he had  
to go further afield.

His first instructor was John Foster

from Norwich. Foster was one 415  
of the Norwich Scholars, the Landlord  
of the Eight Bells in Mancroft parish  
and the ringer of the sixth in the first  
peal of Stedman Triples. He showed  
himself an efficient instructor and  
on September 10<sup>th</sup> 1741 he called at  
Coddensham, Garthorn's peal of Grandwire  
Triples - Garthorn's Triples the peal board  
calls it "being the first true peal that"  
ever was struck with two Doubles only  
Eccleston rang the Treble and Samuel  
Anderson the Tenor.

Foster's trade as a publican made  
it fairly easy for him to transfer  
himself from Norwich and no doubt  
he had been installed in one of the inns

on Eccleston's estate. But, like 416  
William Shipway later on, he found that  
there are disadvantages in being the expert  
ringing instructor to a wealthy Country  
gentleman amateur. There is not so much  
as a decent sized village for miles round  
Coddernham and after the bustle and  
stir and life of Norwich market place  
he found the Country intolerably dull  
and monotonous. Presently he had  
the opportunity of going not back to  
Norwich, but to Lincoln and there  
some years later at St. Peter at Arches  
he again called Garthorn's peal. (135)

After Foster was gone Eccleston  
induced three men from London to

spend some time in Suffolk. 417

One was Andrew Field whom we have already come across first as a College Youth and later among the Eastern Scholars. The second was William Walker the clever young son of William Walker the leader of the Richmond Band. <sup>(136)</sup> The third was John Sharp whom we shall meet again in London.

Field called a peal of Bob Major at Coddenhams on November 9<sup>th</sup> 1742 to which Eccleston rang the tenor and John Ball the fifth.

John Sharp went down to Suffolk some time after 1742 and on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of September 1751 he called 5040 Changes of Double Bob Major on the largest eight



bells at Stonham Aspall, and L:18  
four months later he rang the seventh to  
Hollis' Original peal of Grand sire Triples  
in the same sleuple. William Walker  
who had rung the seventh to the Major  
called the Cobs in Hollis' peal from  
manuscript sitting in the belfry "as it  
was thought impossible for a man to  
ring one of the bells and call the Cobs  
at the same time, the peal being so  
intricate." <sup>(137)</sup> Seven months later at

Norwich William Discon was the first  
man to ring a bell and call the peal.

Sharp called at least one more  
peal at Stonham - 6160 Bob Major on  
February 11<sup>th</sup> 1752 to which Walker rang  
the tenor.

For some time after Eccleston's 419  
death there remained a good band  
of ringers at Honham St. Paul, and  
in 1768 they achieved a peal of Bob Major  
and then the company gradually died  
out or lapsed into an ordinary Country  
village band.

Theodore Eccleston had a house at  
Northlake on the Thames a little below  
Richmond. I imagine that that was  
his original home, and in 1741 he  
added two bells to Wightman's ring  
of six in the steeple of the parish church (138)  
In 1746 he married Catherine, the  
daughter of Samuel Jacobs of Ipswich (139)  
The wedding took place at Northlake.

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Less than a year later Mr.  
Eccleston died in child birth and the  
infant poor poor after. Eccleston seems  
to have spent much of his time at  
Northlake and here too he got together  
an excellent band of ringers. Fulham  
was no great distance. There was a  
skilled company there and in William  
Skellon a ringer who could meet  
Eccleston on terms of social equality  
In 1746 the latter decided to replace  
the two trebles which Robert Catlin  
had cast for Northlake and which  
had proved unsatisfactory. Instead  
of having them recast he ordered two  
new bells from Whitechapel and gave  
the old ones to Fulham where after

being recast they were hung at  
Skellion's expense. (140)

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That there was a good local band at  
Fulham is shown by their ringing on January  
24<sup>th</sup> 1736, 10,080 changes of Bob Major in  
6 1/2 hours and 40 minutes, and it is likely  
that they rang other peals the record of  
which is lost.

William Skellion died on October 9<sup>th</sup>  
1762, (141) and was buried in Fulham Churchyard  
where there was a tombstone to his memory. (142)

His son, also named William, was a  
ringer and a member of the Society of  
College Youths. (143)

Theodore Eccleston gave five bells to  
Winchester Cathedral but what connection  
he had with that city does not appear.  
He had begun his ringing career as

a member of the Society of Eastern 423  
Scholars, but later he joined the College  
Youths. He rang no peal with them, but  
he held the office of steward in 1747 and  
of master in 1750. Anderson and Ball  
his two Crowfield friends became members  
of the society and so did John Skovill  
one of the Notlake band.

Theodore Eccleston died in 1753, and  
was buried at Notlake on January 14<sup>th</sup>  
with his wife and infant son. The  
Church contains no memorial to him  
but one of the many illegible tombstones  
in the churchyard probably marks his  
grave. He was only thirty-seven years  
old when he died. It was the case with  
Henry Brel <sup>(144)</sup> an absurd legend arose

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that his love of punting caused  
him to squander his estate and led to  
his ruin. Dr. Raven, in his *Bees of Suffolk*  
says that the Crowfield estate was purchased  
in the year 1764 by Arthur Middleton,  
Governor of South Carolina; but as we have  
seen, according to the will of Isabella  
Eccleston, her son Theodore had only a  
life interest in the estates, which after  
his death passed by remainder to his  
cousin, William Middleton, and so  
ultimately to the present owner Lady  
de Launay.

In disposing of his other property  
Theodore Eccleston did not forget his  
friend Samuel Anderson. He left him  
10/6 a week for life.

Eccleston gave in all twenty-four

bells to various churches. Eleven 425  
of them still remain; the others have  
been recast.

After the record length of Cinques  
at Southwark, the College youths had  
a very quiet period so far as peal  
ringing went. During two years only one  
peal was scored. That was College Bob  
Major at St. Bride's on January 24<sup>th</sup>. 1737,  
the first ever rung in the method, Tunable  
conducted, and Trenchell and William  
Richard rang in it, but most of the  
prominent members of the society were  
absent. Later on in the same year the  
Eastern Scholars rang one of the most  
notable peals on record, one which in  
some respects has never been beaten.

This was 15,120 Changes of Bob L26  
Major at All Saints, West Ham.

The band consisted of John Braby,  
Thomas Hart, Robert Goodner, John Bradshaw  
Thomas Bennet, John Long, Francis  
Topham, and Thilemon Mainwaring.

Mainwaring called the bobs and rang  
the tenor which weighs 28 cwt. The peal  
stood as the record number of changes  
rung in any method and on any number  
of bells for fifty-six years, until 1793,  
when 15,360 Changes, also of Bob Major,  
were rung at Aston, Birmingham. That  
was unbeaten in the method until  
Whit Monday 1933 when 18,144 Changes  
were rung at Pennington in Hertfordshire.  
Meanwhile in 1868, 15,840 Changes of



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Kent Treble Bob were rung at  
Bethnal Green; in 1883, 16,608 changes  
in the same method at Skotham in  
Lancashire; in 1892 the same number in  
Oxford Treble Bob at Debenham; in 1899  
17,024 changes of Double Norwich at Kidlington  
in 1904, 17,104 changes in the same method  
at South Wigston, Leicestershire; in 1923  
17,280 of Kent Treble Bob at Over in Cheshire;  
and in 1927, 17,824 changes of Oxford  
Treble Bob at Heptonstall. In 1922 it  
was reported that 18,240 changes of Kent  
had been rung at Skotham, but the  
composition was afterwards found to be  
false and the bells had got out of place  
and been put right in the actual performance. (145)

Besides these peals, fifteen thousand  
changes have been rung several times

on different numbers of bells and L28  
in various methods, but where the West  
Ham peal is unique is in the weight of  
metal. Only once has a heavier bell  
been rung to a peal longer than fifteen  
thousand changes, and that was at  
Loughborough in 1909 when William  
Iye rang the 30 cwt. tenor behind to  
Hedman Calers. That bell was hung  
with all the skill and all the scientific  
methods at the disposal of the leading  
and most up-to-date firm of bell founders. (146)  
Mainwaring turned in West Ham tenor  
a bell hung in the old style and by the  
old rule of thumb methods. Except  
in one instance none of the lengths which  
are supposed to have beaten this peal

approaches in weight of metal. 429

Bethnal Green tenor is  $14\frac{1}{2}$  cut.; Mottram tenor, South Wigston, Pennington, and Over about the same weight; Heptonstall tenor is 18 cut. and Debenham tenor a ton. The exception is Keddington tenor which is usually given as 27 cut. but I have been assured that it is not really more than about 24 cut.; and though the length was rung there the performance was not above suspicion.

The West Ham peal, with the Treble Bob Major at Spitalfields and the Bob Royal at Southwark, definitely places Mainwaring among the foremost heavy bell ringers of all time.

But a doubtful point is raised by the time it took to ring the peal in.

Both the peal board and the peal 430  
book give it as 8 hours 40 minutes;  
and if that is correct then, either the  
ringing was extraordinarily fast, or else  
the number of changes was some thousands  
less than what was claimed. Some fifty  
years later the authors of the Clavis,  
voicing no doubt the general opinion of  
the London ringers at the time, roundly  
declared that the peal could not have  
been rung. "Notwithstanding that  
there is a frame at West Ham in Essex  
so they say" for upwards of 15,000, it  
is well known, by the time mentioned  
and the weight of the bells, they could  
scarcely ring thirteen."

Too much weight need not be given

to this opinion. William Jones 431  
and his Coadjutors had probably known  
and rung with Thomas Bennet in his  
old age, but they were not very likely  
to know much about the matter, and  
there are indications that they shared  
the scepticism with which ringers at  
all times have been prone to regard  
performances not within their immediate  
purview.

But still there is the doubt. Given  
a perfectly going bell, an extraordinarily  
skilful ringer, and a thoroughly competent  
band in front of him, I do not doubt it  
would be possible to turn a 28 Cwt tenor  
in to a five-thousand in 2 hours and  
53 minutes. But such a thing has

(167)  
not yet been done, and certainly 432  
none of the early feals at West Ham  
approaches that rate. A month after  
the fifteen-thousand Shainwaring called  
a feal of P.S. Triples there which took  
3 hours and 7 minutes. Other feals of  
Major took 3 hours, 15 minutes; 3 hours  
20 minutes; while Triples took 3 hours;  
3 hours, 24 minutes; 3 hours 20 minutes;  
3 hours 22 minutes; and 3 hours 10 minutes.

The most probable explanation is  
that the time on the feal board is a  
mistake and should be 9 hours 40  
minutes, not 8 hours 40 minutes. It is  
true that the feal book gives the same  
time as the feal board, but it is probable

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that the book was not written  
until some time after 1737 and the  
particulars were taken from the board.  
Otherwise either the Conductor made a  
mistake in the Calling without knowing  
it, or the band deliberately claimed to  
have done what they must have known  
they had not done; and there is no  
reason to suppose that they were likely  
to be guilty of such a fraud.

During the years 1736, 1737, and 1738  
the College Youths only rang four peals  
and all of them were Major. One was the  
peal of College Bob already mentioned;  
another was the first peal of Treble Bob  
at St. Giles-in-the-Fields; and the third

was a peal of Morning Exercise on 434  
the front eight bells at St. Bride's. The  
last method is Oxford Treble Bob  
above the treble and Cambridge Surprise  
below. It was the most difficult peal  
that had as yet been rung. <sup>(1418)</sup> But as the  
lead ends are irregular and there are  
eight false course ends with the tenors  
together, it is pretty certain that the  
composition was false, especially as  
it seems to have been an adaptation  
of Baldwin's five part peal of Treble Bob.

These peals were by Annable and his  
immediate followers. His opponents were  
a majority within the society and  
though Cundell was not strong enough



to get himself elected master, he 435  
was strong enough to keep his rival out.  
For twelve years Arnable had been the  
most skilful member of the company, the  
conductor of nearly all the feasts; yet it  
was not until 1737 that he was elected  
steward and meanwhile his inferiors in  
ability and his juniors in the society  
had passed through the chair. Samuel  
Fielding who followed Matthew East  
was one of the old school; John Patrick  
who followed him was, I imagine, the  
son or grandson of John Patrick, the  
composer and owed his position to the  
weight of his name, for there is no  
evidence that he did anything himself

to account for his rapid advancement 436  
- elected 1730, steward 1733, master 1736.

Samuel Jacock, master in 1737, had rung  
in many of the early peals; and John  
Pearson who followed him was one of the  
band who rang the Cinques in 1725.

It seems that he died during his term  
of office for another man Francis Tudnam  
a member of thirty years standing  
completed the year.

That Cundell's influence at head  
quarters was at this time greater than  
Annable's is shown by the fact that on  
November 29<sup>th</sup> 1738 he called for the  
society at St. Bride's the first peal ever  
rung of Double Grandure Cinques.

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The band was John Ward, Peter  
Carr, Samuel Lee, William Pickard, James  
Barlow, Stephen Pickard, John Dearnor,  
Richard Wendleborough, William Watts,  
Robert Hobbs, John Cundell, and John  
Trenell. Cundell conducted, but  
Annable was excluded from the band  
and what that exclusion meant to  
him we may perhaps guess. He  
however rang in the only peals scored  
in the next year and in them neither  
Cundell nor John Ward nor any of the  
old hands except Trenell took part.

One was during the annual Whitsun-  
tide outing at St. Peter's, Northampton,  
"and on this journey they rang a great

many peals of less note at 438  
several places on the road thither. " (149)

The other two were the first peal of Double  
Bob at Fulham and the first peal of  
Treble Bob at Twickenham. Stephen  
Pickard called the Fulham peal.

The year 1738 was a blank one for  
the Eastern Scholars. They apparently  
were torn by rivalries and dissensions  
ending, as we have seen, by skimming  
going to the Union Scholars, who alone  
among the leading London Companies  
were able to ring more than one peal  
during the twelvemonth.

It was perhaps not altogether  
unconnected with these quarrels that

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two non-society peals were rung  
about this time. The first, said to have  
been by a "Society of Compilers" <sup>(156)</sup> was at  
St. Mary, Skatfelon, Whitechapel, on  
April 16<sup>th</sup> 1737, and consisted of "Seven  
Compleat Surprise Linc Bell Peals." The  
methods which would not now all  
rank as Surprise were Gocford Triple  
Peal, Cambridge Surprise, London Surprise,  
Morning Exercise, Bristol Surprise, <sup>(157)</sup>  
Worcester Surprise, and York Surprise.  
The band was James Titchbourn and  
James Stewart who belonged to the Eastern  
Scholars; James Forsee, Edward Newton  
and Thomas Smallshaw who were London  
Youths, and William Barrett, the Conductor

who was a College Youth.

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This is the earliest notice we have of the London Youths. They were a Company whose headquarters was in Whitechapel or Bethnal Green and who lasted with varying fortune until the early years of the nineteenth Century. For some years after 1753 a branch ranked as one of the leading societies in London.

Edward Newton had been an Eastern Scholar, and Smallshaw one of the Ramblers. Fitchbourn was ringing bells with the Eastern Scholars in 1749-52 and with the Union Scholars much about the same time. He appears to have changed from one to the other more

than once. He was afterwards  
leader of the London Youths.

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William Barrett, the Conductor joined  
the College Youths in 1733, but, for some  
reason or other, never got into their peal  
band and his name does not appear  
in the records of any of the London  
Societies until 1752 when he rang a  
couple of peals with the Eastern Scholars.

The other non-society peal was  
rung on December 28<sup>th</sup> 1738 at St.  
Andrew's, Holborn. It consisted of 6,60  
changes of Bob Major and is said to  
have been by the Friendly Society. John  
Bosc, who, it will be remembered, rang  
the ninth to the City Scholars' peal of  
Grandsire Gates in 1732 turned the

28 cut tenon in single handed. LH 2

Robert Hobbs from the College Juniors rang the seventh; Stephen Green, who had been one of the Ramblers rang the fifth; Robert Board (or Beard), an Eastern Scholar, rang the sixth; and John Sharp, at the time one of the Union Scholars rang the second.

