

THE SAFFRON WALDEN SOCIETY OF CHANGE RINGERS

By

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A HISTORY OF THE SOCIETY taken from the only extant records dating from 1881, with references (a) to some surviving records of an earlier "Saffron Walden Company of Ringers" dated 1818 to 1857 and from 1868 to 1873 (b) to Peals recorded in the British Museum, 1774 - 1828 and (c) to the Churchwardens Accounts 1622 - 1756.

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,
The flying cloud, the frosty light:
The year is dying in the night;
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,
For those that here we see no more;
Ring out the feud of rich and poor,
Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out false pride in place and blood,
The civic slander and the spite;
Ring in the love of truth and right,
Ring in the common love of good.

Ring in the valiant man and free,
The larger heart, the kindlier hand;
Ring out the darkness of the land,
Ring in the Christ that is to be.

Tennyson

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March 1973

Read also "The Bells and Ringing Annals of Saffron Walden" by the Revd. G. Montagu Benton published in the Essex Review Vol. XXX pp. 32-41 and 65-73, in the Town Library.

THOMAS TURNER'S CHARITY AND GREAT RINGING DAY

Thomas Turner, by his will dated 10th June, 1623, directed (inter alia) that 33/4d should be "bestowed yearelie upon such persons which shall ring the bells of the Church of Walden upon the daie of the yeare on which I shalbe buried". Turner was buried in the North Chapel at the top of the steps leading to it from the north aisle. No inscription of any kind appears on the grave stone, only the spaces which contained brasses removed in the 18th century. For a description of these brasses we have to rely on Holman's MS "Notes on Walden Church" formerly in the Colchester Museum but now in the Essex Record Office and catalogued as T/P 195/17. These Notes state ".....He was aged 56 years. Buryed ye 16 of June 1623".

The Revd. G. Montagu Benton, a former Curate at Walden Church, in his article "The Bells & Ringing Annals of Saffron Walden" published in Vol XXX of the "Essex Review", 1921, claims that Turner was buried not on June 16 but on June 26, basing his claim on an entry in the Church Burial Register :-

"1623 Mr. Thomas Turner under the great stone right against the dore in the north Chapell ye 26 June".

The Verger has kindly verified this entry for me as being correct.

What, however, Benton apparently did not know was that Thomas Turner's Will was proved in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury on the 26th June, 1623, and it is not feasible that Probate would have been granted on the day Turner was buried if indeed we are to accept as correct the date entered in the Church Burial Register. In my opinion the error arose not in the Brasses on the memorial stone but in the Register.

In support of my contention that June 16th was the correct date of burial, I advance as evidence R. H. Brown's copy of the Churchwardens' Accounts Vol. 1 covering the years 1640, 1641 and 1642 (pp 99, 107 and 110) recording the spending of the 33/4d in the custom prevailing at the time. The first record of any money at all being received and spent occurs on p. 86 when the 33/4, received in 1639, "was thus spent at John Gamages in the year 1638:-

	s.	d.
ffirst a breakfast @ 2d a man	4.	0.
Dinner for 20 at 6d a man	13.	0.
Supper for 22 at 8d a man	14.	8.
Churchwardens Dinner the rest	1.	8.

The next year (p.92) the money was spent in the same way when 24 persons had breakfast and 22 each had dinner and supper. No date is recorded for these two years but for each of the next three years "June the 16th" actually appears in the accounts.

Page	Year	Breakfast	Dinner	Supper
99	1640	20	20	22
107	1641	18	21	21
110	1642	20	25	18
115	1643	20	20	20
(No date)				

In 1644 (p.119) the Turner Charity money was spent "as usual" and thereafter the entries are recorded simply - "Ringing money spent at Henry Thurgoods" (or at the house of some other named publican) without giving any date. The expressions "as usual" or "as before" must surely mean a thrice recorded "June 16th".

Enquiries at the Essex Record Office and the Public Record Office for a record somewhere of the date of Turner's death and/or burial have proved unsuccessful.

The legal formalities necessary to prove Turner's Will in those far-off days of slow communication, would have taken longer than the normal few days between death and burial and as there is no doubt whatsoever that Probate was granted on June 26th, 1623, that same date for Turner's burial is at once suspect and unacceptable, quite apart from the evidence afforded by the Churchwardens Accounts, written when the Brasses were in place and when people were living who would have remembered the funeral of such a prominent parishioner and benefactor. Can it be doubted that the bellringers would have seen to it that the bells were rung on the correct day, namely the 16th June 1624 and each subsequent year so as to be certain of qualifying for the 33/4d bequest? In those hungry days 20 odd ringers would not be likely to lose the chance of the free breakfast, dinner and supper the Churchwardens supplied on June 16th, or are the accounts of the latter to be disputed as well as the brass on the Turner gravestone?

The 27th June, Great Ringing Day for many years past, wrong in any event and, strictly speaking, does not qualify for the Thomas Turner Charity. The ringers, however, have for long celebrated this traditional Day with little thought for a small sum of money to be divided between a band of perhaps 12 ringers.

The 33/4d was increased to 56/4d about 1808, which increased amount has continued to date.

Extract from "An Account of the Festival held on Saffron Walden Common, June the 28th, 1838; the Day of the Coronation of Queen Victoria".

"At 12, Half-after, the Assistants, Tapsters, Band and Ringers will dine".

The main Dinner, at which 3760 people sat down at 75 Tables, was not until 2 o'clock so it would appear the Ringers had their meal first, then departed to ring the Church Bells during the Festivity.

The Ringers are recorded as follows:-

John Richardson

Jonathan Bennet

John Wright

Samuel Francis

Richard Miller, Ashdon

Frederic Ruse, Ditto

Wm. Spicer, Audley End

William Rumbold

James Bacon

John Freestone.

THE SAFFRON WALDEN SOCIETY OF CHANGE RINGERS

The claim by the Society that they were established in the year 1623 is a most dubious one for there is no evidence to support it. The year would seem to have been adopted because Thomas Turner died and was buried in that year and he, in his Will, "bestowed yearelie upon such persons which shall ring the bells of the Church of Walden upon the daie of the yeare on which I shalbe buried", thus founding what has long been called "Great Ringing Day". In 1622 there was "spent on Ringers the 5th August ...ij^s"; on the 5th November v^s and in 1623 "at ye Princes comming home" v^s; ye 5 August iiij^s vj^d; 5th Novr. vj^s ij^d; "uppon ye Ringers Crownation Daie" iij^s iiij^d, clear evidence that a band of ringers was in existence before 1623, as there obviously must have been if there is any truth in the story that Thomas Turner "having lost his way in some nearby woods, was guided in the direction of the town by the bells which happened to be ringing at the time".

The Rev^d Cecil Deedes (Transactions of the Essex Archaeological Socy Vol iii (New Series) p 108 published 1889) writing about North Essex Bells states "The earliest mention of these bells at Saffron Walden is 1440, Henry VI "For rynggn wanne ye quene was her iiij^d" and "a Rye Rekfyr p. emedemeto de deux claps second and le ters bell ... ij^s" and this date could have been chosen for the foundation of the Society of Change Ringers with as much authority as the date 1623.

Although there are no records of a Society of Change Ringers by that name earlier than 1881 the Society does possess records of an earlier Saffron Walden Company of Ringers the earliest of which is a manuscript copy of "Articles of Agreement concluded upon and signed by a Society of Ringers of Walden this 27th June 1800" which Benton copies in full in his _____The Bells and Ringing Annals of Saffron Walden.

These are the first and only set of Ringers rules which exist, and it is unfortunate they are unsigned as Benton records and that no Minute Book exists to verify their actual adoption. The evidence is clear, however, that even though the band from the earliest recorded peal in 1753 did not call themselves the "Society of Change Ringers" they were in fact practicing change ringing. Whether a Saffron Walden Company of Ringers existed as a properly constituted body before the 1800 articles, must, in the absence of records, remain in doubt and if it must be said with certainty that there is no evidence that a Society of Change Ringers existed in 1623, a band of ringers numbering about two dozen men positively qualified for the Turner gift for each of the years 1638-1642 inclusive, that qualification not requiring the ability to change ring. The first recorded meeting of a Socy giving itself the name of Change Ringers was held on the 29th November, 1881 attended by F. Pitstow, G. Martin, N.J. Pitstow, J. Penning, J. Freeman, C. Freeman and G. Bennett. A supper was arranged for a New Year's Eve "at the Clubhouse" where the ringers met each month. The actual meeting place is not mentioned until 1895 when the Clubhouse is referred to as the King's Arms. From the Treasurer's Accounts (1892-1913) we learn that when the ringers met, originally at the King's Arms but later at the Cross Keys, they paid nothing for the use of their private room, lighted and heated but that each member was required by the Rules to spend 4d. If a member was absent his 4d, or "Club" as it was called, was paid by the Treasurer who deducted it from the member's dividend at the annual share-out. The innkeeper was thus assured of receiving fourpences from a given membership whether present or not, plus anything extra members

cared to spend. On special ringing occasions the innkeeper cooked and served a meal, the meat being bought by the ringers direct from the butcher.

It was agreed at the second meeting on Decr. 27, 1881, that "a fine of 6d be made upon every member who is absent at 6.30 p.m. and that a fine of 1/- for the same at 11.30 p.m. on Decr. 31st". For working-class men these were fairly heavy fines in terms of money-value at the time, but such was the enthusiasm of this small band of eight men that they made a rule hitting their own pockets should they fail to turn up for ringing, thus making a peal impossible for their colleagues who did attend. Charles Freeman was the first to keep the Fines Book and G. Martin was the first Treasurer. James Miller was admitted a member at this meeting. He died January 1892, his last ring being on Mayor's Day, November 9th, 1891. He was probably the son of Richard Miller 'that eminent ringer' who died 7th January, 1862 aged 81. The 'G. Bennett' who attended the first three meetings, 29 Novr and 27 Decr 1881 and 31 Jan. 1882, was, without much doubt, the same "George Bennett" who was a member when, on March 13th, 1848, a presentation was made to Richard Miller "for his unremitting services for 45 years and upwards as a Member and Conductor of the Saffron Walden Company of Ringers".

