London Ringers and Ringing in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries

Volume I

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London

Ringers and Ringing

in the

Seventeenth & Eighteenth

Centuries

Volume One.

Chapter One.

By J. Armiger Trollope.

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Let us now praise famous
Men and our Fathers that begat
us.

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Introduction

The man who would write an history of Change Ringing may not complain of any lack of material. All over the Country, in town and village, there are peal boards; at Oxford, at Cambridge, at Bloomsbury and elsewhere there are manuscripts; there is a small but important number of printed books; and in the files of the ringing journals and the association reports there is a complete record of every peal that has been rung during the last half Century. Probably nothing Comparable to ringing is so fully documented. If the historian's object is to give an account of the most notable peals that have been

rung — the first in the method, the greatest number of changes, the heaviest weight of metal, and the like — what he must do is to gather together this material, (or rather the essential part of it) sift it, sort it, arrange it, and present it to his readers in the most attractive manner possible. The task would be no light one, calling for the outlay of much time and patience, and its magnitude is proportioned to the mass and diffusion of the matter to be dealt with.

Fortunately for such a one, several men have for many years past been working on these lines and much of the necessary preliminary work has been done. There are few peal boards of any particular interest that have not been copied and printed, and none perhaps that are not known.

Jasper Snowdon, in his various books, has given us an account of the successively longest lengths in all the standard methods except Plain Bob; the Records Committee of the Central Council has a mass of tabulated information; and the pages of The Bell News, and The Ringing World have many historical articles by different writers. Mr Morris has gathered together the work of his predecessors and set out the results in his admirable book of seven hundred pages, every one of which is filled with interesting matter. He takes us through the length and breadth of the land, and there are

few peals of any account recorded on tables boards, or in the pages of the ringing journals that he misses. A man who possesses a fairly complete ringer's library can know with little trouble what peals of any importance have been rung in any method.

But when we have got all these books and writings, we still have the feeling that we have not yet got an history of ringing. The impression they give us is of a man of items, all of them interesting. but which remain items, without any correlation. In the multitude of the trees we lose sight of the wood. We learn much of individual peals, but little of ringing as a whole. We ask how

it chanced that so seemingly incongruous a thing as church singing ever came into being; and what were the forces and influences which not only created and developed it, but which are of such potency that today, after three centuries, the art has a larger life than ever it had. Above all we ask, What sort of people were those old singers, — the pioneers of the seventeenth century and the men of the eighteenth? What were their relations to each other, to the general public, and to the Church? We want to know about their habits, and their friendships, and quarrels, and rivalries, and how it came to pass that in the last century the men, who for so long had been so closely connected with the Church

and her services got so bad a name, until the bell ringers were in the popular mind associated with disorder and drunkenness and little else.

These questions have not yet been answered, and the historian who attempts to do so has got to consider first, not what to say, or how to say it, but whether there is anything at all to be said. For here it is that our means of material and information seems to fail us. We have the records of hundreds of peals rung, but of the men who rang them there seems no information at all. One generation is little interested in the generation that immediately went before it, and recent facts are so

well known to everybody that rooms thinks it worth while to put them on record. Most people are interested in the people of old times and their doings, but the intervening years act as a wet sponge drawn across the memories of men.

And yet the case is not quite so hopeless as at first it appears. We go into a change belfry and read the tablets on the walls. Here is one perhaps that records the ringing of a peal of Grandsire Triples a hundred years ago. It gives the usual details, — the date, the number of changes, the time taken, the names of the ringers and the rest. But what does it tell us of the ringers themselves? Just

nothing. Or we turn over the pages of an old seal book, like that of the College Youths and we notice perhaps that in the 1752. John Holt called a seal of Grandeur Colors for the Society. An interesting fact, but in itself of no particular importance. But when we notice further that Benjamin Annable & not only did not ring in the Holt seal, but that he rang no College Youth seal at all so long as Holt was with them, then we have made one step towards understanding what were the relations between those two great men. And as we study the records, and take a hint here, and a hint there, a sentence from an old letter, a chance

remark in a book and so on, the play begins to unfold itself. The names on the seat boards become first shadowy forms, ~~and~~ then flesh and blood, at length and we can visualize some few at least of these old singers, not so very unlike, perhaps, what they actually were.

If it were possible that I could slip unaware into a meeting of the College Youths of 1730 in St Bridgets belfry or at The Barley Mow, and could watch and listen for a little while unnoticed, I feel I could identify most of the more important people. Annable I should know at once, and after a while Hardham, and Laughton, and perhaps Crundell. I should

probably mix up Felix Mungavin and William Thompson, and Samuel Peacock and John Ward, but I could not fail to recognise Francis Geary if he were present. And, could I mix with them, I could converse just as freely as I should were I today to visit some tower in an unfamiliar part of the county. For I know the towers they practised in, I know the methods and the peals they rang, I know something of their ambitions as ringers, and their quarrels; and change ringing, which for all the development of two hundred years is essentially the same thing now as then, would form a common bond of sympathy between us. Would Annable be satisfied

with the way I rang and struck Grandsire Cinques? I wonder.

But not all, nor many of the old ringers stand out clearly against the background of time. The supers remain supers, and we need not regret it. But some of the principals remain mere shadows and ~~defy~~ elude any ~~clo~~ clearer vision. George Partrick and George Meakins, for so long the leading men of the two leading Companies, remain names. John Holt I picture as a young and rather insignificant looking man, slight of stature and not particularly robust in health, illiterate and unready in speech, the very ~~ant~~ antithesis of the big domineering masterful Annable.

But the people I seem to know most clearly are the men of the seventeenth Century, that part of the story of the Exercise which till now has been a Complete, or very nearly Complete, blank. These men, or rather I should say that unrepresentative part of them which was included in the societies of the College Youths and the Esquire Youths, stand out clear because we see them in their relations to other people, though, (alas for the interest of my tale), not in their relation to each other, or to singing. We cannot know them as singers, but as men we can. Peerelon the Cavalier nobleman; Harrison the adventurer; John Hackett the brave, hot tempered, quarrelsome, loveable priest;

Francis Withens, weak, timid, and self indulgent, the judge who sentenced to death many a better man than himself, and could not prevent his wife making him a cuckold; Lane Underhill the actor, with his gait his droll Rabelaisian tales, and his captivating smile; the great Fabian Stedman — these and many more we may know.

A man may write annals or compile records, but he cannot write history except he have imagination. But no gift can be a greater snare or more needs being kept in control. Were I a novelist or a dramatist and were allowed to fill out my story with fictitious details I might

perhaps convey a better and fuller impression of these people than is possible by a bald recital of known facts. But such devices are forbidden the historian. It is in the terms of his contract with his reader that he must not put down for fact, anything save what he believes to be literally true. But what a loss from the point of art! I turn over the pages I have written, and how lame and lifeless they seem, all for the want of the personal element which is lost for ever. I have complained of my predecessors that their pages are not so much history as statistics and as I read my own, conscience whispers "And have you then after all done

so much better than they?" It cannot be helped, nor do I think I could ever make my readers know, as I do, these old ringers with whom I have been living in intimacy for these many months agone.

I have made no attempt to write a history of the whole Exercise. On the plan and scale of this book I do not think it could be done. The details are too many, the connecting motifs too few. The only successful way would be to write a fairly short book, deal with the main outstanding features of the story, and ruthlessly sacrifice all detail, especially that of peal ringing. I have confined myself to the London area and to a period of time which starting with

the beginnings of Change ringing, covers the ~~eighteenth~~ seventeenth and eighteenth Centuries and extends some way into the nineteenth. By this means it has been possible to get something like unity of time, place, and action, for the London societies did act and react upon each other, and their rivalries form most of the dramatic action of the story; and these two Centuries saw the gradual working out of the force that had created and developed ringing as a peculiar art, while the nineteenth Century saw the clash of that force with the changing ideals of Church life, and set the Exercise the great problem of how to adjust itself to altered circumstances

and standards without a breach with its historic past.

One of the things the historian has to decide is how to deal with the many legends and traditions that have grown up. The temptation is to welcome them and to make much of them for usually they are the only relief among the real records, and real records can be so very monotonous. So you will find that almost every writer on ringing repeats what Jasper Snowdon calls these absurd legends and they overflow into the secular press. A man cannot mention the College Youths but he must needs bring in Dick Whittington and his Cat, or the aristocratic band that after ringing a peal of Bob Maximus left St Bride's each in his

own carriage while Fleet Street was thronged with gentry who had come to hear them ring. But when we come to look into these pleasant little tales we find, as a rule, they are the results of men's fancies, and after having discovered how insubstantial most of them are, the temptation is to sweep them all away as unworthy of serious consideration. But traditions generally have some germ of truth in them, however much they may have become distorted in the course of time, and, provided one has the time and patience it is an interesting task to trace them back to their sources and find out what that truth is. To accept these legends as they stand is to shirk an important part of the historian's job. To reject them totally

to forego a valuable source of information, and the man who does so would speedily find himself creating his own legends in the attempt to find a reason for the events of bygone years. To gather the material for this history I have cast my net far and wide and turned over the pages of many an old and rare book. Except in a few instances I have consulted the original authorities and used the editions which are most nearly contemporary with the events described. Such a thing is only possible when one has access to such a library as the British Museum. But no one can write a book like this without being indebted to many other people who have worked on the same or

parallel lines The writing of history has been described as the pouring out of many bottles into one. We can easily acknowledge the debt due to the original authority by a reference to him in the notes. It is not so easy to acknowledge the debt due to the writers through whom we got to know of the original authority. Two or three names stand out preeminently as those of men whose books and articles have done much for the history of pinging - H. F. Ellacombe, Jasper Snowdon, R. A. Daniell — but none has done so much as Edward John Osborn. Osborn conceived the idea of writing a history and proceeded to collect the necessary material

He actually wrote an account of the old London societies which remains in manuscript and is now in the British Museum. The style is stiff and pedantic, the handling of the matter, dull and uninspired. Osborn's book if ever it had appeared, would not have been a good one. But where he did surpass everyone else was as a collector of material. Two large books are filled with copies of seal tablets and seal books drawn from all over the country, and far more valuable still are the original records which he discovered and preserved. But for him the history of early London ranging would be mostly a blank.

In addition to many lesser documents this collection of manuscripts contains the original records of the Society of Union Scholars, of the Eastern Scholars, of the two Societies of London Youths, and the earliest manuscript belonging to the Society of College Youths. It contains also a verbatim transcript of the seal and name books belonging to the Society of Cumberland Youths, the Society of College Youths, the Junior Society of Cumberland Youths, the Junior Society of College Youths, the Sussex Society and the St James's Society. And much material relating to provincial societies. Osborne's services to ringing history did not end there He discovered and bought the name and seal book now in the possession

of the Ancient Society of College Justs
and the copies of Stedman's Campanalogia,
of Whites Tintinnalogia
^ of each of the first four editions of the
of the two editions of the Clavis
J. D and C M Campanalogia, and of
Shipways work now in the British
Museum originally formed part
of his Collection. We cannot be too
thankful for the public spirit which
prompted his widow to present all
this mass of valuable material to
the national Library. By comparison
my own discovery of the Esquire
Justs' book is a small thing but
it has value in adding materially
to our knowledge of the least known
part of the plain of the Exercise.
ultimate.
All these documents form the basis
^
of the present book.

But large as is the material at our disposal, we must still remember that it is incomplete; and much as we can know about peal ringing in the past, there are still great gaps in our knowledge. We know of practically every peal rung by the College Youths, the Eastern Scholars, the Cumberland Youths and some other societies, but there were many peals rung by other companies or by bands belonging to no society the records of which are lost. We know almost nothing for instance of what the London Scholars rang, yet they were for years the rivals, and the equals of the College Youths and surely must have accomplished many performances other than the three of which we know. And what is true of them is true of many bands in

provincial towns. For during the 18th Century there were bands in several parts of England who scored peals of which only a few are recorded on boards and tablets. Some of them were reported in contemporary newspapers and the patient searching of men like Samuel Slater, Philip Sadler, and Edward F. Cole brought many to light but most of them are lost for ever. This must be remembered whenever the statement is made that such and such a peal was the first or the longest in the method. Even the claims made in peal books and on peal boards may not be taken as conclusive proof, for in the 18th Century ringers in one part of England could not and did not know what had been done by ringers in another part

The ringers of today may be inclined to think very little of the performances and records of the 18th century. Then now a days will ring in a year more peals than Annable or Holt did in their lifetimes; the methods then practiced by the most skilful companies are now kept in elementary bands; and we are inclined to smile at the assertion that a peal of Treble Twelve "stands unrivalled for the boldness of the undertaking, and the intricacy of the method," or that a peal of Cambridge Surprise Major "was one of the most intricate performances in the Campanistanian art." The College Youths and the Cumberlands rang PB Major and Treble PB where we ring London and

Bristol Surprise, but it would be a great mistake to suppose that because there has been so much advance in method ringing, we are better or cleverer ringers than they were. One man labours and another enters into his labour. One generation begins where another leaves off. In ringing more than in most things we are what we are, and we do what we do, because of the men who went before us. We have climbed on their shoulders, but we should not boast that we are taller than they. When the first peal of Cambridge Surprise was rung it was a performance equal in every way to the peal in twelve Spliced Surprise Major Methods which today marks the highest point of method ringing

Chapter I.

The General Condition of the Exercise in the Seventeenth Century

A.D. 1931. Revised 1933.

