THE CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY GUILD OF CHANGE RINGERS

1879 – 1979

A Centenary History by

WILLIAM T. COOK

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1. THE FOUNDATION OF THE GUILD

Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and to a lesser extent in the earlier part of the nineteenth century, there had been a steady succession of members of Cambridge University who were also change ringers. There is even a legend that Isaac Newton was a ringer. But it is not until 1871 that we find any attempt being made to form a University Society. No doubt the impetus came from the recent formation of the Oxford University Society, and the motive was clearly the promotion of "belfry reform". It is important to realise this if we are to understand the aims and objectives of the early members, and the reason why the Guild in its earlier years produced so many clerical members.

In October 1871, the Rev. Woolmore Wigram of Furneaux Pelham, himself a Cambridge man, and a keen though not very proficient ringer, wrote a letter to the 'Cambridge Chronicle', in which he expressed the hope "that Cambridge will (like Oxford) organize a Society for the study and practice of Scientific Campanology". He advocated ringing as a scientific amusement, as a means of bringing together men of different ranks, and as a branch of Church work. Rev. Woolmore Wigram was a staunch protagonist of belfry reform, and, like others, felt it could best be accomplished if the incumbent himself had some knowledge of, and interest in the art of ringing. As it was put in 'Church Bells' in 1873, in reference to the Oxford University Society: "We can hardly expect that any great proficiency will ever be attained by the University Society, owing to the continual changes among the members, but we hope that a good number will be sufficiently grounded in the science to enable them to take the lead in any belfry reform which may be necessary in their own counties".

Wigram's letter was taken up in December, 1871, by one who

signed himself "A Bell-Ringing Undergrad" in which he suggested that others interested should send their names to the Editor of the 'Cambridge Chronicle', with a view to the formation of a club. But evidently nothing came of this, although the writer of the letter thought there were "plenty of men who know how to manage a bell up here". It appears from his letter that the writer was not a method-ringer.

In the following years, it would seem from the list of members of the Cambridge Youths that there were a few undergraduates who were method ringers, but it was not until W.C. Pearson came up in 1878 that there was anyone to take up Wigram's suggestion seriously. Shortly before he came up to Clare College, Pearson had rung his first six-score of Bob Doubles at Henley, Suffolk, the tower with which he was afterwards so intimately associated, and he was evidently sufficiently interested to take active steps towards the formation of a Society. He enlisted the support of some of his friends, and eventually, on February 4th 1879, five undergraduates met in A.C. Holthouse's rooms in Clare College, and "resolved to form a Society for the purpose of practising change-ringing". Besides Pearson and Holthouse, there were present L.S. Staley and S.W. Kettlewell, both of Clare, and M.C. Potter of Peterhouse. They called themselves 'The Clare Association of Ringers'. No doubt they had already cast around for suitable senior officers, for they elected Rev. E.J. Heriz Smith, Dean of Pembroke, as their President, with W. Hope of Peterhouse as Vice-President, and A.C. Holthouse as Secretary and Treasurer.

Whether Heriz Smith was anything of a ringer does not appear. The first few handbell practices were held in his rooms, but after one term he drops out of the Guild records altogether.

Three days later, on February 7th, it was agreed to hold tower bell practices at St. Bene't's on Tuesdays at 2.30 p.m., and

handbell practices in the President's rooms on Saturdays at 2.30. St. Bene't's bells were not easy to ring at that time, and probably the practices were with tied clappers..

At the next meeting, four days later, two more members were elected, and a set of rules was passed, changing the name to 'The University Guild of Change Ringers', and limiting membership to members of the University. A system of fines for lateness at. or absence from practices was instituted, and this, with modifications, lasted until 1910.

Two more members were elected in this first term. It appears that a set of handbells was purchased by subscription, and that at St. Bene't's the Guild provided their own bellropes, with pale blue sallies.

A short item in 'Church Bells' for April 16th, 1879, throws some light on how the members of the new Guild regarded their position at that time. 'Campana' writes: "An effort has been lately made to start a University Company of Change-ringers at Cambridge, and though at present it exists in little more than name, it is hoped that the time may come when it will rival that of the sister University".

Heriz Smith resigned as President on May 31st, and Rev. A.H.F. Boughey of Trinity was elected President, a position he was to hold for fifty-seven years. The incalculable benefits of this election will be seen in the ensuing pages. It is not clear to what extent Boughey was already a change-ringer at this time, when he was a fellow of Trinity College and Vicar of St. Michael's. Nor is there any record of what was rung during this term, or indeed for the next year or so, as the practice of keeping a Touch Book did not start until the Lent Term of 1881.
However, we have from the pen of E.H. Lewis an excellent picture of what Guild practices were like in his time, and probably

had been like from the time that Boughey became President – and continued to be like for years afterwards. Lewis wrote: "Each October the president, with unfailing patience and unfailing good humour, started to teach a fresh batch of beginners, knowing that only a small proportion would get very far, at least while they were at Cambridge. The work among those who did not progress very far was probably not wasted. A number of them were subsequently ordained, and they at least knew something of our art, and would be sympathetic with the ringers of the bells of which they might subsequently have charge.

"As a teacher Mr. Boughey was excellent. On tower bells he was most particular about the proper handling of the rope. . . . There was never much chance of good striking in the tower . . . with too many beginners ringing together; but Mr. Boughey laid the foundations in such a way that members could become good strikers when they got the chance.

"It was easier to get on quickly with handbells. A good handbell ringer himself, Mr. Boughey was always ready to start again at the very beginning, first single-handed, then double-handed, with each new batch of members".

In October 1879 a meeting was held at which only six members were present. It was agreed to continue practising weekly at St. Bene't's, and to hold two handbell practices a week at St. Michael's school. A short while later the rules were revised; the title of the Guild had the word 'Cambridge' added to it, and it was agreed to have a 'Conductor' as one of the Officers instead of a Vice-President. W.C. Pearson was elected to this office. In October 1880 the tower-bell practice was moved to St. Andrew's-the-Great. Later in the same month, the handbell side of the Guild's activities was sufficiently flourishing for it to be worthwhile to arrange an extra practice "for the more advanced ringers only".

An important change in the rules introduced in November 1880 had the effect of making life members of all those who were still active members at the time of their going down. This rule has, of course, been very beneficial to the Guild, as it has enabled younger members of the Guild to take part in ringing with older, more experienced members. Honorary Members began to be elected in 1881.

Evidently, at the tower-bell practices, some of the town ringers had been giving assistance, but by February 10th, 1881, the Guild had advanced far enough to achieve 60 Bob Doubles at St. Andrew's, with the clappers tied, "this being the first touch rung by the Society on the church bells, unassisted". Progress was also being made with the handbells, and on February 12th a 720 of Bob Minor was rung on the handbells by R. Copeman, M.C. Potter, Rev. A. Boughey, E. Knowles, W. Baker and W. Pearson (cond.). Ten days later, at St. Andrew's, was rung 360 Bob Doubles by R. Copeman, E. Knowles, M.C. Potter, Rev. A. Boughey, and W.C. Pearson (cond.), "these being the first peals rung by the Society at the tower, with the clappers untied". "We congratulate the Guild on having made a commencement", commented the Editor of 'Bell News', when publishing the report of these performances.

This may not seem to us today to be much to show for two years' existence of the Guild, but we have to remember that at that time, and for a long time afterwards, the resident Guild consisted of only about a dozen members, of whom only one or two were already experienced in any way. Much time would be taken up with beginners who resigned after only a short while, and there was little co-operation from the town ringers, who viewed the Guild with some suspicion, as the town ringers' chief interest lay in the paid ringing, which they were naturally anxious to keep as their own preserve. However, in October 1881, they did agree to allow the Guild to instal a 'Seage's dumb practice

apparatus' at Great St. Mary's (the gift of Revs. A. Boughey and F.G. Howard), and to help the Guild in return for an annual payment of two guineas. The Seage's apparatus proved to be of great help to the Guild, and from the time it was installed until just after the second World War it was regularly used by the Guild for the purpose of instruction – indeed, for long periods, it provided the only experience of tower-bell ringing for members in residence.

In the earlier part of 1881, the handbell repertoire had extended as far as a course of Oxford T.B. Major, and outings had been held to Horningsea, Little Shelford and Barrington. During the Long Vacation Term a 720 of Kent T.B. Minor was rung on the handbells.