Earlier in the year the Norwich Scholars scored their feat of Grand sire Caters - 12,600 Changes - which remained the record length in the method until 1888.

Whatever may have been the trouble among the Eastern Scholars, the society had abundant vitality and the year 1739 was the beginning of a period of



great activity and prosperity.

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Vaughan, Palmer, Barnett and Popham came back from the Union Scholars, (it may be because Skainwaring had gone there) and this together with the death or retirement of Denmead was a sad blow to the latter company. After the Plain Ten-in at Southwark they only rang two peals in eight years - one at Lambeth in 1739 and one at Fulham in 1741.

The three peals the Eastern Scholars rang in 1739 were Bob Major at Stepney, Bob Major at Croydon, and 5080 changes of Grand sire Cinqes at Southwark. They claimed the Bob Major as the first

peals in the two towers; but five <sup>years</sup>  
years earlier Annable had called a  
peal of Major at Stepney and we are not  
to suppose that any peal that he took  
part in was not a true one. <sup>(185)</sup>

Andrew Field who had not yet gone  
to Coddensham called the Cingus at  
Southwark.

On August 18<sup>th</sup> 1738 died Richard  
Sheeps. He was a native of Acrebury in  
Wiltshire and came up to London as  
a young man. Some time before 1700  
he set up as a bell founder, and in 1701  
when James Bartlet died he acquired  
the Whitechapel foundry which under  
his control prospered exceedingly. He  
was a fine craftsman, one of the best of

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all English bell founders, and examples of his work are to be found in many parts of England. His greatest feat in London is St. Michael's, Cornhill, bells which have always had a deservedly high reputation.

St. Magnus the Martyr, St. Andrews, Holborn, and the ring which was once at St. Dionis Backchurch and afterwards at All Hallows, Lombard Street are his also; but in all these cases some of the bells have been recast.

The five ton hour bell at St. Paul's Cathedral is his and almost the last job he did was to recast the tenor of Hodson's heavy ring of eight at St. Mary-le-Bow. The 5<sup>th</sup> bell was for nearly five centuries deemed to be "one of the best bells in existence" (153)

and the official reason for her 446  
being broken up in 1933 and recast  
was not that she was defective in tone  
or could be improved on, but that she  
had developed a crack in the crown -  
a not unusual thing in old bells, and  
due, as a rule, to the unequal expansion  
of two metals where the iron clapper staple  
is cast into the bell.

In the country Phelps's most important  
rings are Great St. Mary, Cambridge, St.  
Mary's, Bury - St. Edmunds, Ware, Goudhurst,  
Enfield and Greenwich, all of which now  
now contain bells by other founders.

Phelps was not a ringer, nor so far as  
can be seen a member of any of the leading  
ringing societies, but apparently he was

greatly respected, and some one, in 1447  
imitation of the grand manner, composed  
a method as a funeral peal for him,  
and called it Phelps Elogy. Annable  
has preserved the figures, but the style of  
the method is not like his work.

The early years of the eighteenth  
Century were a great time for the bell  
founders and especially in London. The  
Rudhalls were then in their prime, and  
Samuel Knight was a worthy rival of  
Phelps, both in the quality and the  
quantity of his work. He was the last  
of a family who had been casting bells  
at Reading for the best part of two

hundred years. When in the course 1448  
of years business fell off, he moved to  
London where he set up his foundry  
in the parish of S. Andrews, Holborn,  
probably in Shoe Lane. His most  
prominent work in the metropolitan area  
was the new rings at S. Savours, Southwark  
S. Sepulchres, Holborn; S. Margaret's,  
Westminster; and All Saints, West Ham.  
His casting is said to have been very  
rough but his bells have a very high  
reputation. It is probable however that  
the big bells were not so good as the  
smaller ones and most of them have  
since been recast. He survived his  
rival, Richard Phelps, a little over a

year and died at the latter end 449  
of 1739.

On Monday, March 24<sup>th</sup> 1740, the  
College Youths rang at S. Taverner's what  
they called a fine peal of Bob Macimus  
Double, 5016 Changes, in 4 hours and 4  
minutes. Although it is not claimed  
as the first in the method, it is the first  
of which we have any record. It was  
an official peal by the society, Annable  
called from the seventh, and Lundell  
rang the tenor single handed.

John Sharp was now the leader of  
the Eastern Scholars. In May he called a  
peal of Double Bob at Fulham, and in  
the next month the first five-thousand

- Bob Major - on the new bells 450  
that Robert Callin had just hung at  
St. Mary's Ealing. Almost at the same  
time Callin increased the size at  
Richmond by adding two trebles, the  
gift of William Gardiner; and in August  
Sharp and his band rang the first peal  
there, also Bob Major. A month later  
(September 21<sup>st</sup>) the College Youths rang  
a peal of Bob Major in the same tower,  
and the band, whether made up by  
Gardiner or by Callin, is interesting for  
it was composed largely of men who had  
been in steady opposition to Annable for  
years past, together with others like  
Trenell and the two Pickards, who though



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not among Annable's enemies  
were yet not sufficiently his partisans  
to refuse to ring with those who were.

Catlin rang the third. He had not stood  
in a peal with Annable since the Cinques  
at Cornhill in 1729 though he had taken  
part in John Cundell's *Bob Mascinus* at  
St. Martin's. This was his last peal. (152)

John Hardham rang the treble, and his  
friend John Cundell rang the tenor.  
Stephen Tickard conducted.

This was Hardham's last peal. Though  
he seems to have kept in touch with the  
College youths throughout his life, his  
main interests were henceforth elsewhere  
than ringing. After his failure as a  
Cupidary he started a tobacconist's

business in Fleet Street, which 452  
rapidly became prosperous, and which  
may be said to have been the most famous  
tobacconist's shop that London has ever  
known. It bore the sign of the Red Lion  
and stood on the north side of the street  
two doors from what is now Ludgate Circus.  
In those days the fashionable way of using  
tobacco was in the form of snuff, and  
it was Hardham's good luck to invent  
or introduce a snuff which for many  
years was the most popular on the market.  
He called it his No 37 for (it would seem)  
the not unnatural reason that that was  
the number of the drawer in which he  
kept it; but so prosaic an explanation

altogether failed to satisfy the 453  
more romantic writers. Hardham, according  
to one of them, not being able to find a  
name for it himself applied to Lord  
Townsend the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland,  
who suggested 37 because that was the  
number of the majority in some division  
or other in the Irish Parliament. 157

But wherever the name came from,  
there is no doubt about the cause of its  
popularity. Partly, and indeed mainly,  
it was because it was good snuff, but  
it got its first start from a piece of  
most unblushing puffing. Hardham as  
I have said, was a great friend of John  
Cundell. Cundell had interests in the

theatre and among actors, and he 454  
may have introduced Hardham to stage  
lips. Thus, or in some other way, the latter  
got to know many actors and ultimately  
David Garrick himself. That great little  
man was pleased to approve of the snuff  
and in one of his plays introduced a gag  
recommending it to the person with whom  
he was speaking. <sup>(158)</sup> The advertisement served  
its purpose and it became the correct  
thing in the fashionable world to take  
Hardham's 37 snuff. It was manufactured  
and sold under that name for years  
after his death and for aught I know  
is so still.

According to one not very reliable

account Hardham was himself an actor; certain it is that he held the position of chief numberer at Drury Lane. His job was to place himself every night in some cove of vantage in the roof of the theatre and count the people in the pit so that a check could be kept on the man in charge of the box office. For this he was paid 15<sup>(159)</sup> a week.

He developed an intense feeling for everything connected with the stage. He adorned the parlour behind his shop with the portraits of leading actors; the place became a regular meeting place of would be thespians; and he was seldom without embryos Richards and Holopurs

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strutting and bellowing in his  
dining room." (160)

He aimed at being a dramatist himself  
and wrote a play or what, I suppose,  
he thought was a play. It was never  
acted. Garrick knew what was good  
snuff - "a name is all - from Garrick's  
breath a puff of praise gave immortality  
to snuff" (161) - he also knew what was a  
good play and what was not. Hardham's  
snuff he could and did praise, but with  
Hardham's play he would have nothing  
to do. And so it was printed, the not  
unusual fate of dramatic writings,  
judged not worthy of the stage.

Its title is *The Fortune Teller*, or the

World Unmasked, a Medley, 457  
written by Abel Drugger <sup>(162)</sup>. London, printed  
for M Cooper at the Globe, Palmerston Row,  
G. Jones at the Fan and Star in Compton  
Street, Stos, and to be had at the Pamphlet  
Shops at the Royal Exchange, Temple  
Bar, and Charing Cross.

There are eight characters in the play,  
Bombasi, who is the Fortune Teller, Tycho  
his assistant, and six clients who come  
to have their fortunes told - Squire Trig,  
Sir John Wealthy, Miss Amorous, Lactantius,  
Urganda, and Sappho. They are, one and  
all, hypocrites and impostors, the only  
difference being that Bombasi knows  
he is an impostor and freely admits it -  
when there is no one to hear him except

his assistant

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His excuse is that ~~at~~ he takes the opportunity to give a moral lecture. They come in one at a time, and each in turn he charges with the usual vices and follies that society people are supposed to indulge in, pride, avarice, insincerity and the like.

Naturally they are at first disposed to defend themselves, but presently they go away stripped of most of their conceit and self satisfaction; and we are to suppose so much the better.

of action there is none, and the speeches are the plagiary rari. It is the poorest stuff imaginable, though one indulgent critic thought it "far from being devoid



of genius or poetic imagination." (163) 459

But it is not as a play wright that Hardham must be judged. He was a bad dramatist but he was a good tradesman. The old fashioned tobacconist had to know his trade. It was not then as now a matter of selling over the counter packets already made up of advertised and well known brands. He had to select his tobaccos and blend them, and to do that successfully he had to have a fine taste and a good knowledge of what the public wanted. Hardham's customers consisted of the fashionable world of the time and his shop became a popular rendezvous where people used to drop in

to meet each other and have a 160  
chat. It was as unlike a modern tobacco  
shop as well could be. A narrow door  
guarded by the effigy of a gigantic  
Highlander; the front of the shop bare  
except for a high stool or two and a few  
upturned tubs on which the customers  
sat; a plain counter, bare except for  
the scales each a hemisphere hung on  
slender chains; and behind a press of  
numbered drawers surmounted by a row  
of canisters, dark green with dull gold  
lettering. And pervading all the heavy  
sweet smell of the tobaccos. (164)

Here Hardham made a fortune  
such as even a modern Fleet Street

tradesman would not despise, 461  
though he had to go through a period  
of depression, and once even failed.

But what, perhaps, really brought  
him success was his capacity for attracting  
the esteem and affection of people of all  
classes. He must have been a shrewd  
careful man of business, yet his charity  
and generosity were extensive to an  
uncommon degree. Men recognized his  
goodness of heart and trusted him with  
very delicate and confidential matters,  
such as paying little annual stipends  
to "unfortunate" women; and often when  
the original donor stopped payment  
he continued it out of his own pocket. (165)

Garrick was his friend, and I L. 62.  
imagine that it was through him that  
John Rich became a member of the Society  
of College Youths and served in the office  
of steward in 1750. <sup>(166)</sup> Once, before the days  
of his prosperity, Garrick became his  
security for £100.

William Woly in his *Campanalogia*  
thus apostrophises Hardham, and we  
shall agree that here at any rate, poetic  
ardour has not exaggerated the truth. —

But Hardham! shall my young  
good natured muse

Be silent in thy praise? No — she  
applauds

Thy strict sincerity of mind and despo

To call thee no mean patron of this art

Not may'st thou blush to own it, since

thy soul L63  
With milk of human kindness is replete  
And truth and open honesty are thine  
Long may'st thou live accompanied by  
health

The sweetest comeliest progeny of love!

That was published in 1761. Contemporary  
ringing records had long since ceased  
to mention Hardham's name but it  
seems that the Theatre did not altogether  
usurp the place of his first love. It was  
but a stone's throw from the Red Lion  
to the Barley & Snow, and we may suppose  
that Hardham often crossed Fleet Street  
on the nights of the College youths'  
meetings, even if he did not always  
climb the many stairs to St. Bride's

belly.

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He died in September 1772 leaving behind him a fortune of £22,289. Of this his will bequeathed £10 to Garnett and £10 was set aside for his own funeral, for he said only vain fools spent more. Some small legacies went to Chichester friends, and five guineas to each of the four daughters of Woodruff Dinkwater who had married his sister. The interest on the remainder went to Mary Brinmore his housekeeper, for as long as she lived, and after her death to John Cundell for his life time. <sup>(171)</sup> On the expiry of these interests the money was bequeathed to the Guardians of the Poor of the City of Chichester "to ease the

inhabitants of the said city in their 465  
poor rates." The bequest still remains.

In 1930 the capital sum was £22,735-13-9,  
realising £568 per annum. (167)

Hardham is sometimes said to have  
left his money to the poor of his native  
city, (168) but that was not so, neither in  
intention, nor in effect. His object was  
to bring the greatest amount of benefit  
to the largest number of people for the  
longest period of time. "I thought it  
best," he said, "to leave it as I have done  
for now it will be a benefit to the said  
city for ever - if I had disposed of it in  
legacies in a few years the whole would  
have been annihilated and come to

nothing" <sup>(169)</sup> But he cannot be 466  
said to have succeeded in his object.  
What happened, of course, was that the  
landlords of the favoured parts of the city  
put up the rents the amount they  
benefited under the will, and so the  
only people better off for the legacy  
have been the owners of certain houses.

Now was the will well received by the  
general opinion in the city. The Swiss  
Drinkwater were naturally very disappointed  
at getting no more from their rich  
uncle than "five guineas to buy mourning  
with." It must have seemed a mockery  
to them <sup>(170)</sup> They were persons of unexceptional  
character, they fully depended to have



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Come in for the bulk of his fortune  
after his death; and it was then asserted  
that he had promised one of them to leave  
her independent of the world. Public opinion  
thought the ladies hardly treated, and as  
for Mrs Binnmore, she was a designing female  
who after the death of his wife had gained  
too strong an ascendancy over him." (173)

Latin tradition gave Hardham a place  
among the Composers, (174)  
but no evidence of  
it has come down to us. Like Laughton  
Jeacock, Spicer and others, he may have  
done a little experimenting with figures,  
but in that case we should have expected  
some notice of it in Annals's Book. There  
is none.

John Hardham's fame and reputation

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as a tradesman stood so high  
that a hundred years after his death his  
name was still above his old shop, and  
the business and the snuff were still called  
Hardham's though they had long since  
passed into other hands. (175)

Phelps was succeeded at Whitechapel by  
Thomas Lester and the first independent  
work of importance that he did was to cast  
a ring of eight for the new church at St.  
Leonard's Shoreditch in 1739.

The first recorded peal on these bells was  
rung on March 1<sup>st</sup> 1741 by the Eastern Scholars  
It was Double Bob Major. Sharp Conducted;  
Mainwaring, who was back from the Union  
Scholars rang the tenor, Bennett the seventh,

and John Blake, who was beginning 469  
to be one of the most prominent members,  
the sixth. Another man whose name  
now appears as a peal ringer for the first  
time but who afterwards took a conspicuous  
part in London ringing was William  
Lovell.

A month later on April 7<sup>th</sup> the Company  
rang on Samuel Knight's new bells at  
St. Sepulchre's Holborn, the first peal of  
Treble Bob Royal ever accomplished. The  
band was J. Dickinson, J. Sharp, W. Simms,  
W. Lovell, J. Blake, W. Roman, W. Phillips,  
T. Bennet, S. Mainwaring, and R. Wendleborough.  
Mainwaring conducted.

