

Essay for the Friends No. 12

An Exercise in Printing - *Beginners' Grandsire and Beginners' Plain Bob*

When a book is nicely presented it has a good 'feel' about it. One book in this category is *Peace and Good Neighbourhood. The story of the bells of St. Luke's Church Liverpool 1817-1965*, by Bryan McCahey, and I made comments to that effect in the review I wrote for the *Ringing World* in 1995. Another two publications that have the same feel are the little booklets *Beginners' Grandsire* and *Beginner's Plain Bob*, written by the late Alex Waddington. What all three have in common is that each was printed on a hand printing press, with a loving attention to detail, with two-coloured printing. In the case of the Liverpool book, the chapter headings are printed in red, while the booklets have parts that it is wished to emphasise printed in this colour.

Alexander ('Sandy') Waddington was a member of the Kent County Association for over 50 years. He learnt to ring at Charing, cycling over there from Egerton, and his name first appears in the Kent County Association report for 1926 under that tower, but disappears in 1928. He started a change ringing band at Egerton, and his name appears in the report of 1930 as secretary of that band. He conducted the first peal on Egerton bells (of Grandsire Doubles), and the names of five of the six ringers in the peal are recorded in the report under Egerton.

Alex Waddington remained as a member of Egerton tower until his death in 1984, but he also helped round about and taught several other bands. He taught many ringers at Egerton, although his manner was rather abrupt. One appreciation after he died recorded:

'My first venture into the ringing chamber was preceded by a family warning. "not to be put off by Sandy's shouting – he doesn't mean it". For those who had witnessed or even worse, borne the brunt of his shouting, to be told that "he doesn't mean it" is hardly comforting. The best strategy was to consider it a back-handed compliment; he never shouted at anyone unless he considered them to be capable of ringing.'

But whatever might be thought nowadays of his teaching technique, he successfully taught many ringers and maintained a change-ringing band, although with ups and downs, under the title of the St. James's Society, Egerton. The first peal in seven methods on the bells, in June 1956, was credited to the Society, conducted by Alex Waddington. In it four of the band (aged 15 or 16) rang their first peal, and the other member was a 'first in the method(s)'.

After the war, in which I understand he served in the Navy, he taught at Ashford North Modern Boys' School. Clearly he felt that there was a need for simple booklets to aid teaching basic change ringing, and he wrote booklets on Grandsire and Plain Bob. The first was called *Beginners' Grandsire*, and was printed in 1951 at the school by members of a printers' guild that he had established under his leadership, and published by the St. James's Society, Egerton. A simple booklet with 16 pages and card covers, measuring 5.3in by 4.2in, only 100 were printed. *Beginners' Plain Bob* followed in a similar manner in 1952, with 120 being printed. Interestingly there was a mistake in the commentary on the 'blue line' of Plain Bob Doubles, which had to be corrected by hand.

With such a short print run, it is not surprising that they were quickly sold out, and there was a call for a second edition of

each. *Beginners' Grandsire* was reprinted in 1954 and published by the Peregrine Press, Egerton, rather than the St. James's Society. There is no indication of the print-run, and it cost 1s. 6d. post free. The second edition of *Beginner's Plain Bob* followed in 1956, costing 1s. 9d. post free. Again there is no indication of the print run, and it is clear that the type had been left set up from the first edition, as the error in the 'blue line' of Plain Bob Doubles, mentioned above, was still present but with a proper overprinted correction.

There must only be a few of the first editions surviving, but as these were held together by stitching, these are likely to be in better condition than the second editions, which were stapled together.

The merit of these small booklets has recently been recognised and they have been republished by the Central Council Publications Committee at a very moderate cost. Although not in facsimile, they are close to the original, with two colour printing - but as a collector I would rather have the originals!

Texts in the *Beginners'* series

Title	Date	Edition	Comment
Beginners' Grandsire	1951	First	Only 100 printed
	1954	Second	Number printed not specified
Beginners' Plain Bob	1952	First	Only 120 printed
	1956	Second	Number printed not specified

BEGINNERS' GRANDSIRE

by
A. WADDINGTON

S. James' Society of Bellringers
EGERTON

*Printed by hand on an Albion Press
at the
Ashford North Modern Boys' School
by members of the
PRINTERS' GUILD
under the direction of
A. Waddington
Master of the Guild
1951*

First Edition of 100 copies

Title page and reverse of *Beginners' Grandsire*. The title is printed in red.

BEGINNERS' PLAIN BOB

by
A. WADDINGTON

S. James' Society of Bellringers
EGERTON

*Set and printed by hand on an Albion Press
by M. Griggs, D. Homewood, and B. Horton
members of the
PRINTERS' GUILD
Ashford North Modern Boys' School
under the direction of
A. Waddington
Master*

*First Edition of 120 copies
1952*

The title page of *Beginners' Plain Bob* is similar to that of the earlier booklet.

CHURCH SOCIETY
OF
CHURCH BELL RINGERS

BEGINNERS' GRANDSIRE

by

A. WADDINGTON

THE PEREGRINE PRESS
EGERTON : KENT

*First Edition (1951) of 100 copies printed by hand
at the Atford North Modern Boys' School
and published by
The S. James' Society of Bellringers
Egerton*

*Second Edition
1954*

*Copies obtainable from The Peregrine Press, Egerton
at 1s. 6d., post free*

The publisher of the second edition of both texts was the Peregrine Press.