We learn something about this earlier 'Company of Ringers' from various sources. Firstly, from one of the news cuttings in the Henry Steer collection at the Saffron Walden Museum dated January 2, 1754 (quoted in full in Bentons "The Bells and Ringing Annals of Saffron Walden") recording a "Peal of Grandsire Triples composed of 148 bobs, with 2 singles*, "Rung on Christmas Day 25th December 1753 in 3 hrs 20 mins by "The Society of young Ringers of this Town" That on New Years Day following "They completed the same in 8 minutes less than before". The names of the Ringers who took part appear in the List of Ringers which accompanies this article.

This is the first evidence on record of any change Ringing in Walden Tower, but the reference to the Antagonists of the "Old Society" suggests that change ringing was practised before 1753. An entry in the Churchwardens' Account - in 1709 "Paid for a rope for the seventh bell - 4/-" implies that there was at that time a peal of 8 bells although Morant wrote some years later "a good ring of 6 bells". Even so change ringing can be done on as few as 5 bells.

Secondly Nathan Pitstow's research in the British Museum about Peals, recorded in detail in the 1901 Minutes, begins with a peal on June 27, 1774, of 5040 Bob Major rung in 3 hours & 22 minutes "by four of the Cambridge Society and four others". The names of the Cambridge party who rang are given but not the other four. The Cambridge Chronicle however reported on July 2, 1774, that this peal "was rung by 4 of the Walden youths assisted by 4 from Cambridge". This paper further reports that on the previous day (Sunday June 26 1774) "was Rung at Saffron Walden a complete peal of 5040 Grandsire Trebles (sic) in 3 hrs and 24 mins".

* see also Addendum on p.41

When the 8 bells were recast by John Briant of Hertford they "were opened on the 6th July, 1798 by the Ringing Company from Chelmsford". One would like to think that this invasion of the Walden Tower by 'foreigners' to ring Walden's bells on such an occasion, served as a challenge to the local ringers, then perhaps in a state of decline. Be that as it may, on "Tuesday evening Decr. 14, 1799, was rung in Saffron Walden Steeple by the Company of Ringers of that place, a complete peal of 5040 Bob Major in 3 hours and 22 minutes, the striking was so excellent as not to attract the musical ear but enrapture the susceptible heart. The performance was by a young Society of not more than a year and a half standing and their efforts would have done credit to veterans. The peal was rung in compliment to Mr. Thomas Cornhill on the occasion of bringing his Lady to St. Aylotts.

Thomas Bowtell	Treble	Richard Bush	5th
William Rumble	2nd	John Bell	6th
John Harris	3rd	James Bennett	7th
Charles Pratt	4th	William Glover	Tenor

Conducted by James Bennett"

This is change ringing by a local band without any doubt, but not evidence that a Society of Change Ringers had, as yet, been formed, but does the name really matter?

Just as nearly a century later the Pitstows were to have such an influence on bell ringing, so in 1799, the name of James Bennett emerges conducting and standing No.7: in 1817 Jonathan Bennett (Treble) ; in 1825 James Bennett Senior and Junior; and in 1826 and 1828 the three Bennetts all taking part in peals together. Of the 10 peals recorded in the British Museum, the last 6 were conducted by Richard Miller.

The present Society has with its records eight books Saffron Walden Ringers Accounts 1818 to 1857 and 1868 to 1873, ably kept up to 1857 by Richard Miller from whose family the Society obtained them. These Accounts are a source of information and we learn from them the names of the members comprising the Company. In 1819 they were:

Richard Miller	(1807)	Samuel Francis	(1815)
Thomas Rannow	(1807)	John Bell	(1799)
James Rider	(1807)	Allen Hopwood	(1799)
Wm. Spicer	(1813)	David Smart	(1815)
James Bennett Snr	(1799)	James Bennett Jnr	(1815)
Wm. Rumble	(1799)		

The dates after their names referring to their earliest known peals.

'Forfeits' are recorded against each member, fees received for ringing on Mayor's Day, for weddings and other special occasions; money spent at various 'pubs' (mainly 'the Keys') on days corresponding with ringing occasions, the surplus balance being divided. Expenses to Finchingfield (1825), Waltham Abbey (1826) and Hatfield Broad Oak (1827) suggest that the ringers enjoyed annual outings just like their successors of more modern days.

Inside the front cover of the account book for 1829-40 Leonard Proctor's name and his address "Bennington, near Stevenage, Herts" is noted. In July 1837 the annual outing was to Bennington, an indication that at this time the Company was change ringing.

The 1818-19 account records a payment of 4/- on June 26 to Samuel Francis "for Ringing y^e Bell". Francis was regularly paid this 4/- up to 1852, the Bell being referred to as the Quarter Bell.

Payments for refreshments after ringing on special occasions do not include one for June 16 or June 26 neither do these two dates appear in the many "Forfeits" accounts. It was customary for the Ringers to be paid on or about June 26 for special peals, the Turner Charity being paid by the Mayor on June 27th, the ringing of the Quarter Bell by Francis apparently qualifying for it. These early Ringers accounts provide no evidence leading to any conclusion about the correct date of Thos Turners burial, but the Articles of Agreement made June 27, 1800, do perhaps explain why the "Anniversary Day of the Society" referred to in the original Rule 5, was fixed for June 27th. "Anniversary Day" seems to have changed to "Great Ringing Day" in 1899. Article 8 of the 1800 agreement required all members to meet at the Church on June 26th "from thence repair to the Clubhouse" no mention being made about ringing on that or any other day to qualify for the Turner gift.

The Society also possesses two Ringing Books which belonged to Richard Miller containing "a variety of peals upon 5, 6, 7 and 8 Bells with the general Rules of ringing the same". One Book commencing Dec. 23rd 1804 includes peals rung in 1813, 1815, 1817, 1825, 1826 and 1828. The second book commences January 28th 1806.

These old articles and accounts so nearly correspond to the Change Ringers later records as to suggest that the Society, formed in 1881, modelled itself on the "Saffron Walden Ringers" of Richard Miller's time, perhaps that same "young Society of not more than a year and a half standing" which rang Bob Major in 1799. There were bell ringers in Walden long before 1623 as indeed there were in Parish Churches throughout the country which possessed a peal of bells but so far as records exist, no local band capable of change ringing emerged until the 18th century - sometime before 1753. The art was revived by James Bennett and Richard Miller but seems to have declined again perhaps with the ageing of Richard Miller, who died 7th January 1862 at the age of 81.

Fred Pitstow is reported as saying that he first began ringing at the age of 15 and became a member of the Company of Ringers in 1867 along with his brother Nathan and that "while working in the Church one day in the 1880's he was fascinated by change ringing and decided to try his hand at it". He would then have been about 30, evidence that for 15 years he had been ringing without opportunity to learn change ringing. To practise the art, he and his brother Nathan went to belfries in many parts of the country where bellringers assembled to master the somewhat complex system set forth and explained by Fabian Stedman, a native of Cambridge, who published in 1688 the first book on the subject, "The Art of Ringing".

It is significant that at this time (1881) a meeting was held, a Minute Book commenced and Rules adopted. The 'John Penning' who was present became associated with Fred & Nathan 'as a member' in 1871.

When "The Times" published a report of the Tercentenary Celebrations in 1923 and referred to the claim of the Saffron Walden Society that it was founded in 1623, 14 years before the foundation of the Ancient Society of College Youths in 1637, the Revd. G. Montagu Benton wrote to that paper that the claim "is extremely improbable. Hundreds of churches at that time possessed peals of bells and naturally they had bands of ringers, so the mere fact that Thomas Turner's legacy dates from 1623 is no proof that a Ringing Society, in the strict sense of the word, existed at Saffron Walden at that early date. Moreover, I believe such a claim was only put forth in the latter half of the last century". My own study of such records as there are, lead me to the same conclusion.

At the fourth meeting of the Society held 28th March, 1882 "the draft rules submitted at the last meeting were finally agreed" which rules are entered at the end of the Book. The 'last' meeting was Jan. 31, 1882, two months only after the first recorded meeting and such a subject as Rules suggests that the ringers met on 29 Novr. 1881 to form themselves into a properly constituted Society of Change Ringers.

At this time Nathan Pitstow was 34 with 15-20 years' experience as a Solicitors' Clerk and one can imagine his legal mind being brought to bear on a set of Rules which are recorded in his own handwriting.

The Rules are headed "Saffron Walden Society of Change Ringers" and there is no clause repealing any earlier rules. Rule 5 begins "The 27th of June, being the anniversary day of the Society, a dinner shall be provided..." but here, I suggest that the 27th June was much more the anniversary day of the Society, founded by the 1800 Article than the actual day on which the bells were rung to qualify for the Thomas Turner Charity money, for Turner was not buried on June 27th 1623.

To qualify for membership a ringer had to ring 1008 of Grandsire Triples or Bob Major. Practice for change ringing was fixed for Tuesday evenings at 7 o'clock and members were required to forfeit 3d for non-attendance unless prevented by illness.

Fines for non-attendance on other occasions were fixed, absence from ringing for two consecutive months rendered a member liable to be expelled and bad conduct or "using bad language in the belfry or at any of the meetings of the Society" rendered a member liable to a fine of 6d.

These Rules were revised in 1895 and ringers who had not taken part in 1008 of Grandsire Triples or Bob Major could be members but styled 'probationers'.

Handbell practice was a usual pastime at meetings.

Ernest Pitstow, brother of Fred Nathan, rang his first 1008 in Novr. 1882 and at the next meeting 23/1/1883 A. G. Coe (2) Ernest Pitstow (3) and John Seaman (4) were in the band which rang 1680 of Bob Major, the longest length rung by these three of the first part of Annables 5040. Ernest Pitstow became a full member the next week. For Great Ringing Day on June 27 the meeting time was 6.30 a.m.

On 31/7/1883 Ernest Pitstow rang his first course of Stedman Doubles on the handbells.

