

RINGING PERIODICALS

It is difficult to overestimate the importance of the *Ringling World* to ringers, both as a means of disseminating information and as a forum for discussion. It is arguable that such contact has stimulated the development of change ringing, both in the range and difficulty of methods and in the sheer number of peals that are now rung. How difficult then to imagine when there was no periodical devoted to ringing and when ordinary newspapers were the means of communication.

In the eighteenth century much information on peals and other ringing events was published in local newspapers. On occasion details were placed in newspapers further afield so advertising what had been achieved. In the nineteenth century, details published in sporting newspapers such as *Bell's Life in London* or *The Era* reached a wider public, since the papers, although based in London, had a wider distribution.

A rather different means of communication started on 31 December 1870, with the publication of the first issue of the weekly general church paper *Church Bells*. It was made clear from the start that there would be a regular column devoted to bells and bellringing, the editor of the column being the Rev. H.T. Ellacombe. Over a period of time the column built up and not only restoration and augmentations of bells but also peals and other ringing performances were published, as well as instructional material and historical articles. Every opportunity was taken to press the case for belfry reform and to campaign against prize ringing.

With the stimulus of regular reporting, the column became a page, but a body of opinion came about that considered that there was a need for a paper that reported ringing alone. It was decided to consult Jasper Snowdon, who gave his support to the venture, which resulted in the setting up of *The Bell News and Ringers' Record* (usually referred to as *Bell News*). The editor was Harvey Reeves, and the first (monthly) issue was published on 1 February 1881. This was advertised by a flyer, a copy of which is reproduced below. Such was the success that it became a weekly paper on 8 April 1882 and had a vitality such that the early issues make compulsive reading. By the middle 1890s that vitality had diminished somewhat, and an attempt was made to start another weekly paper for ringers. This was entitled *Campanology* and first appeared on 16 September 1896. The proprietor and editor was William Bedwell and the office was at 221 High Street, Lewisham. Essentially the same as *Bell News*, it was laid out more as a magazine. In the introductory remarks it was stated that "...the necessity of a bright and cheerful journal...has for years past been plainly manifest.". In the pages of *Bell News* there is no mention of its competitor, but it is evident that this new venture affected its circulation, for a new flyer was issued, a copy of which is also printed below. This is undated, but from internal evidence it dates from February 1897 or soon after, and presumably was issued before the demise of *Campanology*, the 26th and last issue of which appeared on 10 March 1897. It had paid the penalty of being too similar to *Bell News*.

The threat of a rival changed nothing in the format and content of *Bell News*, and another attempt was made to start an alternative ringers' paper ten years later. A circular was sent out late in 1906 and the first issue of *The Bellringer* appeared on 5 January 1907, costing 1d. The editor was William C. Hunt, and a major contributor was William Willson of Leicester, who wrote under the pen-name 'Jingle' and who had

previously contributed a regular column to *Bell News* under the same pen-name. The opening editorial, without actually naming *Bell News*, stated that a paper should be published on time, inferring that *Bell News* was regularly published late, thus appearing after meetings, notices of which had appeared in its pages. It also said that it stood for progress, and lamented the demise of *Campanology* from lack of support, through a mistaken sense of sympathy to the old.

However, despite its brighter approach, *The Bellringer* also evidently suffered from lack of support. Five weekly issues appeared, and then it was admitted that the money that had been set aside to start the paper was rapidly vanishing. As a result the paper became monthly from 1 March at a cost of 3½d. The ninth and last issue was dated 1 June 1907 and on the front was an apology for its late appearance. It was announced that it would recommence as a weekly paper on 29 June at a cost of 2d, but no more issues appeared and thus it went the way of *Campanology*. However, it was only a matter of time before a successful rival to *Bell News* was launched as the decline in the standard and interest of *Bell News* continued, not helped by Harvey Reeves' breakdown in health. The first issue of *The Ringing World* appeared on 24 March 1911, producing the breath of fresh air that was needed. Sadly, Harvey Reeves died on 28 March 1911 after having been bedridden for nearly a year, and so would have seen or heard of the first issue of the paper that would eventually cause the closure of *Bell News*. His obituary was written by William Willson. The objective of the *Ringing World*, was expressed in his first editorial by John S. Goldsmith, where it is stated that '...there is a demand for a journal which shall record faithfully and promptly the doings of those engaged in the pursuit of bell-ringing.' Goldsmith recognised the service that had been done in the past by other journalistic enterprises, but stated that '...there never was a time when ringers generally felt that their requirements were more inadequately met than they are today,...' The success of the newspaper showed that his assessment of the situation was correct. *Bell News* continued to be published for several years, and it has been said that it had been supported financially by Sir A.P. Heywood. What proved to be the final issue appeared on 25 December 1915, but this contained no hint that it was to be the last. No comment on the passing of *Bell News* appeared in the pages of the *Ringing World*.

*On the First of February, 1881, was published, and will be continued
on the First of every succeeding month,*

The Bell News & Ringers' Record.