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Chapter I

The origin of bells and ringing was the same in England as in other countries. It sprang from one of the fundamental instincts of human nature, the desire to attract the attention of men by making a noise; and centuries before there was anything like change-ringing, the general shape and form of the bell, and the general uses of ringing were settled. The use of the bell was two fold. It was primarily as a summons and later on as an expression of public joy or sorrow, the first usage being associated with single bells, the other, mostly, with several bells rung together. Very early too, church bells were believed to possess thaumaturgic and exorcistic powers and were used for dispersing tempests and driving away evil spirits.[1]

Of necessity, bells were from the first almost universally hung in church towers, for they were very nearly the only buildings suitable to contain them; but the use of them was by no means confined to religious or ecclesiastical purposes, either in pre-reformation times or later. (91) In the Middle Ages churches were with few exceptions of one of two kinds. They either belonged to the religious (85) orders, or they were parish churches. The first kind included most of the cathedrals and all the abbey churches, that is the majority of the largest and most splendid in the land. By their profession, the monks and priests who served ~~here churches~~ them were cut off from secular interests and pursuits (86), and the many bells that hung in the towers of these

churches were used solely for religious purposes.[2] As they were rung at some of the most solemn moments of the Church service, such as the Sanctus or the Elevation in the Mass, or as a call to a special devotion as at the Angelus, the bells themselves were considered to be sacred instruments, and were consecrated by a ceremony which, in form at least, was hardly distinguishable from baptism.[3]

The parish church differed from the monastic church, not only because it was as a rule very much smaller and poorer, but because it served the laity and was used for many other purposes than strictly religious services. From very early times, long before England was one kingdom the civil

and ecclesiastical systems existed in complete harmony. The parish was but the ecclesiastical aspect of the civil township. The two were identical in area and administered by the same persons, though separate in character and machinery.(4) In the villages the Lord of the Manor was supreme. He maintained and practically owned the church, which he or his fathers had built, and he appointed the rector as his successors in so many cases do to this day.(5) The Church was the centre of the village life. The bells that hung in the tower may have been blessed like their sisters in the abbey towers, but their use was to call together any assembly of the villagers whether for civil or religious purposes. When the Lord of the Manor held his moot, or when he called together

the villagers to make a levy for the kings' army, the bells were rung just the same as when the faithful were called together for Mass or Vespers. The important events in the communal life were marked by the ringing of the church bell. Thus at harvest time no one was allowed to glean after the reapers, until the bell gave the signal, and all alike, the old and feeble as well as the young and active, had ~~it~~ a fair start. (112)

In the towns the use of the bell was still more important, for in the days before there was printing and a general ability to read, it was the one means of gathering the citizens together to give orders or to impart information. As has been pointed out, whoever controlled the bell tower largely controlled the town. In the rich cities of the Low Countries the burghers had their

own bells and either hung them in the cathedral tower at Antwerp, or built a special belfry as at Bruges and Ghent. In France one of the cherished privileges of a Bourg, or Corporate Town, was to have a belfry, (6) and probably, more often than not, this belfry was the tower of the parish church.

Edward the Confessor ordered the Nook Bell to be sounded to call together the people in times of danger, and we are told that John (1195) used the same means. (7) Another well known secular use of Church bells was the curfew. (8) William the Conqueror is often said to have introduced it, but he did no more than strictly enforce what was a general custom throughout Europe, especially in war time. The evidence seems to be that it was rung at Carfax Church in Oxford as early

as the time of Alfred the Great.
William's law was abolished by his
son Henry I in 1100 but the bell
continued to be rung, at least in
London and other towns, and was
the official notice that taverns
and shops were to close, and that
labour was over for the day. In London
it was regulated by the City authorities.
Four churches at wide intervals were
chosen to set the time - St Brides, St
Giles' Cripplegate, St Mary-le-Bow,
and All Hallows, Barking - and it
was an offence for a parish clerk of
any other church to ring later than
these. (58) In 1495 Sir Henry Colet, the
father of Dean Colet, then Lord Mayor
gave directions to the Queest of
Wardmote in every ward - "yf ther
be anye paryshe clerke that ryngeth
curfewe after the curfewe be ronge
at Bowe Chyrche or Saint Brydes

Chyrche or Saint Gyles without Cripplegate all suche to be presented." (9) To give the alarm in case of fire was another important use of the church bell. In the closely built towns of mediaeval England, and especially in London, where the streets were narrow and the houses largely of wood, a fire held dreadful possibilities. There were few means of extinguishing it, and once it was fairly alight no one could say where it would stop; and the rapid insistent ringing ~~of~~ of the bell was the quickest and easiest means of summoning all available assistance to fight so great a danger.

Besides these practical uses and the summoning of the people to worship, bells were rung to celebrate national, civic, or personal events, to welcome distinguished persons, (10) (28)

and on Church festivals, and as a part of some Church services.[87] The bells played a very important part in the life, both secular and religious, of the people during the Middle Ages.[106]

Then came the Reformation with its tremendous changes in Church and State, and among the lesser of those changes the one which concerns us here was the almost complete secularization of ringing. After the breach with Rome, public worship in the English Church was much simplified and shorn of a great deal of the ~~elaborate~~ elaborate ritual which had gradually accumulated and the quasi-liturgical ringing of bells was forbidden with other ceremonies. Many old and pious customs were dropped, the knife of the framer cut very deep. But there can be no reasonable doubt

that there was much rank growth, and a great need for simplification; and especially so in bell ringing.

The sacramental use of material things in religion springs from the best instincts in humanity. It has the sanction of high and holy men, and indeed of the greatest authority of all. It is full of beauty and of poetry. But nothing perhaps can more easily or quickly degenerate into formalism and superstition. In early mediaeval times men did really believe in the existence of wicked spirits. They were called upon to fight, not merely with abstract evil, but with evil personalities, — a host of beings that existed in time and space, and were like men, except that they were enormously more powerful and were invisible. It was an evil spirit that rode in

the tempest to destroy the works of men, that scattered the pestilence to ruin their bodies, and that hung over their death beds waiting to catch the soul as soon as it was released from the body to bear it to everlasting damnation. And this belief, which, no doubt, had its origin in the primitive myths which peopled every ✝ wood, or stream, or mountain, with daemon or demigod, was not contrary to or forbidden by the Christian religion.

But if these men believed in evil spirits, they also believed in good. They believed in angels and in the great company of the Saints of God. They felt that if, like Elisha's servant, their eyes could be opened, they would see the whole mountain full of chariots and horsemen round about them. The fight with the evil spirits

was a terrible one, but here was help for the asking. And there are other ways of asking beside the spoken word: hence those symbolical acts and ritual which mean so much at their greatest and so little at their lowest. The man who made the sign of the Cross was invoking the whole tremendous power of the incarnation; the priest who sprinkled holy water, was appealing to the cleansing power of goodness; and the voice of the ringing bell was a defiance flung in the face of principalities and powers, and the rulers of the darkness of the world, and an appeal to angels and archangels and to the spirits of just men made perfect. (11)

That was the ideal; that was exorcism at its best. But we do not need much knowledge of human nature to realise that the time was bound to come when the spirit and

the reality were lost sight of in the sign, and the bells themselves were supposed to possess magical powers by virtue of their consecration (7). This point had long since been reached in the sixteenth century, and when men who shared either the scientific and sceptical spirit of the Renaissance or the religious spirit of the Reformation looked at all this ringing of bells to allay tempests or keep away the devil, it was no more than a sham and a lie. "Je know" said Latimer who represented the best of the common sense of his age, "Je know when there was a storm of fearful weather then we rang the holy bells (62), they were they that must make all things well; they must drive away the devil. But I tell you of the holy bells would serve against the devil or that he might be put away

through them sound, no doubt we would soon banish him out of all England. For, I think, if all the bells in England should be rung together at a certain hour, I think there would almost be no place but some bell would be heard there. And so the devil should have no hiding place in England, if ringing of bells should serve. But it is not that that will serve against the devil, yet we have believed such fooleries in times past, but it was but mocking, it was the teaching of the devil. And no doubt we were in a miserable case when we learnt of the devil to fight against the devil." (12)

When old customs and old opinions have lost their life and meaning they will still continue until a time comes of mental and spiritual upheaval. Then men question them

and they crumble into dust. One of the chief notes of the Book of Common Prayer is sincerity. Nothing of the old service books was retained which could not stand the most rigid tests of utility and truth. Much that was harmless but had ceased to be useful was swept away, and inevitably all the sacramental and quasi-liturgical ringing of bells had to go. "The bells were rung all night long upon All Hallows night, because all other vigils which in the beginning of the Church were godly used, yet for the manifold superstitions and abuses which did after grow by means of the same were many years past taken away throughout Christendom saving only upon All Hallows day at

night. Cranmer moved that it might be observed no more.

"He objected also to the covering of images & in the church during Lent with the lifting of the veil that covered the cross on Palm Sunday, and kneeling to the cross at the same time and to the creeping to the cross." (13)

As a result the king (Henry VIII) wrote to the Archbishop "Our pleasure is that the said vigil should be abolished and that there should be no watching or ringing of bells." (78)

The Injunctions of 1547 carried the matter a stage further. "To avoid all contention and strife which heretofore hath arisen among the Kings' majesty's subjects in sundry places of the realm and dominion by reason of places in procession and also that they may the more

quietly hear what is said or sung, to
their edifying there shall not from
henceforth in any parish church at
any time use any procession about
the church or churchyard or other
place, but immediately before high
mass the priests with others of the
clair shall kneel in the midst of
the church and say plainly and
distinctly the Litany which is set
forth in English with all the
suffrages following and none
other procession or Litany to be
had in use but the said Litany
in English and all ringing and
knolling of bells shall be utterly
forborne at that time except
one bell in convenient time to
be rung or knolled before the
sermon."

It is not to be supposed that
these Injunctions were everywhere

compulsorily obeyed, or that they put an end to all ringing for religious purposes. The bells were still rung for the great festivals and in places the Angelus continued (104) to be rung long after the reason for it had passed away. (77) The passing bell and the death bell too were not abolished, but new meanings were given to them. (14) The one was no longer a charm against evil spirits, but an invitation to men to pray for the dying person; the other no longer a summons to pray for a departed soul, but an announcement of death. (84)

All this while the old secular uses of bells continued or increased and by the middle of the century ringing as a sport had appeared. The use of bells had already become almost entirely secular when

towards the latter part of Elizabeth's reign a movement arose in the Church which had a profound and lasting influence on ringing. (15)

This was the puritan movement. The only aspect of puritanism which concerns us here is the attitude of its professors towards bells and ringing. It was definitely and actively hostile, and the long estrangement between the Exercise and the Church and the most unsatisfactory state of ringing and ringers during so much of the last century may confidently be traced to this cause.

The puritans were especially distinguished by a hatred of forms and ceremonies, and by a love of preaching and hearing sermons. The first caused them to use all

their influence to stop what they called the superstitious ringing of bells, and to restrain their use in the service of the Church to the tolling of one bell to call the people together. (110) In London and other big towns where the puritans were strong and where the parish priests were mostly of the opposite party, it became the custom to appoint lecturers to preach sermons outside the usual times of service, (33) and it was no unusual thing for these sermons to be disturbed by bell ringing, deliberately done, we may suppose, by their opponents (16)

Two of the canons deal with these matters. No 88 says down that the Churchwardens or Questmen and their assistants shall not suffer the bells to be rung superstitiously upon holy days or eves abrogated by the Book of Common Prayer, nor at any other time without good cause to be allowed by the

ministers of the place and by themselves;
and No III directs that "in all visitations
of bishops and archdeacons, the Church-
wardens, or questmen and sidesmen
shall truly and personally present the
names of all those which behave themselves
rudely and disorderly in the Church,
or which by untimely ringing of bells,
by walking, talking, or other noise,
shall hinder the minister or preacher."

Archbishop Abbot in 1632 related
that some years previously he had
visited Scotland, and lodging first
at Dunbar he went to see the Church
there which was shown him by "a crumpli
unseemly person, the minister thereof."
He enquired how many bells there were,
and the minister, with some astonishment
at such a question, answered "none".
Abbot, in his turn astonished, asked
"how it chanced", and was told that "it
was one of the Reformed Churches". At
Edinburgh there were no bells at all

pave one at St Andrews' Church; all the rest had been shipped to the Low Countries and on the way had been lost in Leith Haven. (18)

That was in Scotland where the puritans had far more power than ever they had in England. In the northern kingdom ringing was practically stamped out (88), and though the same thing did not happen here, the use of bells was almost entirely secularized

The early years of the seventeenth century, which saw the birth of change ringing, are notable for the great advance of the Puritan party both as a religious and a political force, and at the same time they adopted a tenet which has had a great and lasting effect on ringing. This was sabbatarianism. The identification of the Christian Lord's Day with the Jewish Sabbath and all that it involves was not recognised by the Church of the Middle Ages (89) (111) nor was it a doctrine

of the early English Reformers. It was
about the year 1595 (27) that the strictest
sort began to insist on the wrongfulness
of Sabbath breaking. (19) A bill was
introduced ~~&~~ into Parliament for the
better and more reverend observing
of the sabbath day. "It was argued
several days, it hardly and difficultly
passed both houses," and was then
summarily rejected by the Queen "on
the prejudicated principle that she
would suffer nothing to be altered in
matters of religion and ecclesiastical
government" (20)

According to the new doctrine, all
work not absolutely necessary, and
everything done on that day for
pleasure were sinful. Ringing was
hard work, and ringing gave
enjoyment to the ringers, it was
therefore one of the things specially
marked for condemnation. Stripe
tells us that in many parts of England

in the early days of the seventeenth Century preachers were maintaining that to work, to play birds, to make a feast or wedding dinner on the Sabbath day, or to ring on that day more bells than a single one which was to summon worshippers to prayer, was as great a sin as the most atrocious act of murder or adultery.(21)(24) "The Lords' Day" says Fuller began to be precisely kept, people becoming a law to themselves, forbearing such sports as were yet by statute permitted, yea, many rejoicing at their own restraint herein. On that day the stoutest fencer laid aside his buckler, the most skilful archer unbent his bow, counting all shooting beside the mark, may games and morris dances grew out of request, and good reason that bells should be silenced from jingling about men's legs if their very ringing in the steeples was judged

unlawful" (22)

The puritans were not content merely to observe the Sabbath strictly themselves they began with increasing success to forbid any games or pastimes on that day to everyone. In 1620 a bill was introduced into Parliament for the more strict observance of the Sabbath. "One Shepherd opposed this bill objected to the application of Sabbath as puritanical, defended dancing by the example of David, and seems even to have justified sports on that day" (23) For this he was expelled the house on the motion of John Pym his offence being stated in his sentence to have been "great, exorbitant, and unparalleled." (25)

In May 1643 all persons were forbidden under heavy penalties to be present on the Lord's Day at any wrestling matches, shooting, bowling, ringing of bells for pleasure, masques, wakes, church ale games

dancing, or other pastimes (26)

All this had an enormous effect on bell ringing and on the Exercise; for if it were a sin to ring bells on the only day on which Church services were held, then ringing must become entirely secular or must cease to be.

