

Biographical Record

Peter Howard MACKIE (1947 – 2015)

Represented the Ancient Society of College Youths on the Central Council
from 2014 to 15 and attended one meeting

Peter was born on 13 October 1947. His first introduction to ringing was at Wellesbourne when the vicar recruited the basis of a novice band from the congregation, including Peter's parents, Laurence and Elizabeth Mackie. The band was fortunate in receiving help from local ringers from Warwick and Allesley and these included Peter Border. Peter Mackie was then in the VIth form at Cheltenham College but joined his parents during the school holiday and made rapid progress, so much so that he was soon proficient enough to join the Cheltenham 12-bell practices under the guidance of Cyril Wratten.

Having completed his VIth form studies he stayed on at school for the Autumn term to prepare for Oxbridge entry exams and thence spent seven months in Canada where he rang at all but two of the available towers, those being the Roman Catholic rings. He wrote an article for *The Ringing World* about the state of ringing in Canada and gave us a youthful castigation of the locals for not being proactive in keeping their bells ringing: most of the rings at the that time in Canada were maintained and organized by British ex-pats and though the Canadians showed an interest, motivation always seemed to come from the Brits! Here he rang his first peal at Calgary on April 23rd, 1966, of two doubles methods for the Lincoln Diocesan Guild. It is thought to be the first peal in more than one method in Canada.

In the Michaelmas Term that year, Peter went up to Hertford College, Oxford to read Medicine and on the first Sunday of term he rang at no fewer than four towers, starting as he meant to go on, throwing himself into the ringing life of the College.

From the outset of his career, Peter kept meticulous records of his tower visits and peal attempts. He conducted his first peal at Wellesbourne, of Plain Bob Minor on December 26th 1967, which included his father and his sister Caroline and in January 1968 he conducted a family peal with his parents and siblings at Radway, Warwickshire, of Plain Bob and Grandsire Doubles which was the first peal on the bells.

Peter was elected to the College Youths in 1970 by which time he had rung at 500 towers and had accumulated 68 peals.

Peter began his clinical studies at the Middlesex Hospital, ringing regularly at St Augustine's, Kilburn until 1973, when he took a position as house surgeon at Cheltenham General Hospital, followed in 1974 by a move to Bristol Royal Infirmary as a registrar, then to Birmingham and Oxford before being appointed as a consultant at Wexham Park Hospital in 1982. Here he became Director of Laboratory Services, Clinical Director of Cancer Services and Medical Director of the Hospital Trust, as well as being appointed as an examiner for the Royal College of Physicians. Peter specialized in haematology and his career restricted his opportunities to ring peals to single figures each year between 1973 until he retired.

Peter devoted his time outside his medical career to his family, bellringing and music. He was an excellent pianist and organist and would play regularly at St Giles' church and for family weddings and funerals: he also played the piano and sang at performances organised by his colleagues in the profession.

Following his move to Wexham Park he joined the band of his parish church, St Giles in Stoke Poges, S. Bucks. The tower was somewhat insular and unambitious at the time. His name first appears in the Guild report as a tower member in 1985 when the renowned Arthur Barker was tower captain and Guild treasurer. He was devoted to service ringing and would organise his ringing around his professional work, putting his pager on the ringing-room table in case he was called in to work. He was elected tower captain of St. Giles in 2007 and successfully campaigned to recruit new ringers to the tower.

He was a very patient teacher, especially of challenging, mature learners, teaching them the basics of handling and introducing them to new methods.

When the morning service at St Peter's was changed to 9.00a.m., a time regarded as too early for the majority of the band in deference to the locals, he assisted the ringers at High Wycombe and was regularly invited to join service ringing at St Paul's Cathedral.

Peter contributed to the running of the Exercise as Branch Secretary of the EBSB Branch of the Oxford Diocesan Guild and served on the Publications Committee while on the Central Council. He also wrote an excellent article on the history and science of ringing for the Stoke Poges Council.

Peter's retirement in 2012 enabled him to spend more time peal ringing, especially on 12 bells, hoping to tackle some of the more difficult Surprise Maximus methods. However, he developed cancer and the opportunity was denied him. He died on 3 September 2015, leaving a widow, four daughters and three grandchildren.

Peter's peal total was 318, rung for 24 societies, the majority being for the Oxford Diocesan Guild. His leading peal ringer was J Alan Ainsworth. His last peal was of Bristol Maximus for the ASCY and his leading tower was his home tower of Stoke Poges. He rang peals on all numbers from Doubles to Yorkshire Surprise Fourteen.

His obituary appeared in The Ringing World 2016, on page 44.