2. 1881 - 1904

The next two years were a quiet period for the Guild, ringing being mainly restricted to Bob Doubles and Minor, with only a handful of touches being recorded for the years 1884 - 87. In 1882 the set of handbells had been increased to twelve (at a cost of 21/-), and Lord Braybrooke, Master of Magdalene, accepted the office of Patron of the Guild, a position he held until his death in 1904. In October, 1885, H.J. Elsee became Conductor in place of M.C. Potter, who had held that office since 1881. Other prominent members at this time were H.B. Woolley and J.T. Rickman. A library of ringing books was begun by the purchase of suitable works, and the Guild began to subscribe to 'Bell News'. As a result of the continuation of this policy, the Guild now has one of the best collections of ringing books in the country. Hitherto, officers had been elected each term, but in 1886 the present practice of electing officers at an Annual General Meeting was introduced.

H. Law James came up in October, 1887. His personality, coupled with the fact that he was already a competent ringer, led to the start of a period of considerable progress in ringing, beginning with the Guild's first quarter-peal, Bob Minor on handbells, rung on February 1st, 1888, by L.F. Gosling, Rev. A.H.F. Boughey, W.O. Assheton, H.L. James, J.R. Ellis and J.T. Rickman (cond.). In June 1889 the first double-handed handbell touch is recorded, 420 Bob Doubles by Rev. A.H.F. Boughey, H.L. James (cond.) and A.G. Langdon. The band was further strengthened in October 1889 with the election to membership of the Guild of E.B. James and C.F. Wedemeyer. The handbell repertoire was extended to include Grandsire Caters; the first double-handed 720 of Bob Minor was rung on November 23rd 1889 by Boughey and the brothers James, and the same band scored a 720 of Kent T.B. Minor on December 7th. A 720 of Canterbury Pleasure Minor followed on February 8th, 1890,

and in the same term touches of Grandsire Triples and Major, and Bob Triples, were rung double-handed. On tower bells, the height of achievement was a Plain Course of Grandsire Triples on the Seage's apparatus at Great St. Mary's.

The time was now ripe for an attempt at a peal, and after an unsuccessful attempt which lasted 1 hour 37 minutes, the Guild's first peal was scored on Monday, April 28th, 1890, when Holt's six-part peal of Bob Triples was rung in 2 hours 33 minutes by Rev. A.H.F. Boughey, E.B. James, H.L. James (cond.) and C.F. Wedemeyer. This was the first peal for Boughey and Wedemeyer, and was claimed to be "the first peal on handbells ever rung in the town of Cambridge". Commenting on this peal, the Editor of 'Bell News' wrote: "While the Oxford University Society of Change Ringers appears to be hastening towards total extinction, that of the sister University is making headway. Both of them are numerically weak, but the Cambridge Society is just now exhibiting a vivacity which may seem a palliation for its want of numbers. The efforts of the Messrs. James to give a fillip to the art upon the banks of the Cam have resulted in the execution of a peal in hand, and we hope that this is but a preface to other if not greater performances".

At about this time, the rules of the Guild were revised, and the office of 'Conductor' was changed to that of 'Master'. Some famous names appear in the Minute Book this term, with the election to Honorary Membership of Sir A.P. Heywood, Leonard Proctor, and Canon Woolmore Wigram. Later in the May term, visits were paid to nearby towers, and Stedman Triples began to be practised on the handbells.

The following term, it was decided to go for a handbell peal of Double Norwich C.B. Major, a feat which had never before been accomplished by anyone. Some touches in the method were successfully rung, and then, as a preliminary, 5040 Bob

Major was rung on November 17th, 1890, in 2 hours 36 minutes by Rev. A.H.F. Boughey, E.B. James, H.L. James (cond.) and G.A. Clements. The same band, in the same order, scored the first peal of Double Norwich Major ever rung in hand on February 23rd, 1891 in 2 hours 48 minutes, the composition of E.B. James. This peal, which was only the Guild's third peal, must rank high as a performance judged by any criteria. Just how much perseverance went into it is shown by the account which later appeared in 'Bell News': "It was first definitely settled to practise for a peal of Double Norwich in October, 1890. The first practice was on October 20th, when after a whole afternoon's hard work the first course of the method was rung. The Bob Major followed to improve the Major striking, and courses of Double Norwich were rung at intervals during the Michaelmas term. After the Christmas vacation the method was thoroughly taken up, the band meeting nearly every day for about five weeks".

Tower-bell ringing now became for a time a more important activity, with two tower practices a week (on the Seage's apparatus) being arranged as from January, 1892, though the Touch Book contains few tower records at this period, the majority of touches shown being Grandsire Triples in hand. The Committee were also to arrange "visits to neighbouring churches, as far as possible on Fridays".

On October 19th, 1893, the first attempt was made by a Guild band to ring a tower-bell peal. This was at St. Andrew's, for the Jubilee of the church. Unfortunately, the attempt "came to grief owing to an accident after ringing for 45 minutes". However, a 504 of Grandsire Triples was rung by G.H. Ridout, W.W.C. Baker, C.W.O. Jenkyn, Rev. A.H.F. Boughey, C.E. Earle Bulwer, G.A. Clements, H.L. James (cond.) and W.J. Conybeare. Another attempt was made at Sawston on December 7th, but it failed after 2 hours 10 minutes.

The peal was eventually scored at Sawston on April 17th, 1894, Holt's ten-part peal of Grandsire Triples, in 2 hours 52 minutes. The band was; G.F. Woodhouse, E.B. James, C.W.O. Jenkyn, Rev. A.H.F. Boughey, C.E. Earle Bulwer, Rev. C.A. Clements, Rev. H.L. James, W.J. Conybeare. Three of these were non-resident, and it was the first peal for Woodhouse, Jenkyn, Bulwer and Conybeare.

A quiet period follows for some years, with little happening except the teaching of beginners. It was at times such as this that the Guild owed its continuing existence almost entirely to the patient teaching of its President, as has already been shown. In 1896 some courses of Duffield Major on handbells are recorded, and many touches of Bob Major and Grandsire Triples, with peals of Bob Major in November and December, 1896. Very little of note was accomplished in the tower, apart from a peal of Bob Major on the Seage's apparatus in Great St. Mary's on January 27th, 1897, in which four Guild members (Rev. A.H.F. Boughey, C.W.O. Jenkyn, R.H. Whitford and G.F. Woodhouse) took part along with four members of the Cambridge Youths. A peal of Bob Royal was rung on handbells, after several practice touches including a quarter peal, on March 2nd, 1897; but as the band included F.Ll. Edwards of Ridley Hall, this cannot be claimed as a Guild peal, as Edwards was not a member of the University, although he had been elected a member of the Guild. The same applies to a peal of Bob Major in hand on March 12th.

A period of greater activity opened in the Michaelmas term, 1901, when E.H. Lewis, F.S. Poole, H.S.T. Richardson and B.H. Tyrwhitt-Drake came up, and all four soon showed themselves to be keen ringers. As before, it was chiefly on handbells that the progress was made, there not being sufficient experienced ringers in residence to enable much to be done in the tower; although when members of the Oxford University Society visited Cambridge in April 1903, it was possible for the combined band

to ring touches of Grandsire, Stedman and Plain Bob at the Catholic Church and at St. Andrew's.

The four undergraduates mentioned in the last paragraph, together with Rev. C.W.O. Jenkyn, Rev. A.H.F. Boughey, Rev. H.L. James and R.A. Daniell, who had recently been elected an honorary member, scored a peal of Bob Major at St. Andrew's on June 17th, 1903. In July there was another joint meeting between the O.U.S.C.R., and a peal of Grandsire was attempted at Drayton with four undergraduate members from each University, but it was lost less than 200 changes from the end. Lewis, Richardson and Poole scored their first handbell peal, Bob Major, with Rev. A.H.F. Boughey, on July 29th. It was Richardson's first peal as conductor.

The same four undergraduates stayed for a fortnight at Trowell, Notts, and at Southwell, and joined with local ringers in ringing at many towers, themselves doing quite a lot of handbell ringing, including a peal of Bob Major, the first ever rung by Undergraduates only. This was rung on October 8th, 1903.

On November 9th, 1903, a band which included Revs. H.L. James, C.W.O. Jenkyn and H.B. Woolley attempted a peal of Stedman Triples at St. Andrew's, on the occasion of the King's Birthday, but this was lost after just over 4,000 changes had been rung. The handbell band was now practising for Bob Maximus, and this was scored on November 10th, with the help of Rev. H.L. James. This was the Guild's first peal of Maximus, and as the band were all members of the College Youths, it finds its place in that Society's Peal Book as the first of Maximus in hand rung by the College Youths. The five residents rang a peal of Bob Royal on December 11th. Stedman Triples was attempted again at Ely on December 14th, but was lost at the half-way point. However, the band succeeded in ringing the Guild's first touch of Double Norwich in the tower.

