

RULES FOR THE "ESQUIRE YOUTHS"

1662-63

Transcribed by

F. W. M. DRAPER, F.S.A.

THE rules of this ringing company, founded by Sir Henry Chauncy, are to be found in a little book in the Manuscript Department of the British Museum (Addit. 28,504). The book ($4 \times 5\frac{1}{2}$ inches) is of black leather with gold tooling, bearing back and front the letters C R ii surmounted by a crown. At the other end of the book is a MS version of Skelton's *Tunnyng of Elynour Rummyng*. The rules are freely studded with Latin and Greek quotations, which appear to have been dictated to a scribe and not always correctly deciphered by him. With the help of my friend, Mr. A. P. Hockaday, I have tried to give a translatable reading, even for the most improbable pieces of Latin.

RULES FOR THE ESQUIRE YOUTHS

Salus populi suprema lex esto. ["Let the safety of the people be the supreme law."]

Omnium societatum nulla praestantior est, nulla firmior quam cum viri boni moribus similes sunt familiaritate coniuncti. ["Of all associations none is more excellent, none more stable than that in which good men of congenial character are closely united."]

All whatsoever of this company well knowne by the name of Esquire Youths doe strictly tye and enioyne our selves to p.forme shall fall under two principal heads, as haveing reference either to order in our Arte and exercise or manner in our behaviour & deportm.t.

Nulla alia de causa a Maioribus leges sunt inventae nisi ut suos cives et socios incolumes conservarent. Tull, Offic. 2. ["Laws were made by our ancestors for no other reason than the preservation of themselves and their allies."]

Περὶ τῆς ἐνταξίας. ["Of discipline."] Generall or Principall. Deteriores omnes sumus licentia. Ter. ["Licence ruins the nature of us all."]

And because we being many desire to bee one body: our resolve is to chuse yearely one Head that shall occasionally make sober & impartiall Inquiries for the good welfare of every

memb: thereof and inflict what punishm.t hee thinkes fitting on any officer that neglects his place.

Virtutes Imperatoriae sunt praecipue industria in agendo: celeritas in conficiendo, consilium in providendo &c. ["The virtues of a leader consist principally of hard work, speed in execution, common sense in planning."]

Θησαυρος Treasurer

(The word means "treasury." *ταμίης* would have been preferable.) (It is impossible to suggest emendations or to make sense of the next Latin quotation, which possibly might be supposed to mean: "The most devoted find themselves incurring a charge of extortion.")

Shall geather all Steepledges at all extraordinary peales. Shall make up reckonings at all publique meetings and keepe w: mony shall be gathered upon any forfeiture for ye use of ye company.

Clericus. Clerke

Magni interest locum et laudem societatis (sustinere). ["It is of importance to keep up the standing and good name of the society."]

Shall keepe accompt of what forfeits are committed throughout ye whole company and of all such monys by ye Trea.r gathered and at ye years end ye one to give in what was receaved and laid out or other how disbursed.

Stewards Sen: Junr.

Prius quam incipias consulto: ubi consulueris mature facto opus est. ["Before you begin, you must take counsel; when you have consulted, act promptly."]

In their places cheifly shall order & guide things as well for ye yearely feast and consult with ye Treasurer what monies he can spare or may bee gathered as one any other extraordinary occasion and after all publicke peales to provide convenient retireing place for the whole Company to consult about their serious affaires.

Wardens Senr: Junr

Iustitia sine prudentia multum poterit: sine Iustitia nihil valebit prudentia. ["Justice without prudence shall do much: without justice prudence shall avail nothing."]

For ye better nurturing of Young Ringers they are impowered to choose three of ye compaine weekly, the Generall and assistants expected to be urgent and not to miss them after notice of and promise without forfeitures, and to p.vide round Ringers & pullers against an extraordinary peale.

Election of officers

When two well accomplished for ye Generall place, any other officers wch wee shall stand in any need of shall be ellected by ye assistance and nominated by ye Generall, [and] all ye rest of ye Society at ye yearely feast in all day and there they shall sett downe his name they choose in a paper and most hands throughout shally cary any of ye two for officer that yeare and if any memb: shall sollicite another in election of any off.er or in passing his place upon any other occasion against his liking shall have his suffrage suspended for that yeare or pay a shilling and in ye choosing officers it shall bee a rule that none shall discend but alwaies ascend into ye Generall's place and after the expiration of that office shalbe perpetually an Assistant to ye company unless upon urgent occasion hee be chosen generall again by ye Society.

Assistants

Fortes creantur fortibus. ["Brave from the brave are born."]

After all extraordinary peales ye Society being seated about a table ready to consult about ye company affaires ye assistants are to take other places next ye Generall and to assist him wth theire best advice but if they or any other shal remove from there seates w.thout the Generalls leave shalbe amerced: 6d.

The Generall and Assistants are athorized to issue out theire warrants and send ye warner wth them to warne ye whole company against any extraordinary peales.

