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Bell Casting

Author(s): S. Haddy and W. W. Starmer

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selection and very creditable to all concerned! We are sorry we cannot give the list in full in the *Musical Times*, but we are doing so in the March issue of the *School Music Review*—ED., M.T.]

## BELL CASTING.

TO THE EDITOR OF 'THE MUSICAL TIMES.'

SIR,—The interesting article in your February issue by Mr. Starmer, 'A famous British bell foundry,' recalls to my mind the story of the re-casting of a peal of bells for the parish church of St. German's, Cornwall.

About fifty years ago an old man pointed out to me a spot near the west end of the church where he had been told that at some time or other the bells were re-cast. The place was at this time overgrown with scrub. I could see no trace of a furnace or foundry, and I was very doubtful as to the accuracy of the story. As I became more acquainted with moulding and foundry work I was still more sceptical on the matter. About five years ago, however, it was found necessary to re-hang the bells, and at the same time two bells were added to the original peal of six. Upon the completion of this scheme a small pamphlet was published in which I found the following:

'The old peal of six were cast in 1775 by J. Pennington, a clever bell-founder, who lies buried in the churchyard of Stoke Climsland, near Callington, who appears to have travelled about the country, carrying his tools, furnaces and sand, with him, and to have cast the bells as near to the church as possible, using the churchyard as his foundry and the vault of heaven as his canopy. It is not too much to say that no bell-founder of the present day would undertake to do such work with such primitive appliances. The casting, however, was very well done, and the bells must have come from their fiery beds very nearly in tune,\* as there were no tools for effectively tuning them after they were cast.'

If there are any other records of a similar character, an account of them would doubtless interest many of your readers as well as—Yours truly,  
S. HADDY,  
Barrow-in-Furness.

In corroboration of the above, Mr. Starmer says:

In bygone days, when roads were bad and locomotion difficult, bells were often cast in the churchyards. Southey gives this description of such a ceremony:

The brethren [monks] stood round the furnace in processional order, sang the 150th Psalm, and then, after certain prayers, blessed the molten metal, and called upon the Lord to infuse into it His grace and overshadow it with His power for the honour of the Saint to whom the bell was to be dedicated and whose name it was to bear.

Great Tom of Lincoln was cast in the Minster yard in 1610, and the great bell of Canterbury in the Cathedral yard, 1762. In some instances (Kirkby Malzeard and Haddenham) the bells were actually cast in the church.

It was a common practice of bell-founders to travel the country casting bells on the spot where they were required, even up to about 1840, when the development of our railway systems rendered this way of doing business unnecessary.

Two itinerant founders, Michael Darbie (bells cast 1651-75) and John Waylett (bells cast 1703-31), are perhaps as well known as any. According to the late Dr. Raven, Michael Darbie's business morals were not as good as they should have been, while John Waylett is considered to have been 'an honest and hardworking man,' his work being described by Stahlschmidt as 'honest and good.' From a most careful analysis of the work of these men I find that Dr. Raven might be correct as to Darbie's *methods* of business (he does not produce any real evidence as to this), but that Darbie's bells are *infinitely superior* to Waylett's in design, tone, tune, casting, and quality of metal. I particularly mention this because Raven's dictum has been quoted as authoritative by Stahlschmidt, Walters, and others, and the sooner such a correction can be made the better.  
W. W. STARMER.

\* This is not a probability in view of the correct musical requirements, for many such bells are more than a quarter of a tone from the pitch they should be.

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## RUSSIAN-ENGLISH transliteration.

TO THE EDITOR OF 'THE MUSICAL TIMES.'

SIR,—You have performed such a useful service in printing the War Office system of Russian-English transliteration that it is to be regretted you have omitted their important footnote directing that the common adjectival termination should be transliterated by 'i.' Therefore Chaikovsky and Musorgsky are not 'in strict accordance with Whitehall principles,' among which perhaps the most important is that the English 'y' shall always represent a consonantal and never a pure vowel sound.—Yours faithfully,

JOHN H. REYNOLDS.

46, Campden Hill Square, W. 8.

February 14, 1918.

## CLERICAL MUSICIANS.

TO THE EDITOR OF 'THE MUSICAL TIMES.'

SIR,—In your February issue there is a statement communicated to you by 'a well-known musician' as to a service held in the Cathedral at Christ Church. There are one or two inaccuracies in it which you may care to correct. The Church Parade for the Royal Flying Corps cadets takes place every Sunday, and I am responsible for the service, which I take from the pulpit. As this is a long distance from the console, I am never able to play the organ. On the Sunday in question I asked one of the Canons to play (Dr. Otley, the Regius Professor of Pastoral Theology), and he did so, transposing the tunes of the hymns so as to suit the men's voices. If he had been unable to come, I should still have been able to provide an organist from within the Chapter, as Dr. Cooke (the Regius Professor of Hebrew) would have been able to do the work. I am glad to say that not one of our Canons is blind.—Yours truly,

THOMAS B. STRONG (*Dean*).

Christ Church, Oxford,

February 19, 1918.

## HOW TO HELP OUR SOLDIERS' AND SAILORS' CHOIRS.

Dr. Stanley B. Siddall (well-known in the North of England as an admirable choir-trainer) tells us that he has a son in the R.N.A.S. who is getting up a male-voice choir, and who demands music. Dr. Siddall has supplied him from the library of the St. Helens Glee Club, and he and his members have determined to take the fledgling 'under their wing' (but is it not the fledgling that has got the wings?). This benevolent intention leads Dr. Siddall to say that 'there must be scores of male-voice choirs in this country similarly placed to St. Helens—with large stocks of music and few or no men to sing it. If each of these "adopted" a properly-organized choir in one of the Services by lending them suitable stuff, I feel sure a very great amount of pleasure would be given to both receivers and lenders; and vocal music might at last take its proper place with our Forces. My boy just writes me that our particular godchild now numbers thirty voices—all good, and nearly all readers. He says they can at any rate get the high notes all right (some of them between 20,000 and 30,000 feet!).'

The conductor says that when the idea of starting the choir was mooted they had no music except 'Sweet and low' on a picture card. Copies were made off a jelly, and it was soon realised that the choir had come to stay.

We imagine that the remnants of many male-voice choirs in the country would like to utilise their libraries in this excellent way, but the practical difficulty is the bringing of a choir in, say, Mesopotamia, into communication with a choir in Blackpool. We shall want a Clearing House.

Mr. Fred. G. Shinn has been appointed Professor of Sight-Singing and Ear-Training at the Royal Academy of Music.