Lord Braybrooke, Patron of the Guild, died in January 1904, and a muffled peal of Stedman Triples was rung at St. Andrew's by five Guild members and three from the Ely Diocesan Association. The Guild's 25th anniversary was marked by a dinner in Trinity College, at which a silver salver was presented to Rev. A.H.F. Boughey, "in recognition of his long and valuable services as President". The occasion was marked by a handbell peal of Bob Major, while on the following day a peal of Minor was rung at Barrington.

In the next term, Kent T.B. Major was twice attempted on the handbells, and several quarter peals were rung in other methods. The only notice of tower-bell ringing is the Guild's first peal of Kent T.B. Major, rung at Henley, Suffolk (Rev. W.C. Pearson's tower). This peal was rung on June 15th in 2 hours 44 minutes by H.S.T. Richardson (cond.), Rev. A.H.F. Boughey, Rev. W.C. Pearson, E.H. Lewis, Rev. J. Holme Pilkington, F.S. Poole, B.H. Tyrwhitt-Drake and Rev. C.W.O. Jenkyn. The following day Rev. A.H.F. Boughey called his first peal, Bob Major in hand. The Kent Major in hand was scored two days later. Other handbell peals were rung during the Long Vacation term, the most noteworthy being the Guild's first peals of Grandsire Caters and Kent T.B. Royal.

3. 1904 - 1914

Lewis and Tyrwhitt-Drake went down in 1904, so the resident band was not able to accomplish much until A.O.C. Longridge was ready to ring his first peal, Bob Major in hand, on February 8th, 1905. In the long Vacation term, further unsuccessful attempts for Stedman Triples were made at St. Mary's, Ely, and at Sawston. The following year was chiefly remarkable for the first ever 'Guild Week', although previous to this, on May 25th, 1906, an attempt to ring Stedman Triples in hand had lasted for 3,600 changes.

The 1906 tour was of course the start of a tradition that has been maintained without a break (except during the war years) until today, and which has been of the greatest benefit to the Guild, especially when it became the custom to encourage younger and less experienced members to join in it. This first tour seems to have been different from the later ones in that there was no one 'headquarters' for the whole week. Only eight members took part, although Rev. C.A. Clements and E.H. Lewis joined in on single days. Like most of the earlier tours, the main object was a peal attempt each day.

On Monday, August 27th, a peal of Kent Major was rung at the Bell Foundry, Loughborough; on Tuesday, Stedman Triples was lost at Ripley, Derbyshire; on Wednesday, Double Norwich was lost at Duffield; but the band having been invited by the Vicar of Ripley to make a second attempt, scored the Guild's first peal of Stedman Triples there. The band was H.S.T. Richardson (cond.), Rev. W.C. Pearson, Rev. A.H.F. Boughey, Rev. W.W.C. Baker, Rev. H.J. Elsee, Rev. C.W.O. Jenkyn, Rev. H.L. James and Rev. B.H. Tyrwhitt-Drake. The strong clerical element will readily be noted. Another attempt for Double Norwich failed at Lenton, Notts, on the Thursday, but Kent was again scored at Southwell on the Friday. This last was the first

peal of Major on the bells, rung on "the hottest day recorded in Nottingham for 31 years".

As a result of the success of this first Guild Week, it was decided next term to appoint a Non-resident Secretary, "whose duty it shall be to communicate with other Non-resident members".

Only seven members met at Pulford, Cheshire, for the 1907 tour, but with the assistance of local ringers they managed to ring five peals. In 1908 the Guild became affiliated to the Central Council, and E.H. Lewis was elected as its representative. The resident band at this time was small, and not able to accomplish much. In the week before the 1908 tour, four members met at Frodsham and made several unsuccessful attempts for handbell peals. The tour proper was centred on Darlington, and produced the first Clerical peal of Major – Kent Treble Bob at St. John's, Darlington; the first Clerical peal of Bob Major, at Bishop Auckland; and the Guild's first peal on ten tower bells – Bob Royal at Stockton on Tees, rung by Rev. H.L. James, Rev. H.S.T. Richardson (cond.), Rev. A.H.F. Boughey, J.T. Rickman, Rev. C.A. Clements, Rev.E.W. Carpenter, Rev. H.J. Elsee, Rev. B.H. Tyrwhitt-Drake, Rev. W.W.C. Baker and Rev. C.W.O. Jenkyn.

During the 1909 tour the first Clerical peal of Double Norwich was rung at Drayton, Berks. This was the first tour with a fixed headquarters for the whole week, and with journeys mainly by road instead of rail. The plan has been adopted ever since.

In 1909, E.M. Atkins, A.C. Blyth and R.O. Street came up, and the Touch book shows that this was the start of a new period of progress for the resident band. Evidence of tower bell progress by the residents appears with a 168 of Grandsire Triples rung on the Seage's apparatus at Great St. Mary's on November 18th,

1910, while on the handbells two peals of Bob Major were rung, on February 25th and March 16th, 1911, by B.C. Roberts, Rev. A.H.F. Boughey, E.M. Atkins (cond.), and R.O. Street.

Five members of the Guild met for a week's handbell ringing at the Residence, Southwell, before the 1911 tour, but again they were unsuccessful in scoring a peal, Double Norwich being the aim. The tour was based on Hythe, Hants, and the main success was the first ever peal of Little Bob Major, rung at Brading, I.O.W., on September 8th, in 3 hours 5 minutes, by Rev. A.H.F. Boughey, E.M. Atkins, Rev. H.L. James, Rev. A.G. Langdon, R.O. Street, W.D. James, Rev. E.B. James (cond.) and Rev. H.S.T. Richardson. This was also the first peal of Major on the island. The peal book throws some light on the method of transport used during this tour, for in it is recorded that some handbell touches were rung "in the brake".

The resident band was further strengthened in 1911 by the presence of W.D. James, J.H.R. Freeborn and J.B. Williamson, and handbell peals follow in quick succession. The Kent T.B. Major rung on March 11th, 1912, was the President's 100th peal, of which 37 had been rung with the Guild.

In the Easter term, 1912, no fewer than thirteen handbell peals were scored– two of Bob Major, three of Kent, one of Oxford, two of Double Norwich, one of Little Bob Major, and one each of Grandsire Caters, Bob Royal and Little Bob Royal. This last was the first peal to be rung of Little Bob Royal. The performers were Rev. A.H.F. Boughey, E.M. Atkins (cond.), W.D. James, Rev. H.S.T. Richardson and R.O. Street. On June 20th, Stedman Triples was rung at St. Andrew's by a mainly non-resident band. The next day the same band rang a half-muffled peal of Double Norwich Major at Great St. Mary's, in memory of Professor Verrall. On August 7th, the first Clerical handbell peal, Grandsire Caters, was scored in the President's rooms by Revs.

A.H.F. Boughey, E.B. James, H.S.T. Richardson, H.L. James and B.H. Tyrwhitt-Drake.

The 1912 Guild Week, based on Newton Abbott, brought further successes, with the Guild scoring its first peal of Surprise – Cambridge Major, rung at Charles Church, Plymouth, on September 2nd in 3 hours 12 minutes by Rev. W.W.C. Baker, Rev. H.L. James (cond.), Rev. H.S.T. Richardson, E.M. Atkins, E.H. Lewis, W.D. James, Rev. E.B. James and Rev. C.W.O. Jenkyn. The President was still in Cambridge during the early part of the week, and a telegram sent to inform him of the success of the peal is preserved in the peal book. Two days later, the Guild rang its first peal of Superlative at St. Michael's, East Teignmouth, in 3 hours 35 minutes, the band being the same as for the Cambridge except that Rev. H.J. Elsee took the place of Rev. W.W.C. Baker. Friday, September 6th, brought further success, with the first peal of Little Bob Royal on tower bells at St. Sidwell's, Exeter. Some of the band stayed on in Devon for a further week, and scored three handbell peals.

In the following year, the resident band remained comparatively strong, though still too small to do much in the tower. An all-undergraduate peal, Bob Minor on handbells, was rung on December 1st, 1912, in only 1 hour 38 minutes, by J.B. Williamson, W.D. James and F. Barker. It was, however, a mainly non-resident band which made two unsuccessful attempts to ring a peal of Stedman Triples on the newly-augmented eight at Long Stanton, where Rev. H.B. Woolley had shown great energy and determination in getting the bells increased to eight. The first attempt was on November 22nd, 1912, after the dedication service, but it came to grief after two hours. The peal was eventually scored on January 15th, 1913.

