

## Book Review

**Turret Clocks:**

*Guidelines for their Maintenance and Repair and for the Installation of Automatic Winders*

A booklet which should be in the case of every Church Clock and be read by all clock keepers. But there are some omissions which one hopes will be inserted in the next edition.

The section on Routine Maintenance dismisses the subject of regulation in too simplistic a manner. This operation, the *raison d'être* of the clock, should have been treated separately. Omitted has been the use of regulatory weights and their placement, together with the adjustment of the escapement fly fan.

In Weights, Pulleys and Lines no mention has been made of the fixing of pointers allied to painted indicators on the weightlines to preclude overwinding and its subsequent dangers. The mention of cable clips on steel cables should be expanded to specify their correct fitting and the need for the use of pear-shaped olives to protect the lines from the damage of sharp bending.

E. V. WILLIAMS.

*Turret Clocks* is available from bookshops or direct from The Council for the Care of Churches, Field House, Little College Street, London SW1P 3SH price £2.80p inc. p&p.

**Big Edward**

In the Cathedral Campanile above the public viewing gallery, is hung Big Edward, a bell weighing 52cwt 10lb. The bell was cast in 1910 at the Whitechapel Bell Foundry in East London and is one of the 50 notable bells in the British Isles.

The Latin inscription on the bell reads: '*Pray for Gwendolen, Duchess of Norfolk, who has given this bell to the glory of God and in honour of St Edward the Confessor in the year 1910. Whilst the sound of the bell travels through the clouds, may the bands of angels pray for those assembled in thy Church. Saint Edward, pray for England.*'

Plans were made in 1910 for the consecration of Big Edward but this was never carried out owing to the death of King Edward VII. The bell was sounded by pulling a rope attached to the clapper (itself weighing about 2cwt.) which then hit the inside of the bell. This was dirty and strenuous work, which is why the bell has been used so little in the past. The bell was rung by this method after the Mass of Thanksgiving for the 100th Anniversary of the laying of the Foundation Stone on 29th June 1995, after Mass on the Feast of Edward the Confessor that year and before the historic visit of Her Majesty the Queen on 30th November 1995 by members of the Guild of St. Agatha (the Catholic Association of Bell Ringers).

Due to the generosity of Bunzl plc. the bell has been recommissioned and an electronic apparatus for tolling the bell has been installed. For the first time in many years the sound of the bell will 'travel through the clouds' over Westminster, as the architect originally intended.

On Sundays and Solemnities Big Edward rings before the Solemn Capitular Mass and also rings the Angelus at midday on these days. It is also tolled for funerals and for some special services. On every other day of the year the Angelus is tolled on one of the three small bells which hang above the Lady Chapel.

Our thanks to Fr. Shaun Lennard for the above information).

# Letters

**The London County Association**

The report of the London County Association Extraordinary Business Meeting initialled J.T.S. and the subsequent letter from C. M. H. Brady emphasise the differences of opinion that presently exist among active Members of the Association with regard to the conduct, results and reporting of the 1996 Annual General Meeting (A.G.M.) and the Extraordinary Business Meeting (E.B.M.).

Any person attending a London County Association Meeting is at liberty to send a report of that meeting to *The Ringing World*. If that person is a Member of the Association it is common courtesy to inform the elected Public Relations Officer of the Association that the report is being submitted.

The report of the E.B.M. emphasises the irregularities in the way that the A.G.M. was handled but makes light of the fact that no Association rules were broken during the proceedings. The letter from C. M. H. Brady stresses that the A.G.M. was legally valid and that there were no irregularities in either the voting procedure or in the counting of the votes. There is a feeling among a number of those members present at the A.G.M. that they were effectively disenfranchised by the E.B.M.

For the future the Association Committee has set up a working party, chaired by the Master, to examine the Association Rules and to consider both any alterations that might be felt to be necessary and the adoption of appropriate standing orders. The framing of rules is always a difficult exercise; goodwill from all parties is necessary for their implementation in a manner that preserves the intentions of the rules and it is hoped that such goodwill will be as clearly visible in the future business affairs of the Association as it is at its practices.