In the next month the College Youths  
in the same tower. The College Youths rang  
an even 5000 of Treble Bob. The Eastern

Scholars' peal was 5200 changes and <sup>470</sup>  
took 3 hours 57 minutes; the other took  
3 hours 46 minutes. The number of changes  
in the second performance is interesting  
because it was an almost universally  
recognised rule in the eighteenth Century  
that no length under 5040 changes should  
be counted as a peal. <sup>(176)</sup>

The band of College Youths was -  
S. Lee, J. Stephenson, J. Wearmor, W. Rickard,  
B. Annable, J. Griffiths, R. Spicer, T. Peacock,  
R. Hobbs and J. Trentell. Spicer called  
the bobs.

The Eastern Scholars put up a board  
to record their performance, and above  
it the College Youths put up one to record  
theirs. <sup>(177)</sup> The latter simply says that

5000 Changes of Union Bob Royal 471

were rung and gives no names; but the following Couplet is added -

When merits justly due a little praise then Permeth  
A good peal needs no frame, a bad one none  
deserveth.

These lines gave rise to a tradition that the Eastern Scholars' peal was false, <sup>(178)</sup> but there is no justification for such an opinion. If the College Youths had known that their rivals' peal was not a true one, they would have, without the slightest hesitation, claimed their own as the first rung. Nor does it necessarily mean that the earlier peal was a bad one or that the striking was faulty. The verse probably was no more than a motto which the person who erected the board

thought suitable for the occasion. 472

The sentiment after all is pretty trite and commonplace.

The College youths rang no more peals that year, but the Eastern Scholars kept busy. They rang the first peal of Bob Major at Deptford, 6160 Changes of Bob Major at St. John's Hillingdon, 5120 of Oxford Treble Bob Major at Fulham, and 5040 of Bob Major at Stratlake, the first on the octave there.

John Sharp called all these peals except the East. There was one of the usual quarrels, and Sharp, Lovell, Dickenson and Timms went and joined the Union Scholars and rang a peal with them.

St. Marnwaring was out of the company.

as well, that left John Bradshaw 473  
to call the bobs at Northlake.

The quarrel, whatever it was about, was soon patched up. First Mainwaring and Lovell and Simons came back, and soon afterwards Sharp and Dickenson. The Company was still the most active bands in England. In January 1742 they rang Bob Major at S. Stephen's Coleman Street and after a fortnight's interval the same method at Christ Church Southwark. Next month they rang Double Bob at S. Margaret's Westminster the first recorded peal in that tower. The peal at S. Stephens is recorded in an unusual way. The account is cut into

the lead of the Church roof, and L74  
near it is written "This is a eye as pure as  
ever the performers lived". The Comments  
may be merely a spiteful or idle remark  
by some irresponsible person; or it may  
be an indication that in the opinion of  
some critics the peal was not faultless.  
If it, we rather wonder, no more than a  
coincidence that vague doubts have  
been thrown on three peals conducted  
by Rainwaring - the fifteen thousand  
at West Ham, the Treble Bob Royal at  
Snow Hill, and this peal at Coleman  
Street?

John Blake rang the tenor at St.  
Margaret's. He was beginning to take



the position of regular tenor ringers 475  
to the company and when the band went  
to Northlake on March 2<sup>nd</sup> for a long  
feast he was at the tenor and Mainwaring  
at the seventh. The number of changes  
was 6832 the same length and probably  
the same composition as Annable had  
called at Lambeth in 1726. At Frimley  
later the same men rang 10,080 changes  
at Northlake but this time Mainwaring  
rang the tenor.

The last four feasts were called by  
John Sharp. He also called the next one -  
6,160 Bob Major at Gravesend - and after  
that he went to join Eccleston's band in

Supper and after that we hear 476  
no more of him. He rang in all nineteen  
peals, sixteen of which he called. His  
score was Plain Bob Major, 11; Double  
Bob Major, 4; Grandine Triples, 1; Grandine  
Cinquies, 1; Oxford Treble Bob Major, 1;  
and Oxford Treble Bob Royal, 1; Four  
were six-thousands and one a ten-thousand.

Judged by later standards this is not  
much of a list; at the time it was a  
respectable one but nothing remarkable.

Two peals rung in this year outside  
the metropolitan area are of more than  
ordinary interest. One was the first  
peal of Double Norwich Court Major, and  
was rung at St. Michael Coslany by the

Notworth Scholars. The other was 477  
5040 changes of Richmond Triples at St.  
Mary's, Richmond, by the local Company.  
In this year too was born William  
Doubleday Crofts, afterwards a famous  
ringer at Nottingham.

Following John Sharp's departure  
the Eastern Scholars had a quiet time.  
In 1743 they rang only two peals, both  
of them Bob Major; in 1744 only one peal  
also Bob Major; and in 1745 none at all.  
Mainwaring called five of them, and  
then he drops out of our sight. Since  
his first peal in 1733 he had rung twenty  
two peals and had conducted fourteen  
of them. They were - Grandine Triples, 1;

Caters, 5; Bob Triples, 1; Major, 10; 478  
Royal, 1; Double Bob Major, 1; Oxford Treble  
Bob Major, 2; and Oxford Treble Bob Royal, 1.

For the College youths 1742 and 1743 were  
lean years. No peal was scored in the first  
and only two in the second, one in January  
and the other in December. The January  
peal was at Westminster and the band  
was - Thomas Lowe, James Watson, Stephen  
and William Dickard, Annable, Spicer,  
Trenell and Cundell. Spicer called the  
Cobs. It was three years since Annable  
had conducted a peal, and that we may  
put down to Cundell's influence, but this  
was the latter's last peal. Annable had  
thirteen more peals to ring with the  
society and he called them all.

Cundell's peal total was twenty- 479  
five of which he called five. They were made  
up of - Grand sire Callers, 3; Cinques, 3;  
Double Grand sire Cinques, 1; Bob Triples, 3;  
Major, 9; Mascimus, 1; Double Bob Major, 1;  
Mascimus, 1; Union Triples, 1; Simon's  
Triples, 1; and College Triples, 1.

After about 1740 a marked change is  
noticeable in the general outlook of the  
College youths. Their important people were  
no longer anxious to keep in the fore front  
of peal ringing bands as they were in the  
days of the rivalry with the London Scholars.

The prestige and position of the society  
were as great as ever - greater, for on  
the social side it stood alone, and more  
new members were joining every year.

But they were not the type of the 480  
keen skilful ringer that joined when  
Annable was a young man. That class  
of recruits was now going to the Eastern  
Scholars and presently to the Union Scholars.  
After about 1735 a large proportion of the  
new names in the College youths' list  
are those of men who lived in the Country  
or of people who joined for the sake of the  
social life and the annual feast. There  
was a steady trickle of deserters from other  
societies attracted partly by the glamour  
of the society's name and partly influenced  
by quarrels in their old companies: men  
like John Blake who had taken part  
in sixteen out of the last seventeen feasts

ring by the Eastern Scholars, and 481  
who for a few years made one of the peal  
ringing band that Annable managed  
to keep together.

But the great days of his activity were  
over. After the Double Bob Maccinus in  
1740, and the Treble Bob Royal in 1742,  
the College Juniors rang no more peals of  
any particular account until a new  
generation of ringers and altogether different  
conditions had arisen. The most interesting  
were 5040 Changes of Reverse Bob Major at  
St. Margaret's in 1751, and 5040 Changes  
of Bob Major St. George, at St. Georges in the  
Borough in 1750. Annable thus describes  
the latter method - This peal differs from

Plain Bob Major only in this one 482  
thing - at every 7 leads when the 7 & 8 have  
dodgd behind the two bells which the treble  
leaves before make a single dodge and  
the bell in 3rds place lies still."

The other peals were Grand sire Gales,  
Plain and Double Bob Major, and Treble  
Bob Major.

The centre of peal ringing interest now  
shifts to the Eastern Scholars. Their leader  
after the departure of Sharp and the  
retirement of Mainwaring was Joseph  
Prior. There were two Priors: Joseph  
and Thomas; presumably they were  
brothers and Thomas the elder. His  
first peal seems to have been the Bob



Mayor at Ealing in 1740, and he L83  
rang in several of the following performances.  
The General Advertiser of 1746 contains  
an advertisement by "Thomas Prior, Esq"  
in which he offers for sale a marvellous  
Pan water which would cure almost  
any complaint including asthma,  
Cancers, small pox, Lowness of spirit, etc.  
His address was Painters Court, Bury  
Street, St. James's. There is nothing besides  
the name to identify this man with the  
ringer, but it is quite likely they were  
the same.

When Sharp left the Eastern Scholars  
Thomas Prior took his place as Conductor  
and called a peal of P. N. Major at St.

Clement, Danes; but later in 1743 484

Mainwaring reappeared and Prior went over to the College youths, whither, as we have seen, John Blake had already gone. With Annable he rang six peals; he then joined the Union Scholars and rang a couple of peals with them; and then returned to the College youths in time to take part in the last peal save one that Annable rang with the Company.

Joseph Prior rang in Mainwaring's last two peals, the first of them being the only peal in which both the Priors took part; and then out of the rest nine peals by the Eastern Scholars, he rang in eight and conducted seven.

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They were all Bob Major except  
one - Grand sire Calers - at Fulham in  
1746 where the unusual length of 5886  
changes was rung. One peal was a  
6832 at St. Leonard's Shoreditch where  
John Blake, back from the College  
Youths rang the cut tenor single  
handed. Most likely it was the same  
composition as had been rung at Lambeth  
and Northlake.

Joseph Prior was a Composer as well  
as a Conductor, and the first peal he  
called was his own composition. It  
was claimed to be the first of Bob Major  
rung with the sixth twelve courses  
at Home. The earlier peals were nearly

all on the plan of Annable's 486  
Three-part in 5-Course blocks. While  
Trior was Conductor both Francis  
Topham and Samuel Vaughan who  
for some years had been out of the peal  
ringing band, made a reappearance.

After a while Joseph Trior fell out  
with the Eastern Scholars and joined  
the Cumberland Jouths, the new society  
which had just been started by George  
Tartick, and the older Company was  
for a time without any outstanding  
conductor. Several men called peals -  
John Blake and Thomas Bennett in  
1746; William Chadwick, John Newman,  
and Joseph Clark in 1747. All were still

Bob Major except for one peal of 487  
Bob Triples. Then in 1747 a recruit  
joined who was to become one of the  
most prominent ringers in the whole  
history of the London Exercise.

George Meakins was one of those men  
who are the despair of the historian  
of ringing. For four and fifty years  
he was one of the foremost of ringers. He  
was the leader of the band that ultimately  
became the Society of College Youths. He  
conducted nearly all the peals he rang  
in. And yet he remains little more  
than a shadow and a name to us.  
There are no traditions connected with  
him; no anecdotes to give us a hint

What manner of man he was. 488

That he was successful we know, for he did what Annable failed to do, and kept a first class band together for years. How did he manage it? Was it because he had a genius for leadership or was it because his good qualities were negative? Was he a brilliant conductor, or only a safe bob caller?

These things we cannot answer, and for that reason George Meakin, who should be classed among the leading ringers of all time, has been utterly forgotten. Next to Annable the present Ancient Society of College Youths owes its continued existence more to him than

to any man, and yet his name is 489  
not even mentioned in the official "History."

George Sheakins's first peal was 5040  
Changes of Bob Major at St. John's, Hackney  
on December 1st 1746. He rang the third,  
Joseph Prior rang the second, Samuel  
Vaughan the fifth, and John Blake rang  
the 24<sup>th</sup> cut tenor and Concluded. The  
ringer of the fourth was Robert Butterworth  
who had taken part in the previous fourteen  
peals, and for many years continued to  
be one of the most active members of the  
band.

It was nearly three years later - on  
June 14<sup>th</sup> 1749 - that Sheakins called  
his first peal. It was at St. Dunstan's  
in the West, and Butterworth, Lovell,

and Blake in the band

490

Two years earlier the Company accomplished at St. Leonard's Shoreditch, 5040 changes complete of that excellent new Peal called Eastern Bob, the first of the kind that ever was rung." It was the composition of Joseph Prior, and the band was as follows - R. Gregory, Robert Butterworth, Samuel Vaughan, George Meakins, Thomas Batt, John Blake, Thomas Bennett, and William Lovell. Bennett called the bob.

The method is quite a good one, except that it is not symmetrical. It consists of Bob Major with Court places (i.e. ~~the~~ fourths and thirds) when the treble is in 3-4 going up. A modern



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style of peal with singles would probably produce repetition of changes within the leads; but the old style of compositions in which no singles are used readily gives true peals.

Many years later Henry Hubbard published the method under the name of Yorkshire Court Bob, as his own composition. Unfortunately he also gave it as a pic-bell method, and it was included several times in performances of seven 720's of Minor. No unsymmetrical method will give an extent of Minor, and so those peals were false. (181)

Meanwhile several interesting and important events were taking place

in other societies. In 1744 James 492  
Barham, who was born in 1725 and therefore  
was now nineteen years old, began his  
remarkable series of feats by taking part in  
5040 Bob Triples at Harrietsham. In the  
next year the Reading Jouths, attempting  
a ten-thousand, rang 8076 changes, when  
the third rope broke. In the same year  
John Holl joined the Union Scholars. And  
in 1747 the Society of Cumberland Jouths  
was founded.

John Holl was one of the greatest  
ringers of all time, and his name has  
probably been wider known than that  
of any other member of the Exercise. Yet his  
career was quite short, and his story is  
a simple one and soon told. He was

born on March 11<sup>th</sup> 17~~26~~<sup>26</sup>, the son 493  
of Hugh and Mary Holt, and was  
baptised at Christ Church Newgate  
Street on March 31<sup>st</sup>. <sup>(182)</sup> His family  
evidently were in very poor circumstances  
and except for his natural parts, he  
grew up without any advantages whatever.  
Doubtless he could read and write, for  
few Londoners have ever been without  
that qualification, but of education, in  
the ordinary sense of the word he had  
none. Socially he was on a lower level  
than the average member of the leading  
metropolitan societies: lower not merely  
than men like Eccleston, or Topham, or  
Gardiner, but also men like Strnabe,

or Cundell, or Hardham. His name 494  
is entered in the Union Scholars' book  
not like the rest in ordinary Old English  
characters, but highly ornamented with  
of flourishes and every mark of distinction  
so that Jasper Snowdon concluded that  
when he joined he must have been  
considered a very great acquisition to  
the society. <sup>(183)</sup> But this is only a good  
example of how appearances may lead  
astray even a very clever and careful  
man; for the entry was not made  
until after Hall had become the leading  
man among the Union Scholars, and had  
shown something of the stuff of which he  
was made. In 1725 he was a young and

unknown man who came shyly 495  
knocking at the door of the Union Scholars  
because they were, just then, the least  
of all the big societies, and so the more  
likely to give him a welcome and find  
him a place.

Of his personal appearance we know  
nothing, but it is pretty certain that he  
was not one of those big lusty men like  
Annable, or Cundell, or Trenell, or Mainwaring,  
who delighted in turning in heavy bells.  
The heaviest he ever rang to a peal was  
the tenth at St. Bride's which may weigh  
15 cwt. Usually he was to be found at the  
light end, and one is tempted to imagine  
him as a man of rather frail physique

and not over strong; but, apart 496  
from his early death, there is no real  
justification for such a view. <sup>(184)</sup>

The Union Scholars were an old and well-established Company; but, as we have seen, they had not been able since 1718 to produce a band able to ring a peal, except when they were temporarily strengthened by descriers from the Eastern Scholars. The last of these visitations was in 1741, and of that band Sharp, Lovell, Dickenson, and Simms, had gone back and some of the others had dropped out of peal ringing. Hoddis task was first to make a position for himself within the society, and then to gather together a peal-ringing band. He took two years

to do it and on October 27<sup>th</sup>, 1747. 497  
By calling a peal of Bob Major at St.  
Margaret's Westminster, he inaugurated  
the last and most prolific period of  
peal-ringing activity in the history of the  
Union Scholars.

