

# Biographical Record

## **Roger (Douglas\*) BAILEY (1946 – 2013)**

Represented the Middlesex County Association and London Diocesan Guild on the Central Council from 1989 to 2013 and attended 24 meetings

(\*Apparently Roger made great efforts to get rid of this name, removing it from his passport)

Roger was born in Holbeach, Lincolnshire, on 25th June 1946. He learned to ring at about the age of 11 at All Saints', Holbeach, taught by George Johnson, a local stationmaster. He went to primary school in Holbeach, and won a scholarship to Spalding Grammar School aged ten. In 1961 he joined the Lincoln Diocesan Guild, and rang his first peal on 1st July at Deeping St Nicholas (7 extents of minor, Kent Treble Bob and Plain Bob), on an inside bell. This boded a lifelong interest in multi-method minor. Almost exactly a year later, Roger called his first peal, aged 16, at Luton: 7 extents of minor in 6 methods. He was introduced to the famous Monday night Spalding band, and by his mid-teens was ringing peals of Surprise Major with them. He often also went to ring at Frampton, ringing Spliced Surprise Minor.

While at Holbeach Roger became interested in handbell ringing: he, Alan Payne and Keith Davey slowly (according to Roger) taught themselves Plain Bob Minor.

Following a gap year between school and university because of his age, he went up to UCL, London, to study Biochemistry, achieving a B.Sc. in 1967. He then began working for a Ph.D. which involved using the UCL's solitary computer. Gradually he became fascinated by the possibilities of using computers to help solve the theoretical challenges of bell-ringing. He began working in the computer centre at UCL; the Ph.D. took a back seat, and was abandoned in 1970.

Roger continued to work as a computer programmer in the UCL computer centre for a total of ten years, during which he completed a part-time M.Tech. in Computer Science at Brunel University (1973-78). In 1978 he took a job as lecturer (later Senior Lecturer) at Imperial College, in what was then the Department of Computing and Control, later becoming the Department of Computer Science. He stayed there until 2001, when he took early retirement.

By the time he arrived at UCL he had already rung more than 100 peals, more than half of which were multi-minor methods. He went on to make a notable contribution to composing and conducting Spliced Surprise Minor. In November 1966, with UL ringers, he rang a peal of 51 methods, which introduced the revolutionary concept of places in 5-6 made at other than the lead end. There were complaints from traditionalists, but the CC Methods Committee accepted the peal. He went on to call peals involving increasing numbers of methods, and in July 1972 he called 210 methods in a normal length peal, i.e. one lead of each method. This was followed a few days later by 7200 Spliced Surprise Minor in 290 methods at Stoke D'Abernon (this is still an unofficial record, although it was rejected by the CC Methods Committee).

Roger did not keep personal records of his peals, but from Andrew Craddock's Pealbase we can see that he rang 3030, of which he conducted 1253. His tower bell peals totalled 1668.

He rang 68 peals of 23-Spliced Surprise Major (14 on handbells). He rang five long-length peals, including 17280 Cambridge Surprise Major in 2003 at Willesdon, a record that still stands (in 2013). He rang 1104 peals for the Middlesex County Association. The person with whom he rang the greatest number of peals was Alison Regan (nee Surry), to whom he was close for many years in the 1980s. He considered her the best woman ringer of all time.

Roger became a Central Council Representative in 1989, representing the Middlesex County Association and London Diocesan Guild. He remained a CC Rep until 2013, attending 24 meetings. In 1990 he was elected to the Peal Compositions Committee and Methods Committee, serving on both until 2009. He was Chairman of the Peal Compositions Committee from 1993-1999, and hence an ex officio member of the Administration Committee, subsequently being elected to the Administration Committee from 2008-2011. He played a full part in the work of these committees, and made thoughtful and sometimes provocative contributions to the debates at Council meetings. As Philip Earis put it “paradoxically both a traditionalist and an anarchist”. He played a large part in many motions to Council, including those on Method Extension in 1992, Extension of Principles in 1995, Methods and Method Extension in 2004, Rolling Committee Elections in 2008 and Additional Members in 2010.

Roger was a life member of the Middlesex County Association, which he joined in 1985, and he had held virtually every post there as well as those in the Western District of the MCA. He was a member of the band at Willesdon for 28 years, and its Tower Captain when he died. For the University of London Society of Change Ringers (ULSCR) he had been President, Trustee and Auditor. He was an active and participatory member of both societies. In both societies, and outside them, he was a teacher. He taught scores of people to ring, both tower and hand bells: teaching was his vocation, being encouraging, patient and having a light touch. He was a tutor on the Keele Summer Course for many years, and Phil Gay notes that “when we heard back from former students, he was the tutor most often mentioned”.

One of his most lasting contributions to the Exercise was his website 'Change Ringing Resources'. He was also co-owner of the Charmborough Ring, a transportable ring of six.

Outside ringing, Roger was a keen walker, latterly developing a taste for hill-walking in Scotland, although not keeping a tally of his Munros. He had an interest in classical music, was a lifelong Guardian reader, a crossword puzzler, fan of Rupert Bear and The Beano, and was an able cartoonist. He was interested in art and architecture, passionate about Apple Macs and devoted to his iPhone. He also had a passion for films, both watching and (at least in his student years) making them. He also travelled extensively, Asia and the Far East being favourite destinations.

Following a long illness, Roger died on 22nd January 2013. He had a woodland burial in the Chilterns following a humanist funeral. There was a large memorial gathering at Conway Hall, central London, on 19th February 2013.

*Tributes appeared in The Ringing World 2013, pages 245-250 and 257-261*

