

Biographical Record

Frank BEECH (1935 – 2015)

Represented the North Staffordshire Association on the Central Council
from 2002 to 2014 AND Attended 12 meetings

Frank was born in Woodseaves, near Stafford on 12th May 1935. He had all the childhood illnesses including rheumatic fever, so missed a lot of school days but still came top of the class in Mathematics at Eccleshall Secondary Modern School.

He was taught to ring by his father, Frank Senior, at High Offley along with his lifelong friend Ted Fairbrother. To advance their ringing they both went to the ringing practices at St Mary's, Stafford, where they could learn change ringing. Frank rang his first peal, Grandsire Doubles, at Church Eaton on July 5th 1961. In total he rang 350 peals, of which he conducted 47, ranging from Grandsire Doubles to Plain Bob Maximus. Fifty-one of his peals were rung for the North Staffordshire Association. He rang his last peal at Colwich on January 20th, 2012.

Frank was Ringing Master of the Stafford Archdeaconry Society (now Lichfield and Walsall Archdeaconries Society) 1968/71, Tower Captain at Stafford 1970/73 and Steeple Keeper at Stone, Staffordshire, 1999/2003. He was a Central Council Representative for the North Staffordshire Association from 2002 to 2014 and attended 12 meetings.

In his younger days he twice tried to get into National Service, but was refused on medical grounds. He was a keen short distance racing cyclist, and used to cycle to Technical College and to work at Bagnalls where he started an apprenticeship and subsequently became a draughtsman. He was also a qualified football league referee and was paid 17/6d to referee Third Division North matches.

He went to work at English Electric when they took over Bagnalls. This is where he met Jenny, who worked on the same 5th floor level in the estimating department. Their first date was on Thursday 28th February 1963, when they went to see South Pacific. Going to the cinema became their regular weekly date on a Thursday. Saturdays were taken up dancing to big bands, mostly at company's Social Clubs like Sankey's at Telford and English Electric's at Stychfield, which Jenny especially enjoyed when it was preceded by a dinner.

Every month on a Saturday they would go on a picnic close to a church where Frank knew there was going to be a bell ringing meeting of the Shropshire Association. So they would end up in the tower where he would have a ring. Fed up with sitting out all the time Jenny caught the bug, doing most of her learning at Stafford and Edmond. Frank by this time was a regular member of the Sunday Service band at Stafford, he later became ringing master there.

Frank left his position of Chief Draughtsman at Sankey's in 1973 when he and Jenny became tenants of The Red Lion, Stone. Business was good so they bought a set of handbells and the Inn Ringers were formed in 1977.

Having moved to Stone, they joined the band at St. Michael's and Frank became involved with the North Staffordshire Association. He held various positions for the Association including Chairman, Deputy Ringing Master and Central Council Representative. He served on the Ringing Trends working party, and was later on the Bell Restoration committee. As he was very proficient at splicing bell ropes and as part of his work for the Central Council, he produced a booklet on splicing bell ropes. This practical little booklet covered the very tricky subject of how to splice hemp to plastic rope. After their daughter, Crystal, was born, Frank and Jenny gave up the tenancy and Frank went back to being a draughtsman, first at Malkins then at William Boulton's then as a contract draughtsman before setting up his own company, Frank Beech Designs Ltd. He mostly worked in the Manchester, Birmingham and Derby areas until he retired in 2000.

He was a keen gardener and took on an allotment where they both enjoyed working and growing all their own vegetables. Frank was a member of the Stafford and District Model Engineering Society, but never completed any model locomotives that he started: he was always willing to do lathe work for his friends. He was also a member of the Stoke-on-Trent Engineers, becoming their president in 2005. He was a lifelong member of the Edgmond Court of the Foresters Friendly Society and held the post of Forester Chief Ranger for a number of years.

Frank died on April 17th 2015. He had been ill for a number of years, but continued to play a full part in the life of the church. He was a Deanery Synod member representing St. Saviour's, Aston near Stone and a member of the PCC there. He could be relied upon to liven up the discussions and somehow always managed to introduce a new subject. The same could be said of his representation at Central Council meetings.



His funeral was held at St. Michael's, Stone on Wednesday April 29th.

His obituary appeared in The Ringing World on 26 June 2015, p660 and in the Summer 2015 edition of Clappertrappings the. North Staffordshire Association newsletter