

Eric Lee



Eric learnt to ring at Godalming in the 1940s, together with Tony Appleton, but both developed their skills in Guildford, at St Nicholas and at Holy Trinity where they came under the influence of Alf Pulling. Here Eric met Mark White, and the two of them were early members of the Society of Roving Ringers. Eric trained as a Civil Engineer and worked in Petworth, Pershore, Wokingham and north Somerset, where he finished his career as Head of Technical Services at Woodspring District Council, Weston-super-Mare.

Eric's first peal was Grandsire Triples at Chiddingfold, Surrey, on 21st September 1946. He was quite a prolific peal ringer in his early days, ringing 44 peals for the Guildford Diocesan Guild in the 1940s. In later years he was a less frequent visitor to the peal columns, ringing 93 peals between 1954 and his last in 2000, in most of the standard methods. He was a member of the band which practised at Midsomer Norton after the bells were augmented to twelve, and

rang several peals of Stedman Cinques and Surprise Maximus there, including the first local area peal of Bristol Maximus in 1990. More locally he was tower captain at Chew Stoke, where he was instrumental in having the bells rehung. He was elected to the Ancient Society of College Youths in 1948 and rang two Society peals.

I first met Eric in a peal at Minehead in 1963, shortly after he moved to Somerset, but rang with him frequently in north Somerset from the 1970s. He was a likeable character with a very dry sense of humour. He was a popular member of the Chew branch of the Bath and Wells Diocesan Association, and in his later years was a member of Michael Horseman's 'Old Codgers' quarter peal band. For many years he rang with the Chilcompton band, enjoying their relaxed way of organising a practice.

Outside of ringing Eric was interested in steam trains and this became a lifelong hobby. He was a skilled model engineer and built progressively larger outdoor model railways, culminating in a steam railway large enough to carry passengers. Needing to tow a trailer to transport his model steam locomotives and lorries to rallies, he was keen on powerful cars, and at various times ran a Triumph Stag and a Jaguar. He was also a qualified glider pilot and had a share in a glider at Nympsfield, Glos.

In recent years Eric and his wife Jean had moved to Oxford to be near their daughter, and he died there quite suddenly on 26th November, after being admitted to hospital following a fall. He was just short of his 84th birthday. At his funeral on 10th December the music before and after the ceremony, reflecting his two main interests, consisted of recordings of Little Bob Maximus from St Mary Redcliffe, Bristol, and the locomotive 'Talyllyn' departing from Abergynolwyn.

I would like to thank a number of people for help with this obituary, particularly Ann Lee, Eric's daughter, and Anthony E. Cox.

CHRIS KIPPIN