

**UNIVERSITY OF LONDON SOCIETY
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

Saturday, May 13
 10.30-11.30 St. Luke's, Chelsea.
 12 noon Demonstration of Carter Ringing Machine, Council Room, Science Museum.
 2.15-3.00 St. Clement Danes'.
 3.00-3.45 St. Lawrence Jewry.
 3.45-4.30 St. Olave's, Hart Street.
 4.30 Service, followed by tea and meeting.
 N. Thompson, 6 The Holt, Wallington. 3767

**MIDLAND COUNTIES GUILD
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING at Burton**

on **Saturday, May 13.**
 Bells: St. Paul's, 2.30-4.15.
 St. Modwen's after meeting.
 Service at St. Modwen's 4.30, followed by tea and meeting in Friar's Walk Schools. All welcome. 3768

**SURREY ASSOCIATION
NORTHERN DISTRICT PRACTICES**

The following practices will take place from mid-May to early June:
Tuesday, May 16
 Advanced practice, Streatham, 7.30-9 p.m.
 Special method: Yorkshire.
Wednesday, May 24
 General practice, Banstead, 8-9.30 p.m.
Thursday, June 1
 10-bell practice, St. Martin's, Epsom, 8.30-9.30 p.m. 3766

**ANNUAL DINNER AND DANCE
SURREY ASSOCIATION**

at The Valley Hotel, Caterham, on **Saturday, October 28, 6.30 for 7 p.m.** Tickets are now available from association officers. Make sure of yours now; numbers limited to 100.
 Band as 90th anniversary dinner. Ticket price: £2. 3831

**DURHAM AND NEWCASTLE ASSOCIATION
ANNUAL DINNER, 1972**

Saturday, May 27,
 at the Freemasons' Hall, Darlington.
 Tickets (£1.30) available from Secretary, N. A. Johnson, Burnt House, Blaydon, NE21 6EA, and district secretaries.
 Ringing at Darlington (Holy Trinity) 3-4 p.m., St. Cuthbert's 4-5.30 p.m. 3673

**ST. PETER'S, HENLEY, SUFFOLK
70th ANNIVERSARY**

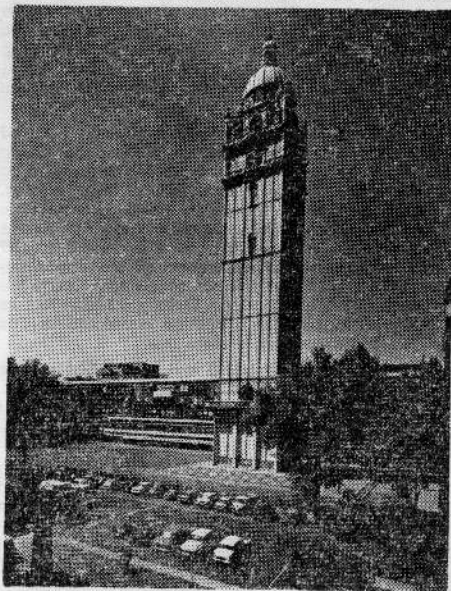
A **SPECIAL SERVICE** will be held on **Sunday, May 21, at 6.30 p.m.**
 Preacher:
 The Bishop of St. Edmundsbury and Ipswich. All welcome. Bells open from 5 p.m.—H. W. E. 3727

NEW TIE: NEW COLOUR

The new tie for ringers is now available in Maroon, Bottle Green and Navy Blue at £1. In Enamel and Gilt: Ringers Cuff Links at £1.00 in plain box, £1.20 in presentation case. Post free from **PETER SLOMAN, 51 Eastbury Ave, Rochford, Essex, SS4 1SE.** Profits: bell restoration

THE CENTRAL COUNCIL

is, this year, meeting in London (May 26-30), and each week we shall publish an article on the different churches and places where ringing and events will be taking place during that week-end. We acknowledge the assistance of Dr. D. E. Sibson and Mr. W. T. Cook, who are supplying the necessary pictures and information.



THE "QUEEN'S" TOWER OF THE FORMER IMPERIAL INSTITUTE

AMONG THE MANY works undertaken to commemorate Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee (1887) was the founding of the Imperial Institute, to foster commercial, technical and scientific progress throughout the Empire. A massive and sumptuous building was put up at South Kensington, close by the big museums and the Albert Hall, the main part of which consisted of extensive galleries containing exhibits which formed, in the words of the then Prince of Wales, "a worthy representation of the different countries composing the Empire by collections of their important natural products and sources of wealth".

The centre-piece of this building was a lofty tower, built immediately behind the main entrance to the Institute and known as the Queen's tower, or Victoria tower. The whole work of building took six years, and the Institute was opened by Queen Victoria on May 10th, 1893. Whether it had always been intended to install bells in the tower I do not know, but the bells were presented by an Australian lady, Elizabeth M. Millar, who appears to have been a great lover of bells. She was at this time residing in England, at Kew, Surrey, and in July 1893 the College Youths wrote to her asking if she would become an honorary member of the Society, but she declined the offer as she was then 83 years of age.

The bells were cast by John Taylor & Co., and are an extremely fine ring of ten, tenor 38 cwt. 1 qr. 15 lb. in D flat. Each bell bears the inscription round the shoulder:—

"Elizabeth Millar gave me—
 The Loughborough Taylors made me."
 The bells are named, from treble to tenor, Maud, Victoria, Louise, George, Albert

Victor, Arthur, Alfred, Alexandra, Albert Edward and Victoria R.I. 1837-1887. On the 8th bell is the additional inscription:—

"The peal of which this bell forms one was by special permission of the Princess of Wales named after Her Royal Highness."

It is unfortunate that it was decided to hang these bells right at the top of the very tall tower, as this means that the tower sway is very considerable, making good striking difficult owing to the sudden dropping of the bells. Nor is the ringing room ideal, the storey immediately underneath the bells being used for this purpose, which means that the bells sound very loud. Also, a considerable climb (over 250 stairs) is involved.

At the opening of the Institute, the bells were rung by a band which John W. Taylor, Jun., had the unenviable task of selecting—unenviable because the authorities decided that the band should as far as possible fairly represent "the whole of the ringing Associations in the country". Eventually 12 ringers were selected, who do seem to have been fairly representative, and included many famous names. Various touches were rung by this band on the opening day, and it is reported that "as the Queen was leaving the building some rounds and firing were rung and Her Majesty stopped the carriage to hear the bells and expressed her pleasure with them".

From the outset, the arrangement for ringing the bells was basically the same as it is today—that they should only be rung on royal birthdays and anniversaries. At present the bells are rung eight times a year. Only a very few peals have been rung on these bells, the first being on Coronation Day, 1902 (August 9th), 5,079 Stedman Caters, rung by a College Youths' band and conducted by Challis F. Winney. The latest was a 5,019 of Stedman Caters, also by the College Youths, rung on November 14th, 1964, and conducted by J. Chilcott.

In recent years, the buildings of the Imperial Institute, which had by then changed its name to the Commonwealth Institute, proved no longer adequate for their purpose, and the Institute was moved to a new building on a different site. The whole of the old buildings were then demolished to make room for the expansion of Imperial College, with the exception of the tower, which was adapted to remain as a free-standing tower. A statue of Queen Victoria is preserved at its base, just inside the door. While these works were in progress, the bells (which had been rehung some few years previously on plain bearings) were, of course, silent, but ringing was resumed three or four years ago.

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