In the five years between October 1747  
and September 1752 the Company rang  
twenty-two peals, all of which, save one,  
Hall called. They consisted of - Plain  
Bob Triples, 4; Plain Bob Major, 9; Double  
Bob Major, 3; Grand sire Triples, 1; Grand sire  
Caters, 2; Grand sire Cinques, 1; Oxford  
Treble Bob Major, 1; and Court Bob Major, 1.  
Most of them were rung in the West End  
at St. Margaret's, St. Martin in the Fields,  
St. Giles in the Fields, and St. Bride's  
During the same period the Eastern Scholars

rang thirteen peals; the College 498  
youths, three; and the Cumberland youths  
fourteen peals.

In a peal of Bob Major rung on the  
smallest eight bells at St. Martin's in  
December, 1748, Samuel Green rang the  
fifth. He may have been a son of Stephen  
Green the erstwhile Rambler. Stephen  
Tichauer rang the sixth and Robert  
Skotimer the seventh: both were afterwards  
prominent ringers.

Three of Hollis' peals were rung on the  
front bells in twelve bell towers, which  
shows that the Company was short of  
heavy bell ringers, for there were men  
in other societies able to ring the tenors  
in those steeples to peals.



In 1749 George Meekins joined 499  
the Union Scholars and rang a peal of  
Bob Triples with them. It looks like a  
friendly visit and in any case was a  
short one. In June he conducted a  
peal for the Eastern Scholars, in August  
he rang in the Union Scholars peal, and  
in October he was back again peal  
ringing with the Eastern Scholars. Not  
all the migrations of these ringers were  
the result of quarrels, but there may be  
some significance in the fact that Meekins  
did not call the October peal nor the  
one that followed it.

John Lukis also came over from the  
Eastern Scholars, rang one peal, and  
quickly returned, Thomas Prior came

from the College Youths, where for 500  
a time peal ringing had ceased to be,  
and rang the tenor to two peals - Plain  
Bob Major at Christ Church, Southwark  
on October 15<sup>th</sup> and at S. Sepulchres  
Snow Hill, on December 5<sup>th</sup>, the latter  
being the first peal of Major on the bells.  
The ringer of the peal in this peal was  
James Albion. He was a Hackney born  
man and was by profession a  
mercantile clerk and professional  
writer. He re-wrote the peal and name  
books of the Union Scholars and afterwards  
those of most of the contemporary London  
societies.

Robert Butterworth rang in one peal

in 1750 - Double Bob Major at

501

S. Margaret's, and that was the first of two or three peals in which James Titchborne took part. We have already come across him as one of the band that rang the peal of Shenor at S. Mary, Stratford, in 1737.

The only peal that Hollis rang in and did not conduct was called by Thomas Ward. What relation he was (if any) of John Ward we do not know but he belonged to a later generation. He had rung in Hollis' first peal and took part (in all) in a dozen Union Scholars' peals. Then he deserted to the Eastern Scholars with whom he called five or three five-thousands including the last rung by

that society -

502

Other interesting feats rung by the Union Scholars at this time include Grand sire Calers at St. Sepulchres, "being" as the feat book claims "the first ever performed in that method on those Bells" a claim which was no doubt literally sound, but, nineteen years before, John Cundell had called a peal of Grand sire Calers in the steeple on the old ring of bells. Five days after Hollis' feat George Meakins called a longer length in the same method for the Eastern Scholars.

John Hollis also called a peal of Calers at St. Martin's, and Cinques at St. Bride's. The latter belfry was still the College Youths' stronghold, but however great

their interests in the tower may 503  
have been, they had either not the desire  
nor sufficient influence to exclude rival  
Companies. No peal of Cinques had been  
rung there since the College Youths' performance  
in 1725, unless one were included among  
the forgotten peals of the London Scholars.

Twice in the year 1751 Helli and his  
band visited Hillingdon, a village  
adjoining Uxbridge at the western extremity  
of Middlesex where there was a good  
band of ringers and an old tradition  
of ringing. On April 9<sup>th</sup> they rang 5040  
changes of P.B. Major, immediately after  
ringing 5800 Double P.B. Major, the whole  
time being 7 hours 30 minutes. We may

assume (though the record does not 504  
definitely say so) that the two peals were  
rung as one without interval or resetting  
the bells, or altering the positions of the  
band. Joseph Dickenson, who both  
before and after was a member of the  
Society of Eastern Scholars rang the  
24 Cur tenor unassisted.

On the second visit in August the  
Company rang 5040 Changes of Double  
PB Major "with the sixth at home and  
in the Tittum Course twelve times each."

On February 16<sup>th</sup> 1752 the society rang  
at S. Margaret's, Westminster, 5040 Changes  
of Court PB, "being the first that ever was  
rang on those bells." Holt Conducted from  
the third and the other bells were rung

by James Davis, William Underwood, 505  
James Albion, Oliver Ellingworth, James  
Vickers, James Newby, and John Lloyd.  
This William Underwood was almost  
certainly not the old London Scholar  
but his son, who presently was to take a  
prominent part in London ringing, and  
this apparently was his first feat. The  
matter however is a little doubtful for  
both father and son were ringing at the  
the time and the latter is sometimes  
described as "junior". The father was a  
member of the Society of College Youths, and  
in the following year held the office of  
steward.

(186)

By profession John Holt was a shoemaker  
and this trade, sedentary and largely

mechanical, gave him great 506  
opportunities for thinking. Intellectually  
he was far above the average; and so  
it was quite natural that he should  
turn his attention to composition, and  
the solution of such problems as then  
fronied the Escercise. The popular  
methods at the time were Bob Triples  
and Bob Major and in both Annables'  
feals held the field. Already some  
men, notably Joseph Trion, had tried to  
widen the range of composition, and  
Holl carried on this work. He has several  
original feals of Major and in Triples he  
produced a feal without a single. (187)

But it was into the problem of Grandine  
Triples that he put his best work, and



how brilliantly successful he  
was there, is common knowledge.

507

Grandsire Triples was rung all over  
England. It was freely practised in  
London, but the men there did not use  
it for peal ringing. Before 1751 only  
three peals of it are recorded - the Histo  
Triples of 1718, Skainwaring's peal in 1734,  
and Denmeads' peal in 1736. As I have  
already pointed out the reason was  
Doleman's false peal. That had been  
rung many times in the country, whether  
through ignorance of its falseness or for  
want of a better, but the London men  
"Could not see any satisfaction from  
repeatedly practising a false peal when  
so many true ones present themselves in

other methods. <sup>(188)</sup> There were indeed 508.  
Garthorn's peal, Annables', Vicaris, (if it  
were known) and Denmeads'; but the  
prejudice against the method had  
arisen before they appeared, and in any  
case they were not the kind of peal that  
ringers wanted. The Bob-and-Single  
peals with their rigid plan seemed to  
be (what indeed they really are) peals  
in a different method with a three-lead  
course, and men had a separate name  
for that method - Gogmagog. <sup>(189)</sup>

Ringers would not have denied the  
general right of these peals to be called  
Grandsire, but they looked on them in  
much the same way that we do now on  
multi-bob peals of Stedman Triples. What

They wanted was a five-thousand  
in which the bobs were freely arranged  
as they were in the pouches they rang. In  
fact Doleman's deal would have been  
just the thing - if it had been true.  
Singles generally were disliked, but there  
would have been no insuperable objection  
to them if they were thought necessary.

Today with our knowledge of the Law  
of Q Sets to compose a one-part deal of  
Grandeur Triples is no very arduous  
undertaking. It was quite otherwise  
in John Holt's time. He had to deal  
with an entirely unexplored problem;  
his brain was a mathematical one, but  
it was totally untrained, and he, perforce,  
had to work by intuition and empirical

methods. Yet he must, of course, 509  
have had some general scheme in his  
mind. The number of ways in which you  
can arrange bobs and plain leads in  
a 5040 is so almost inconceivably great  
that no mere hit-or-miss plan is ever  
likely to bring success. What his scheme  
was cannot be known, but there is  
one which would be likely to occur  
to any one in his position. It is to take  
the fifteen-lead blocks produced by the  
three-lead-course plan and try and  
unite them by omits instead of by singles.  
Annable had already experimented  
with this without success, <sup>(190)</sup> and in itself  
it is not very promising, yet it well  
may have been Hollis' starting point,

and some confirmation may be found in the fact that in the peal the sixth is never called Before.

The Original was composed some time before the middle of 1751, and on Sunday July 7<sup>th</sup> in that year the Union Scholars rang it at St. Margaret's Westminster. The band was - James Davis, James Albion, Jacob Hall, Thomas Jackson, James Vickers, James Newby, John Lloyd, and George <sup>Fleming</sup> Henry and Edward Davis at the tenor. Holt thinking it too great a task for one man to call the peal and ring at the same time, sat in the belfry and conducted from manuscript.

It seems strange that two men should have been needed to ring the tenor

571  
behind, for just about the same  
time, both before and after, several men  
turned her into Skajov.

A board was put up in the belfry to  
record the performance. Some fifty years  
ago it was restored and now hangs in  
the base of the tower which serves as  
the main porch of the church.

No record of the peal now appears in  
the peal book and this has given rise  
to some conjectures. Osborn thought it  
was not entered because it was considered  
irregular for the Conductor to call and  
not to ring at the same time. Inowdon  
thought it was because Annable did  
not approve of the composition.

Neither reason is convincing.

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The Union Scholars had rung the peal and they had recorded on an expensive tablet. It is not likely that they would have boggled at entering it in their book, or would have paid undue attention to the hostile criticism of a rival belonging to another Company.

The probability is that it was entered, and in after years when the book became dilapidated someone took it away to keep as an interesting curio. (211)

According to tradition the one-part was the first of Hollis' Grand sire peals to be composed and the ten-part and the six-part came later. That seems probable

for though the Original appears 513  
to be the more Complex, the others are  
as Compositions by far the finer productions.  
The oldest eschant copy of the ten-part  
is in the College Youths' manuscript in  
the British Museum. A page or two  
earlier the peal records are written up  
to 1745 and no further. That almost  
looks as if the composition dates from  
soon after that year, but the book is so  
mutilated that it is not safe to speculate.

It was nearly forty years before  
the Original was again rung in London,  
when James Bartlett rang the seventh  
and called it at St. Giles-in-the-Fields,  
on Sunday, October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1791; but



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within a few months of its first performance it was three times rung in the provinces Theodore Eccleston, as we have seen, took or sent it down to his band in Suffolk and they rang it at Honham Hospital; and soon after the Norwich men rang it at S. Giles and S. Michaels

Meanwhile in the Society of College Youths the long drawn out rivalry between Benjamin Strnabe and John Lundell was coming to its climax. After the Treble Ten at S. Sepulchres the society had relinquished the leadership in peal ringing, and after the P.B.

Major at Westminster in 1742,

peal ringing was left to Annable and a band of his supporters. But he no longer had round him the brilliant ringers of his early days. Some, like Peter Merrygale, William Thompson, and Laughton had long since gone elsewhere; some like Cundell and Catlin were numbered among his opponents; some like John Pearson were dead; and most were getting old and inclined to rest on their laurels.

of his original companions John Ward  
alone was still ready for an occasional peal.

of the later men Jeacock, Spicer, and the five Pickards were still active and so was John Trenell, who except for his

association with the Ramblers, 516  
had remained loyal to the College youths.  
The rest of the band was made up of  
deserters from other societies like John  
Blake and Thomas Prior

From 1743 to 1746 nine peals were rung,  
then there were three blank years, then  
two peals in 1750, and one in 1751. one  
of them was rung on the Whitsun outing  
in 1744 at St. Mary's Reading, where there  
was a good band some of whom joined  
the society. Another was rung at  
Christmas, 1745, on the bells at St. Peter's  
Braughing, Hertfordshire. Both were  
Pr Major. Pr Major was rung in  
1744 on Lester's new ring at St. Botolph's  
Aldgate, and Grandire Calers at

Fulham in 1746, a few days after 517  
the two pebles were added. I have already  
mentioned the P.D. Major S. George, and  
the Reverse P.D. Major at S. Margaret's.  
This latter which was rung on January  
22<sup>nd</sup>, 1751 is the earliest in the method  
of which we have any record, but as  
the only claim made in the peal book  
is that it was "the first that was done  
in that steeple"; it is possible that  
another had previously been rung by  
another band elsewhere.

Annable had called the first peals  
of Plain P.D. Major, Royal, and Mascinus,  
and the first peals of Double P.D. Major  
Royal and Mascinus. It was only

fitting that he should call the  
first peal of Reverse Bob.

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Two months after the Westminster peal  
Barham's band rang a peal of Reverse  
Bob Major at Harnetisham.

The other College Youths' peals about  
this time include the first peals of  
Treble Bob at S. Leonard's Shore-ditch,  
Northlake, and S. Margaret's Westminster.

In 1746 the College Youths paid  
Annable the long deferred honour  
and elected him master. His predecessor  
was Robert Randall whose membership  
dated from 1731, and who doubtless was  
a worthy person, but who was not  
distinguished in any way and who rang  
no peals. <sup>(198)</sup> Another such was Thomas

Overbury, (1741.) William Pickard 579  
(1740), and William Gardiner (1744) had  
good claims to the honour, but none  
could in any way compare with Armable.  
For nearly a quarter of a century he  
had been the most brilliant member of  
the Company, he had conducted nearly  
all their best feasts, he was acknowledged  
in all quarters, in town and country  
as the greatest living authority on the  
art and science of change ringing,  
and the College youths owed to him  
more than to any other person the  
position of preeminence they then occupied.  
That it was so many years before he  
became master is inescapable except

on the grounds that his opponents felt that official status, added to his personal influence would have made him autocrat and dictator of the society. (191) And he himself, no doubt, looked to his term of office as an opportunity of doing great things. If so, he was disappointed. A couple of months before his election he called a peal at Mortlake and then there follows silence.

Neither during the year that he was master nor for two years after was there a peal rung. We do not know what happened but it is not difficult to guess. There were dissensions and quarrels. The more active men, like John Blake and Thomas Prior, went elsewhere, and no new members

Came to take their places. During the whole of 1746, 1747, and 1748, there were perhaps two but not more London ringers elected. The other new members were Country ringers belonging to Ware, Croydon, Reading and other places, with Thomas Lestin, the bell founder and William Underwood the old London Scholar.

When Armable's time was up John Hardham took his place, and we may be sure that he was elected, not merely because he was favoured by the Cundell party, but chiefly because he was loved and trusted by all and men looked to him to make peace and to heal the breach.

In 1750 Armable got together a peal



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band again. It included the  
two Richards, and Fenell, and Robert  
Powell, the sometime London Scholar.  
Thomas Prior came back, and Stephen  
Pickhaver and Robert Mortimer came  
over from the Union Scholars, and  
Thomas Bennett from the Eastern Scholars.

