

Biographical Record

Frederick Hector BENNETT (1907-1982)

Represented the Shropshire Association on the Central Council
from 1957 to 1960 and attended 2 meetings

Frederick Hector Bennett (Benny) was born on May 21st 1907 in the Whitchurch area of Shropshire. He learned to ring at Marbury in Cheshire, where he had been a choir boy. At some time he moved to the Chesterfield area, where he married Helen Marjorie Millward on June 16th 1932 at the church of St. Mary and All Saints Chesterfield. The couple had a son in 1935, but sadly the marriage foundered and they were divorced in 1940, at which time Benny, who was a master brewer, was living in Wallingford in Oxfordshire.

Benny was elected a member of the Shropshire Association of Church Bell Ringers at the Annual General Meeting on 23rd February 1943. Some time between then and 1947, he was elected as a committee member and in 1948 he was elected Deputy Ringing Master, a post he held until the year 1955-1956. In that year he was also elected Treasurer and he continued to be Treasurer until 1962. Between 1968 and 1971 he was one of the Trustees of the Association. In the reports of the Shropshire Association for many years there were no membership lists. When these started in 1957 for some years Benny was unattached, but from 1968 he was attached to St. Chad's at Shrewsbury. At the AGM on July 8th 1978, he was elected an honorary member. He continued to be attached to St. Chad's until his death in 1982.

In 1969 the bells of Meole Brace were augmented from three to six. Benny, who lived in Meole Brace at the time, was appointed to teach some ringers for the new peal of six.

Benny's first peal for the Shropshire Association, Grandsire Caters at Coalbrookdale, was on 21st May 1945 and his first peal as conductor for it, Kent TB Minor at Newtown, Montgomery, was on 9th January 1960. In total he rang 132 peals for the Shropshire Association of which he conducted 10. He was a keen peal ringer and rang 337 peals in total after 1950 in a large variety of methods up to and including Surprise Maximus. These included several handbell peals. The peals were rung all over the country – he obviously enjoyed participating in peal tours. His last peal, Cambridge Surprise Royal, was on 12th January 1974 at St. Giles, Newcastle under Lyme.

One of Benny's other interests was printing. He had two old printing presses in the shed at the bottom of his garden. When Meole Brace bells were augmented, he produced the service sheets for the dedication service. He also printed many other items including music for Oxbridge choirs. His other interests included music, engineering, mathematics, outdoor life generally and even water divining.

He died on his 75th birthday, May 21st 1982, in hospital at Bishop's Castle.



Two short tributes were in The Ringing World on page 482 and page 586 in 1982.