These sabbatarian ideas were by no means popular with the bulk of the common people, nor were they held by the catholic party in the Church, nor by the government. (29) In Elizabethan times the custom was to hold sports on the village green on Sunday afternoons, and James I when he found puritan magistrates were suppressing these games, issued in 1618 a Declaration which all clergymen were ordered to read from the pulpit, directing that no one should after Divine service be prevented or discouraged from lawful and harmless recreations, provided

such sports were held in due and convenient time without impediment or neglect of Divine service, and "those persons who refused coming to prayers were forbidden to use such sports." (30) But though this Declaration seems to our view so reasonable and so righteous the puritan opposition was strong enough to get it withdrawn. (31)

In the next reign when Archbishop Laud was in power both in Church and state the Book of Sports was ordered to be read in Churches. (81) It was almost identical with James I's Declaration and gave similar permission for Sunday sports. It encountered fierce opposition from the puritan party and was one of the lesser causes of the Civil War. (32) Many of the extreme clergy refused to read it and suffered the penalty of excommunication in consequence.

How ecclieme their opinions were may be gathered from a book published in 1646 by Samuel Clark (34) the Minister of St Benet Fink London, called A Mirrour or Looking Glasse both for Saints and Sinners. It tells of dreadful consequences which he supposed had followed on Sabbath breaking. At Alcester on the coming forth of the Declaration of Sports a lusty young woman went on the Sabbath Day to a green where she said she would dance as long as she could stand, "but while she was dancing, God struck her with a violent disease whereof within two or three days she died." Fourteen young men played at football on the ice on the Sabbath Day and the ice gave way and all were drowned. Another Lad also playing football broke his leg gangrene set in and he died.

"Not long since in Bedfordshire a match at football being appointed on the Sabbath in the afternoon, whilst two were in the belfry tolling a bell to call the Company together there was suddenly heard a clap of thunder and a flash of lightning was seen by some of them that sat in the Church porch Coming through a dark Lane and flashing in their faces, which much terrified them and passing through the porch into the belfry it tripped up his heels that was tolling the bell and struck him stark dead and the other was so sorely blasted that he ~~died also~~ shortly after he died also"

Puritanism as a political party came to an end in 1660 but its influence in religion and morals lasted during the following two

Centuries. The end of the seventeenth Century was marked by a revolt against its more extreme features, and during the eighteenth Century there was much Latitudinarianism and Laxity in Church matters, but the Wesleyan and Evangelical movements, within and without the Church, revived the puritan spirit, and during the nineteenth Century its influence was strong. In no respect was the result of puritanism more marked than in the attitude of religious persons of all schools of thought towards the observance of Sunday. No one ever again suggested a revival of the Book of Sports. The High Churchmen and Tractarians of the nineteenth Century held sabbatarian opinions very little different from those of the seventeenth

Century puritans; opinions which no doubt gained their strength from the then universal belief in the verbal inspiration of the Bible, from the fact that the Ten Commandments were recited in the Office of Holy Communion, and from the age long custom which had written up those same Commandments in the most prominent and conspicuous part of the Church. It is but a short while since that peal ringing on a Sunday was considered wrong (60), and not so very long since that all Sunday ringing was considered Sabbath breaking. The following is an extract from a decline given at a clerical meeting at Sutton Bennington Notts on June 26th 1859. —

"Neither should any excuse whatever obtain permission for

ringing on a Sunday. Many, even Clergymen are not aware of the generic distinction between ringing and chiming but on this distinction turns the animus of my present caution. The difference may be described geometrically by saying that both in chiming and ringing the motion of the bell is oscillatory - but whilst in chiming the arc of oscillation is small, in ringing it is 360°. I for my part would quite as soon sanction foot-ball or cricket in the church yard on Sunday as ringing properly so called and I would as soon give up the belfry to prize fighting on a Sunday as prize ringing - at all times indeed most objectionable. Ringing is an intellectual and scientific enjoyment as much so as chess or violin playing, and in the opinion of some more so when done as it should be; and we know what new we should take

of Sunday chess players or Sunday concerts. Let me therefore implore every clergyman to exercise his authority and put an extinguisher on all Sunday ringing." (35)

This was not said by an enemy of ringers and ringing, nor by a poor fanatic. The speaker was engaged in an attempt to improve the condition into which ringing had fallen. His lecture was an early landmark in the belfry reform movement of the last century and was quoted with approval by no less a person than Henry Thomas Ellacombe in his Bells of the Church. Ellacombe was a High Churchman one of the Oxford Tractarians and his life long love of bells and work for the good of ringers are known to all. "However delightful and poetical" he wrote "may be the thoughts connected with a cheerful

peal on a Sunday morning, every year convinces me more and more that in most cases it is productive of evil." (36) (109)

These two quotations from such sources are conclusive proof that ringing as distinct from chiming and tolling was looked upon as an entirely secular thing.

But the opposition ~~xxxxx~~ of the early puritans toward bell ringing was not merely because it was "superstitious" or because it was Sabbath breaking; the plainer members of the sect objected to the thing itself because it gave pleasure to ringers. It is rather difficult to understand and rightly appreciate the ideas of these people. Vividly conscious as they were of the reality of the future life, firmly believing as they did in the Calvinistic doctrines of predestination

election and reprobation, they could not but hold that every part of life which was not occupied by work must be spent in religious service, a service from which all ceremony, all art, all beauty, were rigorously excluded, and which largely consisted of interminable sermons that to us seem extraordinarily arid and tedious but to them were full of life and meaning. To such people all amusements, all recreation, all sport were diversions which kept mens minds from higher things and so were first harmful, and then positively sinful, and singing along with dancing fell under the general condemnation.

The attitude of John Bunyan towards singing well illustrates this phase of thought. Bunyan

was an exceptional man, but he typifies the puritan spirit at its best both in its strength and its limitations. He was born among the lowest of the people and grew up without education or contact with educated people. He was gifted with an intensely religious nature, a vivid imagination, a morbidly sensitive conscience, and a mastery of strong simple language. Nothing can be further from the truth than the legend so widely believed in later ~~years~~ times that he in his early years he was a reprobate and a great sinner. This legend arose from people taking literally the fervent words of his autobiography and the desire to hold him up as a shining example of the power of grace to reclaim the worst of

sinners In his young day when he was a bell ringer at Elolow he was much attracted by the services at the parish church and assiduous in his attendance there. He was fond too of sports and dancing and the usual amusements of the village green. Then came the time when he fell under the influence of those puritan ideas about which we have been speaking. The result so far as ringing is concerned shall be told in his own words — "Now you must know that before this I had taken much delight in ringing, but my conscience beginning to be tender I thought such practice was but vain and therefore forced myself to leave it, yet my mind hankered. Wherefore I should go

to the steeple house and look in it though I durst not ring. But I thought that this did not become religion neither, yet I forced myself and would look on still, but quickly after I began to think how if one of the bells should fall. Then I chose to stand under a main beam that lay athwart the steeple from side to side thinking that there I might stand sure but then I should think again, should the bell fall with a swing, it might first hit the wall and then rebounding upon me might kill me for all the beam. This made me stand in the steeple door and now thought I, I am safe enough for if a bell should then fall, I can step out behind these thick walls and so be preserved notwithstanding

"So after this I would go and see them ringing but would not go further than the steeple door (56), but then it came into my head How if the steeple itself should fall? And this thought it may fall for ought I know when I stood and looked on did continually so shake my mind that I durst not stand in the steeple door any longer but was forced to flee for fear the steeple should fall upon my head." (37)

Some later writers have tried to explain Bunyan's renunciation of ringing on the ground that it was Sabbath breaking but there is no hint of that in his own words. To him the thing was attractive and being attractive was a worldly snare and so to be avoided as sinful.

No man has had greater

influence in religious matters among a certain class of people than Bunyan and perhaps the bad opinion which so many religious people for so long a time had of singers and singing is due in no small degree to the writings and influence of the greatest man that ever was a singer. (99)

The idea that amusement was perhaps actually sinful and at any rate harmful persisted in certain religious thought through many years It was strongly countenanced by the eighteenth century revivalists and widely held during much of the following century I am tempted to quote a nineteenth century editor of Bunyan as showing views held seventy years ago — "A new source of uneasiness now presented itself in his practice of (103)

bell-ringing an occupation requiring severe labour usually performed on the Lords-Day; and judging from the general character of bell ringers. it has a most injurious effect both as regards morals and religion. ×××× We find that the Church bell minister to the Book of Sports to call the company to Sabbath breaking [the reference is to the incident already noted where two lads were killed by lightning] The bell ringers might come within the same class as those upon whom the tower of Siloam fell; still it was a most solemn warning and accounts for the timidity of so resolute a man as Bunyan. ×××× The terror of an untimely death eventually deterred him from that mode of Sabbath breaking. We are not

to conclude from the example of a man who in after life proved so great and excellent a character that under all circumstances, bell-ringing and dancing are immoral. In those days such sports and pastimes usually took place on the Lords'-day, and however the Church of England might sanction it and proclaim by royal authority in all her churches the lawfulness of sports on that sacred day, yet it is now universally admitted that it was commanding a desecration of the Sabbath and letting loose a flood of vice and profaneness. In themselves on proper days for recreation such sports may be innocent, but if they engender an unholy thought or occupy time needed for self examination and

devotion they ought to be avoided as (30)
sinful hinderances to a spiritual life."

A further cause of the secularization of bells and ringing in the latter part of the sixteenth, and during the seventeenth and following centuries lay in the decline of ecclesiastical authority. In England the Reformation was largely the revolt of the laity against the clergy. The control of the fabric of the churches passed into the hands of the laity. (97) In the country districts the landowners were naturally supreme; in the towns the parish acting through the vestry meeting had control. Every one was by law compelled to attend his parish church on Sundays and holy days on pain of fine and every rate payer had the right of attending and voting at the vestry

meeting The fabric of the church was maintained by a rate ~~(illegible)~~ levied on the parish and this gave the ratepayers the right to say how the money should be spent. The churchwardens were the officers of the laity and represented them to a far greater degree than at present And though ringing for ecclesiastical purposes had declined ringing for national civic or personal purposes, had increased. It is probable that the custody of the bells and the regulation of the ringing was legally then as now in the hands of the incumbent; actually it was largely in the hands of the laity The vicar of a country parish would have no motive for interfering with ringing done to please the squire, and in the towns the parish seems to

have ordered and paid for the ringing
In the Corporate Towns the order to
ring the bells came frequently from
the civic authorities and the mayor's
right to command the ringing
seems to have been generally recognised
even if it had no basis in strict
law. There is a tale told of Queen
Elizabeth summoning the mayor
of a town she was visiting, and
complaining that no bells were
rung in her honour, and her plea
was not that it was none of his (39)
business but that there were no bells.
This right, real or assumed, of
mayors to order the ringing of
bells obtained in many places
and continued until recent times
if indeed it does not still exist.
In Norwich St Peter Mancroft
bells were rung on national and

civic occasions such as King's birthday mayor's day and the visit of the judges. and the ringers got their orders and received their pay from the Guildhall without any reference to the Church authorities. Something similar obtains in the City of London on Lord Mayor's day, and doubtless elsewhere also. (79) At Preston the civic authorities appear to have ignored any rights belonging to incumbent and churchwardens, and taken upon themselves the entire control of the ringing. On the 13th of January 1587 ~~Key~~ were issued Orders to be had and observed concerning the use of ringing the bell, set down and agreed upon by the Four and Twenty Men of the said Parish (i.e. the mayor, aldermen, and the men of the Upper End and Lower End). These orders, eleven in number, restrict the funeral "peals" to the three allowed by Law, and

apportion the number of bells to be used according to nice social scale. For children and poor persons no more than three might be used. For ordinary persons, four. But for a gentleman or an honest householder all five might be rung. So many peals and (and no more) were to be rung to service both Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer, in such sort as hath heretofore been accustomed. The bells might be rung "upon the Queens day and at all triumphs of joy for her Majesty", and "for the entertainment of the nobility." The passing bell and sermon bell were to be used, and no "pleasure peals" (i.e. ringing for sport) were to be allowed, "except it be at the request of a worshipful man or a gentleman of the parish." And not only was any control of the ringing taken out of the hands of the churchwardens, but they and

the clerk were to forfeit and lose twelve pence every time the bells were rung when not allowed by the orders. (98)

The Norwich Corporation also assumed powers to regulate ringing, for they sent orders to all the parish clerks in the city that they must not presume to ring any bell for any person, other than such as shall die in the parish where they inhabited; and they went still further and sold all the bells of St Ethelred's church but one. (63)

If we examine the wardens' accounts of any important church it is easy to trace the gradual but in the end almost complete secularization of ringing. As examples I give at the end of this chapter, the lists of the payments for ringing at two of the principal churches in the City of Salisbury.