Such then was the state of affairs in  
1751, and now the Cundell party made  
their last and biggest effort to oust  
Annable. They knew very well they could  
not hope finally to supplant him, unless  
they had some one to take his place, who  
was his equal as Conductor and Leader  
and among themselves they had no such  
a one. Once Cundell had essayed the

523  
role, but had failed, and he was  
now nearly fifty years old. In all England  
there was but one man who as singer,  
conductor, and composer, might hope to  
rival Stannable - the rising genius of the  
Union Scholars, young John Hollis. If he  
could be induced to join them, they would  
be independent of Stannable. But would  
he join them? It was no doubt a fine  
thing to be conductor to the premier  
society of England, but Hollis had already  
behind him a better and more active  
band of real singers than he was likely  
to find for a long time among the  
College youths. In the Society of Union  
Scholars he was without a rival. The

524  
only man who had tried to share  
the conducting with him, Thomas Hard,  
was gone; and the visitors that came  
from other Companies, men like Sheatkins  
and Iron, though they were skilled  
conductors, were content to leave the job-  
calling to him. True it was nothing  
much at the time for a man to leave one  
society and go to another, but in all  
such cases there was either personal  
jealousy or thwarted ambition, and both  
motives were absent from Holt. Osborn  
indeed suggests that he resented the  
exclusion of the record of the Original from  
the peal book and for that reason resigned  
from the society. But that cannot be.

The Union Scholars were sharers in 525  
the credit of that performance equally with  
Holl, and in any case he rang five  
more peals with them after that one.

There is, I think, one thing which, without  
casting any discredit upon Holl, will  
satisfactorily explain why he left his old  
friends. He had now composed his ten-  
part and his six-part peals of Grandure  
Triples. He had done what Armable  
and the older authorities had failed to  
do, and indeed had declared to be  
impossible. If he could only get the  
figures into the hands of ringers his casting  
game was assured. But how to do that?  
There were then no journals that would

print the Compositions, nothing of 526  
the class of Bell's Life or The Era, and,  
of course, nothing like our modern pumping  
newspapers. Of printing and the making  
of books he knew nothing, and we may  
doubt if he were capable of writing a  
letter. <sup>(192)</sup> That is where Cundell came in.  
He invited Hollis to join the College  
Youths, and in return promised to  
collect subscriptions to have the peals  
printed and to publish them.

We cannot wonder that Hollis consented:  
we should have wondered if he had not.  
No doubt he hoped to take his old friends  
along with him, but they did not see  
the matter with his eyes. Samuel

Hillican alone went with him. 527

The others - Newby, Albion, Titchbourne, Davis, Vickers, and the rest - stayed on to ring some more peals before the Union Scholars finally broke up and disappeared.

Holl parted from his old company with friendly feelings. After he had called a peal of Grand sire Calers for the College Youths at S. Dionis Backchurch, on August 5<sup>th</sup> 1752 he went back to the Union Scholars, and on September 25<sup>th</sup> he called a peal of Bob Triples for them at S. Giles-in-the-Fields. On the last day of the year he called 6390 Changes of Grand sire Calers at S. Sepulchres for the College Youths.

The band at S. Dionis included the younger William Underwood, Samuel

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Killican, Thomas Bennett, John  
Trenell, John Ward and Stephen Green,  
sometime a Rambler and whose name  
we last came across among the band  
who rang the friendly peal at St. Andrew's  
in 1738. It was John Ward's last peal.  
He had remained an active pealringer  
longer than any one else of the Cinques  
band of 1725, except only Annable; and  
Annable had but two more peals to ring.

The band at St. Sepulchre's was - Underwood,  
Thomas Dobbinson, Edward Powell, Holt,  
Bennett, Hassel Hutchinson, Green, Killican,  
and Pickhaver.

Almost as interesting are the names of  
the people who did not ring. Annable of

Course was escluded, and outside 529  
the band were Richard Spicer, the two  
Pickards, Samuel Thompson, Mortimer  
and Prior. Trenell rang in the first peal  
but not in the second. Annable still  
had many friends left among the active  
peal ringers.

John Cundell was as good as his word.  
Besides canvassing the London College  
Youths, he wrote to the leading bands  
in the Country and to such prominent  
ringers as would be likely to assist.  
What apparently is a copy of his letter  
was printed in the Ipswich Journal of  
September 1<sup>st</sup> 1753. Why the advertisement  
should have appeared in that paper, and



not in, say, *The Norwich Gazette*, is 530  
not clear, but we remember that Samuel  
Jacomb, Theodore Eccleston's father-in-law,  
and himself a College Youth, was an  
Ipswich man. There was a good band  
of ringers at St. Mary-le-Tower, as there  
almost always has been; <sup>(193)</sup> but no name  
of any note is associated with the town

The advertisement is addressed "To  
all Artists in Ringing. Mr John Holt  
of London", so it reads, "Having at length  
discovered, a method of ringing 5040  
Grandiose Triples without Changes over  
again, or ye use of any other means than  
plain Leads, bobs, and only two singles  
which hath hitherto been looked upon

as impossible: he has also made 531  
improvements in Plain Bob and Union  
Triples; all of which he is willing to  
communicate to ye world: but as his  
Circumstances are low, and as he can  
expect no reward for his Labour, nor  
Assistance toward ye expenses of publishing  
them but from his brethren in ye art,  
he proposes to have neatly printed  
two whole peals of Grandshire Triples,  
divided into halves, one containing  
three regular Courses, the other 5, with  
two singles - one at ye hay peal, the other  
at ye end, the bobs being so regularly  
disposed as to be easily called. One Complete  
peal of Plain Bob Triples in 3 regular

Courses without any single or 532  
alteration, but only Leads and Bobs as  
are usually rung. Also a Complete peal  
of UNION TRIPLES, each half in 3 regular  
Courses ye singles made at ye middle  
and end of peal; and to deliver Copies  
of these four peals by Xmas next, to any  
single person, or any set of 8 bell ringers  
who shall subscribe not less than 5s. 3d  
notify their subscription post paid to  
Mr John Cundall, in Salisbury Court,  
Fleet Street; who engages to deliver ye same  
with a list of subscribers, or return ye  
subscriptions if there should not be enough  
to defray ye expenses of printing.

“ Those who have not had an opportunity

to subscribe in London, and are  
 willing to encourage ye design, to send  
 their subscriptions to ye printer of this paper  
 (194)

Among those who helped to obtain  
 subscribers was Charles Mason of Cambridge.  
 He wrote to the Norwichingers about  
 it and in reply received a letter from  
 John Webster which was a polite but decided  
 refusal. — "Reverend Sir, I desire you'll  
 excuse my not subscribing to a Work  
 which I have some Reason to fear will  
 not answer to Expectation. I must Confess  
 Our Company seem Intirely to slight it  
 though I must Own it is not a Generous  
 Way of Treating Mr. Hollis's performance  
 but I believe they are Induc'd to this

by that Ingenious Ringer Mr. 534  
Anable's not Encouraging of it, had he  
Approved of it, his Influence on the  
Colledge Youths I presume would have  
been sufficient to have sent it to the  
Press without Further Subscriptions." (195)

It is a little strange that the Norwich  
men should have "intirely slighted"  
Hollis' peals, for twelve months before  
they had rung the Original. It is likely  
however that the men who rang that peal  
were not Norwich Scholars but a band  
of young ringers who practised at the  
Eight-bell Towers in the city - S. Giles,  
and S. Miles. (196)

Webster's Letter is evidence of the great

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reputation Annable enjoyed in  
the Country and of the influence and  
authority he exercised. He did not  
approve of Hollis' Broadsheet. Of course  
he did not, and in the circumstances  
it could hardly have been expected.  
But the reason has been misunderstood.  
He was not a generous critic of other  
people's work; he spoke of Prior's new  
method, Eastern Po, with derision;  
and he had for so long been considered  
the oracle on all things connected with  
Composition that he could not easily  
brook an equal, let alone a superior.  
But there is no evidence that he had

anything to say against the  
 fears themselves. <sup>(197)</sup> What he did object  
 to was the encouragement of Holl, since  
 it was part of a scheme to turn himself  
 out of the College Joints. Had he  
 approved of Cundell's action he would  
 have shown a generosity and a greatness  
 of mind altogether beyond what one  
 has a right to expect.

Whether Annable approved or not  
 the publication of the broadsheet was a  
 success. Cundell sold by subscription  
 seventy-five copies which at 5s. 3d a  
 copy realised nearly twenty pounds before  
 printing. The names of the subscribers  
 are interesting. Eight copies went to

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Cambridge - four to the Company,  
two to Dr. Mason, one to Mr. Windle, and  
one to Mr. Joseph West. <sup>(205)</sup> The Gocford Company  
took a copy and so did the bands at  
Nottingham and Stroud. The S. Stead's  
Company had four copies. Samuel  
Anderson of Honham St. Paul, Theodore  
Eccleston's friend took two copies.  
Eccleston's own name is absent from  
the list for he died in that same year.  
Other country subscribers include Henry  
Cowley of Twickenham, John Swaine of  
Stanwell, Joseph Levens and John Short,  
of Croydon, and William Fortrey of Gally,  
Leicestershire <sup>(199)</sup> The latter was a country  
gentleman, a lover of ringing and a



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giver of bells to the churches in  
his neighbourhood. He subscribed for four  
copies of the broadsheet.

The largest subscriber among the  
London ringers was Samuel Killican  
who took seven copies. He appears to  
have been a fairly well-to-do person  
and a great admirer of John Holt.  
The bell founders, Robert Randell of the  
Fleet Ditch, and Thomas Lester of Whitechapel  
each took four copies. So did Cundell,  
William Gram, Thomas Lowe, and William  
Skellion Gram was Master of the College  
Youths in 1729. He had been elected  
in 1732 but had rung no peals.

John Hardham took two copies and  
so did James Watson. Single copies

were taken by Christopher 539  
Pinchbeck who was master in the year  
that Holi joined the College youths,  
William Underwood, Thomas Bennett,  
Joseph Griffiths and Samuel Thompson,  
William Tickard, Robert Romley and  
Richard Hynn.

The two bell founders subscribed for  
business reasons; Hardham and Gram  
because they were friends of Cundell;  
Killican because he was an admirer  
of Holi; <sup>(200)</sup> Skellion, Underwood, Bennett,  
and Thompson because they were genuinely  
interested in the progress of ringing.

There were others besides Stornable who  
did not subscribe. The price may have  
frightened some for 5s. 3d. was a lot for

a single sheet of printed paper, 540  
and there may have been some who,  
like Annable did not "encourage it".

Trenell and Prior and John Blake;  
Hard, and Spicer and Jacocks; and  
the older members of the Society of College  
Youths like Catlin and Gardiner.

None of Hollis' old friends of the Union  
Scholars subscribed, nor did the Leaders  
of the Eastern Scholars - Neatkins and  
Butterworth, and Popham and Vaughan -  
nor did any members of the Society of  
Cumberland Youths which was taking  
its place as one of the leading Companies.

Cundell's Circular was sent out  
early in 1753; the broadsheet appeared

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before the end of the year; and  
by that time John Holt was dead. He  
was only twenty-seven years old, and his  
ringing career had lasted but eight years;  
but in that time he had made a name  
which is second to none in the annals of  
change-ringing. What he could have done  
had he lived as long as Arncliffe or John  
Reeves, or William Shipway it is interesting  
but futile to speculate; and still more so  
to speculate what he could have done had  
he the advantages of training and education  
in addition to his natural mental ability.

His peals of Bob Major and Triples have  
long since been superseded, his post-part  
peal of Grandire Triples, for some reason

not very clear, has never been popular, even the ten-part, which for a Century and a half was the one indispensable composition, is now largely supplanted by Parker's twelve-part, but the Original still maintains its supremacy, and Hollis' name is never likely to drop out of the list of composers.

A broadsheet is a very perishable thing, much more so than a bound book, and I believe that at present only one copy of Hollis' exists. It was Dr. Mason's and is now among the Powell manuscripts in the library of Downing College, Cambridge. (207)

It is headed "Mr John Hollis' four parts of Triple Changes. of London. College

Fourth, "Lately deceased". It gives 523  
the triple leads of the first part of the  
pisc and ten-part peals of Grand sire,  
the pisc-part peal of Union and the three  
part peal of Plain Bob Triples. The Original  
is not given. Probably it was thought to  
be too difficult to be of much value to  
ordinary ringers. There is a list of the  
subscribers and a notice that "these peals  
to be had of Mr. Cundell, at ye Golden Eagle  
in Dukes Court, Bow Street Covent Garden.

That no doubt was Cundell's own address  
for as I have mentioned he was in charge  
of the box office at Covent Garden theatre.  
The Golden Eagle most likely was a tavern  
but at the time signs were used for all

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parts of businesses. Duke's Court  
has now disappeared and its site is covered  
by the Bow Street Police Court. The address  
in Salisbury Court from which the first  
Circular was issued was the Parley Row  
the headquarters of the College Youths.

Hollis' death upset Cundell's plans.  
He was elected Master of the College Youths  
in 1753 and during his term of office  
Annable had little to do with the  
Company. Earlier in the year the latter  
had called 6080 Changes of Bob Major  
at St. George's-in-the-East and that was  
to prove his East feel with the College  
Youths. The band was Edward Nodes  
William Underwood, Samuel Thompson,

Benjamin Annable, Richard  
Spicer, John Trenchell, William Thorpe, and  
Thomas Bennett. <sup>1 shrovetide</sup>

The Union Scholars rang four peals  
after Holi left them. One in March 1753  
was Grand sire Calers at Greenwich. It  
was conducted by James Newby, and the  
ninth was rung by Samuel Muggenidge  
a Southwark man, afterwards a famous  
heavy-bell ringer, and the father of a  
still more famous son. This was James  
Albion's last peal with the Company  
Next year two peals were rung, both  
P. S. Major, one in March at Fulham,  
conducted by James Titchbourne, the other  
in April at Hillingdon conducted by



James Vickers. Then three and a 546  
half years elapsed without a peal until  
Sunday December 18<sup>th</sup> 1757, when Thomas  
Jackson called Hollis' Ten-part peal at  
St. Giles-in-the-Fields. None of the band  
except Jackson had previously taken  
part in any of the society's performances.

This was not the first time that the  
Ten-part had been rung. George Partridge  
called it in 1754 and William Underwoods  
possibly twice in the same year.

Not long after the Grandine Triples  
at St. Giles's the Society of Union Scholars  
broke up and disappeared. Most of the men  
who had formed the peal band had already  
left the company and in 1758 several of

them including Vickers, Davis, 547  
Thomas Ward. John Jennett and Suggenidge  
took part in a peal of Bob Masenius at  
Southwark with the London Youths. 21

The records of the Union Scholars are  
now in the manuscript department of the  
British Museum. They consist of a set  
of rules, a list of names "Commencing from  
the first of May in the year one thousand  
seven hundred and thirteen", and an  
account of peals rung between 1718 and  
1757. The writing throughout is the work  
of one man, James Albion, and was done  
during the years 1747 to 1757. It varies  
a good deal in character, some of it  
being a very neat and clear script, and

some a very ornate Gothic with  
flourid decoration. The first peal recorded  
the Hicks Triples of 1718, is in the same  
writing as the others though the style  
and that of the first peals is different from  
the later ones. Albion evidently copied  
an earlier manuscript and copied it  
verbatim. The first records of all the  
societies seem to have been in ordinary  
cursive script. We still have examples  
in the manuscripts of the Cheapside Schollers,  
the Esquire Youths and the fragment  
once belonging to the College Youths.

As the record of the 1718 peal is not  
contemporary Osborn and Jasper Snowden  
were mistaken in thinking it to be the

oldest record of a feal in writing. <sup>(201)</sup> 549

That distinction belongs either to the first entry in the Eastern Scholars' book, or to the account of the feal of Minor pasted into the London youths' book.