During the same term, seven handbell peals were rung, followed by another five in the Easter term. The 1913 Guild

Week was held in North Wales, and three peals were rung – Stedman Triples, Cambridge Major, and the Guild's first peal of Stedman Caters, rung at Wrexham on September 2nd in 3 hours 33 minutes by W.D. James, E.H. Lewis, J.B. Williamson, Rev. H.S.T. Richardson, E.M. Atkins, Rev. H.L. James (cond.), Rev. H.J. Elsee, Rev. E.B. James, Rev. C.W.O. Jenkyn and Rev. B.H. Tyrwhitt-Drake. During the week, touches of the variation of Kent known as Granta Bob Major were rung for the first time.

Plenty of handbell touches are recorded for the Michaelmas term, 1913, but only three handbell peals, and a peal of Bob Major at Long Stanton. The same band scored seven more handbell peals in the next two terms, and a peal of Grandsire Triples with four non-residents was rung at Long Stanton.

4. 1914 - 1929

The outbreak of war on August 4th, 1914, caused the cancellation of the tour which was due to be held in Lincolnshire. However, a few members met at Surfleet Vicarage and rang the Guild's first peal of Kent T.B. Maximus, on handbells, the band being J.B. Williamson, Rev. A.H.F. Boughey, Rev. H.S.T. Richardson (cond.), E.M. Atkins, Rev. E.B. James and Rev. H.L. James. Years later, a man named C. Rawding of Burfleet, who in 1914 was a page-boy to Rev. H.L. James at Surfleet Vicarage, gave the following interesting description of the meeting there in September, 1914: "I well remember these handbell peals sometimes going well into the night and occasionally coming to grief, with E.B.J. and H.L.J. storming at each other as to who was at fault".

"The band at that time addressed each other by their initials, with the exception of the president, Rev. A.H.F. Boughey . . . In appreciation of their visit they presented the Vicar with an altar book, suitably signed by the president".

At the beginning of the Michaelmas term, most of the members were away on military service. At the first meeting of the term, on October 21st, only the President and J. Butler were present. The latter temporarily undertook the duties of Master, Secretary and Treasurer. Later in the term a few new recruits were elected, and it was possible to ring a few touches of Bob Minor during the year. There was a bit more activity in 1916, when J.B. Williamson was in Cambridge for a time, and B.F. Sheppard had made progress. Two handbell peals of Kent Major were rung, in January and April 1916, at Surfleet Vicarage. The Touch book is a blank from July 1916 to June 1919, and no meetings are recorded for this period in the Minute book.

On April 19th, 1916, Sir A.P. Heywood, who as we have seen

was an Honorary Member of the Guild, died. He had bequeathed "all his books and MSS on ringing matters to the Cambridge University Guild of Change Ringers to do with as they may think fit, to destroy all they deem useless, and to sell for their own benefit or give away . . . the remainder". The Guild gratefully accepted this legacy, which was sent to Rev. H.L. James to sort out. Ultimately, some of these books and MSS formed the nucleus of the Central Council Library, while the rest was sent in 1922 to the University Library.

The first post-war activity recorded is in the May term, 1919, when W.H.J. Hooton became a member, and J.B. Woolley was elected an associate member. To celebrate the peace after the Great War, the Guild held its first Ringing Week after an interval of five years, in Cambridge. A peal of Bob Major was rung at Sawston, and a muffled peal of Double Norwich at Long Stanton, in memory of W.D. James, who was killed in France in 1915. He was one of fifteen Guild members who were killed during the war. Two days earlier, on September 3rd, 1919, the Guild acored its 100th peal, Bob Major on handbells. Also, during the week, an attempt for Grandsire Caters was made at Great St. Mary's. The band "rang for 3 hours 52 minutes, but a shift course had occurred long before".

In the next term, M.C.G. Hooton and H.G. Benson joined the Guild, and handbell and tower bell practices went on as before, the band receiving valuable assistance from E.M. Atkins, and scoring several handbell peals. The most notable of these was the first ever peal of Spliced Major – Plain and Little Bob, rung on May 19th, 1920, by W.H.J. Hooton, Rev. A.H.F. Boughey, E.M. Atkins (composer and conductor), and B.F. Sheppard. The highlight of the 1920 tour, based on Tunbridge Vicarage, Herts, was the Guild's first peal of Double Oxford Bob Major, rung at Broxbourne on September 9th.

A useful new recruit in the Michaelmas term, 1920, was E.G. Benson. On January 15th, 1921, E.M. Atkins and Rev. E.B. James came to Cambridge, and three handbell peals were scored that day – Bob Major, Double Norwich, and the first ever of Plain and Medium Bob Royal. Two days later, the same band rang 5120 of the Gonville variation of Kent. The next two peals of note were one of Kent in the Granta variation, rung at Surfleet Vicarage, and one of Double Norwich on April 11th, which was the President's 200th peal. He was then nearly 72 years old. A third variation of Kent (Cam) was rung on April 30th. The 1921 tour, based on Isham, Northants, produced three peals.

The resident band in 1921 - 22 was a small but very active one, and some progress was made on tower bells, so that the Guild was for the first time strong enough to undertake some Sunday Service ringing, in the form of ringing at Great St. Mary's for Evensong on the front five bells. Handbell peals of note were the first peal of Norwich C.B. Major, the first of Spliced Plain and Little Bob Royal, and the first on handbells of Double Bob Major. In the Long Vacation term, the Guild's first peal of Grandsire Triples in hand was scored.

The same level of activity, by much the same band, was maintained in the following year; tower-bell ringing being confined mainly to Grandsire and Stedman Doubles and Bob Minor, but plenty of handbell ringing, with several peals being scored. An important change to the rules was made as a result of an approach by the Oxford University Society. It was laid down that only members of the University be eligible to full membership of the Guild, but that members of the O.U.S.C.R. be Honorary members of the Guild. No peal was to be counted a Guild peal "unless every ringer be a past or present member of the University of Cambridge". Similar rules were adopted by the O.U.S.C.R.

In August 1923 an 'unofficial' but apparently highly successful camping tour, designated as a 'Junior Tour', was held in the Isle of Wight, six members taking part. The peal of Minor they rang at Whitwell was the first tower bell peal of Minor in the Isle of Wight, and the peal at Chale on the 15th was the first peal of Doubles in the island. A similar tour was held in the following year, after a year of lesser activity at Cambridge. Indeed, the period until 1926 was one of which there is little to report, only a few touches being recorded, and peals being confined to the Guild Weeks.

By the Easter term of 1926, there was once again a small but active resident band, its chief members being F.E. Haynes, S.H. Wood and C.W. Woolley. This band rang several handbell peals, that of Bob Major on May 31st, 1926, being the Guild's 200th peal. During the 1926 Guild Week, the band was strong enough to ring the Guild's first tower-bell touch of Grandsire Cinques, at Macclesfield.

The same level of activity was maintained the following year, with a number of successful handbell peals. Notable among these was one of 5039 Pliced Bob Royal and Grandsire Caters, rung on April 30th, 1927, by C.W. Woolley, E.M. Atkins, W.H.J. Hooton, S.H. Wood (cond.) and F.E. Haynes. This was the second peal to be rung on this plan, and the first on handbells. Several of the residents are recorded as taking part with members of the Cambridge Youths in ringing for Sunday evening services at Great St. Mary's, in standard methods up to Grandsire Caters.

An interesting meeting was held in January, 1928 – a "Meeting of the Lay Members of the Guild". Among other things, they rang peals of Double Norwich at Long Stanton on January 13th, and Bob Maximus on handbells on the 15th. Attempts for Cambridge Major were made at Bourn and Ickleton. A feature of the 1928 tour was the Guild's first course of Bristol,

rung at Wraxall.

The following year saw little activity from the resident band – indeed, they held no tower-bell practices in the Michaelmas term, 1928 but resumed them the following term. However, as had been the custom for some years, there were no tower-bell practices in the Easter term, 1929.

5. 1929 - 1939

It had been the intention to mark the 50th anniversary of the foundation of the Guild by holding a dinner on February 4th, 1929. This, however, was postponed owing to the death on January 19th of Rev. H.B. Woolley, one of the Guild's leading and most respected members. His part in the early history of the Guild has already been recorded, but he had taken an active part in the work of the Guild ever since, particularly after his appointment to the living of Long Stanton in 1905, where he had the bells augmented from five to eight. He had also been an active member of the Ely Diocesan Association, serving as Secretary of the Hunts. District for many years.

