

**Derby District
Monthly Meeting**

3rd April

Newhall 6:00 - 7:15 pm
Winshall 7:30 - 8:45 pm

passed and he realised that he had forgotten exactly how many parts he had called! Was this the last part or not? As the part end approached, he realised that a single would not bring the bells round, so he thought he must have mis-counted and there was a still a part to go. To his surprise, as the next part end came nearer he calculated that the bells still would not come round if he called the single. So he carried on, but as he approached the next part end, he noticed that the rest of the band was becoming agitated. Then he looked at the clock. He could hardly believe it - they had been ringing for over three and a half hours. A peal could not take that long on bells of that weight. Somewhere he must have put in an incorrect call. Sadly he called 'Stand'. The band didn't let him forget the time he had called 14 parts of Parker's 12 part - and still not got a peal!

Pat Halls

**THE DERBY DIOCESAN
ASSOCIATION
of CHURCH BELLRINGERS**

**Annual General Meeting
24th April**

Afternoon ringing

Repton 2:30 - 3:15 pm
Hartshorne 3:30 - 4:15 pm
Ticknall 4:30 - 5:00 pm

Service, tea and meeting at Ticknall

Evening ringing

Ticknall 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm

Why?

Why isn't phonetic spelled the way it sounds?

How does the guy who drives the snowplough get to work in the mornings?

Why are there interstate highways in Hawaii?

You know that little indestructible black box that is used on planes, why can't they make the whole plane out of the same stuff?

Have you ever imagined a world with no hypothetical situations?

CONTRIBUTIONS for the next issue are needed by **April 13th 2004**. Please post to Jenny Booth at 51 The Plain, Brailsford DE6 3BZ, or e-mail to Jenny@Brambles-Books.co.uk.

Strike Notes is compiled by Jenny Booth and printed by Steve Harpham

Strike Notes

March 2004 Issue 39

News, Information and Trivia for ringers in the Derby & Ilkeston Districts

**Results of the Derby District
Striking Competition Heats**

The Derby District heats of the Arthur Ashby Cup (call changes) and the Horsley Cup (methods) were held on Saturday the 13th of March at Brailsford and Mugginton respectively. About 50 ringers met later at Mugginton Youth Club (despite a double-booking of the room) for an excellent tea and the results with comments from the judges; Malcolm Phipps for the call changes and David Marshall for the methods. The results were as follows -

Arthur Ashby Cup

1st	Etwall	212 points
2nd	Brailsford	200 points
3rd	St. Peter's Derby	196 points
4th	Overseale	184 points
5th=	Derby Cathedral	169 points
5th=	Sutton-on-the-Hill	169 points

Horsley Cup

1st	Derby Cathedral	241 points
2nd	Ticknall	157 points
3rd	Brailsford	72.5 points
4th	Overseale	44 points
5th	St. Peter's Derby	28 points

The top two teams in each competition go through to the final on the 15th of May.

Congratulations to them and thanks to all the teams for participating.

Steve Harpham

The Other Foundry

When my (non-ringing) friend asked if I'd like to join her on an outing to Whitechapel Bell Foundry I jumped at the chance. We met up in London on a freezing cold sleety day at the end of February. The Tube connections were closed due to work on the lines so we made our way to Whitechapel by bus. We met the rest of the party there, the whole group comprising about thirty. The foundry manager, who took us round, asked if there were any ringers, but I was the only tower bell ringer; a lady from Ohio rang handbells. There have been bellfounders in the area since 1420 (Aldgate), and in Whitechapel itself since 1570. The building was a coaching inn in the 17th C and has gradually been extended. We first went through the yard, full of bells standing or lying on their sides.

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Some have been there years, waiting for funds to rebuild their towers. There was a beautiful Burmese temple bell decorated with dragons, and some upturned decorative mortars (bellfounders used to cast mortars, as in pestle & mortar, for apothecaries to grind their pills and powders.)

The manager explained the purpose of "cannons". I didn't know this before, but they are properly termed 'cannon loops', taking their name from the handles at the back of cannons, which were also cast by bellfounders. Apparently, old bells often crack at the cannons because that part of the bell is uppermost during casting, and all the impurities rise to the surface, resulting in a weaker place even after the slag is removed. The old cast-in crown staples for clappers expanded at a different rate from bronze, which also led to cracking. However, he stressed that bells, being very hard, are also very durable; the oldest they have had through the works was c 1120.