James Albion may be said to have been the originator of the decorative style of recording feals, although some attempt in that direction had been made by the writers of the early entries in the Eastern Scholars' book. He worked for most of the London societies of his time. The name and feal book now belonging to the Ancient Society of College Youths is his work, and so too are the later entries in the Eastern Scholars' feal book, the

whole of their name book, and  
the early part of the Cumberland Journals  
book. He was elected a member of the  
Society of Union Scholars in 1747, and  
rang in thirteen of their peals. In 1754  
he was appointed head master of a large  
school at Bath and left London. When  
the Union Scholars broke up their peal  
book was sent to him unless he already  
had it to write up. When he died in 1805  
it was handed to one John Bush to give  
to the Bath Abbey Society instead of which  
he kept it in his own possession until  
his death. It was afterwards in the hands  
of several people and in 1846 when Osborn  
visited Bath, searching for information

about ringing he was shown it,  
 and "to his astonishment, asked the meaning  
 of such a book." It was in a very dilapidated  
 condition and he bought it for ten shillings.  
 On his return home he took it to pieces,  
 cleaned the leaves, mounted them on new  
 paper, and had it bound up with the  
 Eastern Scholars' book and a number of  
 engravings of churches famous in  
 ringing history.

Farnell's account is rather different.  
 He says that Albion "left the Union Scholars  
 manuscript book to Mr William Fry: by  
 trade a plumber and glazier, also a Bath  
 Abbey Change ringer, to preserve and hand  
 down to posterity."

Jarnell, who made this note on August 27<sup>th</sup> 1817 says that he rang Grandine Calers with Albion at Bath in 1791, and that he "died a very old man at Bath City and was buried at the same place with ringing honours with the bells muffled about the year 1797 or 1800." He adds that Albion was "a small boned little man, not quite so tall as Mr William Booth, a table knife cutter and change ringer" of Sheffield. (202)

On December 9<sup>th</sup> 1754 soon after he arrived in Bath Albion rang the bell to a peal of Union Triples at St. James's Church. (203)

Annables' reputation stood high all over the Country but his position among

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The College youths must have become very uncomfortable. With Holt as conductor and Cundell as master there would not be much room for him either in the belfry or in the meeting room. He must have of times been tempted to go elsewhere and join another society or form a new company. But he was a fighter to the backbone; pride as well as loyalty kept him still with the College youths, and there are signs that he was preparing a coup which should more than counter Cundell's move, and give him control over a young and vigorous band within the society.

The plan was to bring in the seal



ringing band of the Eastern

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Scholars and join with them the few  
young and keen ringers who were already  
College youths

There were difficulties in the way of  
course, but the plan was a good one  
and it was ultimately brought to success  
though not by Annable. It was somewhat  
in the nature of a preliminary that a  
peal was rung in 1754 at St. Leonard's  
Shoreditch. The band was made up of  
Joseph Monte, Robert Pley, Emanuel Brouck  
and John Underwood from the Eastern  
Scholars; Thomas Bennett who at the  
time was a member of the Cumberlands'  
society; William Underwood and Annable

himself, who were College youths; 555  
and Robert Holmes of Twickenham. Monk  
rang the tenor and William Underwood  
called the bobs.

It was Annable's last feat. He was  
now turned fifty years in age, and thought  
that is not old for such a vigorous and  
healthy man as he undoubtedly was, yet  
of course he had less vitality to resist  
disease. Toward the end of 1955 he fell  
ill and on February 1st, 1956, he died. He  
was buried within the steeple of St. Bride's  
Church, where he had rung his first  
feat and which was the scene of so  
many of his exploits. He was fifty three  
years old.

At Great St. Mary's Cambridge, a 556  
"mourning peal" was rung for him and  
no doubt in other places as well.

Annable rang fifty-three peals of  
which he conducted forty-nine. They  
consisted of - Grandring Calers, 6, Conducted  
6; Cinques, 5, Conducted 4; Double  
Grandring Calers 1, Conducted 1; Plain  
Bob Triples 1, Conducted 1; Major 16, Conducted  
14; Royal 1, Conducted 1; Ascimus 1,  
Conducted 1; Double Bob Major 3, Conducted  
2; Royal 1, Conducted 1; Ascimus 1,  
Conducted 1; Reverse Bob Major 1;  
Conducted 1; Bob Major S. George, 1,  
Conducted 1; Union Triples 2, Conducted 2;  
Dunstan's Triples 1, Conducted 1; Simon's  
Triples 1, Conducted 1; College Triples 1,

Conducted 1; Gosford Treble Bob 557

Major 9, Conducted 8; Royal 1; and

Morning Exercise 1, Conducted 1.

He was ringer as he was, Stomable never cared much about starting for a peal unless it was to be in some sort a record - either the first in the method or the longest in the method, or the first on the bells, or the first in the method on the bells. There are few of his performances which do not come within one or other of these categories, and they for the most part like the Treble Bob Major at Spitalfields and the Treble Bob Royal at Snow Hill were arranged and conducted by other men. Probably it was the spirit which lay

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behind all this which accounts largely  
for the position he held. He was above all things  
a leader. His aim was always to get forward,  
to explore new paths, and to try and do something  
that never had been done before. It is not  
easy to say what London ringing and the  
whole Exercise owe to him, for the art has  
within itself the capacity for expanding  
without the aid of any outstanding men,  
it was certainly due to him that the early  
eighteenth century was a period of such  
progress. When he first appeared less than  
half a dozen fine peals had been rung.  
When he died peal ringing was a normal  
thing in an active ringers career. The  
quarter century that covers his activities is

one of the most vital in the story 559  
of the art and has no parallel until the  
closing years of the nineteenth century.

Almost certainly the Society of College  
Youths owed its continued existence to  
him. But for him and the new life  
and energy that he brought into it, it  
would have gradually faded away as  
the Society of London Scholars did, and  
though when he died the College Youths  
were at variance, and presently were split  
from top to bottom, out of the trouble  
came one of the best and strongest bands  
in the history of ringing.

Its a composer Annable set the  
standards which lasted for many years,

and though he produced no feat  
 the equal of Holli's Compositions, two of his  
 at least are among the classics, and  
 will always have their use. I deal in  
 greater detail with his Compositions in  
 the next chapter.

His general character, so far as we can  
 judge it, I have already tried to describe.  
 Masterful and domineering he certainly  
 was, nor was he of that class of men that  
 can suffer fools gladly. He made many  
 enemies, yet it would a mistake to  
 suppose that his whole ringing career  
 was a succession of quarrels. There was  
 a lighter side to his character, and we  
 indications of it in one or two apparently

aimless remarks in his note book, 561  
and in an old fashioned homely ballad  
which he copied out and no doubt sang  
at one of the College Youths meetings.

Of his great reputation as a ringer  
and his authority in the Exercise there  
are many indications. Besides the muffled  
peal at Cambridge and John Webster's  
letter we may mention three. The first is  
Thomas Hearne's note that Annable "is  
judged to understand ringing as well as,  
if not better than any man in the world."  
The second is an entry in a contemporary  
newspaper copied with approval by Dr.  
Charles Mason - "A few nights ago was



buried under the tower of S. Brides' 562

Mr Benjamin Arnable the best ringer  
that ever was known in the world. Till  
his time ringing was only called an art,  
but from the strength of his great genius  
he married it to the mathematics and  
'tis now a science. This man in figures  
and ringing was like a Newton in  
philosophy, a Raiciff in physic, a  
Hardwick in wisdom and law, a Handel  
in music, a Shakespeare in writing and  
a Garrick in acting. O rare Ben!" (204)

The third is the well known quotation  
from the Clavis. (220) Written thirty years after  
Arnables death it preserves the then  
tradition of the Exercise; yet it is remarkable

How little William Jones and 563  
his companions knew of the details of the  
history of ringing. At least one of the  
subscribers to the Clavis had rung a peal  
with Arncliffe and there must have been  
many men living in 1788 who had known  
him intimately. Yet of his family and  
private life no account whatever was  
preserved and there even grew up a tradition  
that he had been a professor of mathematics  
at Cambridge. It was of course wildly  
untrue and no doubt was merely a  
misreading of the newspaper cutting which  
Dr. Mason preserved. But it is an example  
of how little we really know of these old  
ringers. The vast majority of men when

They die leave no record behind  
them, save two, or it may be three entries,  
in the parish registers. They were born,  
and they died, perhaps they got married;  
that is the sum of their life's history, and  
in the multitude of parishes and of men  
and women even so much is very difficult  
to trace. Annable has at least the  
distinction that as long as the art of  
change ringing lasts, his name will  
not be forgotten.

# Notes to Chapter Ten.

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1. See Vol II. p 70.
2. See Vol II pp. 499, 500.
3. For account of the Society of Norwich Scholars  
see Vol
4. See Vol p 522.
5. Garthorn's Compositions are discussed in  
Chapter XI See Vol p. 20
6. "The first known performance of the  
London Scholars was a peal of 5040 Grandios  
Colours at S. Brides in Fleet Street, Friday  
January 11<sup>th</sup> 1716-17. The frame put up was  
taken down and destroyed when the  
church was repaired in 1796. This was  
supposed to be the only peal of Colours rung  
where S. Brides contained ten bells, and  
was said to be the first known peal of  
Colours ever completed by any Company  
in the Kingdom which was probably the

case, as no other peal upon ten bells appears upon record to precede this performance - E. J. Osborn - History of Ringing Societies in London - manuscript

7. Add. MSS. British Museum, 1931.
8. The statement made by Osborn and repeated by Snowdon and Morris that the accounts of the five Union Scholars peals rung in 1718 are the oldest that exist in writing is not

Correct -

9. See Vol p. 35.
10. See Vol p. 40.
11. See Vol IV. p. 575. Vol VI. p. 1794.
12. The book was in a dilapidated state when it came into Osborn's hands. The peals were not numbered and there was nothing to show whether any leaves had been lost. There is no proof that the records from which Allion wrote the book were complete.
13. Parish Registers
14. Ibid
15. The conclusion that Stuntable was a baker is based on some writing in his note book.

16. "St Bridget alias S. Brides. 569

Tuesday Jan 19<sup>th</sup> a complete peal of 5060  
Grandire Cinques being the first peal that  
was done

Wm. Woodruff	1.	Jos Pearson	5.	Wm Jackson	9.
Benj. Annable	2.	Rob <sup>d</sup> Catlin	6.	P. Henrygarts	10.
Edward Chadwell	3.	Rob: Carter	7.	Math. East	11.
Jno. Ward	4.	Wm Thompson	8.	Thos Rowland	12.

Composed by Mr William Jackson

Matthew East called Bobs " -

### The College Youths' Peal Books.

17 New style. The peal book and peal board  
give the date as 1724 old style. Although  
I give the dates in new style.

18. It is given in the peal book. See

19 The name Annable is seldom met  
with in London parish registers. A  
John Annable was Buried in ye New  
Vault on October ye 11<sup>th</sup> 1719 at S. Vedasts  
Foster Lane; in 1713 Mary Annables of  
S. Peters Cornhill was married at S.  
Antholins, Budge Row; and in 1736  
Annable a Stranger was Buried in the  
East Yard at S. Peters, Cornhill.

20. Calendar of State Papers. dom. 570  
1663-1664 Temp Chas II.

21. Children of Joseph and Barbara Catlin.

Mary	Christened	Dec 12.	1699
Richard	"	April	1701
William	"		1701
John	"	June 1	1703
Hannah	"	Nov 21	1704
Sarah	"	Sep 15	1706
Philip	"	Sep 28	1708
ROBERT	"	Nov 29	1709
John	"	Apr 18	1712
William	"	July 16	1713
Thomas	"	Oct 19	1714
William	"	Feb 20	1715
Sarah	"	Apr 21	1717
John	Buried	Aug 21	1727
Mary	"	Aug 16	1727
Sarah	"	Aug 4	1726

- Parish Registers.

22. SAMUEL KNIGHT CAST US ALL AND ROBERT CATLIN  
MADE THE FRAME AND HUNG US ALL - Inscription  
on the 9<sup>th</sup> at S. Sepulchres.

23. See Vol V. page 1086.

24. See Vol VI page 1591

25. D. St. Baker - Biographia Dramatica.

26. Walter Thornbury - Old and New 571  
London, Vol 1 p. 69.
27. It is interesting to speculate as to what  
is the standard by which you can judge  
whether a man is famous or not. Perhaps  
for general purposes we may take a  
notice in the Dictionary of National  
Biography as the test. John Hardham  
is allotted two columns in that monumental  
work but none other of the people with  
whom we are intimately concerned in this  
chapter has a place except Francis  
Geary and Richard Lawes. Richard  
Inckworth has a notice but not Fabian  
Hedman.
28. On August 30<sup>th</sup> 1723 Elizabeth daughter  
of Samuel Jeacocke and Mary his wife  
was christened at St. James's Clerkenwell.
29. Edmund Lodge - Genealogy p. 689.



- 572
- 30 James Keene's foundry was at Woodstock. Some references to him will be found in Raven's Bells of England, p.p. 198, 210, 220, 257
  - 31 A. H. Cocks The Church Bells of Buckinghamshire Royal Commission on Historical Monuments Buckinghamshire, Vol II p. 83.
  - 32 Charnock. Biographia Navalis Dictionary of National Biography.
  - 33 Burkes Peerage and Baronetage 1930 p. 1033.
  - 34 Dictionary of National Biography.
  - 35 John Hardham's will.
  - 36 Grove's Dictionary of Music, 3rd Ed. Vol 1 p 697
  - 37 Walter Blunt, Use and Abuse of the Church Bells p. 5.
  - 38 Thomas Heame.
  - 39 See Chapter XI p. 67.
  - 40 The Clavis.
  - 41 See Chapter XI p 73.

42 Except of Course for the Union 573  
Scholars feat of Treble Bow.

43 Taken mainly from Prographia Navalis  
by John Charnock.

44 In after years Geary's son the second  
Baronet put up for Parliament and one  
of the admirals old parlors was brought  
down to vote by the opposing side. When  
he learnt who the candidates were the  
sailor swore a tremendous oath that it  
never should be said that he had voted  
against the son of his old Commander, and  
he kept his word.

William Hoely's apostrophe to Geary in  
his Campanalogia is as follows -

Hail to thee Geary! tho' expert of skill  
In matters naval. though the azure deep  
Thou knowst - tho' navigation has disclosed  
Her stores to thee, pregnant thy mind  
With useful knowledge - yet dost thou

vouchsafe

574

To patronise this manly British art."

45. The date on the old fiddle now at Fulham is 1727. See Vol V p. 984.
46. See Vol VI pp 1309 1312.
47. The late John W. Taylor told me that years ago he took Josef Demyn the well known Belgian Carillonneur to hear St. Martins bells. The Belgian winced at the bells. "And did they strike you as being so very much out of tune?" I asked Mr Taylor. "No" he said "My ear heard a different octave."
48. "The method known as hunting the fiddle up and down was invented by Fabian Hedman - H. B. Wallis - Church Bells, p. 72.
49. J. J. Raven - The Bells of Cambridgeshire.
50. C. H. Cooper - Memorials of Cambridge Vol III p. 433.
51. J. P. Goldsmith - Fabian Hedman, of Cambridge. Souvenir of Tercentenary.

51. Register of a Society dominated 575  
the Cambridge youths. Add MSS. 16369.
52. Graduali Cantabrigienses
53. *Ibid.*
54. Halche's Catalogue of Provosts, Fellows,  
and Scholars quoted in the Cambridge Folio  
by J. J. Smith, 1840, Vol. 1. pp. 201-2.
55. Bowtell MSS. Downing Coll. Cambridge.  
see Report of Royal Commission on Historical  
Manuscripts. also Article in Church Bell  
by Jasper W. Snowdon; and  
Grandsire p. 124.
56. See Chapter XI p. 117
57. Norwich Gazette from its Leicester Correspondent  
under date Feb 23<sup>rd</sup> 1730 - This morning  
upon the celebrated peal at St. Margaret's  
Leicester was rung by the Leicester Scholars  
the whole peal of Triples (5040) in 3 hours  
6 minutes and 27 seconds to the great  
satisfaction of all the hearers, and (save  
one bell) the same was performed on the  
best peal of eight in England, and

Considering the length of pull 576  
the weight of the bells (the tenor being  
32 hundred) and short space of time  
in which the same was rung, it is one of  
the greatest performances that has been  
heard in this age, except by the College  
Youths and London Scholars, the only  
performers in England to whom all  
preference in this Art must be given  
and who have rung much longer peals  
on greater numbers of bells. - We need  
not suppose that the Norwich Scholars  
and their admirers agreed with this  
opinion.

