

David George Yeo 18/2/1931 - 2/5/2016



David was born in February 1931 at Long Ashton, Somerset and, apart from a few years at Nailsea after his marriage, lived there all his life. He attended the local church school followed by Bristol Cathedral School. After schooling he joined the Bristol Corporation in the Civil Engineer's Depot on Redcliffe Wharf before transferring to the General Office staff of the civic airport, firstly at Whitchurch and then at its current location at Lulsgate. In the early days one of his duties when a private aircraft landed was to jump into a staff car and race across to collect the appropriate landing fee. He eventually attained promotion to be assistant airport manager before taking early retirement on health grounds.

The Yeo family name was synonymous with ringing in Long Ashton. Grandfather George was tower captain at All Saints, father Percy George was Chew Branch secretary and uncle Norman was the tower handyman who helped to install the silent ringing apparatus used during wartime ban. So David learnt to ring in 1943 as well as playing the piano and becoming assistant church organist. In 1945 he was elected to the Bath & Wells Diocesan Association. He played for Chew Branch meeting services when required from 1946 onward and then succeeded his father as Branch Secretary from 1957 to 1971. Meanwhile he took over the post of tower captain from his grandfather in 1956 and held it until 2009. For this service he was presented with a 'Bristol Blue' glass bell by the parishioners.

David always enjoyed outings and was an early member of the Roving Ringers on their cycling/ringing tours and reunion weekends. For some occasions he was able to borrow his father's Austin van which became a somewhat uncomfortable mini-bus when crates, planks and cushions were positioned in the back. In September 1952 he was elected to the ASCY and attended annual dinners with other Somerset ringers but never rang a peal for that society.

His first quarter as conductor was Grandsire Triples at Long Ashton in June 1947 and he eventually rang over 450. In 1949 on his eighteenth birthday he, his father and uncle all rang their first peal. It was for George Yeo's Golden Wedding. In all David rang 42 peals (conducted one), fifteen of them at Long Ashton where he circled the tower. The peals were rung in 23 towers with about 166 ringers for 4 associations.

In 1958 he married Gillian and they set up home in Nailsea but he continued to run Long Ashton tower and commute there and to work on his NSU moped. When Gillian's father's house became vacant they moved back to Long Ashton. She resumed her nursing career with the District Health Visitor Service. David joined the local bowling club when it was

formed. They had two sons and the elder learnt to ring and eventually produced four grandsons who all learnt the art. The younger son presented them with two more grandchildren. He was delighted to have been presented with four great-grandchildren the youngest of whom met him only ten days before he died.

After retirement he became one of the quarter peal band led by Michael Horseman which became known as 'The Old Codgers' who met monthly for coffee, QP, pub lunch and another QP. They covered Somerset and neighbouring counties but also visited local tourist attractions like Berkeley nuclear power station when the 'Codger' title was first applied in response to a query on the title of the group.

David organised an appeal to have the church hand bells refurbished in 1993. The £700 required was produced from coffee mornings, sales and donations. These bells were used during the annual carol service, for the wedding of our current tower captain at Holy Trinity, Hotwells, Bristol which has no tower bells and by the church choir group.

Gillian died unexpectedly during hospital treatment in 2006. David continued to live in the same house but increasing arthritis meant that he could no longer climb the tower at All Saints or ring elsewhere after 2013. His health gradually declined and he was admitted to hospital with acute myeloblastic leukaemia in March 2016 a few days after receiving a certificate of Honorary Life Membership of the Bath and Wells Diocesan Association. After three weeks he was discharged to a nursing home in Clevedon where he passed away peacefully nineteen days later at the age of 85..

The funeral was held at All Saints, Long Ashton conducted by the Rev. Ann Sargent and an appreciation was given by David's elder son Stephen. Two of Stephen's sons played a piano duet and David's only grand-daughter read the lesson. The bells were rung half-muffled by Chew Branch members and the 'Nine Taylors' followed by 85 strokes on the 6th bell were rung as David was taken to the graveside to be buried with Gillian.