The Guild's anniversary was marked by a handbell peal of Bob Royal on February 3rd. It was "not conducted, but it is not claimed as strictly silent, and there was no witness". The main celebrations came during Guild Week, which was held in Cambridge, with a record attendance of 26 members. On Wednesday, September 4th, the Guild was entertained by the President at dinner in Trinity College. Speeches were made after the dinner in celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the foundation of the Guild, and Mr. Boughey, the President, was presented with a large silver rose bowl, inscribed, "A.H.F. Boughey, President, C.U.G.C.R., 1879 - 1929". 'The 'Ringing World' reported: "Mr. Boughey's enthusiasm has resulted in a large number of Cambridge men leaving the University with a knowledge of the art of ringing which has been turned to good purpose, and many well-known members of the Exercise owe their interest in ringing to the inspiration of the President of the University Guild". A photograph of the company taken during the week and published in 'The Ringing World' is of considerable interest. As it says under the photograph: "During the past fifty years about 300 members have been enrolled, and many of them have, after their Cambridge days, occupied prominent

positions in the Exercise". That this is so is illustrated by the fact that, of the 25 members in the photograph, nine were at that time holding office in various associations, and several others were prominent Central Council members. During the week three peals were rung, including one of Stedman Caters at Soham.

After this highlight in the Guild's history, we come to a longish period during which very little of any note happened. In Cambridge, ringing was almost completely confined to handbells, though in October 1930 Sunday evening ringing at Great St. Mary's was resumed. In April 1931 a non-resident band met at Surfleet and rang some touches on handbells of Cambridge Surprise Major. In the same month a somewhat unusual peal of Bob Major was scored, with C.W. Woolley, ringing 8-1, E.M. Atkins 2-3, W.H.J. Hooton 4-5, and F.E. Haynes 6-7. Three notable new members in this period were A.G.G. Thurlow, C.F.D. Moule, and B.J.E. White.

1932 was a slightly more active year, one notable peal being a handbell peal of Cambridge Surprise Major on April 23rd, rung by Rev. E.B. James 1-2, W.H.J. Hooton (cond.) 3-4 and C.W. Woolley 5-6. This was the first peal of Surprise in hand by the Guild.

The Guild suffered a sad loss in 1932 when, on February 3rd, the Rev. Henry Law James died at Surfleet, where he had been Vicar since 1898. His achievements in the early days of the Guild have already been mentioned, and his support for the Guild in later years had been constant, and his influence very great indeed. Besides the frequent meetings of Guild members at Surfleet Vicarage to attempt handbell peals, he had been a regular visitor to Cambridge, where he had conducted many of the Guild's peals, and thus given encouragement to a large number of members who later went on to make their mark in the Exercise. It was he who had founded the Lincoln Diocesan

Guild, and done great work in that area, and his achievements as a composer and an analyst of the laws of method structure ensure him a permanent place in the history of ringing.

At the end of the Easter term, 1932, Rev. A.H.F. Boughey gave up his rooms in Trinity College, which for so long had been the unofficial headquarters of the Guild. Indeed, the A.G.M. in April of that year was the last meeting over which he presided. Fortunately, Dr. Stewart, who had rooms opposite Boughey's, agreed to their use for hand bell practices, and he was elected an Honorary member of the Guild.

The main events of 1933 were the Guild's first seven-method Minor peal on handbells, rung on June 5th by Rev. B.F. Sheppard, C.W. Woolley and W.H.J. Hooton, and the decision to elect Rev. A.C. Blyth as Vice-President. During this year, too, repairs were carried out to the Seage's apparatus in Great St. Mary's, which was of such great use to the Guild in their tower-bell practices. The next two years' activities produced nothing which is worthy of any special mention.

On April 17th, 1933, there occurred the death of Rev. C.W.O. Jenkyn, another of those who had been influential in the early days of the Guild, and had been a regular supporter of the Guild tours. He had been Master of the Oxford Diocesan Guild from 1909, and Librarian to the Central Council since that position was created in 1913. He was succeeded in this post by Rev. B.H. Tyrwhitt-Drake, another prominent Guild member, whose main service to the Guild was the writing and printing of the Jubilee History of the Guild, which appeared in 1931. Tyrwhitt-Drake was tragically killed by an accident in the grounds of his Rectory at Walsoken in January, 1936. He had rendered valuable service to territorial associations, having been President of the Hertford County Association and later Hon. Secretary of the Ely Diocesan Association.

It had been proposed by Tyrwhitt-Drake that the Guild should hold a commemorative luncheon on February 4th, 1936, but owing to his death this was postponed until April 28th. It was again held in Trinity College, and nineteen members and guests were present, including the Master of the Oxford University Society. Unfortunately, the President was too till to attend.

On September 22nd, 1936, Rev. A.H.F. Boughey, who had been President of the Guild since May, 1879, died at the age of 87. His influence on the Guild, and his services through it to the art of ringing, are incalculable, as was pointed out in 'The Ringing World', where we read: "Except during the three years that he occupied the distinguished position of president of the Central Council, (1919 - 1921) . . . Mr. Boughey was seldom a conspicuous figure in the Exercise, but his influence has spread to almost every corner of it. His work was mostly done in the seclusion of his own rooms at Trinity College, where year after year he interested young undergraduates in the art of ringing, instructed them and encouraged them in their practice. Afterwards these young men went out to become leaders in the Exercise and to hold responsible office in many of the principal ringing organisations.

"Cambridge University Guild . . . owed its very existence at times to his stedfast and persistent work, for the conditions of University life make the maintenance of the Guild no easy matter. There is, however, no organisation which has indirectly contributed so much to the advance of the Exercise and the promotion of the art. . . Mr. Boughey has been the centre round which the University Guild has revolved for more than fifty years, and much of its success has come from its efforts . . . The Guild has lost a great and beloved president, and the Exercise a member to whom its indebtedness can never be fully known".

Rev. A.C. Blyth was elected President in January, 1937, a year which saw a little more activity among the resident members, a few handbell peals being scored. R.D. St.J. Smith, who had been the most useful of the undergraduate members, went down in 1937, but later in the same year T.P. Hearn and A.R. Pargeter came up, and contributed much to the resident band.

6. 1939 - 1949

The outbreak of war on September 3rd, 1939, meant, of course, that the Guild Week planned to be held in Cambridge had to be cancelled. It also meant that for some years there was very little activity by the Guild, as there were so few residents to do any ringing, and those who were up did not always complete their normal three years' residence. However, the efforts of the President kept things just going, with occasional tower-bell practices on the Seage's apparatus, handbell practices in the President's rooms or in the Consistory Court of Great St. Mary's, and a few members being elected, prominent among whom were K.S.B. Croft and R. Leigh. Three handbell peals were rung in 1941 and 1942, but during the academic year 1942 - 1943 no meetings of the Guild were held.

In 1943, some useful new members were elected, and practices were resumed. More members joined in 1944, and in 1944 - 45 we see the beginning of the position in which the Guild has been ever since, that of having enough resident members to undertake regular tower-bell ringing, with touches recorded at Histon and Long Stanton, although handbell touches still predominate.

During the war years two prominent Guild members died – Rev. W.C. Pearson and S.H. Wood. William Carter Pearson was the man who had been chiefly instrumental in the founding of the Guild, as has already been recorded. He had returned as Rector to his native Henley, Suffolk, in 1894, and had remained as Rector there until his death on January 13th, 1942. There he had the bells restored and augmented to a ring of eight, and there he rang over a hundred of his 250 or so peals. He was a steadfast supporter of the Guild, and in his will he bequeathed to the Guild his collection of books on ringing, which at that time was unrivalled outside the British Museum.

Eventually, these books were sorted out, and the most valuable of them were placed in the University Library, where the Guild had already deposited a number of books on ringing of considerable interest. The remainder, some 80 in all, were added to the books the Guild already had to form the nucleus of the Guild's own library, which was originally housed in the Consistory Court of Great St. Mary's, and later transferred to the ringing room of St. Andrew's. By a regular policy of acquisition, this has come to rank as one of the best collections of ringing books in the country.

Stephen Henry Wood, who had served as Master of the Guild in the period 1926 - 28, was killed at the age of 34 in an air-raid in Bristol on November 24th, 1940, while on duty with the Auxiliary Fire Service. His period of office in the Guild had been one of the more active ones, and afterwards he was a prominent member of the Central Council, and a promising composer.