58. Norwich Gazette Feb. 4<sup>th</sup> 1729.

59. Laughtons MS.

60. One at S. Brides recording Grandsire  
Cinqués and one at S. Sepulchres recording  
Treble Bob Royal

61. Some information also is to be 577  
had from Annable's note book which  
was discovered by Eleacombe.

62. Snowdon's conjecture that the London  
Scholars were the ringers connected with  
St. Martins, and that they kept the bells to  
themselves until they had scored the first  
and then freely allowed their rivals access  
to the tower, has no foundation in fact.

The College youths had already rung the  
first peal on the bells as mentioned on  
page 226. Morris (p. 89) merely copies  
Snowdon and (here as elsewhere) verbatim  
and without acknowledgement. See Grandson  
p 125.

63. The peal board. Snowdon quotes it as  
six thousand and six but it may have  
some other length just over the six thousand.

64. Norwich Gazette

65. The rates of the three eighteenth Century

578  
pisc thousands of Congres rung at  
St. Martins according to the recorded times

are -

London Scholars' 6000	Grandsire	18.20
College Youths' 6316	Grandsire	20.05
College Youths 6204	Hedman	21.62.

66. William Underwood christened at St  
James's Clerkenwell 1703 and another  
of the same name son of John and  
Elizabeth Underwood born July 22<sup>nd</sup> 1705  
Baptised at Christ Church, Newgate  
Street, August 12<sup>th</sup>. Esther may have been  
the singer, but the name is a fairly  
common one.

67. Lionel Cust in Dict. of Nat. Biography.

68. Norwich Gazette Oct 26<sup>th</sup> 1728.

69. Jasper Snowdon apparently thought it  
should be 10080 and gives it so in his list  
of Long peals published in Bell News, July 7  
1883.

71. Norwich Gazette Nov 25 1729 579
72. Ibid Dec 8<sup>th</sup>
73. Northampton Mercury. Jan 12<sup>th</sup> 1730
74. See Chapter XI p. 117.
75. To be accurate it was seven months short  
of a Century.
76. See Chapter
77. There is a possibility that he may have been  
the beadle, but there is no evidence of it.
78. The authors of the Clavis refer to Cundell  
as a Composer. Stornelle gives a 7-bell  
method of his (Chap. XI p. 119). Otherwise  
his figures are lost.
79. See Chapter XI p.p. 75, 134.
80. "Feb 20<sup>th</sup> 1729. the whole peal of Grandson  
Tripples containing 5040 Changes was rung  
here in 3 hours and 18 minutes \*\*\*\*\*  
" Since it was asserted our first performance  
could not be rung in less than three hours  
and a half for an experiment and before  
skilful judges on ye 12<sup>th</sup> of April 1731, ye



Whole peal of 5040 was completed at 580  
30 changes each minute in 2 hours and 48  
minutes " " " - Teal Board at Kettering.

81. See page
82. Daily Journal, Saturday Mar 11<sup>th</sup> 1732.  
quoted in Notes and Queries, Mar 18<sup>th</sup> 1932.
83. See Chapter XI p. 118.
84. A long list of places where "the Company  
have had the honour of being professionally  
engaged" is given in the Society's Handbook  
1894 edition
85. J. C. L. Stahlschmidt - The Church Bells  
of Kent.
86. "The first and second required ten men  
the third eleven, the fourth eight, and  
the fifth twenty four men to ring them" -  
J. J. Raven - The Bells of England, p. 45.  
quoting E. Leacombe's Miscellaneous Scraps  
p. 443. "Signum quoque magnum in  
cloacis posuit, quod triginta duo homines  
ad sonandum trahunt." - Raven p. 53.

87. J. J. Raven, p. 247.

581

88. This was the bell cast by Hodgson. It weighed approximately the same as its successors.

89. Klahschmidt; probably a misreading of Sandi Thome, the appeal being to St. Thomas of Canterbury.

90. "On Wednesday, ye 9<sup>th</sup> of Jan<sup>y</sup> 1754 was compleatly rung in this Steeple a Peal of 5040 Grandairs Triples in 3 hours 17 min<sup>ts</sup>. - Board in beepy of Canterbury Cathedral.

91. Three tablets disappeared when the church was rebuilt in 1844. See Snowden's Grandairs p. 126. I have taken the particulars from Osborn's collections.

92. Norwich Gazette Sep 14<sup>th</sup> 1732.

93. The tablet recording this peal (if it is the same tablet) is now quite illegible. See Volume VI p. 1651.

94. In 1742 a John Bosc was churchwarden

at St. Michael Cornhill. There is 582  
nothing to identify him with the ringer.

95. Captain George Nodes, probably father of Edward Nodes joined the College youths in 1712.

96. See Volume V page 1184.

97. Alumni Oxonienses. Heame says he was a Commoner of Queen's College.

98. Skellion's name is on the present 3rd and 4th at Fulham as donor. Theodore Eccleston gave the two tables and Skellion paid for the hanging.

99. The account of the visit to Oxford is based on entries in Thomas Heame's Diary - Thursday May 24th 1733 - On Whit Sunday East (May 13th) came to Oxford on foot fifteen ringers from London, and on the day before came on horseback one Mr. Skellion about 14 or 15 years ago a Commoner of Queen's College, Oxford, and an excellent ringer,

583

and at this time Register to the  
Bishop of London (Gibson) and a proctor in  
the Arches. The next day being Monday  
May 14<sup>th</sup> the Oxford ringers gave them a  
short peal at Magdalen College, as they did  
in the evening a short one at Christ Church,  
the Londoners saying still that day that  
they might refresh themselves after the fatigues  
of their journey. On Wednesday, May 16<sup>th</sup>,  
they began to ring at Christ Church in  
the morning a quarter or more before  
twelve, and they rang till five most  
incomparably well, when the gudgeons being  
bad, the biggest bell (that is the tenth)  
fell down but not through the Cope, otherwise  
they proposed to have rung 5040 Changes.

"Wednesday May 16<sup>th</sup> in the evening  
they rang upon the eight bells at Magdalen  
College, but two or three ropes breaking  
they could not proceed above half an hour.

584

" On Thursday, May 17<sup>th</sup>, they began to ring at New College proposing to ring the said number of Changes viz 5040 there. They began a little before twelve and rang about three quarters of an hour, when one of the ropes broke and so they were stopped. Afterwards they dined at Treers beyond Friar Bacon's Study and some (if not all of them) stepping over to Iffley they rang the six bells there (viz 700 Changes upon them)

" The next day being Friday, May 18<sup>th</sup>, they were resolved to ring the abovementioned number of 5040 Changes upon New College ten bells as they had begun to do before. Accordingly they began a little before twelve, and rang full two hours in the morning wanting two minutes when the ropes broke and put a stop to the peal.

\*\*\* Saturday May the 19<sup>th</sup> they went out of town. "

100. "173 $\frac{3}{4}$  Feb 5 James Newcombe. In 585  
the Dark Cloister" - Westminster Abbey Registers  
The funeral book says he died 2 Feb. aged 40.

101. He has copied out in his note book the words  
of a ballad which presumably he intended  
to sing at one of the meetings. On the opposite  
page he wrote "Kmas" several times.

102. Laughton's manuscript. I have slightly  
altered the order of one or two words to  
turn Laughton's "verse" back again into  
the prose he no doubt originally used.

103. In Salisbury Court Fleet Street and the  
headquarters of the Society of College Youths.

104. MS. 254.

105. St Bartholomew the Great.

106 See

R. A. Daniell published Copious eschiads from  
Laughton in the Pall Mall News of Jan'y 20<sup>th</sup>

1900 et seq. The spelling is modernised.

Mr Morris's account is an almost  
verbatim transcript of Daniell (including

his Comments which the reader is apt to take as original) Danelli's Comments are rather superficial. He took Laughlin at his face value and missed the implications

107. Jan 14<sup>th</sup> 1911 by the College Youths, the tenor (Phelps's bell) being rung single handed by H. R. Newton. Charles Kippers afterwards turned the same bell single handed into a peal of Treble Bob, but the Composition of the peal was discovered to be false.

108. Price pulled down.

109. A man standing on a box with his feet free obviously can exert no more force on the rope than his own weight. With his feet in a strap the force he can exert in a downward pull is conditioned by his muscular strength. But in practice no good tenor ringer ever needs to exert at one pull as

much force as his own weight.

587

110. It is within my own personal experience that the ringers of a Devonshire village refused to ring on Whitsunday because a woman was lying dead in the parish.

111. "Sweepings from litchers' stalls, dung,  
guts and blood,  
Drowned puppies stinking sprats, all  
drenched in mud,

Dead cats and turnip tops come tumbling  
down the flood." — A Description of  
a City Shower, written in 1710 by Dean  
Swift. Laughlin may have read some  
of Swift's poems and attempted to imitate  
the style and metre. A Grub Street Elegy  
for instance.

112. This is a paraphrase of several passages  
in Laughlin's book.

113. Snowden concluded that it was a  
different variation (Double Norwich p. 47)



but what the Londoners rang is quite clear from Annable's book.

588

114. See Chapter XI.
115. See Chapter XII
116. See Chapter XI page 118.
117. Parish Registers. Harleian Society publication
118. Osborn.
119. See Chapter I, note 29.
120. Burke's Landed Gentry of England.
121. New Style The feal book says March 13<sup>th</sup> 1733.
122. Norwich Gazette.
123. A feal tablet in the belfry of St. Peter Mancroft Norwich claims that a feal rung in that belfry in 1891 was the heaviest as yet rung with one man to the tenor.
124. I have come across no other notice of this. It is probably apocryphal
125. Hodgson, John - Life of Richard Dawes page 6.
126. The account of Richard Dawes is based mainly on Hodgson's Life and the account

of him in the Dictionary of  
National Biography by Dr. R. H. Luard.

589

127. See Chapter XI.

128. See Chapter XI

129. Jasper Crowdon and Robert Tutke - *The  
Account of the Society of Union Scholars,*  
page 42.

130. There are of course many rhymes which  
look wrong and yet are perfectly correct.  
Sound is the only final test.

131. H. B. Walters - *Genealogical Gleanings in  
England*, p 714.

132. Rev. W. G. Pearson - Article in *Bell News*  
Sep 5<sup>th</sup> 1908, from which I have taken much  
of the information about Eccleston.

133. My knowledge of Hinham Aspal is  
derived from a visit I paid there forty  
years ago when I took part in a peal.  
I do not think the conditions are different  
now. In Eccleston's time I believe the  
bells were rung from a gallery open to

134. J. J. Raven - *The Bells of Suffolk*, p. 178  
 " Samuel Grimwood intreeper of Honham  
 Aspall gives notice to all lovers of ringing  
 that on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> of May next the  
 new peal of ten bells, lately cast by Mr.  
 Thomas Lester of London, and now  
 hanging there by Mr. John Williams, will  
 be rang for the first time by any Company  
 that will do themselves the pleasure  
 of coming. The Norwich and Styham  
 ringers have hired lodgings at Honham  
 Eye and the neighbouring houses intending  
 to be in the steeple early on that date  
 abovementioned

" N.B. - Mr John Williams who has hung  
 most of the peals in and about London  
 hangs church and chapel bells in the  
 best manner and at the cheapest rates

and may be spoken with at 591  
any time at his house in Lionham St. Paul  
street" — Ipswich Journal, edited  
by Samuel Slater.

John Williams was elected a member  
of the Society of College Youths in 1742.

135. Catharan's Tripples on June 20<sup>th</sup> 1756 —  
Snowdon's Grandeur, p. 127.

136. See Vol V. page

137. Ipswich Journal edited by Samuel  
Slater.

138. See Vol VI page

139. Samuel Jacomb joined the Society of  
College Youths in 1746. Eccleston was  
steward in 1747.

140. See Vol

141. Gentleman's Magazine, 1762 p. 552.

142. Thomas Faulkner, — An Historical  
Account of Fulham.

143. See Vol IX p 279

144. See Vol II

145. The progressive lengths of peals  
of Major are

				h. m.	Cut
1725	5040	Bob Major	St Brides		
1726	6832	do	Lambeth		
1727	10.080	Ox. T. B.	Norwich	6-28	14
1728	10.800	Bob Maj	Bermondsey	6-30	14
1737	15.120	do	West Ham	?	28
1793	15.360	do	Aston	9-31	21
1868	15.840	Kent T. B.	Bethnal G.	9-12	14
1883	16.608	do	Moltram	9-48	14*
1892	16.608	Ox. T. B.	Debenham	10-32	20
1899	17.024	D. N. C. B.	Reddington	11-14	27
1904	17.104	do	S. Wigston	10-35	14½
1923	17.280	Kent T. B.	Oven	10. 0	14
1927	17.824	(Heponsall) Ox. T. B.	Heponsall	10.57	18½
1933	18.144	Bob Maj.	Bennington	10.52.	14

\* This weight was queried. It was said to be 11 cut.

146. Loughborough Tenor was hung in plain bearings. Ball bearings were not used for bells in 1909.

147 The rate is 29.13 changes per minute. I have taken part in a peal on the back eight at St. Margaret's Westminster (Tenor 26½ cut.) which was rung in 2 hours 48 minutes or at

The rate of 30.00 Changes per minute. 593

That however was Triples.

148. See Chapter

149. College Youths' MS. in British Museum.

150. From a MS. (apparently Contemporary)

Pasted into the Feal Book of the London Youths.

151. Morning Exercise, Bristol and York

were methods with irregular Lead-ends.

Worcester was the same as the method

now called York. See Chapter

152. This feal was recorded by a board

since destroyed.

153. Petition of the parish to the Bishop of

London, 1758.

154. J. C. L. Stahltschmidt.

155. Catlin was admitted a "Love" Brother of

the Founders' Company in 1740. He had

not been apprenticed to the craft and so

was not eligible for full membership.

He died in 1751.

156. Many of them were broken as 594  
the result of being clocked. Ellacombe's  
list of bells cracked in this way includes  
the following of Knight's bells - St. Pavon's  
Southwark, 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>; St. Sepulchres, tenor;  
St. Margaret's Westminster, 9<sup>th</sup>; West Ham, tenor.
157. A writer in *The City Press*.
158. "Garrett when at the height of his  
popularity made his friend Hardham's  
fortune merely by puffing his snuff  
occasionally on the stage, when acting  
any part which admitted the use of a  
snuff-box." - Rev. C. Collier - *Hypocrisy*,  
a Satire, 1812 p. 86.
159. *Notes and Queries*. 6<sup>th</sup> series, xi p. 462.
160. D. E. Baker - *Biographia Dramatica*.
161. G. C. Collier - *Hypocrisy*. p. 25.
162. Abel Drugger is a character in Ben  
Jonson's play, *The Alchemist*, who is a  
tobaccoist.
163. D. E. Baker.

164. I seem to remember an idealised 595  
picture of the interior of Hardham's shop  
which was used as an advertisement by  
one of the tobacco manufacturers.
165. Leigh Hunt - The Town.
166. John Rich (1682-1761) theatrical manager,  
best known to history as the producer  
of *The Beggar's Opera*.
167. Kelly's Directory of Sussex, 1930, p. 193.
168. e.g. by Leigh Hunt.
169. Alexander Hay - History of Chichester.
170. The heirs at law contested the legality  
of the legacy, but it was upheld by a  
judgement of Lord Chancellor Bathurst,  
July 27<sup>th</sup> 1773.
171. Cundell does not seem to have benefited.  
I have not ascertained the date of his death.
172. Alexander Hay.
173. D.C. Baker.
174. The Clavis.
175. The account of Hardham's life apart from



ringing is mainly taken from. 596

Baker's Biographia Dramatica, 1784.