To gain experience, members visited neighbouring towns and villages, travelling even further afield, to ring as a band or in a mixed company and friends made were welcomed to ring in the Walden tower. On June 4th, 1884 the Company visited Manchester and rang a course of T. B. Royal and a touch of Stedman's Triples on the Cathedral Bells and a course of Double Norwich Court on the handbells. The 3 Pitstow brothers, J. F. Penning and Samuel Slater of Glemsford (to become a member in 1886) attempted in a mixed company, "for a 5000 of T. B. Royal but after ringing 3 hrs 20 mins the service commenced at the Cathedral and stand was called".

On Christmas Day 1884 the ringers met at 6.15 a.m. The Rules required that on New Year's Eve two peals should be rung, the first at 6.30 p.m., the other at 11.30 p.m., absentees being fined. At 7.30, following the first peal, it was usual to have Supper together at the Clubhouse, a member being deputed to procure the joints and make the arrangements.

A new peal of 8 bells at Sawston was opened in August, 1885 by the Walden Ringers at the invitation of the Sawston Churchwardens.

The annual outing to Braughing on Aug. 18, 1886 began a friendly association with Leonard Proctor and his band of Bennington and also with The Revd. F. E. Robinson.

Arthur James, later to marry the Pitstows' sister Annie, stood 3 at a practice Grandsire Triples held at the Tower Aug. 30, 1887, ringing 504 changes. "Mr. F. Pitstow stood behind Arthur James and assisted him". On Jan. 3, 1889 Arthur rang 1148 Grandsire Triples.

A. G. Coe, a frequent ringer, was "re-elected" 29/1/1889 and at the same meeting William Marshall became a Probationer. In 1892 Coe was again "elected a member of the Society under the same conditions as before" but although Coe attended meetings and took part in practice rings, he seems never to have taken part in the outstanding peals, perhaps because he never qualified under Rule 1.

T. Rickman and G. Taylor of Cambridge rang with the Walden band 21/5/1889 "Mr. A. P. Heywood's date touch of Stedman triples" the "longest length by Messrs. James Rickman". George Taylor often rang with his Walden friends not only in Walden but on visits to other Churches.

Another Pitstow, Fred's son Alfred, "rang his first thousand" on 8th October, 1889 at the weekly practice of 1133 Grandsire Triples. He stood No.2 and was only about 14 years old. On Oct. 13, 1891, "1260 of Stedman Triples were rung, this being the longest length in the method by Alfred Pitstow". Alfred's first peal when he was only 16, standing as Treble, was on 21/10/1891 when the Company rang Kent Treble Bob Major in 3 hrs & 9 mins, 5056 changes. A tablet in the Church commemorates this peal.

It was customary at this period for the company to ring on November 1st "Councillors Day" and again on November 9th "Mayor's Day".

To celebrate Fred Pitstow's birthday on Novr. 26, 1891 "The Company again assayed the task of ringing a peal of Double Norwich Court Bob Major" being successful in 3 hrs 12 mins. The peal of 5040 changes was composed by Nathan and conducted by Fred.

In 1892 when Alfred was only 17, he taught a lady band of ringers how to pull bells. The ladies band comprised Vicar Pelly's three daughters, Margaret, Eva and Flora Nockolds, Mrs. Ford Williams the Curate's wife and Miss Gayton of The Towers, Swards End. When Margaret Nockolds married The Revd. Edward Sant on Feb 4th 1892, a mixed band, in honour of the occasion, made two attempts to ring a peal of Treble Bob "but came to grief after ringing 1 hr 10 mins and 2 hrs 40 mins."

The annual outing in Sept. 1892 was to Bennington "all being thoroughly delighted at the kind entertainment by Leonard Proctor Esq. who, with his celebrated band, did their best to make the visit a pleasant one. Touches of Double Norwich Court, Stedman Triples, Superlative Surprise and Cambridge Surprise Major were rung, members of the Company taking part in each".

The only other two places in the country, apart from Walden, where the intricate methods of change ringing then known to ringers could be rung, were Burton-on-Trent and Bennington. Ringers from all over the country came to Walden to get an insight into this kind of ringing, methods commonplace to-day.

In Feb. 1894, Fred's youngest son Frederick Jnr. was elected a Probationer. At the April meeting Joseph Griffin and Wm. Wakley of Burton-on-Trent were "elected members of our ancient Society", Griffin having stood 2nd with the company when, at Radwinter, they "rang an excellent peal of Superlative Surprise Major on Sat 24 March 1894 in 3 hrs 18 mins". This was "the first in the method on the bells and the second peal ever rung in the County". The following Wednesday, Griffin (4) and Wakley (Tenor) rang with the company the same peal "on the bells of St. Mary's, S. Walden in 3 hrs 8 mins". The peal was composed by Fred Pitstow and conducted by Wm. Wakley.

When John Seaman, a former member, died in 1894, a muffled peal for him was rung at Littlebury where he lived.

No meetings are recorded between June 1894 and December, 1895 when Mr. Edward Taylor presided "by request". The Minutes are in his handwriting and decisions to revise the Rules and to appoint Mr. Taylor "Master until the half-yearly meeting in January" suggests some sort of crisis. At the January meeting Mr. Taylor was unanimously re-elected Master of the Society, Arthur James re-elected Secretary and Warner (to notify members when ringing was required for special occasions) and Nathan Pitstow re-elected Treasurer. Edward Taylor, F.L.S., was a Councillor from 1890-1905 and was elected Mayor in 1893 and 1894. The new Master was no 'figurehead' but an obviously keen non-ringing member, for he was seldom absent from meetings. He was generous too. In 1899 "a course of Stedman Triples was accomplished on the Handbells with Master L. Taylor on the treble" and Leonard Taylor's name appears as attending later meetings, evidence of an enthusiasm passed down from father to son.

Fred Pitstow Jnr and Frederick Shedd rang at the tower "their first three courses of Bob Minor unassisted" and both were admitted to full membership. The George Taylor of Cambridge, a distinguished ringer who often rang with the Walden Company was no relation of Master Edward Taylor.

A curious entry occurs 16 Feb. 1897 "The handbells which formerly belonged to the Company were purchased by the Society for £3, from Messrs. F. Pitstow, E. Pitstow and J. F. Penning". It can fairly be deduced from this that before 1881, a Company of Ringers only existed and that the Society of Change Ringers was, in fact, founded that year.

The handbells were sent to Mears & Stainbank for repairs at a cost of £3.

At some unstated date in 1833 the Company "sold Ashdon Ringers 14 hand bells and box to put them in for the sum of £2". On February 14 1833 they "Paid Mr. Mears for hand bells as per Bill £7-8-0". These latter were possibly the Bells the Society purchased from Messrs. F. & E. Pitstow and J. Penning for £3.

There is with the records an undated list of subscriptions received amounting to £4-16-6 in response to an appeal by the Ringers that as they had been "prevented from practising the Art of Ringing upon the Church Bells through the Tower being under repair, they have purchased a new peal of hand bells to practise upon for fear the Ringing should decline as those Bells were a considerable expense to them (viz. upwards of £7) they beg leave to call upon the Gentlemen of Walden and hope they will favour them by a subscription". There is little doubt that this subscription list refers to the handbells purchased in 1833.

The Essex Association of Change Ringers held their meeting in Walden about this time and amongst those ringers present were Frederick and Richard Sworder of Gt. Hallingbury who had but recently returned from Johannesburg after 9 years absence there. They were cousins of Henry Trigg of S. Walden, Miss Gibsons Estate Agent.

"A friendly Company" on the 7th Novr. 1896 rang a peal in honour of the new Vicar The Revd. John Thornton Steele who had been inducted on Oct. 16.

Fred Shedd rang his first course of Double Norwich on Great Ringing Day 1897. The 448 of Superlative Surprise rang at the Tower 27 July 1897 was the "longest length by F. J. Pitstow". Shedd (4) and Walter Parish (Tenor) rang their first quarter peal 1260 of Stedman Triples on 17/8/1897. F. J. Pitstow rang his first course of London Surprise 23/11/1897.

In July 1898 the Company "rang Stedman Triples at the Tower with Mr. L. Taylor" (son of Master). The Revd. F. E. Robinson, Vicar of Drayton, Berks, preached the sermon on Great Ringing Day that year and rang with the Company at Radwinter. In August the company visited Horsham where Mr. Robinson met and rang with them. Robinson asked the company to arrange three peals in October which the Company was pleased to do. A peal attempted at Radwinter was lost but one at Bishop's Stortford "was successfully brought round", Parson Robinson standing No. 7. The third peal of Stedman Triples was rung in 3 hrs 5 mins at Lavenham "first in the method on the bells" there; Thurstons 4 Part in 3 hrs 4 mins was conducted by Mr. Robinson standing 7.

An attempted peal of London Surprise on 13th Decr. 1898 "was stopped by strangers attempting to get into the belfry". A second attempt a week later was unsuccessful. On the 27th members "visited Sawston and rang an excellent peal of Cambridge Surprise Major on the bells of the Parish Church in 3hrs 18 mins, being the first in that method in the County from which it took its name". The Master, Edward Taylor, arranged the Outing and entertained the company to dinner George Taylor came from Cambridge to join his friends and to ring other touches.

The New Year's Eve supper 1898 was attended by Leonard Taylor and after ringing the Old Year out and the New Year in, the Mayor (Joseph Bell) invited the company to Dorset House, his residence, for refreshment. The invitation was extended and accepted the following year.

On Jan. 10th, 1899, the first peal of London Surprise Major ever rung in the County, also by the Essex Association, was achieved in 3 hrs 15 mins - 5024 changes. Several congratulatory letters were received for this outstanding performance, amongst them one from The Revd. F. E. Robinson. The keeping of a Peals Book was proposed by Nathan Pitstow at this time but was not proceeded with unfortunately.

In the Spring Messrs. Griffin and Wakley of Burton-on-Trent once more visited Walden and rang with the company, this time at Sawston.