What soever fault or misdemeanor ye Generall shall be acquainted wth he wth ye Assistants shall see it discharged.

Admittances

If any p.ticular memb: have a freind or lover of ye exercise & a wellwiller to ye Society desireous to be initiated, a memb thereof may intreate ye Clerke to draw his placet at ye next Generall metting get ye Generalls hand thereto and to p.sent it to all p.sent wth if it pass ye Generall or whom he shall appoint shal declare unto him ye companies acceptance of his desires and ye

Treasurer to receive his fees of ye [] of ye Box for his entrance. A six score man to ye Box—is, to ye round 6d. A round ringer to ye box 2s. 6d, to ye round 1s. 6d.

If any give theire None placet ye Clarke shall return non to ye *Generall* and it shall be put of till ye next meeting if ye *Generall* approves of or likes thereof.

Περὶ τῆς εὐτραπείας. ["*Of discipline.*"]

None shall desire to prophane to blaspheme curse or sware by ye Sacred Name of god or any other oath under ye penalty of 6d for every such offence.

Pietate erga Deum sublata, fides etiam et societas, una virtus iustitia tollatur necesse est. ["When respect for God is removed, good faith and friendship, all virtue together with justice must disappear too."]

But whosoever shall be found to make a trade of these or any of them after ye first admonition by ye *Generall* shalbe eicted.

None shalbe untowardly disposed or refuse when the *generall* or *principall* shall appoint or *Contradict* him in what he is about to doe, or deliver his bell to any other managing without his—sub pen 8d.

Φθείρουσιν ἥθη χρηστὸν ὁμιλίαι κακαί ["Evil communications corrupt good manners."]

None shall find fault with anothers ringing but the *generall* or whom he shall appoint—on pen 4d.

Percontatorem fugito, nam garrulus idem est. ["Shun the persistent questioner, for he is a gossip."]

None shall prate or make any noise at peale—on pen 4d. Os Garruli intricat omnia. ["Gossip's mouth confuses everything."]

None shall refuse to rease the bells at night the Clocke having strucke eight & none shall desire ye Company untill the houre for private Consultacon of the whole Society be past away on pain of forfeiting 4d.

None shall deny to pay the treasurer 2d for Steepledge & 4d for ye reckoning on[e] pain of double paym.ts.

None shall offer to talke or occasion ye talk of his maiestie, or any State affairs or news Concerning ye same among all ye Company to the disturbance of any on pain to be amerced 8d.

Qui quod vult dicet, quod non vult audiet. ["He who says what he likes must hear what he likes not."]

None shall utter any scurilous or foule speeches under any pretence whatsoever either to strangers or officers or other their fellows on pen 4d.

Βωμολοχία non est virtus moralis. ["Ribaldry is not a moral virtue."]

None shall speake disgracefull or other words either of ye generall or other officer for by soe doing they do shame themselves and their punishm.t shall be 1s.

None shall exclaim or any way challenge or abuse any of his fellowes, but if a difference happen among them there shalbe a free hearing of all ye parties the next Publique meeteing who are at astrife & the generall wth the assistance that are there present shall decide the controversie.

[Here follows a Greek phrase of which no sense can be made.] Noe ordinary Member shall murmur or whisper about ye fault of any officer but give notice of it to ye Generall. None shall discover any privacy relating to the particuler good or howsoever it may concern them shalbe Cashiered.

Silenti totum est praemium. ["Everything is the reward of the silent."]

Caution is put that noe one disapoint the whole Company to ring wth Strangers but rather profer ym the curtesie of all & bring them to their meeting, if he or they shall thinke fitting. Whom so brought the Society shall at first entertaine at their cost and Charges according to their generall fashions & worth: either their respective friend or friends shall discharge for them under hand or els they contribute their shares, as now noe longer strangers but as acquaintance to them all.

None shall engage the company on a Challenge without the Generall Consent on pain of being amerced 2s. 6d. And in case the company shall be engaged every man shall send his best assistance if required & contribute his equall share wth the rest of his fellowe members.

None shall indeavour to distract ye Company & set them at variance to the overthrow of the Society on paine of Expulsion.

If ani shalbe backward & slacke in paieing his forfeitures to the treasurer shall deposite his halfe Crowne into the Tre.ar hands who is to keepe it untill it's spent in forfeits & then to receive another from him but if ye Party be unwilling he shalbe Cashiered.

Whosoever shalbe in towne and absent himself a whole quarter from all Publique meetings of ye Company shall be expelled.

Extraordinary Peales

1. First Months peale at 5 of ye Clocke, in ye after noone on every second tuesday of ye month throught ye yeare.
2. Quarter Peale if Sunday then be ye day following at 4 of the Clock in ye after noone every quarter day.
3. A generall feast for ye whole Society on St. Bartholomews day against wch every one shall for the effecting thereof deposit 2s. 6d.