Another clear and unmistakable indication of the gradual secularization of bells is to be found in the inscriptions cast on them.[40] In pre-reformation times they were almost always in Latin and consisted of an invocation to the saint to whom the bell was dedicated or of a religious text. After the middle of the sixteenth century English was mostly used, the ornamental crosses & so common on earlier bells disappeared and the beautiful Gothic and old English lettering was replaced by plain Roman letters. At first the inscriptions were mottos of a reverent type but they soon changed into commonplace or frivolous statements or doggrel couplets. The clergy as clergy ceased to concern themselves in the matter and the

provision of new bells and the writing of their inscriptions were left to the churchwardens (82) Probably in most cases the bell founders cast what they thought fit on the bells without reference to any other authority. Seventeenth Eighteenth and early Nineteenth Century inscriptions are sometimes interesting sometimes quaint but they are more often commonplace stupid or objectionable Here are some examples taken at random —

"At proper times my voice I'll raise
To sound my benefactors praise."

"Pull on brave boys I'm metal to the back
But will be hanged before I crack"

"I mean to make it understood
That though I'm little yet I'm good"

"Doctor Nicholas gave five pound
To help cast this peal tunable and sound"

"I'm not the bell I was but quite another

I'm now as right and true as George my brother."

"Harken do ye heare our Clapers wanti beere." (90)

Many other similar examples could be given, and most common of all is to find merely the founders name and the words "made me", or "fecit", with the date and perhaps the names of the churchwardens.

There are very few bells in London of any archaeological interest. The great fire of 1666 destroyed most of the pre-reformation bells, and nearly all those that were left were recast as a result of the desire to have bigger and better rings. The founders who cast these bells were excellent craftsmen but their inscriptions are almost the most commonplace and uninteresting in the history of English bell founding.

It would not be an exaggeration to say that the great majority of the bells which were cast and hung in the 17th and 18th centuries were founded either that men could have increased facilities for practising change-ringing, or because the Laity took a pride in their bells and loved to hear them rung. Many County gentlemen were interested in ringing and gave bells to their parish churches, and many ringing societies either themselves subscribed money or collected subscriptions to found or augment rings. Perhaps the motive was not so very unlike that which today induces men to put up new peals of bells or restore or increase old ones except that it was frankly

secular and there was little science that the bells ought be sacred things to be used for the service of the Church. The ideas of the time are quite fairly reflected in the following epitaph dated 1641 from Sett in Sussex —

"Here lies George Theobald, a lover of bells
And of this house, as this epitaph tells.
He gave a ~~bell~~ bell freely to grace the new steeple.
Ring out to his prayse therefore ye good people." (91)

Strong as was the spirit of puritanism and deeply as was its effect on the national character, its adherents were only a section of the Community. It did not directly influence the upper or the lower classes Its strength was in the middle classes and chiefly the lower middle classes and those who most firmly held its tenets ~~X~~ were sections who had cut themselves apart from all ecclesiastical tradition. There was always a strong Catholic party in the Church of England who looked back behind the Reformation to the undivided Church. These men were not sabbatarians or anti-pluralists but they made no attempt to revive ~~X~~ quasi-liturgical singing ~~X~~ even when they had the opportunity The sacramental use of bells was killed for ever in the Church of England by such things as Latimers sermon.

It is at first sight rather strange that ringing survived the changes of the sixteenth century. It was due entirely to the intense love that the Early had for their bells (92) For centuries they had been part of the Communal daily life, and had voiced the peoples joys and sorrows, prayers and aspirations. There is no instrument which can make so strong an appeal to the emotions of men as the bell, save only the trumpet, which speaks of different things. The appeal is subtle and intangible, the message is never very definite, and it survived all the changes in religion, in fact it survived when ringing was emptied of all definite religious intention. "Superstitious" ringing might be forbidden but the people would still have the bells rung, even if it

was to be entirely secular. And that is what made ringing as a sport possible, and so directly led to the birth of change-ringing. It is quite certain that if change-ringing had not appeared when it did, it could never have appeared at all.

Up till now we have considered the attitude of the general community towards ringing; we must now consider the attitude of the ringers themselves.

As a general rule when ~~if~~ an art is engaged in the service of some cause or institution, while it must be true to its own fundamental laws, in its expression and in its development it must be subordinate to the cause it serves. The general principles of architecture for instance are universal but the architecture which arises from the needs of a

Church will differ from that which arises from the needs of a civic government not merely in the actual planning of the building but in the spirit and style of the whole conception, and it is notorious that where architects have forgotten or ignored this truth, where they have used a style which has grown out of the necessities of one institution to design buildings for the use of another the result is more or less of a failure. Gothic architecture was not adopted merely because it produced beautiful buildings. It grew up because it expressed the spirit and met the needs of the mediaeval Church. The Gregorian Chant was not chosen just because it was fine music but because it was the natural musical expression

of the Catholic Liturgy. In both cases the needs and the spirit of the Church created the art and developed it and we cannot understand and appreciate the art unless we understand and appreciate something of the life and spirit of the Church.

There is nothing at all of this in the case of change-ringing. Change-ringing grew out of no necessity of the Church either ritual or liturgical. It grew out of no necessity of cure or parochial life. Ringing in its widest sense that of making a noise by means of bells did indeed arise from both these necessities, but change-ringing in every thing that distinguishes it from the general sounding of bells had an entirely different genesis and both in its origin and its development it

is not concerned with anything outside the ringing Exercise.

It is true that for the outside public the object of ringing is to make an agreeable and musical sound and it is true broadly speaking that the continually varying rhythm of change-ringing attains this end better than almost every other means. But a little thought is sufficient to reveal that this is really an incidental and not an essential feature of the art. With that enlarging on the subject it may be sufficient to point out that the fundamental law that no one change may ever be repeated in any touch or peal rules out any development on purely musical lines. It is futile to speculate what development would or could have happened of the original

basis of the art had been musical instead of mathematical most probably there could actually have been no other development in ringing than what did take place for the art began on three bells and while the scope for musical expression on three bells is so small as to be almost non-existent, the "pieces" contain the germ of all the mathematical development on all numbers. At any rate the inception of Change ringing was mathematical and not musical.

We have no direct evidence as to the origin of Change ringing, but it is by no means difficult to see how it began. The Church and State had long found the usefulness of bells for various purposes and they employed men to ring them.

Escperience taught that a swinging bell gives a nobler sound than a stationary one. To ring a swinging bell with the old crude arrangement of just a lever and then a lady wheel, required strength and skill and the higher the bell was rung the greater the strength and skill required The men who were paid to ring began to take a liking for ringing for its own sake and when "superstitious" ringing was forbidden they rang to please themselves.

Before there was anything like change-ringing the ringing of bells was an established sport done for the pleasure of the thing and not only when paid for or for a particular object. And then came the time ~~when~~ quite naturally when after the skill of the ringers and the

improvement of the hanging had enabled them to ring the bells in ordered rounds that one said to another in so many words "Let's have some variety Change places with me" and once that was said the whole of change-ringing (iii) became possible by logical development.

But notice that this beginning and all the development that followed came out of the idea of sport which had nothing to do with the original reasons for ringing or from any purposes for which the bells were cast and hung. Change ringing is an art that concerns the ringers themselves and no one else and it can hardly be understood and appreciated by anyone but by ringers. The outside public may love the sound of the bells they may appreciate and in some measure understand

the musical effect that change ringing produces; but the art itself. Everything that is involved in the difference between Grandsire Triples and London Surprise is a mystery and a sealed book to them.

Begun in this way it was inevitable that change ringing should have been secular in its spirit. It would have been so even if it had arisen in the quasi-liturgical ringing of pre-reformation times As it arose when (as we have seen) ringing for public purposes had become almost entirely secular the result was that for more than two and a half centuries it was almost entirely dissociated from the service of the Church.

Two important results followed from all this. The first was the

profound and prolonged misconception and misjudgement of ringers by church going and serious people. They looked on them as a set of men who ostensibly were Connected with the Church and yet who showed no signs that they were Conscious of any obligations from the Connection; and it was a common reproach that ringers pounded the bells which called others to church and were never seen there themselves. Nothing perhaps so much tended to give ringers the bad name they undoubtedly had for so long a time as this charge And yet under the circumstances it was not a fair one Religious opinion had first forbidden ringers to ring for the glory of God because it was superstitious, and then to ring for the service of the

Church because it was Sabbath breaking
Popular opinion and popular needs
had encouraged ringing for secular
purposes and it is not to be wondered
that ringers who enjoyed ringing
for its own sake, as they were forbidden
to practise it for higher motives, practised
it for lower, and considered it partly
as a means by which they could earn
a few shillings occasionally and
generally as a sport. What reason
had ringers as ringers to go to Church?
It is pretty certain that as a class
they were no different and no worse
than men who indulged in other
sports; only no one ever expected a
footballer to go to Church just
because he was a footballer.

The other result was that ringers
were thrown entirely on their own
resources and Change ringing was

enabled to develop itself without
any interferences from outside influences.
If Change ringing had arisen from
some liturgical necessity as Church
music did, it would have been
made subordinate to Church services.
If the relations between the clergy
and ringers had been closer, the
former might have influenced
the development of the art. As it
was the Exercise tended to become
more and more a close Community
with narrow traditions and real
or fancied rights jealously guarded
while the strict mathematical basis
of the science was able to influence
the development of the art on purely
logical lines. And this thing
while it was one of the greatest
difficulties which confronted the
reformers of the middle nineteenth

century probably was the salvation of the art during that critical time. When the time for reformation came it is probable that the reformers (mostly clergymen who woke up to the very unsatisfactory condition of their belfries) would have made a clean sweep as a clean sweep had already been made of the old village orchestras. Only there was nothing to put in the place of the ringers.

Mr Ellacombe wrote in 1872 — Generally speaking there does not exist in connection with the Church a more difficult class of men to keep in order and submission than the bell ringers. Moreover they generally take it upon themselves to train up whom they chose in their particular art, and the young disciples soon learn under

the birthright of their parish preceptors to claim a kind of presumptuous right to privilege of succeeding without let or hindrance to the station of an old singer whenever a vacancy occurs Such a self-elected and exclusive body of men think nothing of setting at defiance the orders and directions whether of ministers or Church wardens which may be likely to interfere with their usual habits or over rule their private arrangements." (41)

This is not an unfair statement of the case from the point of view of a parish priest but it was due not to any inherent depravity in the singers but as the result of causes going back to the very start of Church singing (and earlier) and

to the strict traditions of the Exercise.

In forming judgements of ringing and ringers during the seventeenth eighteenth and much of the nineteenth centuries we must remember that we are dealing with a body of men engaged in a purely secular sport and that many of the ideals and values of the last fifty years do not apply.

Ringing began among the lower orders of society, among the strong labouring class. At first it required more strength than anything else and was paid for when required. There was nothing to attract a better class of men In the village the ringers were farm labourers with a sprinkling of smaller farmers. In his King Henry the Fourth, Shakespeare has drawn a brief but vivid picture of a Country ringer. The action of the

play is supposed to take place about 1606 but the portrait is drawn from the singers the poet may have met in his rambles through the Warwickshire villages in the latter years of Elizabeth's reign The name given to the singer (43) Feles Bullcalf, by itself tells us volumes

The singers in the Lives were drawn from the corresponding class of society In 1598 Paul Hentzner, was tutor to a German princeling who was making a three years tour through France England and Italy, and when he got home he wrote an account of his travels. "The English are serious like the Germans; lovers of show; x x x x they excel in dancing and music x x x the people are vastly fond of great noises that fill the air, such as the firing of cannon, drums, and the ringing of bells; so that in London it is common for a number

of them that have got a glass in their heads to go up into some belfry and ring the bells for hours together for the sake of exercise If they see a foreigner very well made or particularly handsome they will say "It is a pity he is not an Englishman."

The introduction of change ringing which took place soon after this visit had the effect of restricting ringing to those who took it up more or less seriously; for while any lusty youth could make some sort of show of pulling a rope when neither order nor method was aimed at change ringing requires even in its most elementary form study and practice. But ringers were still drawn for the most part from the same class of people.

It has often been said that during

the seventeenth century and especially towards its close singing was a fashionable sport (115) If by that is meant that it was fashionable as polo or yachting or even golf are fashionable now-a-days the statement is hardly true. But it is true that it was indulged in to some extent by young men of better class (64) It was accounted a manly sport (107) like wrestling and football (46) and was practised at the Universities and by the Law students and young lawyers of the Inns of Court of this class were probably the Scholars of Chepeyde a society founded in 1603, and certainly the College Youths, and the Esquire Youths, who apparently did not admit anyone below the rank of an esquire, and may have included men who held appointments at the royal Court. The names of several of these men have come down

to us and if we may judge the rest from those of whom we know something both in politics religion and morality they were the antithesis of the puritan party

Two of the greatest men of the century are sometimes ~~mentioned~~ mentioned (but on doubtful authority) as having taken some interest in singing One was Sir Matthew Hale a famous judge If ever he did any singing it was when he was up at Oxford where he entered in 1626 for he was then particularly fond of amusements and manly sports. There was scarcely any room for it in his later years when his character became grave with a strong bias towards puritanism. Hale was one of the judges before whom John Bunyan's wife pleaded for her husband. He treated her with kindness and

Courtesy Hough he failed to make her understand that the duty of judges is to administer the Law and that they cannot set it aside for the benefit of one who breaks it however worthy his motive. (47)

The other great name is that of Sir Isaac Newton. Newton was appointed a Fellow of Trinity College the year before Fabian Stedman published his Tintinnalogia, and it is just possible that he may have taken a passing interest in a sport which is based on mathematics of which he was so great a master. It is curious to speculate what would have been the result if he had really turned his attention to the science of ringing; whether he would have anticipated the discoveries of the following two centuries or even whether if he had attempted to write a book on the

ringing of the day, it would have been better or so good as Stedman's.