Leonard Taylor was still active at this time, standing Treble (Walter Parish, Tenor) for 3 Courses of Grandsire Triples; a course of Stedman Triples on Handbells and at Thaxted, to re-open the Bells there, he rang his first quarter peal of Grandsire Triples. He had become proficient enough to stand with the Company and the Minutes of 27th November, 1900, in the handwriting of the Master, his father, proudly records "On Novr. 13 1008 of Double Norwich Court Bob Major was rung, being E. L. Taylor's first thousand".

Edward Taylor and Leonard lived at "The Close" near the former Gibson Brewery, (now Raynhams), then in Edward Taylors ownership.

The Company rang with Alfred Pitstow on Jan. 28, 1900 "a farewell touch of London Surprise", Alfred having "volunteered for the Transvaal War". He was made "a full member of the company without liabilities until his return". Returning as 'Sergeant' he was welcomed back on 28th May, 1901 to receive an Address of Welcome from the Borough Council at a special Homecoming, being escorted in procession through the town headed by the Town Band of which his father was the Conductor, and by the Excelsior Band of which his uncle Ernest Pitstow was the Conductor. As he served with the Cambridge Volunteer Section of the Suffolk Regiment, Alfred was amongst those who received the Honorary Freedom of the Borough of Cambridge.

Leonard Taylor (treble) Jonathan Freeman (2) and F. J. Pitstow (tenor) rang their first thousand of the method 1088 of Treble Bob Major on 13 March 1900. L. Taylor "rang a course of Double Norwich Court, being his first attempt" on 30 Octr. 1900 and on 21 Decr. 1900 stood No. 2 for "a peal of 5040 Double Norwich Court Bob Major in 3 hrs 11 mins". He was unanimously elected a member of the Society.

At the New Year's Eve meeting 1901 "the Society, in consideration of the great interest taken by the Master and of his many acts of kindness for the well-being of the Society, presented him, with a silver plated Inkstand".

Leonard Taylor attended on 27/6/1902 and 25/8/1903 but in Novr. 1911 he attended "after ringing that night his first course of Cambridge Surprise. His interesting account of his trip and experiences in the East was greatly appreciated by the ringers".

In July 1919 payments to members was discussed "for ringing on special occasions, e.g. Dr. Taylor's Wedding", a somewhat brief reference to the keen young Leonard Taylor.

Two probationers, Alfred J. Evenett and Robert A. Strong (a teacher at the Boys' British School) practised Stedman Triples with the company they having previously rung 1008 Grandsire Triples conducted by Arthur James. Both were elected members 31/1/1905, the last recorded meeting until 25/1/1910, suggesting another crisis. There is no record of a resignation by the Master, Edward Taylor, who regularly presided at meetings, but he was sent a congratulatory telegram on his 70th birthday on 11th November, 1911.

A fresh start was made with Bob Strong as Secretary, a position he held until 1927. He reported "the Company had reached somewhat to their former standard of ringing, having now a competent band for Superlative & Cambridge Surprises". Members present were N. J. Pitstow, E. A. Pitstow, J. F. Penning, C and J. Freeman, A. James, W. Parish, A. J. Evenett, R. A. Strong and George H. Sparrow whose name appears for the first time - elected probably sometime between 1905 and 1910.

J. Freeman, although 74, "was still one of the most enthusiastic and regular attenders". Fred W. Housden must have become a probationer before 1910 for in February that year he rang his first touch of Plain Bob consisting of three Courses. A year later he rang his first touch of Bob Major consisting of 1008 changes and was afterwards elected a member.

The Tenor Bell was repaired in June 1910 and "Ringing was not of a high standard" on Great Ringing Day.

Fred Pitstow's 60th birthday was celebrated by a peal of Stedman Caters at Bps. Stortford on 27/11/1910. His 63rd birthday was celebrated by a peal of 5056 of Cambridge surprise in 3 hrs 17 mins. Harold Pitstow (3) and Fred Housden (6) participating in their first peal in the method. Fred Pitstow stood treble and Alfred, making a first appearance for some time, stood 4.

Frederick J. Pitstow Jnr. was invited 26/6/1911 "to rejoin the Company" which he must have accepted for he attended the next meeting. There is a suggestion here of dissention, particularly too as Alfred seldom attended.

To commemorate the wedding of Lord Howard de Walden and Miss Van Raalte a peal of Cambridge Surprise (5056 changes) was rung 20/2/1912. Lord Howard rewarded the Society with a gift of £10. The money was spent in part on a tablet in the Church recording the Peal, the balance to a fund for two new bells. The raising of money for this latter project was left to John F. Penning.

John Freeman celebrated his 76th birthday on 27/2/1912 by taking part in a touch of Cambridge Surprise of 672 changes.

A touch of Bob Major (1008 changes) was rung on 26/11/1912 "for the benefit of Harold Pitstow (3), being his first thousand". On New Year's Eve he stood 3 again for a peal of Bob Major (5040 changes) rung in 3 hrs 23 mins. This was his and Fred Housden's first peal. Harold, son of Ernest, afterwards became a Rule 1 or two-thirds member. On 29/4/1913 he rang his first course of Superlative, when he was 14. Ernest Pitstow resigned his membership 19/4/1913.

The annual outing that year was to Warminster, Wilts, near Portway the hometown of Secretary Bob Strong. Going on to Frome St. John's Church the Company, in the evening, created a record by ringing the first touch of Cambridge Surprise ever known to be rung on those bells. The tenor bell, weighing 36 cwt, was rung by Fred Pitstow, who himself weighed 18 stone. Fred gave advice about re-hanging these Frome bells when he found them fixed so close to the masonry of the tower as to shake the whole structure every time the bells were rung. The 'turning-in' of the huge tenor bell was a record performance, there being no recollection of it having been accomplished before.

On 24/6/1913 Fred Housden & Harold Pitstow rang their first course of London Surprise. Fred was about the same age as Harold and both attended the Grammar School. He left the town to work in London early in 1914, but not to sever his connection with the Company for his parents still lived in Gold Street.

Miss M. W. Gibson gave £50 the cost of one new treble bell and about £25 had been subscribed towards the other three proposed. The Vicar had promised of about £30. Mrs. Edmund Birch Gibson donated £5 and the Society made energetic efforts to raise the balance.

On 27 January, 1914 Leonard Pitstow, Harold's brother, became a Probationer.

In February the Society lost on the 14th Jonathan Freeman aged 78 and, on the 18th, Nathan Pitstow aged 67. The bells, fully muffled, were rung in their memory. After Nathan's funeral two peals were rung by friends who came from many places to pay their last respects "to one who was so popular and had attained such a high position as a composer in the ringing world".

Fred Pitstow composed and conducted a peal of Double Norwich Court Bob Major 5040 changes rung on 24/3/1914 which was Alfred Evenett's first peal and R. A. Strong's, Harold Pitstow's and George Sparrow's first peal in the method.

Alterations to the framework to accommodate 12 bells was in hand by April. The Treble was taken away "in order to cast the four new ones" (i.e. to set the tone from the treble).

The four new bells, making the peal up to twelve, were dedicated by the Bishop of Chelmsford on June 27, 1914, and there is in the Minute Book, a full account of the Day's proceedings, a description of the bells, list of visitors attending &c in a copy of the S. Walden Weekly News of 3/7/1914 with a picture of the new Bells and the Company on the Church steps.

The outbreak of War in August 1914 interfered with ringing but did not prevent it entirely. Several well known ringers belonging to Regiments billeted in the town were visitors to the Tower. Leonard Pitstow rang his first Plain Course of Grandsire Caters 17/11/1914 on the 2nd bell. A. G. Coe was again elected a member 26/1/1915.

On Easter Monday 1915 a Quarter Peal of Grandsire Caters was rung - the first quarter peal on 10 bells when "special credit is due to L. Pitstow who rang the Treble, it being his first long Touch on ten bells and whose age was only 15".

Frederick Dench, a talented ringer of Cambridge who had come to live in Walden, was welcomed by the Company on 6th April 1915.

Despite the war, a most successful Great Ringing Day was held in 1915, many ringing friends coming to the town. Later that year news was received of the death of the Society's long-standing friend, George Taylor of Cambridge.

No ringing was allowed after sunset at this period "on account of hostile aircraft" - Zeppelins! There were always the Handbells to fall back on and in December, 1915, Fred Pitstow Jnr (1 & 2), Alfred Pitstow (3 & 4), Fred Pitstow (5 & 6 and Conductor) and Fred Dench (7 & 8) rang a Quarter Peal of Grandsire Triples 'in hand' "being the first by the Society". Fred Dench was elected a member of the Society.

Invitations were sent to Ernest Pitstow and John Penning to rejoin the Society - the hope being expressed that a peal of Stedman Cinques might be rung by an entirely local band. Neither, however, felt they could accept the invitations although Ernest promised to stand in when he was specially required for a peal, a promise he kept. Fred Pitstow Jnr joined the Army in June 1916 but Arthur James returned from two years' service. Harold Pitstow joined up in 1916 and Leonard in 1917. George Sparrow and Walter Parish had likewise joined H.M. Forces.

When the good news was received that the Armistice had been signed at 5 a.m. on November 11th, 1918, "ringers got together as quickly as possible and a splendid touch of Stedman Triples (1008) was rung by E. A. Pitstow (Treble), J. F. Penning (2), C. Freeman (3) , F. Dench (4) , R. A. Strong (5), A. J. Evenett (6), A. F. James (7 and Conductor) and A. G. Coe (Tenor). After ringing, the bells were "Fired" several times".

At the December 1919 meeting Harold Pitstow was made an Honorary Member as he was leaving the Town to work in London.

The Company, having settled down after the War to more normal activities made plans in January 1920 to ring Stedman Cinques. Semi-retired members and friends from nearby belfries were prevailed upon to practise with the Company. The tone of the Treble Bell was unsatisfactory and had first to be re-cast. Arrangements went on for ten months and on Novr. 6th the attempt was made "the bells were brought round in 3½ hours but two bells having changed course, the peal could not be recognised". Six Pitstows formed part of an entirely local band.