*A Monthly Journal and medium of communication for the Ringing Exercise;
and a valuable compendium of information for Clergymen and
Churchwardens generally.*

IT need scarcely be said that the position the Exercise has reached warrants the establishment of a journal solely devoted to the interests of Ringing and its surroundings. The projectors of the above have therefore thought that the time has arrived when such a venture may be started with fair hopes of success.

The journal will be devoted to Ringing and other matters connected with it; its columns will be open in fact to anything which may prove interesting to Ringers. As it will not be established merely for any pecuniary benefit to its promoters, it is hoped that the Exercise generally may accord it their unanimous support, and to ensure such a success as shall be worthy of the undertaking, it is desirable that every Ringer, and all interested in the art of ringing, will contribute their quota to its well-being by becoming a continual subscriber for at least one copy monthly. The price will be One Penny, obtainable at all Booksellers, or direct from the Publisher, as below. Order early in the month. Should the journal prove to be such a success as to require its appearance weekly, instead of monthly, such a course will be immediately resorted to, and as the support is accorded to it, so will its usefulness and attractions become manifest. The paper will be edited by a well-known composer and ringer, who will be assisted in his labours by those who have made the study of ringing a concern of their every-day life.

THE BELL NEWS AND RINGERS' RECORD will be published by W. POOLE, 122, Paternoster Row, London, on the first of every month. All accounts of performances, and any other matter intended for insertion in the first number, must be addressed to the Editor, at the office of the paper, 92, Curtain Road, London, E.C., and must reach there not later than the 25th of each month. Efforts will be made to insert everything forwarded in the current number; but communications received after the above date cannot be promised to appear till the following issue. Those who desire to have their copies direct from the Publisher, can do so on the following terms, by apply to Mr. POOLE through the post direct:—

1 copy each of the first twelve months sent post free for 1/6.
2 copies, 2/6. 3 copies, 4/-. 4 copies, 5/-.

But it would be better, as helping to make the journal known, that copies should be ordered through the local bookseller. The Publisher will be happy to send prospectuses to anyone willing to circulate them among those for whom this paper is intended.

There will be a space set apart for a few respectable advertisements only, and the value of such a medium for announcements of a special kind will no doubt be apparent to the advertising world. All inquiries relating to the charge for insertion of advertisements to be sent to A. F. PHELP, at the office, 92, Curtain Road, as above, to whom all remittances on this account must be forwarded.

Initial Flyer for *The Bell News and Ringers' Record.* (in CCCBR Library)

The leading Composers; the most expert Conductors; and the best of Ringers contribute appropriate Literary Matter to this Paper.—To every Church Bell Ringer it is a welcome guest.

"The Bell News" is recognised by the Clergy and influential Churchmen

as the legitimate authority upon all matters relating to Church Bells and Ringing.

"THE BELL NEWS."

THE ONLY RINGERS' PAPER.

FOUNDED IN 1861 BY JASPER SNOWDON & OTHER RINGERS.

To Ringers all over the world "*The Bell News*" is ever a faithful representative, a steady advocate of their interests, and a reliable record of their doings.

There is no other newspaper in existence so able to promote the requirements, hopes, and aspirations of Church Bell Ringers as "*The Bell News*," which is now in its 17th year of publication. It is the chief means through which Change-ringing has risen so greatly in popularity during late years.

The advertisements of Ringers wanting situations are inserted in "*The Bell News*" free of charge. Many ringers have secured good positions by this means.

The columns of "*The Bell News*" are always freely thrown open to assist efforts made on behalf of Ringers labouring under any kind of trouble or adversity. Many leading ringers have publicly testified to the great good which "*The Bell News*" has effected in this manner from time to time.

"*The Bell News*" has been the cause, in many instances, of new peals being erected, and old ones augmented and repaired.

The Ringers' True Friend is "*The Bell News*." The Editor is at all times pleased to help his brother-ringers in every possible way. He will always be glad to arrange ringing meetings for Ringers visiting London.

Preserve the Continuity of your Ringing Records by having
"THE BELL NEWS" every week.

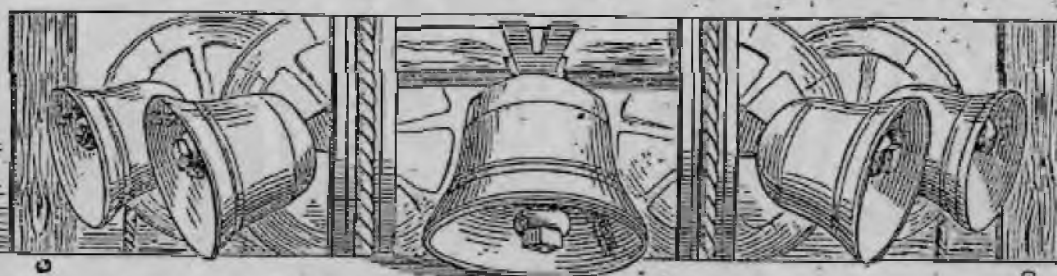
Published every Friday Morning by E. W. ALLEN, Ave Maria Lane, London.