Leigh Hunt's 'The Town', 1848.

Alexander Hays, The History of Chichester  
1804.

Walter Thornbury's Old and New London

The Dictionary of National Biography

Notes and Queries

and Hardham's own book The Fortune Teller.

176. See The Clavis.

177. The Eastern Scholars' Board has disappeared

The College Youths' Board still remains.

178. Osborn. Morris p. 106 says that "this

feal was afterwards found to be false  
owing to an error of the composer." There

is no evidence of such a thing.

179. The feal book says St. Mary's Hillingdon

and so does the Union Scholars' Book later

on, but the church has never had any

other dedication than St. John. Both

feal books were written by the same man.

180. Ernest Morris - History and 597  
Art of Change Ringing, p. 107.

181. Henry Hubbard - Elements of Campanology  
Fourth edition, 1876, p. 28.

182. The name John Holl is a fairly common one and absolute identification is not possible. Having studied Holl's life and taken all known circumstances into consideration I came to the conclusion that he was born about 1725 and that the probability was that he was a London man. I then searched the parish registers and when I discovered the entry at Christ Church in March 1726 I had no reasonable doubt that it referred to the future ringer.

183. Jasper Snowden - Grandure, p. 132.

184. The Clair refers to Holl as "a poor unlettered youth."

185. Except of course the peal of  
Morning Exercise (see page 434). 598

186. A. J. Garnell, who probably got the information  
from James Allion.

187. For the figures of Hollis peals of Plain Bob  
Major and Triples see Chapter

188. The Clavis.

189. Annals MS.

190. Ibid.

191. There is the possibility that he held the  
office of Beadle which was a permanent one  
and would have debarred him from being  
master, but there is evidence whatever of such  
a thing. Cundell was not master until 1753  
and it looks as if the society elected neutral  
men to hold the balance between the two  
parties.

192. He seems to have done all his Correspondence  
regarding the printing of the peals through John  
Cundell.

Page 601 should  
follow here

Grandsire Triples; but when we 599  
understand the whole story it is clear  
that it was not the peals that Annable  
did not approve of, but the scheme for  
publishing them. i.e. Cundells action.

198 Robert Randall was a bell founder  
of Fleet Ditch I am not aware of what  
bells he cast.

199. William Forbey (called on the Broadsheet  
William Forbery, Esq. of Gally) was a  
Leicestershire squire who took a great  
interest in bells. He rebuilt the church  
of Gally and placed in it a ring of six  
bells in 1741. He gave a ring of ten  
(since reduced to eight) to King's Norton  
and two trebles to St. Margaret's Leicester.  
He died on December 11<sup>th</sup> 1783 - see letter  
by Ernest Morris in *The Ringing World*.

200. After Hollis' death Kellican 600  
appears to have given up ringing.

201 "The performance at S. Dunstan-in-  
the East dated September 12<sup>th</sup> 1718 is  
the first known peal ever rang upon  
those or any other peal of bells in London  
and is the first (original) ringing record  
of any kind extant either upon paper  
or tablet excepting a peal which was  
rang at S. Peter's Mancroft Norwich  
and is recorded upon a tablet now in  
that tower; date 2<sup>nd</sup> of May 1715 -  
Osborn, Add MSS 19371

Actually there are two boards at Norwich  
recording earlier peals than that at S.  
Dunstan's.

"The first peal rang in 1718 entered  
in the peal book of the Society of Union

193. " Ipswich December 13<sup>th</sup> 1735. 601

Yesterday in the evening was rung by our  
town ringers at St. Mary, Lower, in this  
town 5040 Changes being the whole peal of  
Grandsire Triples on eight bells " " which  
was done in three hours and eleven minutes  
by the above said persons to the satisfaction  
of all lovers of that science - Ipswich Gazette.

194 The Ipswich Journal, Sep. 15<sup>th</sup>, 1753.

quoted from Mason's MS. in Ella-combes  
Church Bells of Somerset and in Snowdon's  
Grandsire p. 128.

195. Bowtell MSS. Downing Coll. Library  
Cambridge. Quoted in Snowdon's Grandsire  
page 28.

196. See Vol VIII p. 224

197. Snowdon thought (and he has been  
followed by others) that Arncliffe held  
that singles must not be used in  
TURN BACK TO PAGE 599.

602

Scholars is the first known record that exists in writing" - Jasper Snowdon, Grand sire.

202 John Alfred Parnell, manuscript quoted by Ernest Morris p. 178.

203 Manuscript in Albion's hand added to the Union Scholars peal book.

The Union Scholars records were printed and published by Jasper H. Snowdon and Robert Tuke in 1897.

204 It has been usual to talk of this passage as if it were merely eschavagentrodomoniade but I think the critics have misunderstood the writer. He does not say that Arnable was equal to all these people Newton, Shakespeare, Handel and the rest, but what Newton was in philosophy and Handel in



music, that Annable was in.

603

ringing which is not untrue.

205. Joseph West, innkeeper, was elected a member of the Cambridge Fours on August 3<sup>rd</sup> 1724 and died Nov 21<sup>st</sup> 1771

206 "Register of a Society Denominated the Cambridge Fours. Established on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of August 1724. Reprinted for the Society Sep. 3<sup>rd</sup> 1838. This register is extracted (so far as the entries could be obtained) from a series of Books still remaining in the Company's chest. The former accounts of the Old Society which began in the year of Queen Elizabeth are not to be found; neither are there any Memoranda of the original institution now remaining except a few accidental occurrences in

the mouldering pages of a few 604  
local Manuscripts by which it appears the  
Society consisted chiefly of Youthful  
Members of the University." — add 1788. 16369

Among the names are —

- William Anderson, Esq. 1724  
Humphrey Argent Organ Builder 1777  
Robert Barker, Whitesmith, 1724  
John Peel, Gardener, 1726.  
James Bennett, one of the Choir of Kings  
1738.  
Samuel Booth, Whitesmith, 1743.  
John Bowtell, Bookseller, 1773.  
William Bland, Leather Cutter, 1778.  
John Bowman, Clerk of St. Andrews 1791  
Hewes Carter, Watch maker, 1724.  
Thomas Cornwall, sawyer, 1724.  
James Cooper, Merchant, 1725  
George Gilbert, Pencke Maker 1725  
Francis Hunt, Joiner, 1724.  
Rev. T. Handbrook, 1734.

William Haebum, Student of S. John's 605  
Robt Hesketh, Ch. Ch. whose brother was  
created a baronet.

207. "This valuable MS was collected by the great  
pains and diligence of D. Charles Mason  
at the sale of whose library it was purchased  
for the sum of £2-12-6 by Mr. H. Bowtell  
Mayor and Baliff of Cambridge." - Note on  
the MS probably by Bowtell - Royal Comm:  
on Hist: 1755. Report.
208. Sir Henry Hicks apparently had some  
connection with the parish of S. Botolph  
Aldgate, see G. B. Atkinson, p. 169.
209. Laughton, too, quite evidently had hopes  
that his "poem" would survive and be read  
by future generations.
210. In 173 according to William Laughton  
Geary was serving on the Stirling Castle

for in the account he wrote of a trip to the Store he writes - 606

If the Stirling Castle we can find  
Captain Geary will use us kindly  
We hope to meet him in our rounds  
Either at the Store or in the Downs

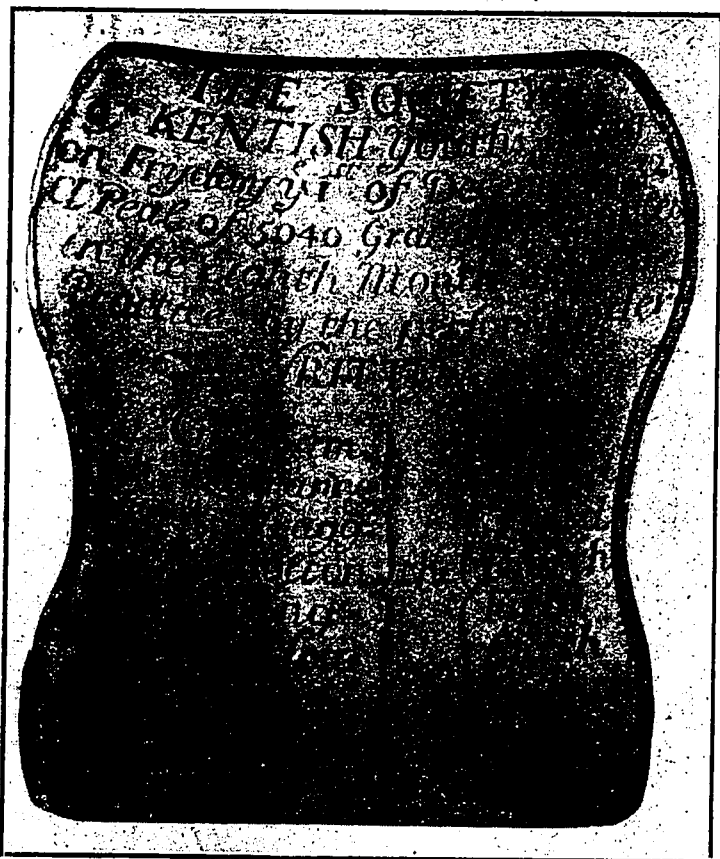
but apparently they did not.

211 The feals in the book were not numbered originally. The present numbering is Coburn's. It is therefore impossible to say whether any sheets have been lost and how many.

212 See Vol 1x p. 330

213 Dr. M. R. James says that "the top storey of the tower is a glorious wooden erection of 1743 - Suffolk and Norfolk. p 85.

214. By the end of the thirteenth century a distinction seems already to have been made between tolling and ringing of single bells  
Abp. Becketham's injunction 1281 says "pulsetur campana in uno latere" (on one side) i.e. tolled not rung



216. A board to commemorate the peal at St. Mary's Dover was erected in the belfry in the year 1938. *Ringing World*. Oct 21. 1938.
217. A peal of Grandiose Triples is said to have been rung at St. Mary's Dover as early as March 26 1729 (Osborn & Snowdon, *Grandiose* p. 126) By a coincidence the same peal was rung on the same day at Hrescham in Wales.
- 218 Among the subscribers to the Clavis was "Mr. Carbery, London." Christopher Carbery rang in a peal with the Cumberlands

at Horsleydown in 1794.

608

219. At the time this was the heaviest peal of Triples. In 1821 (Jan 29) the Society of St. Peter's York rang 5040 Grandsons Triples at York Minster in 3 hours 14 minutes (sic). Bell News Nov 28. 1903 Tenor 53 cut. Two men for each 7<sup>th</sup> and tenor.

On Oct 10 1903 the Lancashire Association rang 5040 Grandsons Triples at Manchester Town Hall in 3 hours 33 minutes. Two for tenor. 52 cut.

220. See Vol X page 62.

221. The elder Theodore Eccleston was at one time resident in America. In 1710 he was very active in promoting petitions on behalf of the Quakers of Maryland against a law imposing "a duty of 40 lbs of tobacco per poll upon all persons towards the maintenance of an established ministry." He objected that "the words of the first enacting clause imply the imposing of the reading of the Book of Common Prayer in all places of public worship" — Acts of the Privy Council.

222. "At St Martins in the Fields East Thursday a Ringing Match was begun to be performed between a set of Londoners

and a set of the College youths." - Norwich  
Gazette, Monday, March 18<sup>th</sup> 1828.

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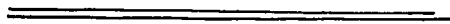


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THE COLLEGE YOUTHS. A History of the Society. By J. ARMIGER TROLLOPE. Woking: "The Ringing World" Office. 5s.

Not only bell-ringers, but many others, will welcome this little book, which celebrates the tercentenary of the Ancient Society of College Youths, with its appropriate dedication to its present Master, Mr. Edwin Lewis. One of the oldest corporate societies in this country, the College Youths were originally drawn mostly from the upper and leisured classes. Osborne tells us in his manuscript history that on the occasion of a peal being rung at St. Bride's, Fleet Street, in the eighteenth century, all those taking part came in their own private carriages. They may be now drawn from a wider circle of society, but the pursuit has well maintained its permanent and universal attractions. Mr. Trollope also points out that what was once confined to the service of the Church has now become, if not a form of sport, at least a form of exercise which must have done much for the physical condition of townsman and countryman alike.

This change was brought about at the Reformation, and the divorce of bell-ringing from the service of the Church was mainly due to the Puritans, who tolerated ringing if for secular purposes. The earliest ringing society

of which we now have records is that of St. Stephen, Bristol, the rules of which are dated 1620. The College Youths followed in 1637. Mr. Trollope, following Canon Ellacombe seventy years earlier, rightly discredits the traditional origin of the name from St. Michael, College Hill (Whittington's church), but fails to give any satisfactory alternative explanation. There seems to have been a notion of connecting the art with learned bodies, such as St. Peter's College, Westminster, members of which may have been College Youths. There was also a close connexion with Cambridge, where the great Fabian Stedman did his early ringing.

Mr. Trollope has much to say of him and of other famous early members, such as Benjamin Annable, and John Holt, who invented the method known as Grandsire Triples. He describes the visits of the members to the universities and other provincial places for ringing, and also tells of the activities of the Cumberland Youths and other rival societies, none of which can boast such a record as the College Youths. He notes the great recent improvement in the status of ringers, to which the Oxford Movement first gave rise. Not only had belfries been too often disgracefully kept, but it was once no rarity to keep there what was known as the "Ringers' Jug," for consumption of beer on the spot. Both in this way, and in the wonderful technical advance made by ringing societies all over England, culminating in the record of 21,363 changes achieved in 1922 at Appleton, Berks (partly by the College Youths), we see how ringers have solved the problem of reconciling ringing as a branch of Church work with ringing as a sport. This is largely due to what has been accomplished by the College Youths in their life of 300 years.

THE COLLEGE YOUTHS. By J. ARMIGER TROLLOPE. "The Ringing World." 5s.

Mr. Trollope has achieved more than his immediate purpose of writing a history of the Society of College Youths. So closely has the guild been identified with English change-ringing that its history is, to a very large extent, an account of how the ancient sport of ringing developed into an elaborate art. Much of the early history of the College Youths is obscure. Though their first master is known to have been the Royalist, Lord Brereton, their founder's name has been lost in the echoes of the bells. Founded on November 5, 1637, at a time when ringing had long been secularized and church towers were still regarded in some quarters as "old chyming chimneys to the drunken whore of Babylon," the society survived the days when the exercise was no longer a fashionable pastime, and led the revivals of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The former revival, mainly through the genius of a College Youth, Benjamin Annable, raised the old standards and made peal-ringing customary. The latter brought the ringer and his art once again into the service of the Church. Ringing matches promoted by publicans for unedifying purposes became a thing of the past, and the belfries were no longer "left to the sole occupation of unclean birds and profane and irreverent ringers." The influence of the Camden and Ecclesiological Societies spread to the belfry, and the ringers who remembered "the good old days" must have been puzzled when in 1846 the Rev. W. Blunt suggested that the morality of the ringers affected the value of church bells. "How sinful," he wrote, "must any carelessness of ringing be! How very sinful any levity in the performance of their duties!" They were difficult times for the ringers, but the Society of College Youths was in no small measure responsible for the

success with which the sport freed itself from secular encumbrances and became a religious art.

Throughout his book Mr. Trollope takes the reader to a strange and fascinating world, whose traditions, so peculiarly English, deserve far more popular attention than they usually receive. The College Youths can look back with pride upon their 300 years in the service of an art for which other countries, for all their *carillons*, may well envy us. When they ring out another century on the bells of St. Paul's and Westminster Abbey may their society still stand as high as it does to-day in the traditions of the "ancient exercise" which has won for this country the title of "The Ringing Isle"!

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The Guardian Nov 5. 1937.