

Prolific Peal Ringers

33: ALFRED BALLARD (1908-1992)



Alfred Ballard was born in Stoney Stanton, Leicestershire, on December 14, 1908, grew up in the village and went to school there. He learned to handle a bell in 1925, taught by the Revd F P Farrow, vicar of St Mary's church and, by dint of

cycling the round trip of twenty-five miles each week to St Martin's Leicester, learned change-ringing there on their old ring of ten.

On leaving school and Hinckley Technical College he joined the local firm of Francis and Windlebier, Hosiery Manufacturer, and worked for them all his life, finally retiring as General Manager. He married Susan Cobby in 1925 and they made their home in Burbage, Leics, and a few miles from Stoney Stanton. He joined the Midland County Association when he started to ring in 1925 and was a staunch member of the local district of that guild until its demise in 1946. He then became one of the first members of the Leicester Diocesan Guild on its formation. He was elected to represent them on the Central Council and remained a member until 1953. He was also a member of the Ancient Society of College Youths and many other ringing associations.

He rang his first peal at Wetherby, Yorkshire on March 19, 1927. This was a peal in four Doubles methods, conducted by Ernest Morris. His second was one of Stedman Triples, conducted by Walter P Whitehead, who called a number of Alfred's following peals.

Over succeeding years Alfred also became an accomplished hand bell ringer, capable of ringing peals in methods on any number of bells from five to twelve. Amongst his notable achievements on tower-bells at this time was taking part in the record length of 12,683 Stedman Cinques at Christ Church, Oxford on August 24, 1946, and the account of the peal notes that he had rung over 200 peals on all number of bells.

He was the fiftieth ringer to be featured in The Ringing World's "Personalities of the Exercise", on December 15, 1961. The author, APACE, pointed out his enthusiasm and competence and how gifted he was at ringing hand bells, taking part in the first ever peal of Cambridge Surprise Royal and the only two peals of Cambridge Surprise Maximus that had been rung up to that time. He pointed out that Alfred considered he was very fortunate to be associated with the late Harold J Poole both as a personal friend and during his early attempts at hand bell ringing.

During the next few years he found ill-health was making tower-bell ringing more and more difficult, so he reluctantly gave-up peal-ringing on tower-bells and concentrated on hand bells. Forty-two years after his first peal he rang his one thousandth. This was Stedman Cinques, rung on hand bells at Wayside, Harold Poole's old home in Leicester and conducted by P J Staniforth on March 19, 1969. Alfred had rung 156 of his peals at this "tower"! He had rung 601 (43) tower-bell peals and 399 (60) hand bell peals.

As time passed he became less able to travel and join in peals with his colleagues, so he instigated local hand bell peals. His enthusiasm got these started and before long they could ring his favourite Stedman Triples and Caters and some of the standard surprise major methods! His last peal was on his 80th birthday, December 14, 1988 and he died on May 13, 1992, aged 83. He rang a total of 1338 peals, of which more than 400 were on hand bells.

References

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