In September 1945, it was possible to hold Guild Week once again, after an interval of seven years, and the week was based on Cambridge. In the following year can be seen the start of the new 'image' of the resident Guild, with tower-bell ringing becoming a more important activity than handbell ringing, owing to an increased number of active members in residence, many of whom had become quite proficient ringers before they came up. In the Michaelmas term, 1945, handbell practices were held weekly in the rooms of Rev. C.F.D. Moule, who was now Hon. Treasurer of the Guild, a position he was to hold until 1958. There were also weekly tower-bell practices at St. Bene't's and Great St. Mary's, and some Sunday service ringing was being done. By January, 1946, the Guild felt strong enough to move the Wednesday evening practice to St. Andrew's-the-Great, with a Tuesday evening beginners' practice at Histon and a Thursday evening handbell practice. All these practices yielded a good

number of touches in the standard methods.

The 1946 Guild Week, held in Norwich, also reflects, in the variety of methods rung, the improvement in tower-bell ringing, the highlight being a peal of Cambridge Surprise Major at Redenhall on September 5th. In the following term a large number of touches were recorded, and two notable peals. The first was 5040 Bob Major on handbells, rung on November 1st, 1946, by R.F.B. Speed, K.S.B. Croft, S.E. Darmon and E.J. Lindley – the first 'silent' peal rung by the Guild. The second was 5056 Yorkshire Surprise Major rung at Littleport on November 9th by E.J. Lindley, G. Dodds, S.E. Darmon, K.S.B. Croft, C.W. Woolley (cond.), R.F.B. Speed, W.H.J. Hooton and P.K. Williamson. This was the first in the method by the Guild, and the first in the method by all the band except the Conductor. A handbell peal of Bob Major earlier in the term was the Guild's 300th peal.

The Guild's first tower-bell peal accomplished by a band of members all 'in statu pupillari' (the first of many) was rung at St. Ives on January 25th, 1947, by J.B. Rowsell, K.S.B. Croft, J.B. Wrenbury, J.F. Moor, J.H. Hayward, R. Leigh, E.J. Lindley (cond.), and R.F.B. Speed. The method was Bob Major.

With the death of Rev. Edward Bankes James on February 20th, 1947, the Guild lost its last link with the little group who had been active in getting the Guild 'off the ground' in the last century. Like his brother, E.B. James had been a fairly frequent visitor to Cambridge in subsequent years, as well as a regular supporter of Guild tours, and had therefore done much to help with the continuity of the Guild. His work as a composer gave the Exercise methods and compositions of enduring merit. A half-muffled peal was rung to his memory at St. Andrew's on February 22nd.

Steady progress continued throughout 1947. On June 3rd the 'residents' rang a peal in twelve Minor methods at St.Bene't's the band being J.B. Rowsell, K.S.B. Croft, E.J. Lindley, R. Leigh, R.F.B. Speed (cond.), and S.E. Darmon. In the next academic year there was again an increase in membership and activity, with Sunday service ringing now taking place at Histon in the mornings and St. Andrew's in the evenings. Practices were held at St. Bene't's on Wednesdays and 'lashed practices' at Great St. Mary's on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Also, for the first time, outings to nearby towers were organized on a fairly regular basis on Saturday afternoons. Handbell ringing was no longer a regular feature of the Guild's activities, though the members frequently met for informal practice, and scored some peals. The Touch book shows that steady progress was made on tower bells. Methods up to Cambridge Surprise Minor were rung, and a quarter peal of Grandsire Triples was rung at the Roman Catholic Church.

An important decision was taken at a meeting held during the 1948 Guild Week, when it was agreed by a narrow majority to admit women who were members of the University to full membership of the Guild. The first peal with a lady member of the band (Miss G.A. Smith) was rung at Bourn on December 4th, 1948.

Other noteworthy events during the same term were the institution of a Guild Corporate Communion, which has been held annually ever since, and the installation of the Guild Library in the Consistory Court of Great St. Mary's, G. Dodds being elected as the first Librarian. In addition to a number of new members who were already experienced ringers, the number of beginners was so great that special arrangements had to be made for their tuition.

The Guild held a commemoration dinner on Saturday,

February 5th, 1949, to mark its 70th anniversary, and this was such a success that an annual dinner has taken place ever since, in February or in March. For the past twenty years, it has been held in Colleges rather than restaurants, and this has given the Guild Dinners a special atmosphere of their own. During the same term, ringing for Sunday services at Fulbourn was added to the Guild's activities. In June/July 1949, another 'Junior Tour' of the Isle of Wight was held, touches being rung in most of the towers on the island.

7. 1949 - 1961

For the next few years, the pattern of activities of the Guild remained much the same. In 1950, in addition to the 'official' Guild Week in Cambridge, a Junior Tour was again held, this time in Gloucestershire. Weekly practices were now being held by the residents at St. Andrew's and St. Bene't's, and St. Andrew's bells were being rung for the Sunday morning and evening services. The Guild was also ringing at Great St. Mary's on alternate Sunday evenings for the special 8.30 p.m. services, and some members were joining with the Cambridge Youths in practices at Great St. Mary's and at the Roman Catholic Church. Outings to nearby towers were held on Saturdays, the bicycle being the usual form of transport, and occasional tower and handbell peals were rung by the resident band. One handbell peal is worthy of mention – 5120 Spliced Plain Major in six Methods, rung on June 1st, 1950, by G.A. Smith, A.B. Stockdale, G. Dodds (cond.) and B.D. Threlfall.

Guild Week in Cambridge in 1950 produced one of the best attendances ever recorded – 22, including a few of the residents. During the week, the Guild's first peal of Rutland Surprise was rung at Long Stanton on August 28th by R. Leigh, S.E. Darmon, G. Dodds, G.A. Smith, F.E. Haynes, P.K. Williamson, Rev. A.G.G. Thurlow and R.F.B. Speed (cond.). Also, on September 2nd at Norton, the Guild's first peal of Lincolnshire Surprise Major was scored.

The resident band does not seem to have been quite so strong in the following year, as fewer touches are recorded, though the same activities continued. An innovation at about this time was the arranging of quarter-peal attempts for Sunday evening ringing at St. Andrew's. This policy bore fruit in the following year with an increased number of successful peals being rung by the resident band. Handbell ringing had by now become very much

a 'side' activity, but one handbell peal of interest was scored at this time – 5056 Plain Bob Major, rung on August 6th, 1952, by C.M.P. Johnson, Rev. A.C. Blyth, P.A.F. Chalk (cond.) and F.E. Roberts. The band were all members of Selwyn College, and this was the first time that a Guild peal had been rung by members all of one college.

Another step forward was marked by the peal rung on January 24th, 1953, at Long Stanton. It was 5056 Cambridge Surprise Major, the first Surprise rung by an all-resident band of the Guild. The ringers were D.L.R. Turk, P.A.F. Chalk, R.B. Morris, J.H. Fielden, A.R. Guy, F.E. Roberts, C.M.P. Johnson and W.J. Ridgman (cond.).

The death of Wilfred H.J. Hooton at the age of 54 on July 15th, 1953, was a sad loss to the Guild. He was born at Oakington, near Cambridge, and after service in the First World War he went up to Cambridge in 1919, where, as we have seen, he rapidly came to the front as a conductor, especially on handbells. He rang in his first peal on the Guild Tour in 1919, and scored his hundredth in 1922. In the 1920's and early 1930's he was a frequent visitor to Cambridge, and did much to help the resident band. In 1935 he married E.H. Lewis' elder daughter, and this was very much a Guild event, the Guild ringing a peal for the occasion at Brasted, Kent. Wilfred Hooton became Central Council Librarian in 1936 on the death of Rev. B.H. Tyrwhitt-Drake, and continued in that office until a few months before his death.

A report in the Touch book for the Michaelmas term, 1953, informs us that during the term the ringing was confined to the more familiar methods "in a determined effort to improve the standard of striking . . . at the end of the term the quality of ringing was much improved". Although the last few years had seen an upsurge in tower-bell ringing, as contrasted with what the

Guild had accomplished in its previous history, the difficulties of keeping together a band that would produce really good striking must not be forgotten or overlooked. The bells of St. Andrew-the-Great were quite difficult to ring at that time, shortly before they were recast and rehung, and the Master was always faced with the delicate task of encouraging beginners while at the same time not discouraging the more experienced ringers. Also, there were only two or three senior members in residence at the time to stiffen the band.

The Selwyn ringers got together on May 1st. 1954, and scored a peal of Double Norwich at Long Stanton, the ringers being R.J.W. Housden, P.A.F. Chalk, Rev. A.C. Blyth, F.E. Roberts, C.W. Woolley (cond.), R. Beaumont, Rev. A.G.G. Thurlow and C.M.P. Johnson. Much the same band scored a peal of Cambridge Surprise Major at Norton, Herts, on July 19th.