In the foundry itself we saw the actual loam mixture for building up the copes and cores (the inner and outer surfaces of a bell). The original medieval recipe hasn't yet been bettered: chopped goat hair, Mansfield red sand, and of course well rotted horse manure. There were some old 'strickles' or wooden shapers mounted on the wall, including Big Ben's and the old Bow bells.

In the tuning shop he explained the old method of tuning (knocking out lumps here & there), and the modern: they use a stroboscope, but the tuner must still have a craftsman's ear. He decides where the metal must come off, and to what depth; he chalks this inside the upturned bell, and the lathe operators do their job. This is literally fine-tuning.. a little more off here, a smidgin there, until the tuner is satisfied. The present

tuner was taught his job by a man who came from Gillett & Johnston of Croydon when they closed in the 1950's, and brought their celebrated richly musical profile with him. Handbells, which are a large part of Whitechapel's work, are also made and tuned in here.

In the next workshop were brand new bells, shiny with graphite and proudly bearing their inscriptions and "2004". They formerly used Zebrite blacklead, but it's no longer available. The new ring for Augusta, Georgia, were in their frame, and Kettering's new twelve are also in production. He showed us examples of cannon-retaining headstocks, bells with their cannons removed, and modern pad fittings, and explained that they now use SG iron for clappers, as wrought iron is no longer made anywhere. Any perceived difference in tone is due to the new clapper not having a large strike surface; they take a few months to bed in.

Upstairs are the joinery and finishing shops: wheels, stays, and the occasional hardwood extension for timber frames. I asked whether English Heritage proved very restrictive to their work, but he said that in fact they usually accept that Whitechapel know their business. The Churches' Preservation people listing more bells might cause problems, but he was optimistic that common sense would prevail.

On the beams is the motto, in almost every language you can name, "Anything is possible to the man who doesn't have to do it". This refers to an early 20th C member of the Hughes family (who still own the foundry) asking the impossible of his employees! Opposite are plaques from the 19th C onwards, with the names and dates of deceased members of staff, including the man who cast Big Ben.

We saw the handbell finishing shop, including a very venerable polished so-called "goose" bone that is perfect for smoothing off leather. Downstairs, a fairly light bell is hung for visibly demonstrating the mechanics of ringing, and he rang this up and down again to show what actually happens during ringing and just why the uninitiated should not tug on stray ropes when visiting churches! He himself is a ringer at Erith in Kent.

I think everyone was suitably enthralled and impressed, and I had added pleasure from being a ringer. None of this, I thought, is any use at all without me & my friends! On the way back, as the bus went past St Botolph's, Aldgate, the bells were ringing ...

I highly recommend this tour; they are about twice a month, on Saturdays, and the cost per person is £8.

Sue Peach

What were they Ringing??

The Derby Mercury on 18th March 1829 reported that "*A Peal of Grandsire Triples on Stedman's Principle, which had not been attempted for many years, was accomplished yesterday with the greatest accuracy on the richly toned bells in All Saints Church by the Derby Change Ringers, on the occasion of the nuptials of William Bateman, one of the society.*"

It is not clear what was actually rung, but it could have been Stedman Triples with a composition by Joseph Tebbs of Leeds. Why call it Grandsire Triples? Possibly because Tebbs' used common Stedman bobs but 22 Holt's singles as used in Holt's 5040 of Grandsire Triples. If this is so, it would be the earliest instance of a peal of Stedman Triples in Derby.

If anyone has any better ideas, we would be pleased to hear from them.

The ones that got away

Anyone who takes on conducting a peal is very brave. Three hours of ringing demands a huge amount of concentration - and that's if you are just ringing your own bell. If in addition to keeping yourself right, you are attempting to call the bobs and singles, transpose the coursing order and correct the errors of the other ringers, then the concentration demanded is tremendous. Every successful peal is a triumph of the conductor's ability to keep his/her mind on the job.

Needless to say, it doesn't always work! There is a famous composition of Grandsire Triples known as "Parker's 12 part". You can find this on page 98 in your Ringing World diary. Basically, you learn a 'block' of calls and repeat it eleven times, but calling a single instead of a bob at halfway and the end. Some conductors find this as easy as calling a 120 of Plain Bob Doubles. Others don't!

On one occasion a band of ringers was gathered together to ring a peal of Grandsire Triples with a conductor who had not called Parker's 12 part previously. The peal started well, though the conductor was, understandably, nervous. Would he remember all the calls? After two parts had passed, his confidence increased and all seemed to be going well. He was not very competent at checking the coursing orders and from time to time he forgot what order the bells should be coursing in. But halfway came and he recognised the correct change. Relieved, he carried on with the composition. Time