But for all this it is certain that the great bulk of ringers belonged to the lower or lower middle classes of society and as a general rule their reputation did not stand very high. In 1702 at the close of the period when ringing was supposed to be a fashionable sport the authors of the J.D and C.M. "Campanalogia" thought it necessary to write as follows.—

"We are very well satisfied and assured that none of you are ignorant of the many scandalous and malicious aspersions that have been cast upon this Art; more than a man without a great deal of deliberation is apprehensive of, for which reason it ought to be defended and guarded by such

as have a perfect and entire knowledge in the same and will deal impartially therein, and for such an undertaking none are esteem'd or thought more fit than yourselves." (48)

That was addressed to the members of the Society of London Scholars in the Dedication of the book. In the preface the authors revert to the same theme. - "Being sensible of the many malicious Aspersions cast upon the Exercise of Ringing by partial and extrajudicious Persons we have endeavour'd by way of Objection and Answer to vindicate this Art." Here is part of the vindication - Since this Art is generally esteemed and look'd upon to be a mean and mechanick Exercise and Recreation we think it convenient and requisite by way of Preamble to say somewhat in opposition xxx And first 'Tis objected

against as mean and mechanical because followd and practicd by Persons whose Cause of Lives (as reported) has been infamous, and also by Persons whose Subsiance for themselves and Families is gaind by painful and hard Labour and therefore not a fit and commendable Exercise and Recreation for one who has been genteely and handsomely brought up and educated

"To this we answer. That there is no Exercise or Diversion whatsoever followd and used by the Nobility and Gentry either of this nation or any other, but is used and followd by the common Sort of People, and with whom they sometimes never scruple, or think it in the least beneath their Dignity and Honour to make them their Fellows and

Class or Tol Companions. Nor is
this done only by such Nobility
and Gentry that are generally esteem'd
to be Spendthrifts and Prodigals,
but also by such whose deep Judgement
and Learning have rendered them
famous Persons and serviceable both
to their King and Country.

"The same Objection may be made
against a Person of Quality or
Gentleman whose Delight is in
playing on the Violin, or any
other common Instrument of Musick
because many poor and silly Fellows
get a Livelihood by going from Door
to Door and House to House, playing
on their unpleasing and tuneless
Musick and bear the scandalous
names of Scrapers and Fiddlers

"Another Objection made against
the Practice of this Art is that

it withdraws and alienates Mens
Minds from their Business by which
they obtain Subsistance for themselves
and Families, making them Drunkards
neglectful of their Occupations and
Trades and consequently the utter
Ruin and Impoverishment of
themselves and all that depend
upon and receive a Livlihood and
Maintainence from them.

"In answer to which we say.
That there is no Exercise or Diversion
whatsoever but will bring and
reduce a Man to Necessity and
Penury (unless used with Discression
Prudence and Moderation) Whereas
on the Contrary it was never known
any Person ever brought or reduced
himself to Penury or Necessity
by following this Exercise; but if
at any Time a Ranger has failed
and come to want, it will be

found upon a strict and exact examination of the Matter that his undoing was occasioned by his following Gaming Horse Races Cock Fighting or some such Mischief.

"A third Objection made against Ringing is That it is too laborious and painful to yield or afford any Pleasure or Diversion, and occasions so great Heat, and Sweatings, That a Man subjects himself to catch great Colds whereby he endangers his Life * * * *

"As to being esteem'd and suppos'd Laborious and painful there is no such Thing, for 'tis perfectly done by Slight, else how could a Man be able to stand an Hour or two (or more as has been done) and he (as this Exercise requires) all the Time in Continual Motion.

"And moreover at this Time

to our Knowledge there are several learned and eminent Persons both Clergy and Laymen of good Estates that are Members of several Societies of Ringers inhabiting within this City, and think themselves very much respected and highly favoured that they can arrive at and attain to so great an Happiness and Honour." (49)

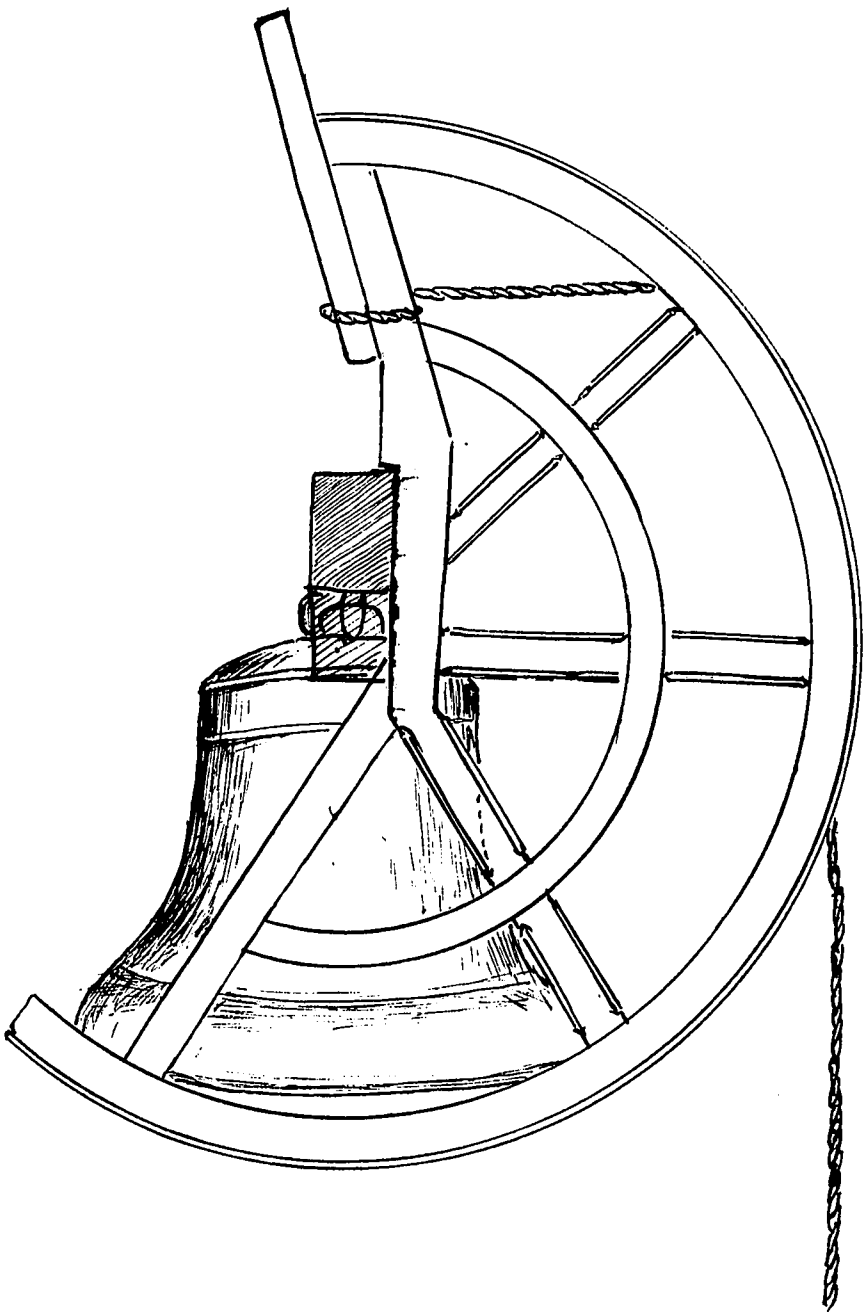
Clearly this was written by men who were keenly conscious of the aspersions cast on ringers and ringing by certain classes of people; by men who knew quite well from their own experience that they were not deserved. It is easy to quote the proverb that he who excuses himself accuses himself and to conclude that this justification itself shows that there was something to justify

We must remember that in those days religious opinions ~~xxxxxxx~~ much more sharply divided people than now. Men were not only thoroughly convinced that their own views and opinions were right, but they had great difficulty in believing that there could be any good at all in persons who differed from them. The controversies of the period were marked by the utmost bitterness and rancour. If we take at their face value the accounts of the time, and the words of later historians who have copied their views, the puritans party was almost entirely composed of saints, while those who differed from them were almost entirely profligate, dissolute, and worldly. The clergy no less than the singers suffered from this reproach. If we accept some

accounts literally they were lazy
illiterate and vicious. The common
word applied to them in pamphlets
and parliamentary speeches was
that their living was "scandalous"
and even bishops did not escape
this reproach.(50) The real truth
seems to be that they ordered their
lives according to a different
standard from that of the puritans

A matter which naturally had a great deal of influence on the progress of ringing was the state of bell-hanging. Bell fittings are the result of a process of evolution through many centuries. When bells first began to be rung the earliest apparatus consisted of a stick lever and rope. The lever gave way to a half or three quarter wheel which was used for a long time.(65) With a three-quarter wheel the bell could be rung up, or as the term was at a "pull-pull", and when that was done change-ringing became possible. The hanging necessarily was done by local workmen and varied in the quality of the work. In the Tintinnalogia Stedman gave instructions for "Hanging of Bells with all things belonging thereto", instructions which were not only not superfluous, but highly

necessary in most cases. It is noticable that he directs the bell to be hung with "bolts of iron to come from the Cannons through the Stock and to fasten them with Keys at the top of the Stock." It would have been useless to recommend nuts to fasten the bolts (even if Stedman had seen such a thing) for the Local workman had no means of cutting a thread. The Wheel is evidently a three-quarter wheel, for we have the following advice - "Tis very convenient (if the Frame will permit) to fasten a piece of Timber about half a foot long on the end of the main Spoke at the top of the Wheel (whereon the end of the bell rope is fastened) with a notch at the end of it; so at the setting of the bell the Rope will fall into that notch from the Rowle (55) and this will make the bell lie easier at hand when it



Three quarter wheel with Stedman's extra Lever

ro pel, and flie better." (51)

The object of this arrangement was to lay and combine the advantages of both lever and wheel. It is partly explained by Stedman's statement that "the bigger a Wheel is, if the frame will permit the bell will go the better"; but it may be doubted whether it was adopted to any extent for with the improvements in bell hanging which accompanied the development of change ringing in the reign of Charles II the Whole wheel became common, though the three quarter wheel remained in many places and indeed in one tower in South Devon survived until recent years (54)

Nine years after he published the Tintinnalogia, when he issued the Campanalogia, Stedman was able to record a great improvement in bell-hanging "Whole pulls was the

general practice in former times, and indeed considering the manner of the hanging of the bells in those days, they could not well be rung at half pull. But since the improvement in the Art of Bell-hanging, that is with round Wheels, housing them up in the Stock, and placing the Roll at right Angles with the Side of the Wheel the bells go much better and are managed with much more ease at a Sett-pull than formerly." (52)

The early bell hangers knew nothing about play and slider. The bells were pulled up, rung and ceased by the same hand without any interval. When Stedman speaks of a bell being set, he is not using the term in its modern sense; he means that it is held by the ringer at the balance. In the same way to ring a bell at a "sett-pull" meant to ring

it up to the balance so that the rate of striking could be controlled.

The usual references in old ringers' rules to overthrowing or overturning a bell, and the appointed fine for such an offence are another sign of the absence of play and slider. A skilful ringer was expected to be able to "set" his bell at every pull "in a manner handwinkt"; "either to drop or overturn" it was the result of clumsy and unskilful handling, but it did not mean a broken stay, or any worse result than the breaking down of the ringing and the trouble of going up among the bells to replace the rope.

As ringers turned their attention from raising and ceasing to peal, and round ringing to changes, the necessity for stay and slider became apparent. and by the closing years

of the seventeenth Century they were generally adopted. By the beginning of the following Century bell hanging reached the stage of development it remained in (save for unimportant details) until the introduction of the iron frame and the modern style of hanging. The quality of the work varied immensely with the difference in skill of the workmen, but where it was well done, the bells went for all practical purposes as well as they do now, except in the case of heavy bells; for though the modern hung bell in ball bearings actually takes much less pull to make it revolve, it is common experience that the most comfortable bells to ring are those which take a certain amount of pulling, go smoothly, and do not "fly".

The establishment of singing as a regular part during the latter years of the sixteenth century, led of necessity to the rise of singing societies. In the County villages, where singers did were few, and where they lived close to each other, and had but one singer to practise at, informal agreements and arrangements among themselves answered their purposes well enough; but in the towns where singers and the general population were many, and where there were several singers to chose from, an organization of some sort or other was a necessity, and the model for the societies was found naturally in the old gilds. guilds

The origin of the gilds guilds has been traced back to pre-Christian times, and it is certain that from a long period before the Norman Conquest, they occupied a very large place in the

social life of the people, as well in England as abroad. They were voluntary associations formed for the furtherance of the mutual interests and for the mutual protection of their members; they were governed by appointed officers; and they had each its code of rules. Their objects were social, philanthropic, religious and commercial. The rules of the Exeter guild in Saxon times direct three annual feasts, with masses and psalm singing for quick and dead; the contributions are in malt and honey; the fines are for neglect of the feasts or the contribution, and for offensive words. There are levies on the death of a brother and house burnings. Similar rules of pre-Conquest guilds at Cambridge and elsewhere are recorded. (93) After the Conquest, leading guilds, or Guilds Merchant as they were called, appeared which were

associations of the members of various trades and which largely controlled commerce in the Middle Ages. A development of these was the craft guilds; which were composed of the workmen and artificers of various crafts.

In the Middle Ages the guild system was one of the most important features of the social life and government of the towns. Many of the guilds were granted charters and acquired much property, and one sign of their importance still survives in the Guildhalls which stand in almost all the larger ancient towns and cities. In the changes and spoliation which accompanied the Reformation the guilds suffered heavily. In 1547 by statute (1 Ed VI.) they were suppressed and their property confiscated to the crown. Exceptions

was made in favour of the craft gilds which were allowed to survive, but all their endowments for specifically religious purposes were taken away. Entirely secularized, they continued down to the eighteenth century, and the London Companies are a survival of them. (59)

These gilds were the models on which the ringing societies were formed. There had been gilds of ringers in pre-reformation times. The Patent Roll under the date of March 8th 1255 records a grant to the brethren of the gild of Westminster, appointed to ring the great bells of Westminster, that they and their successors shall receive yearly 100s at the Exchequer for the ringing, until the king provide for them in land or rent to that yearly value, and that they have all the liberties and free customs that they had from the time of Edward the Confessor. (66)

Mr Ellacombe also discovered a document relating to the Guild of the Church of St Martin in London (67) among whose other activities was ringing; and no doubt there were many others (108) conspicuous at the time and afterwards clean forgotten. But these guilds had shared in the common ruin of 1547, and can hardly be said to have been the ancestors of the Ringing societies. They derived their origin from the regular necessities of ringing as a sport, and their model from the secular craft guilds; and this gave them certain marked characteristics which had a profound influence on the Exercise in the following Centuries.