Price One Penny.—To be had of all News-agents and Booksellers.

Later Flyer for *The Bell News and Ringers' Record*, produced in response to competition from *Campanology*. (From the personal collection of J.C. Eisel)

'Ring out the False : Ring in the True.'



CHURCH BELLS

EDITED BY J. ERSKINE CLARKE, M.A.

No. 1.—Vol. I.

SATURDAY, New Year's Eve, 1871.

One Penny.

THE BELL NEWS

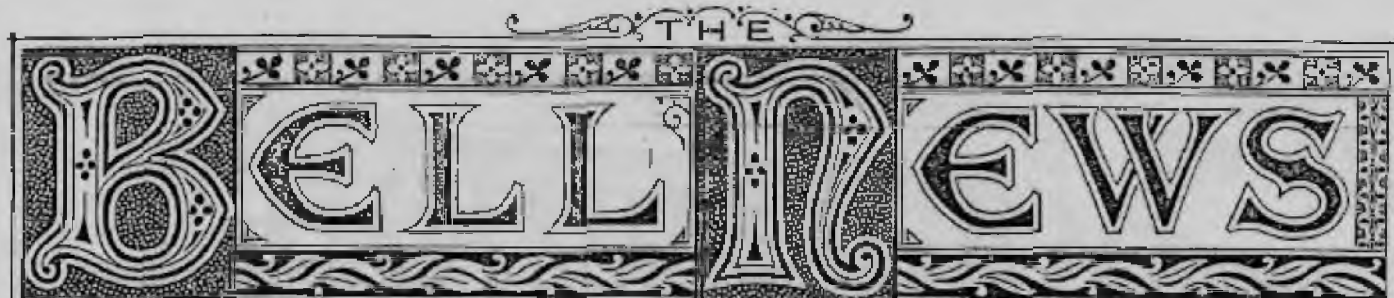
AND RINGERS' RECORD:

A JOURNAL OF THE RINGING EXERCISE; AND COMPENDIUM OF INFORMATION FOR THE CLERGY & CHURCHWARDENS.

No. 1.—VOL. I.

FEBRUARY, 1881.

[ONE PENNY.]



And Ringers' Record:

A Weekly Journal of the Ringing Exercise; and Compendium of Information for the Clergy and Churchwardens.

No. 1. [NEW SERIES.]—VOL. I.

SATURDAY, APRIL 8, 1882.

[ONE PENNY.]



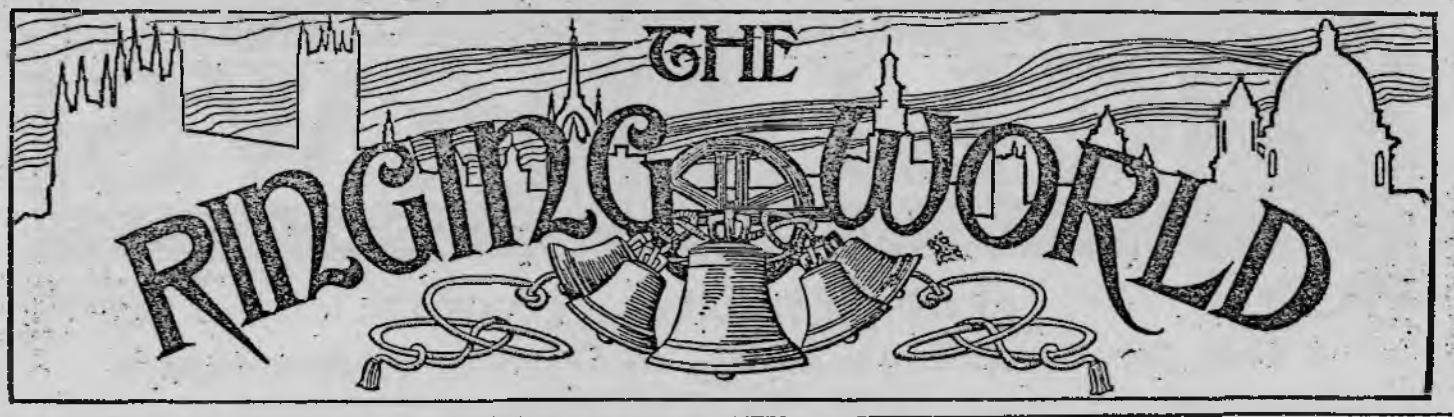
For the use of the Clergy, Churchwardens, and Change-Ringers, as a record of the Sounding, Hanging, Dedication, and Ringing of Church Bells.

No. 1. Vol. I.] WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16th, 1896. [PRICE ONE PENNY.



A WEEKLY JOURNAL DEVOTED TO THE ART OF RINGING AND CHURCH NEWS.

No. 1. Vol. I. JANUARY 5th, 1907. PRICE ONE PENNY.



No. 1. Vol. I. FRIDAY, MARCH 24th, 1911. Price 1d.