

## **Roy E. Taylor (1951-2008)**

Roy Taylor died in Cheshire on 19th June 2008 aged 57, following a short and severe illness. Although a resident of Lymm for the last decade or so of his life, Roy was a west country man through and through, with an outgoing and engaging personality. His roots were irrevocably grounded in Somerset, particularly at Keynsham where he lived for most of the 1970s and 1980s, and where he was a loyal and active member of the local band.

Roy learned to ring as a teenager at Stoke Bishop (near Bristol). Ringing related activity came to the fore while he studied for a degree in Chemical Engineering at the University of Manchester from 1969-72. This was in the 'Marcus Sherwood' era of the MUGs, when peals on tower bells and handbells featured strongly in a full programme of ringing, outings and canal tours. Roy participated wholeheartedly in all of the Guild's ringing and social activity, to which he brought an enormous sense of fun, together with a thirst for real ale and scrumpy cider. This was often stimulated by his appetite for hot curries at 'the Plaza' - usually in the company of Ian Smith. Roy was the Guild's steeple keeper in 1971/2, servicing with great enthusiasm the bells and rather problematic 'Hastings stays' at the MUG'S tower, Sacred Trinity, Salford.

Roy maintained strong links with the Guild after graduation, organised a successful MUG peal week in Somerset in 1976, and returned to Manchester for several dinners, including the 50th anniversary dinner in 1998. Roy rang in several peals for the Southern MUGS, and two handbell peals in Nassau (with Ian and Barbara Bell) for the 'Bahamas Branch' of the Guild - the first ever in that part of the world!

After graduating, Roy returned to Somerset, and worked for many years in the chemical industry in Midsomer Norton. He lived mainly there and at Keynsham. Peals at Keynsham (8, 24cwt) of Yorkshire Surprise Major and Plain Bob Major, which Roy conducted from the tenor, are recorded on peal boards in the belfry. Roy also rang in Bristol and Bath, and on Sunday mornings occasionally enjoyed ringing high class spliced Surprise Minor with the Becks at Chilcompton. This brought Roy into contact with College Youths, including Chris Kippin whose Surprise Royal practices he attended at Evercreech to learn London and Bristol Royal. Roy was elected to membership of the ASCY in 1977, and rang his first peal for the Society in 1982.

Roy met and married Elizabeth in 1981, and became a very proud father of four daughters, one of whom (Kirsty) now rings with the Oxford University Guild. The family moved to the north west in the 1990s, and when other commitments allowed Roy participated in ringing in Cheshire and Lancashire. Roy and Elizabeth were planning a return to the south west, when Roy developed the cancer in spring 2008 from which he was sadly to die.

Never a prolific ringer, Roy nevertheless rang over 100 peals. I was his 'leading peal ringer' with 47. He was particularly pleased to have rung peals on the slow, heavy, lovely sounding bells of Chewton Mendip, Frome, Ditchat and Inveraray, as well as at Bath Abbey and Manchester Cathedral. In March 1975 he rang the tenor at Ashton-under-Lyne to the first (and possibly only) peal of Original Cinques. However, ringing was just one of a wide range of interests for Roy, including wild places like Exmoor, Snowdonia and the high mountains of the Cairngorms, Somerset cricket, Bristol City FC, and railway engineering - particularly the Somerset & Dorset railway about which he had deep knowledge.

Roy's funeral and burial at Keynsham on 2<sup>nd</sup> July was attended by family, friends and ringers from the Bath and Wells area and the Manchester University Guild. He leaves a large hole in the lives of many of us who will miss him greatly. Roy's daughter Kirsty tolled Keynsham tenor 58 times before the service, after which an excellent, half-muffled quarter peal of Cambridge was rung in Roy's memory.

STEPHEN MITCHELL