The societies were voluntary independent bodies. They owed no outside allegiance and recognised

no duties or obligations to any body or anything, except, their own members. The Church authorities, (save in exceptional cases), did not recognise the societies, nor did the societies, as such, recognise the Church authorities. They were not asked, nor did were they expected, to ring the bells for church services; if there was any ringing to be done for ecclesiastical purposes, it was treated in the same way as ringing done for civil purposes; it was a business transaction, and when one party to it had performed the required service, and the other had paid for it, the matter was at an end.

The societies existed partly as social clubs, and partly to make possible ringing as a sport. In London and in the larger towns where

there were several lowers, they were not usually connected with any particular church, but went about from belfry to belfry as suited their convenience, and taking their turn with other societies as they got their chance.

The head-quarters and the regular meeting place was a tavern. Each society elected its own officers and made its own rules, but as they were all formed on the same model they were bound to be similar. There was always a presiding officer, who was sometimes called the Master and sometimes the General. He was elected for a year and as a rule was not considered eligible for re-election when his term of office had expired. He held supreme authority; the members were bound to meet when and where he appointed, to ring

what bells he directed, and generally to obey his orders under penalty of a fine. Two or more men were appointed to carry out routine work, such as getting the bells ready, oiling and replacing chime hammers, oiling the bearings and ~~such~~ like. They were called Wardens, or Stewards. Another official was usually appointed called the Warner, whose duty was to give notice to the members of meetings, and especially extra meetings occasioned by the death of a member. These lesser officials were paid, sometimes by a fee, sometimes by fines incurred by the members. The sexton as the permanent official of the Church, was paid sixpence in the same way that sixpence keepers in London have been paid down to modern

times. As time went on another official was found necessary – the beadle, – whose job was something like that of a modern secretary, and who, since his office was a permanent one, could, if he were a strong and ambitious man, get the real control of the society into his hands.

There was always an annual feast; it was the central event in the societies' life. All the members had to attend, not being let by illness, under pain of being fined. As with the guilds, there was an elaborate system of fines, graduated according to the seriousness of the offence. They relate to such things as refusal to take office, neglect to attend to duties, absence from meetings, bad language and quarrelling, disobeying

the master's orders, concealing with other singers, and so forth. The societies were exclusive bodies. One rule, written or understood, was universal; they did not allow their members to belong to any other society; nor did they allow a stranger to attend their meetings, or to sing with them, unless the master gave special permission. This exclusiveness was, of course, a marked characteristic of the guilds, and was shared by the clubs of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Its reason was self-preservation, but it prevented any combined practice, and it hindered the growth of that spirit of brotherhood and unity which is one of the most precious possessions of the present day Exercise. The development of

that spirit may be said to have been the work of the modern fraternal associations, which derived their origin from the reform movement of the late nineteenth century, and were a break with the traditions of the old societies.

The societies also acted as benefit clubs, assisting members in sickness, and helping their widows and orphans after death. The Society of St Hugh of Lincoln devoted the whole of the gratuity of forty shillings per annum, allowed by the Dean and Chapter, to forming a fund for the benefit of widows and orphans of the members; and the Society of Norwich Scholars existed exclusively (so far as its organization went) as a benefit " " society or purse club, until its final extinction a few years ago. To

attend the funerals of deceased brothers and to assist in singing their funeral peals was an obligation laid on all members.

As a society consisted of one band only, they were small bodies and as a rule short lived Formed by a few men for a particular purpose; they lasted as long as that purpose held. It was only natural that there should be within them, plenty of jealousy, and the clash of personal ambition, and it needed only a quarrel, or the death of the leading member, or the secession of some, to jeopardise the existence of any society.

These bodies gave themselves names and for some reason which we cannot now guess at, they usually called themselves Scholars or Youths.

This Conceit was common all over the Country and all but universal in London. It does not mean that singers were originally Literally Youths or Scholars; they were merely fancy names taken much in the same spirit that present day football clubs call themselves "rovers" or "wanderers". The title of the Society of College Youths was a fancy title entirely unconnected with any actual College or actual Youths and certainly had nothing to do with Richard Whitington and his College of the Holy Ghost. I deal more fully with this in a later chapter. (94)

On these lines singing societies sprang up all over the Country, during the latter years of the 16th Century and the first following

Centuries. Necessarily the records and the very names of the vast majority have been forgotten, but the original rules of three or four are extant. The Scholars of Cheapside were founded in 1603, (68) (101) the Society of St. Hugh of Lincoln in 1612, (69) the Company of St Stephens Ringers (70) in or before 1620, and the Society of College Youths in 1637. (83) (102) In some towns, like Saffron Walden and Lavenham, an annual ringing day has been observed which probably goes back with few interruptions for three hundred years. The only society which perhaps can claim to have survived with an unbroken life from the earliest days to the present time is the Society of St Stephens Ringers of Bristol, but at the end of the eighteenth Century

it developed its social side at the expense of its ringing, gradually lost its connection with the Tower, and now exists only as a quasi-philanthropic body, without any connection with the Exercise. (80)

The Society of College Youths, although as will be seen, they had a definite break in continuity, has really a better claim to be the only society which has existed from practically the beginnings of Change ringing to the present day.

This general survey of the Condition of the Exercise at the time when Change ringing began, explains much of the later history of ringers. We see them as a body of men engaged in a peculiar sport, pursuing their occupation in Church Towers, but otherwise unconnected with

the Church; frowned upon and misrepresented by a large and influential body of religious opinion; ignored by the clergy; with close traditions and jealously guarded rights, inherited through many centuries from the old guilds; and organized into independent and exclusive societies. These things help to explain the state of affairs that Ellacombe complained of; they also (together with the rigid mathematical basis of the science of change ringing), explain the vitality of the Exercise and its essential unity during the more than three hundred years of its existence.

Note to Chapter I

Sir Matthew Hale and Sir Isaac Newton

It has often been said that Sir Matthew Hale and Sir Isaac Newton were ringers, and as there are few greater names than those of any other ringers, (except perhaps John Bunyan), it seems worth while trying to see what authority (if any) there is behind the statement.

The first written reference to Sir Matthew Hale and ringing appears in Sir John Hawkins' General History of Music, published in 1776, where is the following passage — "There are in London several societies of ringers particularly one known by the name of the College Youths. Of this it is

paid Sir Matthew Hale, Lord chief justice of the Court of King's Bench was in his youthful days a member and in the life of this learned and upright judge written by bishop Burnet some facts are given which favour this relation. " (95) (114)

In 1863 Dr. E. B. Ramsay Dean of Edinburgh published an open letter to the Lord Provost in which he advocated the putting up of a heavy ring of eight in that city and in the course of a panegyric on bells and ringing he wrote — "High authority may be quoted for a junction of this art with the more successful study of the Law. We learn from Bishop Burnet that the great Sir Matthew Hale was, in early life a cultivator of Campanology and I cannot

propose an imitation of a better man
or of a better Lawyer." (96)

This is a very interesting example of
how legends grew. Hawkins did not
write that Burnet said that Hale
was a singer. What he did write was
that there was a tradition (where he
heard it he does not say,) that Hale
was one of the early College Justices,
and that some facts given by Burnet
seemed to make it not unlikely. One
does not look for meticulous historical
accuracy in such a pamphlet as
that of the Dean, and indeed more
than one of his statements is open
to question; as for instance where
he says that nine of the bells at
St Saviours Southwark are upwards
of four hundred years old, when
obviously he is confusing the present

ring with that installed by Thos Wentworth in 1424; and again that there are twelve bells at Shoreditch which used to be admired by Queen Elizabeth when they were rung in her honour, where he is comparing the present bells in the present tower with the old five in the old church. (72) The matter is of no great importance except that Caley writers have treated the pamphlet as an authority. Ellacombe quotes it but points out that Hale's name does not appear in the list of the members of the College Youths. (71) Mr Morris copies Ellacombe without the qualification. W. J. Pinks the historian of Clerkenwell gives a variation of the tale. He says that the eminent judge Sir Matthew Hale is said by Anthony à Wood to have

belonged to a society of bell ringers when a young man." (75)

Gilbert Burnet who although a younger man was a contemporary of Hale, has many references to him in his books, notably in A History of his Own Times, and in The Life and Death of Sir Matthew Hale, a panegyric of which Anthony Ward said sourly that many men thought the worse of the judge after they had read it than before; but in none is there (so far as I can trace) any reference to his being a ringer. Ward gives a life of the judge in Athenae Oxonienses (74) but neither is there there any reference to Hale and ringing. (100) The only evidence we have that he was a member of the Essenine is the tradition preserved by Sir

John Hawkins who wrote one hundred and fifty years after the event, but, as that writer says, from what we are told of his early life it seems not unlikely that the tradition was true. Whether he was one of the early College Youths is more doubtful. The absence of his name from the list of members proves nothing for during the first ten years only the names of the masters are given. But in 1637 he was twenty eight years old. He had been fond of amusement dress and manly sports when he was at Oxford and there or anywhere he practised singing. But after he entered Lincoln's Inn in 1628 he turned to study, avoided general

society and leaned markedly towards puritanism. Still there were many members of the Inns of Court among the 17th Century College Youths, and there is nothing extravagant or impossible in the tradition that Hale was one of the earliest of them.

In the Bells of England, Dr. J.J. Raven, referring to Cambridge ringers of olden time wrote that the august name of Sir Isaac Newton is reported to have adorned the list." (76) The sentence occurs in an almost literal transcript of a paragraph from the Cambridge Portfolio a collection of engravings and descriptive articles relating to items of interest connected with Cambridge, drawn from various

sources and edited by the Rev.d
J. J. Smith. Dr. Raven's version
differs slightly but significantly
from his copy which reads — "it is
reported that the name of Newton
adorned the list."

Now I think it pretty clear that
Smith meant to refer to Sir Isaac
and that Dr. Raven was justified in
thinking so; but it is by no means
certain that the original upon
which Smith drew referred to Sir
Isaac, and since there seems to
be no other evidence that the great
mathematician was ever a
member of the Exercise it is possible
it may refer to another Newton.
In 1650 a John Newton was Master

of the College Youths. Who he was is not quite clear. I was inclined to identify him with Dr. John Newton, an author, scientist and divine and whose name would certainly have adorned any list of persons; but he was much more likely to have been John Newton of Crabeton, Devon, who like so many more of the College Youths, was a Lawyer, and was admitted to the Inner Temple in 1640. In either case he may have been the original of the tradition. The chief difficulty is that neither of these men were, so far as we know, connected with Cambridge; and on the other

and Isaac Newton entered
Trinity College on the same day as
Samuel Scattergood (who shortly
afterwards was closely associated
with Fabian Stedman) and so
may have been friendly with him
and shared his recreation.

Consecration of Bells

The following books deal more or less fully with the Consecration of bells in pre-reformation times and in Roman Catholic Countries (113)

Ellacombe H. T. The Bells of the Church 1872

L'Estrange John The Church Bells of Norfolk 1874

The Quarterly Review 1854 Article on Church Bells

Staveley Thomas The History of Churches in England 1712

Pennant Thomas A Tour in Wales 1778.

Bingham The Rev Joseph Antiquities of the Christian Church

The Tablet (the modern Roman use in England) article in issue

Raven J. J. D.D. F.S.A. The Bells of England 1906.

Brand John Popular Antiquities

Walsh William S. Curiosities of Popular Customs 1898

Hone William Every Day Book 1827

Pepys Diary H. B Wheatley's Edition 1897.

Gatty, Alfred The Bell 1847
do do another edition 1848.
Southey R. The Doctor.
North Thomas English Bells and Bell Lore
do do The Church Bells of the County and City of Lincoln
do do The Church Bells of Leicestershire
George Barnaby The Popish Kingdome
Chauncy Sir Henry The Historical Antiquities of Hertfordshire

Payments for ringing at St Edmunds Church Salesbury during the years 1532 to 1686.

1532-33 Payments to ringers on Ascension Day Whit Thursday and Corpus Christi Day.

1550-51 Ryngyng none iiij Holy Day yeres x d.

Ryngyng in the processyon weke iij d

1551-2 For ryngyng to sermon x d

1552-3 Ryngeres at ye comynge of ye Kinges grace x iiij d

1553-4 More for Ryngegyng none ij d.

Ryngegyng the xij day of July when or Soverenge Lady mary quene was proclaymed vij d

1556-7 Payments for ringing in Rogation Week and Holy Thursday.

1557-8 do. do.

Ryngyng of my Lorde bushoppes Knyll x v j d

1560-61 Ryngyng of none an holan yere ij d.

1579-80 Ringing on Christmas Day Candlemas and Easter and for the queanes maiestie.

1586-7. Ringing on Ascension Christmas and Easter Days Queens Accession and Birthday and for the queen of Scottes.

1592-3 Ringers for Ringing in of the Bishope 2s

for ringing the Triumphing daye 4s.

1597-8 ringers for ringing at the Coming in of my Lord of penbrook 8d.

1603-4 Ringing on numerous occasions mostly Connected with the king especially his visit to Wilton.