M. T. SPRACKLING,  
Hon. Secretary,  
London County Association.

**Publicity and public relations matters**

In doing his research into Public Relations Officers (RW p.751) Mr. Derek Watson has perhaps chosen the wrong source to obtain his material. A few years ago Guild Secretaries were requested by the compilers of the R.W. Diary to limit the number of entries they put into the Diary. Consequently I suspect that a number, as we do in the Suffolk Guild, no longer submit the name of the PRO, even though they do have a very active one.

However, I can assure Mr. Watson, and your readers, that contrary to what is shown on Mr. Watson's map, the Suffolk Guild does have an active PRO, and has done so for many years. In addition there are numerous other members of the Guild who do much to promote bellringing throughout the county, as those who have attended the Suffolk Show in recent years, for example, will confirm. Also, thanks to them, our AGM this year received a good coverage in the media.

BRUCE WAKEFIELD.  
Woodbridge, Suffolk.

Letters for publication should be signed and address of sender appended. If not for publication kindly put "Not for Publication" at the head of the letter. We do not guarantee to print all of or any letter received, neither does publication imply agreement with or approval of a letter's content by the Editor, or the Directors of The Ringing World Ltd.

**Odd struck bells**

I was interested in the letter from Robert Churchill (p.776) on the subject of odd struckness and whilst his theory appeared to work I suspect that the garter hole adjustment merely causes the ringer to accelerate the bell at the handstroke thus compensating for the lateness. Any bell correctly hung and in good working order should perform as a compound pendulum and so the timing of the clapper hitting the bell in relation to the movement of the bell is a fixed relationship which can only be altered by the weight distribution or pivot points of the whole construction.

On a related topic I have carried out some investigations at a number of installations in the N. East where odd struckness is a problem and only in some cases can the problem be remedied either by centering the clapper or repositioning it in the bell to compensate. Since the use of a nylon based material for the clapper bushes has been used to produce a lubricant free clapper pin, we have noticed the phenomenon of the variably odd struck bell which can vary its odd struckness from day to day which seems to correspond with changes in the weather and mainly humidity. Presumably this is caused by the bush material taking up moisture from the atmosphere which causes the bush to swell and become tight on the pin. On drier days the problem goes away. I have spoken with a couple of bell hangers and have requested that on any future work they go back to the practice of incorporating a grease point on the pin, something that some bell hangers have ceased to provide. The proof of this can be shown by just externally lubricating the clapper pivot and allowing it to soak in. The difference is very marked but it has a habit of being only temporary.

Finally has anyone had problems over the last couple of years with inconsistent quality of bell ropes? By that I mean that no two ropes supplied seem to have the same winding tension and are either too stiff like iron bars or so loose that it is impossible to keep the tails tucked in. Some ropes now never seem to last more than two or three years when in the past I have known ropes to last for 10 years with little need for splicing. At often over £100 each I think they should last a good while and be comfortable and secure to use.

DAVID HIRD.  
Newcastle Cathedral.

**The Whitehaven peal – technicalities**

With regard to the letter from Mr Flitcroft on page 795, I, too, am surprised and confused.

Whilst not wishing to comment on a subject which is, most probably, a matter of conscience for the Conductor and the Band as a whole, Mr Flitcroft raises the issue of "technical impossibility".

I have not had the pleasure of Mr Flitcroft's company, so I know not of his ability and experience. I do know, however, that to bring a touch of Grandsire Caters round at handstroke in a conventional manner requires that the 3rd be in the hunt. It is a "technical impossibility" for this to occur, as Mr Flitcroft seems to suggest, with the 2nd in the hunt.

Such observations and technicalities will not, I suspect, decide the matter at hand one way or the other. Neither will they add to the quality of the debate!

JOHN A. VESEY.  
Llandaff.