The New Year's Eve supper was revived this year. Two further attempts to ring Stedman Cinques were made (1) on Easter Monday morning 29th March 1921 with the same band except FOR A SLIGHT CHANGE IN STAND and J. F. Penning ringing instead of Fred Housden. "After 3 hrs 40 mins of excellent ringing they broke down when only two courses from home, to the great disappointment of all" (2) on 21st November, 1921 by the same team when "after 3½ hours of excellent ringing - broke down".

MINUTE BOOK No. 3 - 1922-1966

A peal of Stedman Caters, composed and conducted by Alfred Pitstow comprising 5001 changes, was rung on Feb. 16, 1922 in 3 hrs 24 mins as a birthday compliment to the Conductor and his brother Fred.

On April 18, 1922, 5040 of Kent Treble Bob Royal was rung on the occasion of the 3rd (E. G. Hibbins) and 5th (T. R. Dennis) ringers from Cambridge paying a visit to the Tower. This was the longest touch of Royal on the bells.

An enlargement of a photograph of their late Master (Edward Taylor) was procured and hung in the Belfry. He died, presumably, about this time.

On May 22, 1923 a peal of Kent Treble Bob Royal, 5000 changes, was rung in 3 hrs 25 mins composed by Nathan Pitstow and conducted by his brother Fred. A footnote added to the record of the peal in the Minute Book, apparently inserted at some later date, reads - "The above attempt was afterwards proved not to be a true peal" but no explanation is given. There was "a lengthy discussion" about it at the June Meeting, Fred Dench proposing that the "peal be cancelled as being false". The matter was left over for a month and it was shelved again at the July meeting but there is no further mention of it.

There was a notable gathering of ringers for the Tercentenary Celebrations on June 27th, 1923 of which a very full account was published in "The Ringing World", a copy of which, with other newscuttings, are affixed in the Minute Book. A special invitation was sent to Dr. Leonard Taylor (then of Clapton) to be with the Company, which he accepted.

The Company were obliged to raise a fair sum of money to meet the expenses of such an outstanding occasion and when, later, it was found there was a surplus of £8 5/- it was decided to expend it on cleaning and redecorating the belfry. This cost £11.2.7. but the balance was paid from the Company's Fund. New bell ropes were necessary about this time and the Parochial Church Council considered the cost should be charged to the Tercentenary Fund balance, but the Company disagreed.

For a long time there was great keenness to ring a peal of Stedman Cinques and at last an attempt was made on Easter Monday 1924 "but after 45 mins of excellent ringing, broke down". Another attempt on May 10 failed after 1 hr 40 mins.

John F. Penning died Novr 13, 1924. On the day of his funeral 1036 of Grandsire Triples were rung with the bells half muffled - "taken from the One Part Peal composed by deceased". Penning had been a member of the Society for 54 years.

In January 1925 a peal of Kent Treble Bob Royal of 5000 changes composed and conducted by Fred Dench, was rung in honour of the composer's Silver Wedding. Messrs. Hibbins (3) and T. R. Dennis (6) of Cambridge took part. This was the first peal in the method on the bells - the sequel to the peal of 22 May 1923 mentioned above.

At the Annual Meeting in Feb. 1925, when Fred Pitstow was ageing and ringing very little, his brother Ernest was asked to rejoin the Society as Deputy Chairman which he was pleased to do. On Feb 17, 1925 he stood No.4 when a peal was rung of Cambridge Surprise Major 5056 changes in 3 hrs 17 mins composed by C. Middleton and conducted by Alfred Pitstow, the peal being "a birthday compliment to the brothers Alfred and Frederick J. Pitstow".

The company were still pursuing Stedman Cinques which were rung "on Easter Sunday morning and evening, thanks to the welcome visit of two old members Harold Pitstow and Fred Housden".

Annual Outings were a feature and fully recorded. The 1937 Outing was cancelled and there were breaks between 1939 and 1948 and again from 1948 to 1960.

Police Inspector F. Ridgewell, who came to the town an experienced ringer, was elected a member Feb 2, 1926. He left the town for Earls Colne in Feb. 1929 an Honorary Member, leaving behind his son Roland who became a probationer in 1928 and a two-thirds member in Jan. 1930. He was ringing in 1938 but seems to have left the town about this time.

A. L.(Len) Simmonds was elected a member on June 25, 1926 and remained with the Company until he moved to Chelmsford in 1938, returning several times to ring special peals. He died in 1954.

On Feb 22nd, 1927, Alfred Pitstow was elected Chairman in succession to his father whose advanced age prevented him from mounting the stairs to the belfry. On Novr. 17th that year a peal of Stedman Caters 5013 changes, was rung in 3 hrs 18 mins, composed and conducted by Fred Dench. H. Sketchley stood Treble and A. L. Simmonds 5 and this was for both their first peal. H. Sketchley seems to have joined as a probationer in 1924.

The Master and Conductor, Frederick Pitstow, died on the 12th June 1928 at the age of 77. He started ringing when he was but 15 years old and had been associated with the Society for some 60 years, being its Conductor for half a century. Ringers from many parts of the country attended his funeral after which a peal of Stedman Triples was rung being Thurston's 4 part peal, 5040 changes, in 3 hrs 4 mins. The peal was conducted by Fred Dench who stood 7. The bells were fully muffled except the Tenor which was half muffled and this was rung by Walter Parish. The other 6 members of the band were visitors, all Fred's ringing friends.

To celebrate the Silver Wedding of Mr. & Mrs. F. J. Pitstow, a Quarter Peal of Stedman Caters was rung on August 7th 1928 composed by F. Dench and conducted by F. J. Pitstow.

The Dedication of the Four New Treble Bells took place on 15th December 1928 of which reports in the local press and "The Ringing World" are affixed to the Minutes together with a photograph of the 12 ringers with the Vicar (The Revd. Dr. L. Hughes) and the four bells, taken on the steps at the West Door. Harold Pitstow stood No.3 in place of Arthur James for a Bob Course of Stedman Cinques rang after the Service. A framed copy of the photograph was presented to Miss Gibson.

The practice of ringing on Councillors' Day (Novr. 1st) was discontinued in 1929.

For evening service on Sunday October 27th, 1929, the first plain course of Cambridge Surprise Royal ever rung by the Society was accomplished at the third attempt. At Thaxted on Decr. 27th, 1930, members rang a peal of Stedman Triples in 3 hrs 9 mins - Thurston's Four-Part, conducted by Fred Dench. W. Prior of Stansted stood No.2 and Harold Pitstow No.6.

Charles Freeman died on April 30th 1932 at the age of 84 and on May 21st Arthur F. James also died at the age of 64, the Society thus losing two of its oldest members in a few weeks. A quarter peal of Grandsire Triples was rung, 1344 changes, in memory of Charles Freeman and a peal of Grandsire Triples (Parker's 12 part) conducted by F. Dench, was rung in memory of Arthur James, 5040 changes in 3 hrs 13 mins. The bells for both tributes were fully muffled, the peal for the latter was Roland Ridgewell's first, the 50th by his father Frederick (No.5) who came over from Earls Colne specially to ring in tribute to a good friend. J. W. Ward of Melbourn, another old friend, who stood No.3 for the peal, was afterwards elected an Honorary Member. Newscuttings relating to both these long-service ringers are included in the minutes together with a portrait of Arthur James.

A Peal of Grandsire Caters, 5003 changes, rung in 3 hrs 28 mins on March 7th. 1933 composed and conducted by Fred Dench was afterwards proved false. Messrs. Hibbins & Dennis from Cambridge and Fred Ridgewell assisted with the peal.

Lewis Mumford and Frank Adams became probationers in 1934, the former to qualify and become elected a member in 1935, the same year that the Society lost by death A. G. Coe, one of its oldest members. Coe had been "a member of the old Chiming Company as well as the Ringing Society".

On August 11th 1936 a party of Americans visited the Belfry to be much interested in the art of change ringing. The party included Mrs. Alice Forbes Hayden of Plattsburgh, New York, who, for several years following, never failed to write to the Society at Christmastide. In 1960 she generously subscribed £50 to the Church Roof Restoration Fund.

After much planning, several attempts and a few glorious "near misses", the Society, on October 6th 1936, achieved a long standing ambition to ring on the 12 bells the first peal of Stedman Cinques, consisting of 5002 changes, accomplished in 3 hrs 43 mins. The peal, composed by Fred Dench, was conducted by Alfred Pitstow and the Company stood:

Treble	A. E., Pitstow	
2nd	G. R. Pye	of Chadwell Heath
3rd	C. T. Coles	of London
4th	L. E. Pitstow	
5th	H. N. Pitstow	
6th	G. H. Sparrow	
7th	A. L. Simmonds	
8th	E. A. Pitstow	
9th	F. W. Housden	
10th	E. P. Duffield	of Colchester
11th	F. Dench.	
Tenor	W. T. Parish.	

The striking was "excellent throughout".

In appreciation of the assistance given by Miss V. Shorter and Mr. R. Lathbury, both of Cambridge, with the Sunday ringing during 1936, Honorary Membership of the Society was conferred on them. Both were frequent visitors to the Tower.

On Easter Monday morning, March 29th 1937, a Peal of Stedman Triples, 5040 changes, composed by Nathan Pitstow and conducted by Leonard Pitstow was rung in 3 hrs 6 mins. G. Jordan of Stansted and W. Ayre of Leverstock Green, Herts, stood 2 and 4 respectively with the local ringers.

For the Coronation of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth on May 12th 1937, the Society rang for an hour and on the 27th a "Coronation Supper" was held at the Kings Arms, about 15 bellringing friends being invited to enjoy the occasion with the Society members. The evening "proved a great success".