1605-6 ringinge in the Christmas holly dayes 6d

1607-8 ringing on August 5th 8s.

ringinge the Queene to the Towne 4s

the Kinge do 4s

the Kinge & Queene out of Towne 4s

the fyftie of November

1608-9 Ringing on the daie of the papistes Conspiracie

1610-11 Ringing on King's Birthday and Coronation "the daie of the Gowryes treason and the daie of the papists Conspiracye

1620 For a bosce to sett upp the

ringinge Coffe for the ringers benevolence
towarde the maintenance of the bells iiij s

1623-24 When the Kinges matie came
into the Cittie And when he Rode awaie 8s
When the newes came of the Princes
passe retorne from Spain 2s
ringinge when newes came that the
matche was broken off betweene the
Prince and the Infanta of Spaine 2s

1625-26 Ringinge when the Kinge
Rode thorow the Cittie towards Plimothe 4s
Do when the Queene came into the
Cittie and from this to Wilton 4s
and also on their retorne

1630-31 Ringing at the Earle of
Pembrokes funerall 5s

1646-47 Ringing when Sr Tho Fairfax
came through the towne with his
greate gunnes 5s. 6d
Ringers vpon the Publique day of
thanksgiving for the delivering the
Castles and ffortes into the handes
of the Parliament 8s.
Ringing the Race day that ye Erle

	of Pembrook his horse won the cuppe	5s
1647-8	Ringing 7th of Septemb. being ye day of thanksgiving	8s
	Ringing the King's birthday (also the Coronation)	5s
1648.9	Ringing 7th day of Sept. 1648 for a great victory over the Scotts	8s
1651 52	Ringing the 6 September by order of Mr Maior for the victory agt the Scots	5s
	Ringing the 2d October by order of Mr Maior being the day of thanksgiveing	4s.

Payments for ringing at St Thomas' Church Salisbury during the years 1557 to 1686.

1557-58 It' to the baner bearers & to the ryngers upon saynt Markes day vjd
also Rogation Days and Whit Friday

1569-70 Nov 17 to the 7 men that range the belles for the quenes gracious Raigne in the 12th yere 4s. 8d.

1585-86 geven to the Ringers the Kinge of Portingalles beinge heare 6d

1586-87 ringinge the Queenes maties escape from the treason conspired 6d

1588-89 on the tiwesdaie & following for the greate Victorie against the spanyardes by the mightie hand of God 8s

1609-10 Ringing on the Kings visit and several other occasions including the daie on wch we were delivered from the gunpowder treason of the papistes

1635-36 Ringing for visit of King and Queen

1644-45 Ringing for visit of King and his birthday

1646-47 Ringing when Sir Thomas Fairfax came in . 5s

Nov 22 being a day of thanksgiving 18s

1647-48 Ringers half a day on the King's birthday 6s

1650-51 Ringing thanksgiving day July 26 5s. 6d

1651-52 Ringing for the victory at Worcester

1682-83 Ringing at the Duke of Yorks deliverance 5s.

Ringing June 1 for the restaurcen of the King to his health. 18s

1683-84 Ringing on St Georges Day 29 May 9th Sep. etc

1685-86 Ringing when Monmouth was taken and other events.

Notes to Chapter I

Notes to Chapter I

1. The mediaeval conception of bells and their uses and powers is well expressed in the familiar Latin lines which are said to have been inscribed on bells. —

Defunctos Ploro,
Pestem Fugo,
Festa decoro;
Funera Plango,
Fulgura Frango,
Sabbata Pango;
Excito Lentos,
Dissipo Ventos,
Paco Cruentos.

2. In some cases on the Continent bells which hung in a cathedral tower were the property of the town, and used for secular purposes. That was — and is — so at Antwerp. Whether anything similar happened in England I cannot say, but there were cases where the nave of a monastic church was used as the parish church and the parishioners claimed the right to ring the bells. A claim which

often led to a bitter quarrel. The massive Western tower at Wymondham was built as the result of such a dispute. See appendix to Chap. VIII

3. The Consecration of bells is a very interesting subject. The Office used is a very ancient one going back almost to the introduction of bells themselves. Alcuin who lived at the Court of Charlemagne (735-804) says "it ought not to seem a new thing that bells are blessed and anointed and a name given to them". Mr L'Estrange in the Bells of Norfolk (p. 17) says "It appears from a Pontifical preserved in the British Museum (Cottonian M.S. Vespasian D 1. f 127) that the Service commenced with the recital of the Litany and that whilst the choir sang the antiphon Asperges me, the psalm Miserere and psalm 145 with the five following psalms

and the antiphon In cymbalis Domini
clare sonant, the bell about to
be blessed was washed with holy
water wiped with a linen and
anointed by the bishop with the
holy oil."

"The De Benedictione Signi vel
Campanae of the Roman Pontifical
enjoins the same ceremonies interspersed
with prayers, psalms and antiphons.
The bell, washed by the bishop
with water into which salt had
been previously cast, was then dried
by two attendants with clean linen;
the bishop next dipped the thumb
of his right hand in the holy oil
for the sick, and made the sign
of the cross on the top of the bell,
he then marked the bell again
both with the holy oil for the sick
and with chrism saying the words -

"Sanctificetur, et Consecretur,

Domine pignum istud : in nomine Patris et Fi+lii, et Spiritus + Sancti : in honorem Sancti N. Pax tibi. The inside of the bell was then censed. The Pontifical of Egbert, Archbishop of York, and other Office books have similar services" — North, Ch. Bells of Northamptonshire p. 13. According to the Tablet a similar service is still used by the Roman Church in England.

In the English Church before the Reformation uses differed in different dioceses and in many instances the consecration of bells approximated still more nearly to the service of Baptism. A name was given and there were godfathers and godmothers. Thus in the churchwardens accounts of St Laurence's parish Reading there the entry in the year 1499 "It. payed for halowing of the bell named Harry vj s. viij d. and over that Sir Will^m Symys Richard Cleeh and Maistres Smyth being godfaders and

godmoder at the consecracyon of the same bell and beryng all ye costs to the suffrygan." — Coates p 214.
Pennant speaking of St Wenefrede's Well in Flintshire says "A bell belonging to the church was also christened in honour of her I cannot learn the names of the gossips, who, as usual, were doubtless rich persons On the ceremony they all laid hold of the rope, bestowed a name on the bell, and the priest sprinkling it with holy water baptised it in the name of the Father etc; he then clothed it ~~in a~~ with a fine garment. After this the gossips gave a great feast and made great presents which the priest received in behalf of the bell. Thus blessed it was endowed with great powers allayed (on being rung) all storms, diverted the thunderbolt, drove away evil spirits."# These consecrated bells were always inscribed. The

inscription on that in question ran thus -

SANCTA WENEFREDA. DEO HOC COMMENDARE MEMENTO
UT PIETATE SUA NOS SERVET AB HOSTE CRUENTO

and a little lower was another address

PROTEGE PRECE PIA QUOS CONVOCO VIRGO MARIA

- A Tour in Wales 1778. p 35.

The subject of the consecration of bells is dealt with very fully by Ellacombe Bells of the Church pp. 275-292; and also by L'Estrange, The Bells of Norfolk p. 17; and by North, The Church Bells of Northamptonshire p 12.

4. Stubbs' Constitutional History of England 3rd Ed. Vol I. p 247

5. In the Middle Ages a very large proportion of the parish churches were granted by the landowners to different monasteries. These took the tithes and appointed vicars to serve the altars. At the Reformation the tithes and the advowsons were

transferred to lay ownership

6. Stephen Sir James History of France 1852 Vol 1. p. 170

7 North The Church Bells of Northamptonshire p. 155.

8. An account of the Curfew will be found in Ellacombe North and other similar books.

9 Samuel Knight D.D. Life of Dr John Colet 1724 p. 6.

10. For example the following are from the churchwardens' accounts of St Laurence Reading –

1510. It. payed for x ringgers at the parting of the kyng (a) and for drinke and to the reselon ii s ob.

1521 For ryngyng at the int'ment of my Lord Abbott xii d.

Payd for ringing against the Kyng (a) Coming iiii d.

1534 It. for ringing at the birth of ye p'nce (b) iiii d.

Payd to the ringers at the kyng and queens (c) Cumyng and going xx d.

– Coates Vol 1. p 217 ff.

(a) Henry VIII, (Henry VII died in 1509)
(b) Elizabeth
(c) Mary and Philip of Spain

11. "Durandus [A.D. 1286] in plain Song thus - Pulsata et benedicitur campana ut per illius factum et sonitum fideles invitentur &c i.e. The Bell is Hallowed and Rung that by its sound the Faithful might be stirred up. their Bodies and Minds kept Sound, Enemies driven away and all their stratagems defeated, the violence of Hail, Tempest Storms and Thunder allayed Lightning and Winds restrained and all Evil Spirits and Powers of the air vanquished" - The History of the Churches in England by Thomas Stanley 1712 p. 228.

12. Latimer's Sermon on the Epistle for the 21st Sunday after Trinity Edition 1562 folio 82.

13. "and because creeping to the cross was a greater abuse than any of the other for there were people said - Crucem tuam adoramus, Domine - xxxx therefore he desired of the King that the creeping to the cross might also cease hereafter" Strype's Cranmer Vol I p. 193. The quotation in the text is Southey's paraphrase

of Stype

14 Bishop Hoopers Injunctions 1551 –

" xxxiij Item that from henceforth there be no knells or forth fares rung for the death of any man, but in case they shall be sick and in danger, or any of their friends will demand to have the bell tolled while the sick is in extremis to admonish the people of their danger and by that means to solicitate the hearers of the same to pray for the sick person they may use it. And then if the person die for whom the bell tolled and to give warning of his death, to ring out with one bell it may be sufficient " –

Ellacombe The Bells of the Church p. 465.

15 Camden assigns the rise of puritanism in England to the year 1568 a date which may be accepted as the time when it began to be felt as a political force. Its origins were very much earlier.

16. In 1573 the Bishop of Norwich writes to the Archbishop of Canterbury that the

parishioners of St Simons Norwich Complain of bell ringing during sermon time and state that they can get no redress. —

Victoria History of Norfolk

17. Sir Henry Spelman relates that in 1632 in a Conversation with Archbishop Abbot "Mr Barkley affirmed that the bells in Spain and in other places of France and Italy were few and small yet holden to be very powerful for driving away the devil and evil spirits" — The History and Fate of Sacrilege p. 162.

18. Ibid p. 162. The rumor that during the 16th Century many bells were stolen sold abroad and lost at sea on their way seems to have been a general one. Spelman writes "When I was a child (I speak of about three score years since) I heard much talk of the pulling down of bells in ~~my~~ every part of my County [Norfolk] and the sum of the speech usually was that in sending them over the seas some were drowned in one haven some in another, as at Lynn, Wells, or

Yarmouth. I dare not venture upon particulars for that I then hearing them as a child regarded it as a child" – p 159.

19 Hallam Constitutional History 1876 Ed. Vol 1. p 397

20 Strype Annals of the Reformation Vol iii pt 1. p 429 quoting D'Ewes Journal 322.

21 Strype Life of Whitgift p. 530 and Lecky Democracy and Liberty Vol ii p 104

22 Fuller. Church History Ed by J. S. Brewer 1845. Vol V. p. 214.

23 Franklyn p. 31 Quoted in Hymes History of England ed 1818. Vi p. 92

24 "It was preached in Suffolk and my author saith that he could name the man) that 5 ring more bells than one on the Lords day 5 call the people 5 church was as great a sin as 5 do an act of murder"
Strype Life of Whitgift Clarendon Press Ed Vol ii p. 415.

25 House of Commons Journals 15. 16 Feb. 1620 28 May 1621

26. Social England Vol IV p 229

27 In 1595 Nicholas Bound published a book called the Doctrine of the Sabbath plainely layde forth which appears to have had an enormous effect It was revised enlarged and reissued in 1606 It was quite temperately written In it he says The ringing of more bells than one that day is not to be justified. ** Therefore though I do not see how the common jangling of bells that is used in too many places and the disordered ringing at other times of the Sabbath, and for other ends, should be a work of the Sabbath and how it can then be justified - for which the late ecclesiastical canons of our church have taken order - Yet the ringing of one bell according to the custom of the place at one time, and the same or some other at another

time so that all might be present at the service of God from beginning to ending, this end maketh the labour acceptable unto God."

28. "I heard of a Bishop of England that went on visitation and as was the custom when the bishop should come and be rung into the town the great bells clapper was fallen down the tyall was broken so that the bishop could not be rung into the town There was a great matter made for this and the Chief of the parish were much blamed for it The bishop was somewhat quick with them and signified that he was much offended" —

from a sermon "preached by the right Reverende father in God and constant Martir of Jesus Christ Maister Hugh Latimar" 1562

folio 75.

29. "And in this year ( ) did Archbishop Whitgift by his letters and officers at synods call in books on that subject and forbid more to be printed, and Sir John Popham Lord Chief Justice of England anno 1600 did the like And both these reverend page, and honourable persons by their censures declared that the Sabbath doctrine of the brethren agreed not with the doctrine of our Church" - John Strype Life of Whitgift p. 531 Clarendon Press Ed Vol ii p. 416.

See also the preface to Thomas Rogers' book on the Articles. (See Note 61)

Owing to the action of the Archbishop, Baind's first edition is now very rare indeed.

30 Hume David History of England
Vol VI. p. 91
Camden's Annals
Lecky W.E.H. Democracy and Liberty
Vol ii p 105.

31. A nineteenth century writers comment is — "The king by his prerogative assumed wondrous powers thus to dispense with Gods Laws"

32 Lecky W. E. H. Democracy and Liberty Vol ii p 106.

33 Hume History of England Vi p. 308

34 Samuel Clarke a puritan Clergyman and writer (1599-1683) Ordained in 1622 and held various charges in the Church of England including a Lectureship at Coventry where he was inhibited on account of his puritan views afterwards in London and although he took the required oath at the Restoration retired with the non-conforming ministers and lived at Isleworth where he died.

