

Prolific Peal Ringers

47: NORMAN JESSE GOODMAN (1919-1997)



Norman Jesse Goodman was born on June 11, 1919 in Kings Norton, Worcs. His father was Jesse Goodman, a printer and machineman, born in Selly Oak in 1882, and his mother was Elizabeth Goodman, née Shakespeare. Little is known about his younger days, although he was reputed to be a good athlete and cricketer, even playing at Edgbaston on one occasion.

Norman always appeared to be a straightforward, no nonsense character, but he had hidden depths. He had a forceful and powerful

personality and was always ready to debate and argue from his own position! But he also had a much more compassionate side, genuinely moved by little acts of kindness or courage; the plight of animals; the dedication of nurses and so on. He was very good company and loved being with his circle of friends.

He was in the army during his period of service, rose to the rank of sergeant major and carried the bearing of that office for the rest of his life. During the war he was married to Jessica Woodwiss of Birmingham. After the war for the rest of his working life he was employed by Cadbury's, mainly as a van driver but also as a chauffeur for the senior staff.

He rang his first peal on the treble at Selly Oak on August 25, 1934 at the age of 15. This was Parker's Twelve-Part of Grandsire Triples, conducted by William H Cartwright.

Over the next thirty-nine years he was fortunate to ring with a very competent and progressive band and accumulated many peals of Surprise Major, Royal and Maximus. He rang his 1000th peal on December 27, 1973 at Birmingham Cathedral. This was one of Superlative Surprise Maximus, conducted by Peter Border. The Ringing World commented that it was fortunate that most of his peals had been rung mid-week and therefore had not interfered with his other passionate interest – following the fortunes of Aston Villa! Of his one thousand peals, 412 had been of Surprise Major; 190 of Surprise Royal and 293 of Surprise Maximus, a total of 895 Surprise.

Amongst these peals were the following long lengths: 7251 Stedman Cinques, 15699 Stedman Cinques, 16368 Cambridge Surprise Maximus and

11872 Glasgow Surprise Major. His peals totalled 1359, the first and last being At Selly Oak. He rang over one thousand for the St Martin's Guild and over seven hundred at Birmingham Cathedral. But he was not only a peal ringer; he devoted his skills to Sunday Service ringing and practices also.

A few weeks before his death on May 27, 1997 his wife, Bessie died. The loss was great – they had been married for fifty-five years. On May 15 he had a severe heart attack and was taken to Selly Oak hospital where he died twelve days later, aged 77.

The funeral was at Lodge Hill Crematorium, Selly Oak on Friday, June 6 conducted by his long time friend and ringing colleague, Canon Fred Ross. A memorial service was held at Birmingham Cathedral on Monday, June 9, followed by peals of Stedman Cinques at St Martin's and St Philip's, Birmingham rung by a few of his many friends.

At the memorial service the Provost paid tribute to Norman's loyal service at Birmingham Cathedral. *"He became what I would call a disciplinarian of the ringing chamber. He was a man of exacting standards, and expected the best of himself and others. He knew that all effective bell ringers depend on one another, and have an intuitive sense of working together. When Norman's death was announced in Birmingham Cathedral, many people were moved by the knowledge of a commitment over so many years and honoured Norman Goodman by name."*

References

RW 1934/548; 1974/64, 97, 269; 1997/729, 739