A Peal of London Surprise Major, 5088 changes, composed by J. W. Washbrook and conducted by A. E. Pitstow, was rung on June 8th 1937 in 3 hrs 11 mins, the first such peal rung on the Walden bells since 1899 and the first peal in the method by G. H. Sparrow and Roland Ridgwell. A previous attempt on May 18th failed after 2½ hours "of beautiful striking". The Company stood:

Treble	R. Ridgwell	
2nd	A. E. Pitstow	
3rd	G. H. Sparrow	
4th	J. W. Ward	of Melbourn
5th	A. L. Simmonds	
6th	F. Gleaves	of Over, Cambs.
7th	R. Lathbury	
Tenor	L. E. Pitstow	

For the attempt on May 18th F. Dench stood. No.6 instead of F. Gleaves.

In honour of the 77th birthday of Ernest Pitstow a visiting band of ringers from various towers rang a peal of Stedman Cinques on the bells of St. Mary-the-Virgin, 5019 changes in 3 hrs 41 mins. Ernest's son, Leonard, stood No.6 and Fred Dench No.7. James Bennett, a familiar name, but no relation, was 8th and George R. Pye (Chadwell Heath) a long standing friend of the Society, stood No.3.

Ernest Hayes, a ringer from Elmdon, who had come to live and work in the town, rang his first long length of 1152 Bob Major on October 31st 1937 and became a member of the Society.

Three generations of the Pitstow family took part in ringing for service on Sunday evening December 26th 1937. Ernest, his son Harold, and his grandson Malcolm, the two latter then living at Banstead, Surrey. Malcolm (aged 14) rang the treble to touches of Bob Major and Grandsire Triples and "showed great promise". Two other members of the family also rang in these touches - Alfred and Leonard. At the morning ringing Malcolm's 13 years old sister, Margaret, rang with her grandfather, father and uncle, Molly Turnbull, another young local girl, taking part as a learner.

To commemorate, the outstanding peal of Stedman Cinques in 1936, a marble tablet was fixed in the Church on June 25th, 1938, Great Ringing Day.

For a long time Leonard Pitstow had been urging the Society to attempt a peal of Cambridge Surprise Maximus and on Easter Monday, April 10th 1939, this peal of 5280 changes was rung in 3 hrs 58 mins, the first such peal on the 12 bells. The band consisted of:

*A. E. Pitstow	Treble
C. T. Sedgley-conductor	2nd
G. R. Pye	3rd
H. E. Smith	4th
G. A. Fleming	5th
*H. N. Pitstow	6th
*L. E. Pitstow	7th
W. G. Brown	8th
*F. W. Housden	9th
J. W. Ward	10th
W. Ayre	11th
E. P. Duffield	Tenor

Composer - G. Symonds

*Local ringers

As a compliment to F. J. Pitstow, the Society's Treasurer, on the occasion of his wedding to Miss Marjorie Parker, his second wife, on July 8th 1939, another Peal of Stedman Cinques 5007 changes was rung on the 11th in 3 hrs 33 mins, Leonard Pitstow (2) , Fred Housden (5) , G. H. Sparrow (7) and W. T. Parish (Tenor) being the only local members. Fred Housden's wife rang the 4th and G. R. Pye (Treble) brought his nephew E. W. Pye to ring No. 6. The peal was composed by C. W. Roberts and conducted by C. T. Coles who also rang 3rd.

The outbreak of war on September 3rd, 1939 and the many restrictions it brought, interfered very much with ringing. Len Simmonds had moved to Chelmsford in the spring of 1938 and Alfred Pitstow, when he was 65, resigned as Master because the stairs to the belfry were too much for him. Members presented him with a plated cake basket in appreciation of his long service. There were no meetings between May 1940 and July 1942. At the Great Ringing Day Service in 1942 the Vicar, in his sermon, severely censured the Ringers for what he called the dirty condition of the belfry. In point of fact Walter Parish had cleaned out the belfry on the Tuesday before Great Ringing Day and also three months previously, but complained that workmen had used the room as a workshop without cleaning up after their work was completed. Fire Watchers had also used the room storing pails of sand, water and other fire-fighting equipment there. The Society resented the unjustified rebuke, particularly when they discovered that Walter Parish had not been paid since the outbreak of war, the £2 per annum he was entitled to receive for this cleaning work. Members were further annoyed when they learned that instead of paying Parish the 10/- Turner Charity money "for preparing the bells", the money had been paid to the Verger, apparently on the instructions of the Charity Commissioners. The Minutes do not disclose the outcome of the letter which the Society addressed to the Vicar on both subjects. The treatment of Walter Parish who did so much in his quiet way, was indeed undeserving.

At the July 1942 meeting it was reported that Lewis Mumford was serving in H.M. Forces in the Middle East . The Society's Handbells at this time "were hanging in a bag in the belfry" instead of in their box for which there was no key. Orders were given to have a key made and for the keeping of the handbells in the box.

Winston Churchill announced in the House of Commons that he had ordered Church Bells to be rung before Matins on Sunday morning November 15th 1942, "to commemorate our great Victory in Egypt and Libya". The Mayor, through the Town Clerk, expressed the hope that the Walden ringers would be able to muster and meet the Prime Minister's request which they did, Messrs. A. E. Pitstow, F. J. Pitstow, L. E. Pitstow, F. Dench, W. Parish, E. Hayes, R. A. Strong and A. Evenett ringing plain courses of Grandsire Triples. A peal of Stedman Triples was attempted but failed. It was found that the bells "went none too well and that the ropes were very stiff and short". "The people of the town were delighted that the bells were rung and the event was the talk of the town for several days, both before and after". The ban on ringing was again lifted by the Government for 1 hour on Christmas Day. 8 members turned up at the belfry and rang Grandsire Triples and with the help of some visitors call changes on 10 bells were also rung. Further easing of restrictions in 1943 was taken advantage of on Easter Day when some "rounds" on 12 bells were rung with the help of Fred Housden and his Wife and Len Simmonds who came over from Chelmsford. It was hoped the occasion would be marked by the appearance in the tower of Ernest Pitstow, then 83, but he found the 52 steps to the belfry beyond him. Alfred Pitstow, however, was able to join in ringing out the

bells once more after a long silence brought about by War.

George Sparrow, a popular member, especially on Annual Outings, died on February 28th 1945 and a muffled peal was rung after the Funeral Service, Mr. John Negus of Elmdon, but working in the town, taking part. Mr. Negus became a full member on December 31st 1951.

On the 10th June, 1946, a peal of Grandsire Cinques, 5037 changes, was rung in 3 hrs 34 mins, the first on the bells. Leonard Pitstow (4), Fred Dench (7), Harold Pitstow (8) achieved their first peal in the method. The other members of the band were visitors. The first peal of Cambridge Surprise Royal, 5040 changes, was rung on the bells on September 14th 1946 in 3 hrs 25 mins, Fred Housden (4), Len Simmonds (5) and Leonard Pitstow (6) being included in the band of 10. The peal was rung in honour of the induction of The Revd. M. R. Sinker as Vicar.

John Smith, a learner, attended regularly in 1947 but on February 7th that year the Society lost Ernest Pitstow, its oldest member, who died at the age of 86. An account of his long ringing career is inserted in the minute book.

Ringing had been possible throughout 1948 "mainly through the service of learners" and because they "had kept the bells going" they shared in the annual dividend by way of invitations to join the members on the Annual Outing, the first held since 1939.

No meetings were held between April 1948 and December 31st 1951. At this latter meeting Secretary Len Pitstow said the object was to put the Society on a business-like footing once again. Little change ringing had been done in the previous three years except Bob Singles, Doubles and Minor occasionally. Most of the ringing had been call-changes, often on 12 bells but there now seemed hopes of progress. During this time Mr. Robert C. Heazel (Secretary and Treasurer of the Essex Association) and John Negus had come to live in the town or district and would add strength to the band. Mrs. Mumford, W. Rodwell, J. Smith, Leslie Turner and Henry Cranwell were present as learners, with Mr. & Mrs. Leonard Pitstow, Lewis Mumford, R. C. Heazel, W. Parish, E. Hayes and J. Negus.

Frederick J. Pitstow had died on the 15th May 1949 at the age of 69, since which date the Secretary had also acted as Treasurer.

Leonard Pitstow was elected Master, Mary his wife became Secretary, W. Rodwell Treasurer and Lewis Mumford Deputy Master. Walter Parish continued as Warner. Mesdames Mumford and Pitstow, Messrs J. Smith, W. Rodwell, E. Pratt, C. Davis, L. Turner, H. Cranwell and T. J. Godfrey became Probationers.

Ernest W. Pye, son of William Pye of Chadwell Heath, having come to the town to succeed Walter Parish as Cemetery Custodian, was elected a member of the Society on New Year's Eve 1952. Some of the probationers were reported at this meeting as having failed to attend during the year.

Len Simmonds died in 1954, a great loss to the Society at a time when his services and experience were so much needed.

On Feb. 22nd 1958, Fred Dench died "a great ringer, conductor and composer of renown" who had been a member of the Society since 1914. A native of Crawley, Sussex, he commenced ringing at the age of 13 with the local band. Later he moved to London and joined the band at Rochester Row. One of his greatest peals was the non-conducted Stedman Cinques at Cornhill. An obituary notice in the Ringing World is affixed to the Minute Book .

W. Rodwell, the Treasurer, died 21st May 1960 "a most reliable ringer who could always be depended upon to attend".

Lord Wrenbury, who assisted with Sunday ringing, left the district early in 1962 but not to sever his connection with the Society entirely. When the 12 bells had to be lowered to the ground to be rehung in new fittings on ball bearings and in a new cast-iron frame they were re-dedicated on October 20th 1962 by the Bishop of Colchester and after the Service Lord Wrenbury entertained the ringers and guests to lunch at Ye Auld Hoose.

Walter Parish, that "most regular attendant at all ringing meetings", for many years faithfully carrying out the duties of Collector and Warner, died on 13th March 1963 at the age of 85. An injured leg, caused by falls, had made it impossible for Walter to get up into the belfry for a few years before his death.

Barry Couzens became a member of the Society on April 10th 1963. His keenness brought him the Secretaryship in 1965.