35 Rev Robert Walker The M.S. from which apparently the Lecture was given is in the British Museum It was reprinted in "The Ecclesiologist"

36 H. T. Ellacombe, Practical Remarks on Bells and Ringers 1859 p. 7.

37 Bunyan John "Grace Abounding"

38 Offer George Life of Bunyan

39 This tale (somewhat altered) is told of Charles II by Dean Ramsay - A Letter to the Lord Provost of Edinburgh 1863.

40 For bell inscriptions see Church Bells Arts of the Church series 1908 by H B. Walters; and in greater detail books by Ellacombe, L'Estrange, North, Raven, Cocks, Stahlschmidt, and others and articles in Ringing papers by J. R Ingram.

41 H.T. Ellacombe "The Bells of the Church"

42 I have endeavoured to show the logical development of Change ringing in my book The Science of Change Ringing

44 Shakespeare Henry the Fourth Part II Act III Scene II

45 Raven Dr. J.J. The Bells of England p 237

46 Anthony à Wood See Chap. IX

47 see "Bunyan" by J. A. Froude pp 78-80 1880

48 J. D. C.M. Campanalogia 1st Ed. p.

49 Ibid p. 9.

50 Stoughton Dr. John History of Religion in England

51 F. Stedman Tintinnalogia (reprint) p. 111.

52. Campanalogia p. 44

53 When pulleys were added to ropes is not known, but it is pretty certain that the early ringing was done with bare ropes.

54 At Dunchideock

55 i.e. the pulley.

56 The tower at Elston stands apart from the Church the door opening practically on the village green and apparently the ringing was then done from the ground floor.

57. From a Contemporary MS. printed in a local newspaper by F. H. Cheetham

58 "Ordinancio de pulsacione Campane de Bowcherche. Saturday 22 April 9 Edward IV [A.D. 1469] An Ordinance of the Common Council to the effect that Whereas it hath been of old accustomed for the peace of the City and keeping due

time at night for the great bell called Bowbell and the bells of the churches of All Hallows Berkyng, St Giles without Crepelgate, and St Bride in Fleet Street to be stuck at the accustomed hours viz at the ninth hour on festivals"... (ends abruptly) – Calendar ~~Calendar~~ of Letter Books preserved among the archives of the City of London at the Guildhall Letter Book L Temp. Ed. IV to Hen. VII Edited by Reginald R Sharpe 1912.

59. William Stubbs Constitutional History of England Fifth Edition Vol i. pp. 449-454 Vol iii pp 581-595.

Mediaeval England pp. 287. 300-12.
Encyclopedia Britannica 11th Ed Vol xii p. 14.

60 "Years back I have been tempted to ring one or two long peals on the Sunday which has been a great sting to my conscience" – John Hopkins (1800-1862) a prominent Birmingham ringer to Ellacombe.

MS. Add MSS. 33.206.

61. "It is a comfort unto my soule and will be until my dying howre that I have been the man and the meanes that the Sabbatarian errors and impieties are brought into light and knowledge of the State, whereby whatsoever else ensue am I that good hath come, namely that the bookes of the Sabbath hath been both called in and forbidden to be printed and made common" The Preface Rogers book on the Articles 1633.

62 In the Churchwardens' accounts of Spalding parish church there is the following entry — "1519 Item p.d. for ryngyng when the Tempest was iijd"

63 "Francis Blomfield History of Norfolk Vol ii p 541 Vol iii p 410.

64. In 1616 the churchwardens of Loughborough "spent in giving entertainment to the gentlemen strangers when they came to ringe xjs"

North Bells of Leicestershire p. 24
and see also the orders for ringing
at Preston.

65. The date when the three quarter
wheel was adopted at St Edmunds
Salisbury is shown by the following
entries —

"1620 Pd to Nicholas Perrie for
making a wheele for ye five a
clock bell and to bring the rest
of the bell wheels to more compas
xxxvij s.

Gave Kingsonn of ffisherton in
erneste to pr forme the wheelinge
& settinge of our bells in order
ffor to be rung in compase Vjd.

1630 Pd Willm Batten joyner
for a thre q'ter bell wheel Vs.

1636 Pd the joyner for making
a 3 q'ter wheels to the Vth bell
and for other things IXs.

— C. W. Lukis Article in Journal
of the Brit. Arch Assn 1859.

Until the three quarter wheel was in

me it would hardly be possible to ring even the simplest of changes and we may suppose that it was in use in London and other places long before 1620.

66. Calendar of the Patent Roll Henry III 1247-1258 p. 403.

67 Conventus Ecclesiae Sancti Martini Londini

Bells of the Church p. 492.

68 The Rules of this Society are in the Library of All Souls College Oxford.

69 The Rules of this Society are among the muniments of Lincoln Cathedral They are printed in North's Church Bells of Lincoln.

70 The Society possesses a copy of the original rules which have been several times printed

71 Ellacombe The Bells of the Church p. 232.

72. The Dean was misled by an article in the Quarterly Review of 1854.

73 Anthony à Wood Athenae Oxonienses 3rd Ed. 1813 by Philip Bliss Vol iii Col. 1090.

74 Ibid.

75 W. J. Pinks The History of Clerkenwell p. 38.

76. J. J. Raven The Bells of England p 323.

77 "Item - that the bell called the Pardon or the Bell which of long time hath been used to be tolled three times after or before divine service, be not hereafter in any part of my diocese any more tolled" Injunctions given by the bishop of Salysbury (Nicholas Shaxton) Burnet's Calendar of Records No LXI part II book i

78 "saving that before Dirige be begun one peal shall be rung to give every man warning to pray for all Christian souls departing." Cranmer's letter and Henrys reply are printed in Burnet's Calendar of Records.

79 When a king of England dies the first news of it is sent to the Lord Mayor of

London who is requested to allow the bell
of St Pauls to be tolled

80 The Bristol Mirror nov 22 1851 nov 27 1852.

81 The full text of the Declaration of Sports is
given on page 31 of S.R. Gardiners Constitutional
Documents of the Puritan Revolution.

82 In a very large number of cases new bells
were provided by people who wanted them for
use in ringing as a purely secular sport.

83 Tradition among its members says it
dates many years prior to a visit Queen
Elizabeth paid to Bristol in 1574, that
her majesty promised the Society a charter
or ordinance on that occasion, and that
a fulfilment of this promise was actually
obtained from James I in 1620. There
is no charter in the Public Rolls Office —
Ellacombe Bells of the Church p. 229.

84 The changes at the time of the Reformation
probably led to the loss of many bells in
parish churches in addition to those which
were sold when the monasteries were
dissolved. It was in the reign of Edward VI

that the greatest amount of destruction of Church property occurred. Strype in his account of the death of the Duke of Somerset (15) says "He is generally charged for the great spoil of Churches and Chapels, defacing ancient tombs and monuments and pulling down the bells in parish churches and ordering only one bell in a steeple as sufficient to call the people together, which set the Commonalty almost in a rebellion" — Strype John Memorials of Thomas Cranmer Book II Chapter 26. Clarendon Press Ed. p. 381. Robert Southey writing of the spoliation of Churches says, "Bells to be cast into Cannon were exported in such quantities that their further exportation was forbidden lest metal for the same use should be wanting at home. Somerset pretended that one bell in a steeple was sufficient for summoning the people to prayers; and the Country was thus in danger of losing

the best music, a music hallowed by all circumstances, which according equally with social exaltation and with solitary pensiveness. Though it fall upon many an unheeding ear, never fails to find some hearts which it echoeth and some which it softens — Robert Southey The Book of the Church 5th ed. 1841 page 306

85 In addition to the monastic churches and the parish churches there were the secular cathedrals, a few collegiate churches and various chapels.

86 The abbeys in course of time became big landowners and so gained many secular interests.

87 The office of excommunication which in the middle ages was a very solemn and awe inspiring service was marked by the quenching of lighted candles and the ringing of bells.

88 "I was much surprised this morning at

hearing a peal of Bells ringing at St Andrews Church in George Street, as though I had previously been some weeks in Edinburgh and in many other parts of Scotland I never heard a peal of Bells in any part of the Country.

"On enquiry, I was told there is no other peal of Bells in Scotland, and these Bells were hung since the year 1788 when I was much in this Town. It is a proof how prejudices are by degrees weakened. I have always understood that Bells except what were necessary to give notice of the time of service by simply tolling were esteemed a remnant of popery." — Joseph Farington Diary under date Edinburgh, Sep 20. 1801.

89 In the middle ages the Court of Law could meet on a Sunday, but not during Lent or Advent (at least in theory) - Note by Mr C. F. Flower.

90 This inscription occurs on the 4th bell at Walsgrave cast in 1702 by ~~Henry~~ William Bagley. The 5th is inscribed

QVANTVM SVFFIIFIT BIBIERE MOLO
CLANCVLA VOS MUSICA TONE 1703. The
Latin seems to be untranslateable but
perhaps we may paraphrase the founders'
meaning thus. "It is all right to
drink enough beer, but too much will
upset the stirring."

91. Notes and Queries 11S. VI. Oct. 5. 1912.
At present there is only one bell at Tell.

92 See Note 84.

93. "I doubt whether there is any continuity
between the Saxon gilds and the Gilds
Merchant There is very little about gilds
in the 12th and early 13th Centuries. I
should be inclined to say "Sometime after
the Conquest" — Note by Mr. C.T. Flower M.A
Secretary of Record Office.

94 "Is it not possible that "College" implies
colleagueship" — Note by Mr. C.T. Flower.

95 Sir John Hawkins — A General History
of Music Vol IV. p. 154.

96 Edward B. Ramsay Dean of Edinburgh

A Letter to the Rt. Hon. Charles Lawson Lord Provost of Edinburgh

97 Churches were used for public meetings of Commoners. At Northampton, Sandwich, Grantham, Boston, Lydd, New Romney, Dover and elsewhere the mayors etc were elected at meetings in the parish churches both before and after the Reformation - see R. M. Serjeantson M.A., F.S.A in Notes and Queries 10S. XII Aug 21. 1909. In 1570 a Canon was issued forbidding the Churchwardens to hold public entertainments in the church, but it was frequently disregarded - Notes and Queries 11S. VI. July 27. 1912.

98 See also payments for ringing at Salisbury Churches (given at the end of this Chapter) where the bells were rung by order of "Mr. Mayor."
" "

99 Grace Abounding, Bunyans autobiography was first published in 1666. Of this edition only three copies appear to be extant. Two are in America and

the third in the British Museum. It does not contain the reference to singing which was added by Bunyan in a later edition.

100 Anthony Wood says that Hale "laid [at Magdalen Hall] the foundation of some learning and knowledge which he afterwards built upon, and might have proceeded further had not his thoughts been diverted by certain juvenile vanities." — Athenae Oxonienses 3rd Ed. 1813 by Philip Bliss Vol iii Col 1090

101 The original rule book of this society is in the British Museum among the Sloane manuscripts. The MS. at Oxford is a copy or a duplicate.

102 Queen Elizabeth arrived at Bristol on Saturday Aug. 12th 1574 and the St Stephens bells were rung to congratulate her on her arrival, for which she promised the ringers a charter which was afterwards

granted by James I bearing date 17th
Nov. 1620 She was received by John Young
the then Mayor of Bristol (afterwards Sir
John Young) He resided at St Augustines
back Bristol — Osborn E.J. note book.

103 "Is the playing at Football, Readyng of merie
bookes and suche like delectations a
violation or prophanation of the Sabbath
daie?" "Any exercise which withdraweth
us from godlinesse either upon the Sabbath
or any other day els is wicked and to be
forbidden." — Philip Stubbs, Anatomie of
Abuses, 1583, p. 83.

10A For the Angelus see Chapter VIII page.

105 In 1576 Archbishop Grindal held a provincial
visitation at Gloucester at which the Church
wardens of St Nicholas in that city were
presented for ringing more peals than one
after funerals and for ringing on festival
days and they were ordered to leave all

extraordinary ringing. Other like cases occur e.g. at Horton where there was ringing on All Saints Day. — Registers of Visitations Diocese of Gloucester.

106 There are numerous and widely separated indications that the church bell was the principal means of bringing the people together for any purpose religious or secular legal or illegal. The message which called the Labourers together for the peasants rising of 1381 ended with "John Ball greeteth you well all, and doth you to understand that he hath rungen your bell." At statute 37 & 38 Ed VI. C. 5. made it felony to "call together an assembly" with bell, trumpet, "ordery, or handbell" for certain prohibited purposes. See also letter of the Council to Lord Russell quoted on page 164. Vol IV.

107. "Ringing off-times hath made good music on bells, and put men's bodies out of tune so that by overheating themselves they have rung their own passing bell" — Thomas Fuller.

108. Further investigations have caused me to modify the opinion expressed here. See Chapter VIII page 886.

109. "I stopped Sunday ringing at Oldham Lower and have never yet felt able to recommence it." Canon Woolmer Wigram (author of Change Ringing Disentangled) in Church Bells Sep. 16.th 1871.

110. John Whitgift afterwards Abbp. of Canterbury himself a puritan defended the use of bells in the Church of England against puritan attacks — "The use of bells was a mark of antichristianity in our churches when the people by them were called to masses and when they were rung against tempests Now they are a token of christianity when

the people by them are gathered together to the gospel of Christ and other holy actions - The Works of John Whitgift Vol II. p. 38.

111 But Dr. Coulton writes in "Great Events in History page 233 — Church theory in the Middle Ages was far more strictly Sabbatarian than is generally realized.

112 The harvest bell was still rung in south Warwickshire as late as 1871 - see "Church Bells."

113. "On the Monday next after the Feast of the Translation of S. Thomas the Martyr in the year of Our Lord 1442 John, Bishop of Olien in Freseland anointed and Consecrated the four bells of Tottoneys (Tolines) namely the great bell in honour of All Saints, another in honour of S. Mary the Virgin, the third in honour of S. Gabriel and the fourth in honour of S. Katherine" - Corporation of Tolines MSS.

114 This passage from Hawkins is quoted in New Campanalogia p iii

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