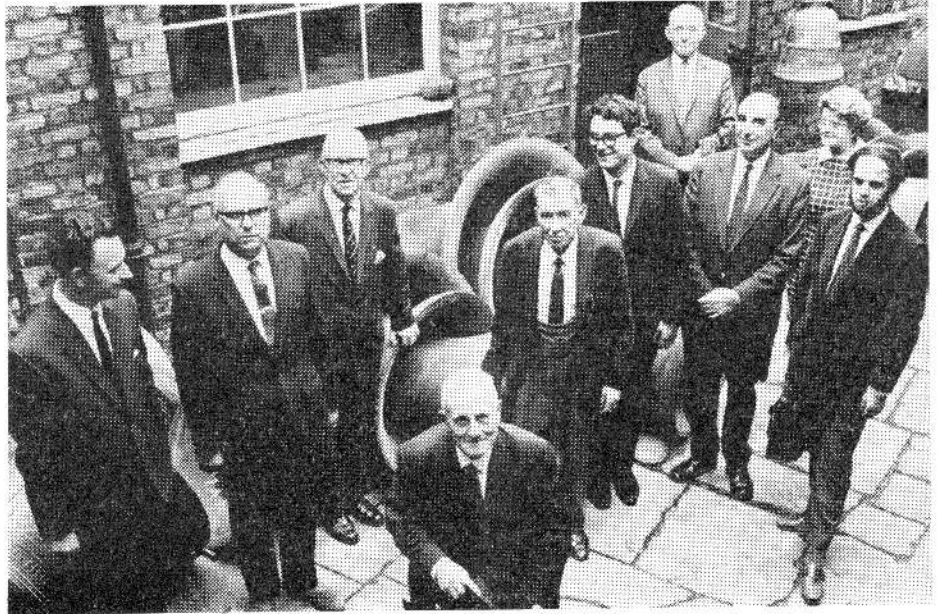


WESTMINSTER ABBEY BELLS

On August 18 a further page was written into the 400 years' history of the White-chapel Bellfoundry when, in the presence of a small group of ringers from Westminster Abbey band, headed by their leader, Mr. H. N. Pitstow, and other privileged visitors, the molten metal was poured into the moulds of the last of four of the Abbey bells to be recast. The visitors were cordially received by Mr. "Bill" Hughes, who conducted them round the foundry and gave a fascinating description of the various processes involved in the casting of bells, and he also supplied ready answers to the many questions. He referred to certain bells of the Abbey made by the firm which had rung at the time of Queen Elizabeth I's visit and which were also rung 400 years later at the crowning of Queen Elizabeth II.

Watching the staff of the foundry at work one could easily forget the rushing outside world and imagine that one was transported back through the centuries. The old style craftsman was seen at his age-old craft, using methods and skills that to a large extent have remained unchanged through the years. No press-button slickness, no elaborate machinery, but all the care and the pride of the workman in the thing being created. As one looked around and saw the remainder of the foundry staff gathered to watch with such close interest the pouring one could not but feel how very different from the atmosphere of many factories today—the operator of a complex



A group of visitors photographed in the Bellfoundry yard amidst bells, various! Several well-known ringers will be recognised among the company.

QUIET WEEK-END

It would, I thought, be a good chance to get all those jobs done; if it was fine, the churchyard needed mowing; if wet, there was some painting to be done.

He rang up on Tuesday: could he come for just one night, Friday? There was a peal Friday evening and another on Saturday. My wife was quite happy to have him; I refused, politely but firmly, a rope in the Saturday peal—in honour I gathered, of a baby not yet arrived, but sure to be here by then.

On Wednesday the organiser of the Friday peal rang up. Just one rope, he said—plenty of people available, but he'd like me in it. I fell for the blarney—after all, I'd have had to join them in the pub in any case, and what use was the odd two-and-a-half hours before that?

We met on Friday. Bristol, I discovered, not my favourite method, so I rang the treble. Not too bad—the odd missed dodge ("My fault, my fault!"), but on the whole reasonable. The local conductor said he'd used someone else's composition, a little improved here and there; it was quite musical.

In the pub it transpired that the baby hadn't yet arrived. Dad was to ring in the Saturday peal; perhaps if I went along just in case . . . ? After a couple of pints I wasn't in a fit state to do more than bargain: if he agreed to help with the churchyard in the morning, then . . . —done!

We made quite an inroad on the churchyard on Saturday morning, he and I and the family. It was damp, but not unpleasant; and providentially the machine broke down just before lunch, in time for the usual.

Inevitably there was a wedding still on at the 2.30 meeting time, but even after that we were still one short. No baby, of course, so I had to stay and ring. It wasn't until 3.15 that the 12th man turned up ("the traffic" was the official reason—unkind people thought about the rugger on the box), and we set off for Stedman Cinques.

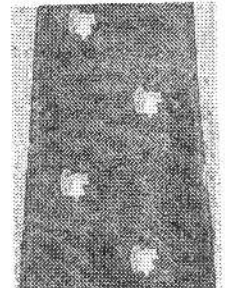
He was calling it himself, and it was to be the first on 12 for his latest girl friend. We negotiated one of those funny starts at the second attempt, and got on quite well on the whole. There were the usual comments ("Push the tenor along a bit!") and one slight disagreement about the coursing order; but we'd had two and a half hours of reasonable tittums and there were two courses to go of good handstroke when—the clapper fell out of the tenor.

Slight gloom till we got to the pub but quite a cheery hour or so thereafter—Dad and Mum joining us by turns, baby still unborn; and he and I conveniently forgot about joining the family at the evening meeting till it was too late. When we all got home he decided he'd stay the Saturday night as well; so we all went out for a curry.

He went off bright and early on Sunday morning. "Pity about yesterday—but we didn't do too badly the night before." The baby arrived safe and well on Sunday. I didn't hear till Thursday that the Bristol was false.

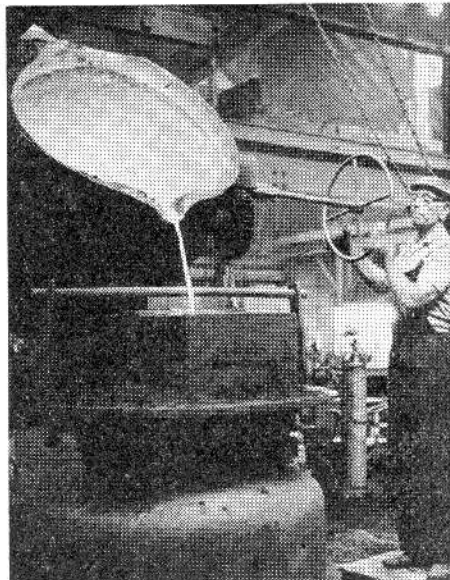
NEW RINGERS TIES

are available with silver bell. Light brown headstock and wheel on Navy Blue or Bottle Green backgrounds at £1.00 each post free from



**Peter Sloman,
51, Eastbury Avenue,
Rochford, Essex SS4 1SE**

Profits to bell restoration



machine turning out some minor item for a larger unit, and of which he, personally, knows little or nothing. Here was the pride and satisfaction of the old-time workman who could see and appreciate his particular part in the finished product, the creation of his own hands.

Among those present at the casting were Messrs. H. N. Pitstow, A. J. Frost, J. H. Crampion, J. Phillips, W. J. Rawlings, L. Fox, C. H. Rogers, R. Cousins, C. W. Lucas, Mrs. Lucas, Miss A. M. Lucas and Miss Valerie Jackson. C. W. L.