Robert A. Strong, a member since 1904, died on June 26th 1964 at the age of 79. He was Secretary of the Society from 1911 to 1927. A much respected teacher at the Boys' British School, he was a fine sportsman in his younger days, playing for the Town Football and Cricket Clubs. In 1946 he was awarded the M.B.E. in recognition of his work as Gardening Instructor for the Essex Education Committee at Bridge End Gardens.

Miss Anne Smith, who had recently entered the Training College as a three-year student was a regular attendant at ringing was elected a full member of the Society, she being qualified. Caroline Pye, who had qualified by ringing a quarter peal, was elected a member December 31st 1965. Jean Sanderson was also elected, and Geoffrey Grayton a probationer.

Alfred E. Pitstow died on January 18th 1966 at the age of 90. A ringer since the age of 12, he was Master of the Society from 1926 until 1944. After the funeral the bells were rung half-muffled and on January 27th a quarter peal of 1260 Grandsire Triples was rung in his memory by:

John Byatt	Treble
Ernest W. Pye	2nd
Frank Harper	3rd
Barry J. Couzens	4th
Jean Sanderson	5th
John H. Negus	6th
Willian Pye	7th
Leslie Turner	Tenor

Conducted by E.W. Pye

An electric heater was installed in the belfry in 1966, thus remedying a longstanding complaint about cold conditions in the belfry in winter time. As a token of their appreciation the Ringers donated £7.10.0. to Church Funds.

Roger Collins was elected a Probationer on December 31st, 1966 and a full member twelve months later. He became Tower Keeper in 1968.

It was agreed in 1966 that all visiting ringers taking part in a peal attempt in the Tower should pay a fee of 2/- per rope, such contributions being placed to a Bell Fund.

In 1968 the Vicar allowed only 8 peal attempts, 6 being allotted to Visitors and 2 to the Society.

Miss Marion Kemp, having come to live in the town was elected a full member on December 31st 1968. She married Mr. R. Newman in 1971 and was given a wedding present. She left the town in 1971.

At the same meeting in 1968, Frank Harper of Melbourn was also elected a member, in recognition of his attendance every Thursday evening to teach Probationers.

During 1969 the Walden ringers taught a band for the new ring of 8 at Ashdon, many training sessions being given on the Walden bells "silenced". On January 18th that year Roger Collins went up among the bells to take off the silencers and found that recent gales had blown in one of the steeples top louvres, which had fallen and smashed the tenor wheel. The wheel was repaired and steeplejacks called in to repair the louvre. In the meantime pigeons had invaded the belfry and covered the bells and frame with twigs and filth. Members voluntarily scraped frame fouled by the pigeons. During the summer correspondence appeared in the local press complaining about the noise made by ringing the bells. Also during this year the church land in Hill Top Lane, called the "Bell Rope Field" was sold for £30,000 but Secretary Barry Couzens reported "there is apparently no proof of any stipulation that the income should be used to buy bell ropes".

Miss Jean Sanderson who lived in Melbourn travelled to Walden in her car, bringing with her Frank Harper from Melbourn, in order to attend Tuesday practices. She was given an honorarium of £10 towards her expenses.

Michael J. Mathews, having run a quarter peal, qualified for full membership and was so elected December 31st 1969.

At this latter meeting draft New Rules were considered and various amendments agreed upon. These new Rules were approved by the Vicar and agreed to be kept in the tower for the information of members.

Eric Hammond, Linda McComiskey and Philip Browning were admitted as Probationers. John Negus was made a Life Member of the Essex Association of Change Ringers, an honour similarly bestowed on Leonard Pitstow the following year.

Dissatisfaction with the charge for ringing the bells for weddings and the distribution of the money amongst members taking part, required a further alteration of Rules 14 and 15. A satisfactory solution was agreed upon.

The tenor clapper broke three times during 1971 making necessary some expensive repairs. Some bell ropes had also to be replaced.

On the 19th April 1972 Barry Couzens was killed in a road accident in France whilst on a business journey. His tragic death was an inestimable loss to the Society for Barry gave unselfishly of his time not only to the well being of the Society as its Secretary but in furthering the cause of his great love for bell ringing by training youngsters in the art. An "Appreciation" in the Ringing World is affixed to the Minute Book as a perpetual reminder of this enthusiastic member.

The vacancy in the office of Secretary was filled by Charles Farrow on June 13th 1972 at which meeting the Master referred to a Petition received by the Vicar from certain local residents who once again complained at the sound of the bells. Advice was taken concerning steps which could be taken to improve sound insulation in the tower. Some letters appeared in the press from people living in Castle Street dissociating themselves from the petition and acknowledging their enjoyment of the bells.

Having myself lived in Castle Street for the first 30 years of my life, the heyday period of the Society, I listened to long peals many, many times. The bells on Tuesday evenings and on other occasions were accepted as part of our lives and we who dwelt under the shadow of the Church became so accustomed to the bells that few persons, if any, complained. What lovelier sound could there be when walking home from any direction than Church bells ringing almost next door to home? In the writing of this history I have revived memories of ringers I knew and admired, my thoughts saddened because it is unlikely I shall ever again hear the Bells of St. Mary's rung as they were in my young days.

MEMBERS OF THE SAFFRON WALDEN COMPANY OF RINGERS AND OF THE SOCIETY OF CHANGE RINGERS

- 1709 Allen, John - Paid 7/- "for the ringers" (Churchwarden accounts)
- 1934 Adams, Frank
- 1712 Bush, Thomas - Paid 8/- "for the ringers" (Churchwardens accounts)
- 1754 Banks, John
Barrett, William Jnr.
Baron, Charles
Bush, Richard Jnr.
- 1799 Bush, Richard (? same as above)
Bell, John - appears once in the accounts for 1819
Bennett, James Snr. - died June 1887
Bottle, Thomas
- 1819 Bennett, James Jnr.
- 1826 Bennett, Jonathan
Bennett, George
Bishop, William
- 1848 Brand, George
- 1851 Bacon, Samuel
- 1851 Barker, Nathaniel
- 1881 Bennett, George (? same as above)
- 1883 Bacon, James (great-great-grandfather of Frank Bacon, Fishmonger)
- 1885 Hyatt, Henry
- 1964 Hyatt, John (aged 14)
- 1970 Browning, Philip - Probationer
- 1754 Clark, John
- 1845 Carr, John
- 1881 Coe, Alfred G. (died October 1935)
- 1951 Cranwell, Henry L. J.
- 1963 Couzens, Barry John (died 19th April 1972)
- 1966 Collins, Roger - Probationer (full member 1967)
- 1898 Dallimore, W (London) His sister married Ernest Pitstow.
- 1921 Dench, Frederick (died 27th February 1958)
- 1951 Davis, Charles (Probationer)
- 1904 Evenett, Alfred J. (died February 1952 aged 76 years)
- 1815 Francis, Samuel (Probably the same Samuel Francis who was Sergeant-at-Mace 1854-71, Town Crier 1836-71, Gaoler 1836 until office abolished - 1854; Clerk of the Market 1846-79 and Sexton at the Borough Cemetery from the time before 1860 until he died in 1872)
- 1833 Freestone, William
- 1872 Freeman, Charles (died 30th April 1932 aged 84)
- 1868 Freeman, Jonathan (died 14th, February 1914 aged 78; brother of Charles)
- 1896 Farr, Walter (Probationer)
- 1900 Folger
- 1971 Farrow, Charles (Secretary 1972)

1799 Glover, William
 1835 Goodwin, Thomas
 1888 Green, York (Stratford)
 1894 Griffin, Joseph (Burton-on-Trent)
 1951 Godfrey, T. J. (Probationer)
 1957 Goodman, W. (Probationer)
 1965 Grayton, Geoffrey (Probationer) Full member 1967
 1799 Harris, John
 1819 Hopwood, Allen (The 1822-30 accounts - record that money was spent "at Hopwoods" which suggests he was a publican; last appears 1828)

 1901 Hughes, Fred
 Pre 1910 Housden, Fred (no records between 1905 and 1910) Son of Walter Housden who lived in Gold Street; left the town in 1914 but was a frequent visitor to the Tower thereafter.

 1938 Hayes, Ernest Died 29th June, 1973.
 1951 Heazel, Robert C. (died 5th July 1969; at one time (about 1960) Master of the Essex Association of Ringers)

 1964 Hanson, Christopher (Probationer)
 1968 Harper, Frank (of Melbourn) Came every Tuesday evening to teach learners
 1887 James, Arthur F. (married Annie Pitstow, sister of Nathan, Fred and Ernest; died 21st May 1932. aged 64)

 1868 King, Samuel
 1968 Kemp, Miss Marion
 1936 Lathbury, R of Cambridge; Honorary Member
 1807 Miller, Richard (Treasurer until he resigned in 1857)
 1845 Miller, Richard (? same as above and same as recorded in 1822-30 Account Book; lived at Nuts Farm on the Ashdon Road and died on the 7th January 1862 aged 81; an eminent ringer who was Master and Conductor of the Walden Company of Ringers in the first half of the 19th century – see Benton's article)

 1848 Miller, James
 1882 Miller, James (? same as above) Last rang on Mayor's Day, 9th November 1891, died January 1892.

- 1868 Martin, George
 "On the 15th April. 1897, the Company rang a muffled peal at 6 p.m. in memory and out of respect to the late Mr. George Martin one of the oldest Members of the Society. The deceased was present on Sunday the 11th instant and took part in the ringing in the afternoon and evening for the Services. Whilst ringing the 5th in the evening in a touch of Double Norwich Court Bob Major, he was seized with a fit, but was able to set his bell; in a few moments he became unconscious and expired on Monday morning about 2 a.m. The muffled peal consisted of 5 Courses fully muffled and 3 courses half muffled, both in the Method of Double Norwich Court Bob Major, being the method the deceased last rung with the Society (Extract from Society's Minute Book)
- 1885 Martin, Charles
 Marshall, William
- 1934 Mumford, Lewis J. T.
- 1951 Mumford, Mrs Ruth (wife of above)
- 1963 Mumford, John (son of above)
- 1969 Mathews, Michael J.
- 1970 McComiskey, Miss Linda (Probationer)
- 1951 Negus, John H. (1970 - made Life member of Essex Association of Change Ringers)
- 1702 ? Orwell, James - Paid 16/- "at ye .Thanksgiving for ringing for vittles & drink"
 - probably referring to the early custom of providing the ringers with breakfast, dinner and supper on June 16th, paid for by the Thomas Turner bequest. Other payments to ringers were made to Orwell at this period and it is possible he may have been, not a ringer, but a publican at whose Inn the ringers sat down to their meals.
- 1799 Pratt, Charles
- 1840 Philpott, Peter
- 1868 Pitstow, Frederick (died 12th June 1928, aged 77)
- 1868 Pitstow, Nathan J. (died 18th February, 1914 aged 67)
 Treasurer 1868 (The date of the first recorded meeting of the Society of Change Ringers in 1881, but and Fred had both been ringing before then. Nathan was born in 1847 and Fred 24/11/1830 and Benton records in his article that Fred "began to ring when only fifteen years old"
- 1882 Pitstow, Ernest Alfred (died 7th February 1947, aged 86)
 Rang his first 1008 on 28/11/1883 and stood No.3 on 23/1/1883 when the Company rang 1680 of Bob Major in 1 hr 9 mins., "the longest length rung by him in the first part of Annables 5040". The following week he was elected a member.

