

## **Essay for the Friends No. 1**

### **HISTORY OF THE CENTRAL COUNCIL LIBRARY**

Curiously, the Central Council had an Hon. Librarian several years before it had a library. In 1913 the Rev. C.W.O. Jenkyn of Caversham was appointed to the position to look after Central Council publications and not to look after a library, for there was no such thing until 1920. In 1916 Sir A.P. Heywood died, and left his ringing books to the Cambridge University Guild. It was decided by the Guild that the books which the Guild did not want could form the basis of a library for the Central Council and so the surplus was donated to the Central Council in 1920 to form the nucleus of a library. Jenkyn volunteered to keep the library in his own house, and this has been the custom to the present day. Although small at first, it has gradually expanded by other books and manuscripts being donated, and in recent years by books and other items being purchased as well.

The Rev. C.W.O. Jenkyn died suddenly in 1933 and he was succeeded as librarian by the Rev. Bernard Tyrwhitt-Drake of Walsoken, Norfolk. Although he made a promising start, his tenure of office was tragically cut short, as he was killed while watching a tree being felled next to his rectory in January 1936: at the next Central Council meeting he was succeeded by Wilfrid J. Hooton, headmaster of a preparatory school in Leicestershire. Hooton, like his two predecessors, was a member of the Cambridge University Guild.

Wilfrid Hooton was librarian through the difficult war years, and gave up the post through ill health in 1953, dying the following year. His successor was Frederick Sharpe F.S.A. of Launton, Oxfordshire, well known as a writer on historical aspects of bells and ringing. As a consequence of being elected President of the

Central Council in 1957, the following year Frederick Sharpe relinquished the post to Frank Perrens of Coventry, who held it successfully until 1968. Because of Frank Perrens's departure on a world tour, the library was transferred back to Launton in October 1968, Frederick Sharpe becoming acting librarian. As Frank Perrens was moving to a smaller house he was unable to continue as librarian, and so Frederick Sharpe was subsequently confirmed in the post. In 1974 the Central Council made its first allocation of money towards supporting the library, and in the same year the first library committee was set up to support the librarian in his work. Frederick Sharpe died suddenly in 1976, when William T. Cook was elected – yet another member of the Cambridge University Guild!

At that time there were about 800 catalogue entries, but with the appointment of Bill Cook the rate of accessions increased, and at the time of his unexpected death in 1992 there were over 2,000 catalogue entries, some of which represent multiple items. Thus, for instance, a set of Guild or Association reports, perhaps over 100 in number, is represented by a single catalogue number.

After Bill Cook's death, the library was transferred as a temporary measure to the home of the present incumbent, Dr. John C. Eisel, in Ullingswick, Herefordshire. He was later confirmed in office, although his title is now that of *Steward of the Library*. Probably most will still think of him as librarian!