Although 1954 was the Guild's 75th anniversary, nothing special was done to mark the occasion. However, during the Guild Week based on Abergavenny, the Guild's 400th peal was scored – 5056 Cambridge Surprise Major at Caerphilly on August 31st.

By this time, it was the policy of the resident band to alternate Saturday afternoon outings with peal attempts. One of these successful attempts was the Guild's first peal of London Surprise Major, rung at St. Andrew's on November 27th, 1954, by W.J. Ridgman (cond.), G.A. Smith, J.D. Painter, R.J.W. Housden, B.J. Stafford, W.T. Cook, J.H. Fielden and C.M.P. Johnson. This was also the first in the method by all the band. Handbell ringing revived somewhat at this time, and a few peals, mostly of Plain Bob, were scored.

Guild Week, 1955, was again held in Cambridge, and was chiefly notable for the ringing of the Guild's first twelve-bell

tower peal – 5019 Stedman Cinques, rung at Great St. Mary's on September 1st by J.H.R. Freeborn, G.A. Smith, F.E. Haynes (cond.), R.J.W. Housden, P.K. Williamson, J.H. Fielden, W.T. Cook, W.J. Ridgman, B.D. Threlfall, C.M.P. Johnson, P.A.F. Chalk and B.D. Price. A peal at Stevenage on January 7th, 1956, was another 'first' for the Guild – 5120 Spliced Surprise Major, in six Methods.

The following year was marked by the decision to go ahead as a Guild with schemes for raising money for the restoration of St. Andrew's bells, which were rehung in February, 1957, some of the necessary preliminary work having been done by Guild members. In fact, the Guild bore the main responsibility for raising the £1400 needed for the restoration of the bells, and it reflects great credit on the energy and enthusiasm of those resident at the time that this sum was eventually raised. The work of C.M.P. Johnson in co-ordinating these activities and representing the Guild on the Parochial Church Council was invaluable. A useful decision taken at about this time was to elect a member annually to act as Steeplekeeper.

Meanwhile, another Guild 'first' had been scored – 5040 Cambridge Surprise Royal at Luton on January 12th, 1957, rung by F.E. Haynes (cond.), S. Jackson, A.R. Heppenstall, P.K. Williamson, G.C. Galley, S.E. Darmon, J.D. Painter, W.T. Cook, C.W. Woolley and C.M.P. Johnson. Later, on June 15th, the Guild scored its first peal of Bristol Surprise Major.

The 1957 Guild Week, based at Pleshey, Essex, produced a new record, in that eight peals were rung during the week, including one rung by six members of St. Catherine's College – E.M. Atkins, H. Neill, E.G. Benson, R. Leigh, J.H. Fielden and F.E.Haynes. This peal – Cambridge Surprise Minor – was rung at Rayne on August 29th.

Another advance in peal ringing was a handbell peal rung on November 28th, 1958. It was a peal of 5184 Spliced Plain Major in 13 methods, rung by M.D.S. Hood, P.H. Langton, A.R. Heppenstall (cond.) and D.J. Kirby. On tower bells, the next achievement was the Guild's first tower peal at Maximus – a 5280 of Cambridge, rung at Aston, Birmingham, on January 10th, 1959, by R.F.B. Speed, F.E. Haynes (cond.), M.S. Jackson, C.W. Woolley, J.D. Painter, A.R. Heppenstall, H. Neill, W.T. Cook, C.M.P. Johnson, W.J. Ridgman, B.D. Threlfall and P.K. Williamson.

The quality of ringing, and of methods rung by the residents had been steadily improving over the years, and although of course beginners were by no means neglected (many of the touches and peals recorded being in the 'standard methods'), it is of considerable interest to note that a peal of 5088 Glasgow Surprise Major was scored by a resident band on April 21st, 1959, at St. Andrew's. The band was H. Neill (cond.), F. Secker, C.M.P. Johnson, P.H. Langton, M.D.S. Hood, J.R. Taylor, A.R. Heppenstall and W.J. Ridgman. It had taken the Guild thirty years to ring its first hundred peals, and another thirty-four after that to reach the 400th, but the 500th was scored only five years later, in April 1959. From about this time on, many peals in different Surprise methods were rung, all "the first in the method by the Guild", and it would be tedious to mention them all in detail.

At the Guild Week meeting in 1960, W.J. Ridgman was elected Vice-President, a move requested by the President, Canon A.C. Blyth, who felt that with advancing years he was no longer able to maintain such an active part in the Guild's affairs as he had done hitherto. The wisdom of this move became tragically soon apparent, for Canon Blyth died on February 9th, 1961. He had served the Guild as Secretary for a year when he was up in 1910 (although at that time rowing was his main activity). He

was severely wounded in the First World War, but came back to Cambridge in 1928 as a fellow of Selwyn College, and served as chaplain, Senior Tutor, and finally vice-Master. As had already been seen, he was elected vice-President of the Guild in 1933, and became President after Boughey's death in 1936. Although he had done little ringing since his undergraduate days, he then entered into the Guild's activities "as though they were the one interest in his life", as E.M. Atkins wrote. Atkins went on to say, "One always felt that here was a president, respected and loved by young and old members alike. His shrewd mind was able to sort out many difficulties . . . He was a man of few words, and his way of stating his point of view sometimes gave offence, but it was soon realised that his advice was very sound. How did he manage all this, and how did he become so proficient a ringer after so long a lapse? One can only imagine that it was because of his brilliance, and his power to give to each of his activities the attention most people give to one activity alone".

A peal of 5056 Bob Major was rung at Ickleton by a resident band on February 11th to the memory of Canon Blyth. In his memory, too, a fine silver loving cup was purchased by subscription from members, and this has featured ever since at the annual dinner.

8. 1961 - 1979

By 1961 the resident Guild's strength in tower-bell ringing had nearly reached the level at which it stands today, and its pattern of activities has remained much the same since that time. The Touch book shows that there was a resident Surprise Major band practising at St. Andrew's, though for Sunday ringing at Geat St. Mary's, which was now being regularly carried out on Sunday mornings in addition to the ringing at St. Andrew's, there were not quite enough experienced members to ring Cinques without some help from the City ringers. Normally at this period Saturday peal attempts alternated with outings, which were well attended by learners, many of whom made rapid progress. In the years which follow, interest in handbell ringing varied considerably.

It is interesting to reflect on some of the factors which led to the remarkable improvement in the Guild's ringing capabilities in the comparatively short time between the end of the war and the period under review. Up to 1945 there had scarcely ever been sufficient skilled members in residence to attempt anything beyond the most elementary ringing on tower bells. It seems, however, that the coincidence of several members joining at the end of the war who had already learnt to ring before coming up provided an impetus of enthusiasm which enabled the Guild to move gradually forward. However, even in 1951, only ten years before the time of which we are at present treating, it was by no means uncommon for Sunday ringing at St. Andrew's to consist mainly of call changes, with just the occasional touch in a standard method.

One of the most important influences had surely been the granting by Canon Woodard of permission for the Guild to use St. Andrew's tower as their headquarters, a move which eventually led to the bells being recast and rehung. This restoration of the

bells was in itself a factor which made progress much easier. Also, there were more opportunities outside the Guild itself for individual members to make progress, such as the Tuesday evening Surprise practices at Trumpington. Indeed, relations between the Guild and the Ely Diocesan Association had become much more cordial, as they also had with the Cambridge Youths. This was, in fact, true of the general standing of University ringers with the Exercise as a whole. Improved transport facilities were another consideration, it being by this time much commoner for residents to have their own cars, thus enabling the resident band to get about much more.

Among the regular activities which start to appear at about this time are an annual outing at the end of the May term, and joint meetings with the Ely Diocesan Association and the Oxford University Society.

A noteworthy peal in 1962 was one of 5040 Spliced Minor in 32 Methods rung at Willingham on June 14th by J.R. Hough, H. Muirhead, M.L. Jordan, L.R.H. Smith, A.S. Hudson (cond.) and B.D. Threlfall.

The year 1962 - 63 saw a revival of interest in handbell ringing. Four handbell peals were rung in the Michaelmas term, and seven in the Lent term. The following year saw further progress in both tower and handbell ringing, with Cambridge Maximus being rung for Sunday services at Great St. Mary's, and touches of Stedman Caters and Cinques on the handbells. This progress led to two peals which are noteworthy in the Guild's history. The first was rung on June 5th, 1964 – "the first peal of Stedman Cinques in hand by all the band and for the Guild". The ringers were S.C. Walters, B.D. Threlfall, J.M.H. Hunter, A.S. Hudson (cond.), V. Nutton and C.H. Rogers. The other, which was the Guild's 600th peal, was 5019 Stedman Cinques rung silent and non-conducted at High Wycombe on December 5th, 1964, by W.J. Ridgman, J.M.H. Hunter, C.H. Rogers, A.S.