- 1874 Penning, John Francis (died 13th November 1924, aged 72)
 (Benton states he "joined the Walden Company in 1874"
 Composed noteworthy Peals of Grandsire Triples and Bob
 Minor. Town Hall Keeper & Clerk of the Market 1893-1920.
 Lived in Fairycroft Road.
- 1889 Pitstow, Alfred Ernest (Born 1875, died 18th January 1966 aged 90).
 Eldest son of Fred, he started ringing when he was only 12.
 Volunteered for the Boer War in January 1900, returning with
 rank of Sergeant in May 1901 to become an Honorary Freeman
 of the Borough of Cambridge. Was Master of the Society 1927-
 1940.
- 1894 Pitstow, Frederick J. (Fred's Youngest son) Treasurer for many years a
 position he held at the time of his death at the age of 69 on 15th
 May 1949
- 1897 Parish, Walter Collector and Warner for many years and a most loyal member
 until he died aged 85 on the 13th March 1963.
- 1912 Pitstow, Harold Nathan
 Born 1.12.1897, eldest son of Ernest.
 Made an Honorary Member 30-12-1919 when he left the town
 to work in London but to be a frequent visitor to the Tower as
 the records of all the principal peals show. In 1924 Harold
 became a supernumerary to the band of ringers at Westminster
 Abbey, later to be appointed a principal. In 1943 he was elected
 Secretary and Conductor of that band, a position still holds.
 Conducted peals at the Coronation of George VI (1937), the
 Victory Peal (1945), Wedding of Princess Elizabeth (1947),
 birth of Prince Charles (1948) and the Coronation of Queen
 Elizabeth II. (1953). Awarded the M.B.E. in 1954 "for services
 to the Abbey"
 Among ringers of both sexes he has trained, have been his two
 sons and daughter.
- 1916 Pitstow, Leonard Ernest (Harold's brother)
 Became a Probationer 27/1/11 when he was aged 14. From
 1927-1951 was Secretary to the Society and was elected Master
 31/12/1951, a position he still holds. On the September 1953,
 Harold, his daughter Margaret and two sons Dennis and
 Malcolm, Leonard and his wife Mary, rang a peal of 720
 changes Bob Minor to celebrate the birth of Rosalind Mary, Len
 and Mary's first child, who was sadly to die when she was but
 4½ years old.
 Elected Life Member of Essex Association of Change Ringers
 1971.
- 1951 Pitstow, Mrs. Mary (Secretary 1951-19--) Probationer
 1951 Pratt, Edward (Probationer)
- 1952 Pye, Ernest W. (Son of William Pye of London who often rang at the

		Tower; Custodian of Cemetary after Walter Parish retired. Left town June 1966 but he, his son and daughter continued to come over from Sawston to ring)
1964	Pye, William E.	(aged 14 - son of Ernest)
1965	Pye, Caroline	(daughter of Ernest)
1799	Rumble, William	(? same as appears in 1822-30 Account Book - died 20/5/1844)
1807	Richardson, John	
1837	Richardson, John	(? same as above)
1807	Rider, James	(appears in 1818-22 Account Book -1 as t appears 1828)
1807	Rannow, Thomas	(appears in 1818-22 Account Book - died 1835)
1839	Ruse, Frederick H.	(Rate collector 1868-1874)
	Reeves, John	Composed the 1807 and 1815 peals but there is no indication that he was a local ringer
1926	Ridgwell, Frederick	Police Inspector Retired to live in Earls Colne
1930	Ridgwell, Roland	(son of above)
	Rodwell , W.	Elected some time between 1948-51 when there were no Minutes. Died 21st May 1960.
1712	Smith	Paid 8/- "for the Ringers" -Churchwardens Accounts
1754	Sell, Frederick	
1754	Salmon , John	
1813	Spicer, William	
1815	Smart, David	last appears 1840
1822	Shepherd, Charles	last appears 1827
1835	Spicer, George	(died May 1838)
1868	Sarel, William	
1869	Simmonds, J.	
1868	Seaman, John	(died at Littlebury 1894)
1886	Slater, Samuel	of Glemsford
1887	Sapsed, C.	
1896	Shedd, Frederick J.	
1904	Strong, Robert A.	Secretary 1911-1927. Died 26th June 1964 aged 79, the day before Great Ringing Day. He had been on the Annual Outing on the Saturday, was taken ill on the Tuesday and died in Addenbrooke's Hospital, Cambridge, on the Friday.
1910	Sparrow, George H.	died 28th February 1945
1924	Sketchley, Harold	
1926	Simmonds, Alfred Leonard	Moved to Chelmsford 1933 but continued with the Society up to ring with the Society up to the time of his death in 1954.
1965	Sanderson, Miss Jean	
1947	Smith, John	(Probationer)
1964	Smith, Miss Anne	(Student at Training College)
1835	Tricker, Edward	
1886	Taylor, George	of Cambridge
1895	Taylor, Edward	(elected Master but was not a ringer)

- 1898 Taylor, Leonard (Edward's son, later to become Dr. Leonard Taylor who Continued to visit Walden and ring with the Society after he left the town)
- 1951 Turner, Leslie
- Turnbull, Miss Mary (Probationer)
- 1735 Weakling (? Wakelin)
Paid £1 "for ringing at the Princes Wedding" (Churchwardens Accounts)
- 1754 Whitehand, Richard (Parish Clerk - died 1784)
- 1824 Ward, Mathew
- 1829 Wright, James
- 1894 Wakley, William (of Burton-on-Trent)
- 1932 Ward, J. W. (of Melbourn an Honorary Member)
- 1959 Wright, Stephen
- 1959 Wrenbury, Lord
- 1851 Warran, Allen

Addendum to the peal of Grandsire Triples
on 25th December 1753

This was an outstanding achievement, for Charles Baron is believed to be the first man to call Holt's Original from memory while ringing his own bell. The composition was first rung at St Margaret's Westminster, on 7th July 1751, with Holt conducting from manuscript, seated in a chair, not ringing a bell himself.

EXTRACT from "Brief Account of the Bells in some of the Parishes in the Northern part of the County of Essex. A few vagrant Notes on Essex Bells, as an adjunct to the interesting paper read by the Rev. Cecil Deedes" taken from the Transactions of the Essex Archaeological Society Vol. iii (New Series) p. 108, published 1889.

SAFFRON WALDEN

A good history of these bells might be written from an early time; they are a comparatively modern peal of eight, and are the heaviest peal in the County, except the only Essex ten, at West Ham, and the eight at Great Waltham. They were cast by Bryant of Hertford, in 1798, but two have been split, the 6th and 7th, which have been re-cast by Mears, of London; the tenor weighs 24 hundredweight. The earliest mention of these bells at Saffron Walden is 1440, Hen. VI., "For rynggyn wanne y^e queue was her iiiij^d" and "a Ryc' Rekfyr p^r emedemete de deux claps secound & le ters bell ij^s". There is one entry finding fault with Gray the bell founder, because the great bell after being re-cast did not weigh more than 27 hhd., and it appears on one occasion he came to the town to re-cast a bell. The great bell seems to have been a great deal of trouble, ropes and wheels were always breaking and the clapper always out of order. There is an item in 1631, "Spent at the White Hart when we ourselves did ring for the queen 9^s". Two hundred years ago Edmund Turner, 'gentleman, left a field, for a ringing day, 17 June, six and eightpence for each bell, and it has been kept up ever since on that day, barring Sunday.

From the Corporation Election-Book of Saffron Walden, Essex.

	s.	d.
12 Ap. 1670 Payd the Ringers when the King came to Audliend	2.	0.
27 Sep. 1670 Payd the. Ringers when the Queen came to Audliend	3.	0.
Payd the Ringers when she came* thorow the Towne on the market day...	4.	0.

The mansion and village of Audley-end, is part of the parish of Saffron Walden, about a mile from the Town to the north.

* Queen of Chas. 2nd. Catherine of Braganza.

Note

It was not Edmund but Thomas Turner who, by his Will dated 10th June, 1623, charged his brother Edmund, his Executor, within 4 years of his death to purchase lands within 40 miles of Walden of the yearly value and worth of £20 to pay (inter alia)...

33/4d "to be bestowed yearly upon such persons as shall ring the bells of the church of Walden upon the day of the year on which I shall be buried.

6/8 to the Parish Clerke "For his paines in preparing the bells".

Thomas Turner was buried June 16th, 1623 and this date thus became the correct Ringing Day, not June 17th. It is also incorrect to say that the bequest provided for "6/8d for each bell"

(See my History of Walden Charities)

H.C. STACEY

The illustration by Mr. Brooks appears on the cover of the Deanery Magazine.