

BELL RINGING

251st Birthday Of Painswick Society

A Brotherhood With "Youths" of 90

Bells will ring out from St. Paul's Cathedral on November 6 in a glorious cascade of silver sound that will have in it precisely 5,002 changes.

Those notes will echo far down the centuries, and in every dreaming village church and stately cathedral in Britain. For they will proclaim the 300th birthday of the Ancient Society of College Youths, the quaint name of famous bell-ringing brotherhood, which has members all over the country.

They are the men who ring the bells of Britain in peals of Coronation rejoicings, at weddings, and on all other occasions.

The Ancient Society of Painswick Youths was established as far back as 1686, and they will celebrate their 251st birthday on Saturday—the day previous to the Clipping of the Yews ceremony—when bells will be rung during the day and a dinner held in the evening.

The "Youths" made their last attempt on the record in March, 1932, and this was their fifth effort to regain their lost record for the greatest number of changes in a peal of grand-sire cinques on 12 bells.

They set the record of 13,001 changes in eight hours 45 minutes on February 4, 1920, and they held it until August Bank Holiday 1929 when it was beaten at Ashton-under-Lyne with a peal of 15,312 changes in 11 hours 33 minutes.

Unfortunate Repetition

When the "youths" made their fourth attempt in November 1930, the ringers completed a peal of 17,686 changes in 11 hours 35 minutes. It was thought at the time that the attempt had succeeded and a great reception was given to the ringers, but one unfortunate repetition was discovered in the composition of the changes after the 16,000 mark had been passed. Although this achievement was one of the greatest in the world of campanology, it cannot be regarded as a record.

The attempt in 1932 broke down after eight and a half hours ringing.

"Youths" of the ancient society of College Youths—some of them 70, 80 and perhaps even 90 years old—will be present at St. Paul's, for bell ringing is famed for the long life of its devotees. After half a century at the bell ropes, virile veterans will assure you that they are still "as sound as a bell."