Whosoever shall come tarde at any of these extraordinary Peales shall forfeite 3d.

And whosoever absents himselfe shall forfeit 6d.

Benefacta male locata male facta arbitror. Tull. ["I regard good deeds misplaced as evil deeds."]

The warner shall warne in the whole company at every of these peales & the like upon notice given him of ye Marriage or buriall of any p.ticuler Member of this Society & there to [go] & there to waite on them in ye Company livery.

Whosoever shall refuse to give him 6d quarterly being his sett wages for his quarteredge & deny to pay his clubb with ye Company preniially for a livery Cloake shall pay double.

President of a Placet

A.B. not only for his recreacon sake but also out of fervent love & affecon to this Society is desirous to be initiated a member thereof before any other & to confine himself within those rules wch wee appointed for discipline & Governm.t. These are therefore to desire & request yr placets according to our order & to tollerate him to subscribe his Name to the engagem.t of his faithfull observance & p.formance of all these orders.

C.D. Gener[al].

An Engagement for all those that are desirous to be Initiated members of the Society to be subscribed unto.

Iura iuranda conservanda, non perdenda conditum est. ["It is laid down that oaths are to be kept, not broken."]

Maintain all these orders to mi full power & utmost indeavours as they are now established by this whole Society & further engage to have not now or hereafter any interest in any Company but this of the esquires.

The form of a warrant

Whereas it is ye pleasure of the generall & his assistance to apoint the next months peale for the Company at B. These are therefore to will & require you upon sight hereof to make yr personall app.ance at the aforesaid Church on Tuesday next the 12th day of July between 4 & 5 of ye Clock by the same Church Clocke in the afternoon, there to help & p.forme the sd Peale to your best skill & utmost Indeavour & hereof you are not to faile on pain of forfeiture.

A.B. Gener[al].

Officers for this yeare 1662

He Chauncy ¹	Generall [Middle Temple]
Ri. Holding	Treasurer
	Clerk &c
Hen. Locke	Steward senr
	Steward Junr
	Warden Senr
	Warden iunr

Wee whose names are hereafter subscribed doe severally p.mise for every of our selves to keepe & maintain all these orders to every our full powers & utmost indeavours as they are now established by this whole Society & further engage to have not now or ever hereafter any interest in any Company but this of the esquiers.

Richard Verney ² [M.T.]	Edward Hodson
Wm Bassil [Linc.]	Griffith Finch
John Verney ³ [M.T.]	Robt Burton
Jo: Nor?	Hen Chancey
Tho. Hancock [I.T.]	John Hallson
Thomas Fowler	Hen. Locke
Richard Holding	Natha. Jefferson
Sampson Bourn	William James [Linc.]
Samuel Sanders [Gray's]	William Cooper
John Griffith ⁴ [Gray's]	Richard Snow
Christopher Turner ⁵ [M.T.]	Giles Hitchins
John Chapman	Stephen Barker
John Bywater	William Barnes
John Jellison	

This feast of St. John Baptist in the yeare of our Lord 1663.

Whereas the gen.all feast of this Society was anciently kept on St Bartholomew day wch falling out in ye middle of ye long vocacon proved very inconvenient to this Company by reason of the Maior part of them be[ing] at that time out of towne it is therefore ordained & desired this present day by a full vote of this Society that the said generall feast for the future be yearly kept on the feast of all souls at wch time the officers for this Society Shalbe elected.

The note on the date of the Feast in the last section of the above shows that it was inconvenient to keep the date open in London for an engagement falling in the Long Vacation and suggests that some at least of the members belonged to the legal profession, as was indeed the fact.

The general, Henry Chauncy,¹ a Hertfordshire man now about 30, after studying at Caius, had been admitted to the Middle Temple on 6th February, 1649-50, and called to the Bar in 1656. He became Recorder of Hertford and was knighted by Charles II in 1681.

Richard and John Verney,² from Kingston, County Warwick, were Wadham men. They were both admitted to the Middle Temple in 1652. They were both called to the Bar and John became a Bencher in 1677, but resigned in 1679.

Samuel Sanders,³ a Derbyshire man, went up to Christ's in 1659 at the age of 18 and was admitted to Gray's Inn in 1663.

John Griffith⁴ of Anglesey was admitted to Gray's Inn in 1654 and went up afterwards to Jesus, Oxford. He took the degree of D.C.L. and became High Sheriff of Anglesey in 1690.

Christopher Turner⁵ and his two brothers must have been thorns in the side of their Inn and a source of anxiety to their father, Sir Christopher Turner, Third Baron of the Exchequer. Christopher entered Sidney from Westminster at the age of 17, was admitted to the Middle Temple in 1657-8 and called to the Bar in 1663. Christopher, Edmund and Charles were expelled from the Inn "for their scandalous and shameless behaviour late on night in several courts, unless they can show good cause to the contrary on Friday next."