Hudson, K.J. Darvill, S.P. Darvill, C.M. Press, V. Nutton, S.C. Walters, C.M.P. Johnson, B.D. Threlfall and F.C. Hobson. Umpires, J.E. Chilcott and J.E. Camp.

Some other peals rung during 1963 - 64 were rather sadder occasions. The Stedman Caters on handbells rung on November 15th, 1963, was a tribute to E.H. Lewis, who died on September 4th. Lewis had been a prominent member of the Guild as an undergraduate, and had taken part in many of the Guild's earlier performances of note. He also attended many of the earlier Guild Weeks. He represented the Guild on the Central Council from 1908 to 1936, and was the Central Council's President from 1930 to 1957. He was also the first member of the Guild to become Master of the Ancient Society of College Youths, being elected to that office in 1936, and again in 1937. His contribution to the Exercise in many fields, especially that of bell hanging and restoration, was immense.

On January 17th, 1964, a peal of Stedman Caters was rung on handbells to the memory of James Butler, who was Master of the Guild in 1914 - 15, and 1919 - 20. He was a staunch supporter of the Guild from that time on, and a frequent attender of Guild Weeks. He died in December 1963 at the age of 72. He was for a long time associated with the band at Kirby-le-Soken, Essex, but before he went there he lived for a number of years in Berkshire. He was described as being "quiet, unassuming but very lovable".

E.M. Atkins died in September, 1964, having been an outstanding member of the Guild since he came up in 1909. He was Master from 1910 to 1912, and in all took part in 155 Guild Peals, of which he conducted 73. Perhaps his greatest contribution to the Guild came in the early 1920's, when, as we have already seen, he was a regular visitor to Cambridge, and spent hours and hours in patient instruction and practices,

especially on handbells, enabling many members to score their first peals. His composition of Bob Major is still widely used for handbell ringing. He also organized three Guild Weeks – those at Isham, Northants, in 1921 and 1927, and the 1953 tour at Newton Abbot. He represented the Guild on the Central Council from 1927 to 1953. In his memory, a half-muffled peal of his favourite method, Double Norwich, was rung at St. Andrew's on October 8th, 1964.

More new fields were conquered by the Guild in 1965, with London Surprise Royal making its appearance in the Touch book, multi-method Surprise ringing featuring regularly at the St. Andrew's practices, and three peals of note. On March 13th, Stedman Cinques was rung at Birmingham Cathedral by an all-undergraduate band. On June 12th, the Guild's first peal of Yorkshire Surprise Maximus was scored at Great Yarmouth, and two days previously, a peal of Glasgow Surprise Major had been rung at St. Andrew's.

It is perhaps rather soon as yet for the historian to be able to get an accurate perspective of the last few years of the Guild's existence. The general impression is that the level reached in the early 1960's has been maintained and even improved on. Some of the peals rung in these last ten or so years deserve special mention. On March 1st, 1968, a peal of 5040 Doubles in 220 methods/variations was rung at Litlington by M. Hutchings, R.H. Youdale, R.S. Bradley, R.L. Underwood (cond.), A.F. Scholfield and G.H. Jones. This was the greatest number of methods/variations yet rung to a peal. The peal of Scientific Triples rung at St. Andrew's on January 20th, 1972, was a praiseworthy performance. The band was: B.R.M. Johnson, J.R.N. Lebon, N.J.H. Small, A.T. Winter, T.H. Kirkman, J.R.B. Speed, W.T. Perrins (cond.) and J.L. Thorogood. The resident band at this time was quite a strong one, and accomplished a number of peals. It is also pleasing to note that, according to

the Touch Book, there was an improvement at this time in the standard of ringing on Sunday mornings at St. Andrew's.

There was an interesting demonstration of the strength of the Guild on October 28th, 1972, when three bands met to ring simultaneous peals of Stedman Cinques at Birmingham Cathedral, Walsall and Aston. The Guild started to interest itself in ringing long lengths at about this time. On December 7th, 1972, a 9072 of Plain Bob Major was rung on handbells by H. Winter, T.H. Kirkman, A.T. Winter and W.S. Croft (cond.). Just over two years later, in January, 1975, there was an attempt for 20,384 Plain Bob Major in hand which lasted for 5½ hours, and a year after that, on January 24th, 1976, an attempt for 13,000 Cambridge Surprise Major at Meldreth lasted for four hours. Meanwhile further progress had been made in Surprise Maximus ringing, and a peal of Newgate Surprise Maximus was scored at St. Peter's, Nottingham, on March 3rd. 1973. The band included a number of non-residents.

Another milestone in the Guild's history was reached on April 17th, 1976, with the Guild's 1000th peal, Stedman Cinques at St. Margaret's, Leicester. Later in the same year the emphasis was on Spliced Surprise Major; a peal in 20 methods was rung at St. Andrew's on November 11th by M.N. Tickner, A.P.J. Limbach, F.H. King, B.H. Taylor (cond.), G.R.D. Lay, B.G. Meads, T. Hooley and J.R.B. Speed. A Week later the same band rang a peal in 23 methods. The Guild had had several attempts to ring a peal at Exeter Cathredal, but success did not come until January 8th, 1977, when Stedman Cinques was scored there.

The last few paragraphs have concentrated on the peals rung by the Guild, but, of course, there were many other activities in these recent years. For example, in the year 1974 - 75 the Guild was practising and ringing on Sundays at St. Andrew's and St. Bene't's; ringing on Sundays and joining with the Cambridge

Youths in Practices at Great St. Mary's; holding a joint outing with the Oxford University Society; entering the Ely Diocesan Association striking competition, and holding an outing in June.

For the non-residents, apart from occasional peal attempts, the main events have always been the Guild Weeks and, since 1949, the Annual Dinner. Although the resident band has for some years now been self-contained, the effect of these other events on the continuity of the Guild has been most important. In recent years, there have been quite a number of 'unofficial' weeks when bands consisting mainly of Guild members have toured different parts of the British Isles. These began in 1968 with a tour of Ireland in the week following Guild Week. Scotland, Northern Ireland and Yorkshire have been similarly visited.

This review of recent years has, unfortunately, to conclude with mention of the passing of three notable Guild members. J.H.R. Freeborn died on June 5th, 1971, aged 83, having led a varied and active life. His contribution to the Exercise as a whole had perhaps been less than that of some of the other members already mentioned in these pages, but he was a notable 'character' and had been a supporter of the Guild's activities for most of the time since he became a member in 1911.

Roger Leigh, who died on August 14th, 1977, aged 54, had also been a stalwart Guild member, and a regular attender on Guild Weeks. Perhaps his greatest contribution to the Guild came when he was Master and later Secretary during the Second World War, when he did much to keep the Guild going. It was he, too, who printed the supplement to Tyrwhitt-Drake's Jubilee History of the Guild, written by E.J. Lindley and others, which updated the History to 1954. Later, he reprinted the original History.

Henry Fielden died on January 8th, 1978. He joined the Guild when he came up in 1952, and from then on had taken an active part in all that the Guild did, ringing in many of its peals, several of which he conducted, and never missing a Guild Week, two or three of which he organised. His early death was a sad loss to the Guild.

The Guild can now justly claim to have one of the best University bands in the country, and in this, its centenary year, it can look forward with confidence to the future. What was said of the Guild in 1936 surely holds good today: "There is . . . no organisation which has indirectly contributed so much to the advance and benefit of the Exercise and the promotion of the art. The extensive influence of the Guild is shown by the fact that it has provided three of the four presidents of the Central council, all three librarians, and the presidents, masters or secretaries of a dozen or more associations. Many who subsequently have joined the ranks of the clergy graduated in ringing through the Guild, while others, going out from Cambridge to other spheres of life, have been among the keenest promoters of the art". That is what the Editor of 'The Ringing World' wrote over forty years ago, and is surely just as true now, the Guild having provided a fourth Central Council president, another librarian, and officers of probably the majority of territorial associations at some time or other, a large number of prominent Central Council members, and five Masters of the Society of College Youths. Many leading conductors and composers have been numbered among the Guild's loyal supporters, having gained their first experience in these fields as undergraduate members. In his Jubilee History, Tyrwhitt-Drake wrote: "The Guild is essentially a training ground, teaching and sending out those who should make their influence useful in wider spheres later on". This is still true today, but the Guild's activities have a special atmosphere about them, which generates a feeling of loyalty to the Guild among its members, whose equal it is hard to find elsewhere in the Exercise.

NOTES

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