

# Biographical Record

## **Philip Malcolm James Gray (1927 – 2017)**

Represented the New South Wales Association from 1957 to 1962 and the Australia & New Zealand Association from 1962 to 1996 on the Central Council and attended 33 meetings

Philip was born on 17 January 1927 at Purley, Surrey. In 1940 he entered Eastbourne College, but because of the war the College was evacuated to share premises with Radley College, then in Berkshire. Here he learned to ring under the tutelage of Marie Cross. In 1944 Philip left school and entered The Royal School of Mines, part of Imperial College, University of London, to study metallurgy, an interest he had inherited from his father. In London he developed his ringing, and with Denis Layton founded the University of London Society in 1945, becoming its first Treasurer and second Master. During his student days he went on ringing tours organised by the Universities' Association, and on one of these tours he met Joan Houldsworth from Oswaldtwistle, Lancs, who was at Oxford, and whom he married in 1949.

After graduation in 1947 Philip started his National Service, but was almost immediately seconded to work at the Government's Nuclear Research Institute at Harwell. Living at Steventon, Philip and Joan became involved with ringing in that area, including ringing with Walter Judge's band in Oxford.

In 1951 Philip took up a job in Australia and he and Joan moved to Melbourne. Ringing was at a low ebb in post-war Australia, and Philip was instrumental in teaching new ringers in Melbourne, and helping to rejuvenate ringing in Australia generally.

In 1955 Philip returned to England to take up a job in Avonmouth, and moved to Bristol. Here he quickly became a significant figure in Bristol ringing, serving as Chairman of the Bristol City Branch of the Gloucester & Bristol Diocesan Association for a number of years, and becoming tower captain at Stoke Bishop where he trained a new band and eventually had the ring of six recast and rehung.

In 1971 a change of job took Philip to London where he and Joan lived in Primrose Hill. His new job involved much travel, so ringing activities were somewhat curtailed, but he was honoured to be elected as a supernumerary at Westminster Abbey from 1985 to 1995.

In 1995 he retired to Backwell, near Bristol, where he and Joan became members of the local band until ill-health progressively prevented active involvement.

Philip rang a total of 282 peals in methods ranging from Doubles to Surprise Maximus. His early peals were mainly in and around London and Surrey, and were rung for the Universities Association, University of London Society and the Surrey Association. After moving to Steventon he had a prolific period ringing mainly with the Oxford Guild band led by Walter Judge. The four years spent in Australia yielded a few peals, but these must have been scored against high odds and were probably all the more satisfying for that. Returning to Bristol Philip found himself in another area with active peal bands, led initially by Albert Tyler and latterly by John H Gilbert and D John Hunt.

After he moved to London Philip's peal-ringing slowed down due to increasing business commitments. In his last few years of peal-ringing he revisited Australia on several occasions and was able to ring peals at a number of towers which had not been in existence when he lived there. His last peal was at the Swan Tower, Perth on 11 April 2001.

Philip was a member of Central Council from 1957 to 1996, representing the New South Wales Association until 1963, and the Australia and New Zealand Association thereafter. He served on the Sunday Service Ringing Committee from 1958 to 1960, the Overseas Committee from 1969 to 1972, the Standing Committee from 1969 to 1972, and the Administrative Committee from 1972 to 1990 and from 1993 to 1996.

Philip played a leading role in the Australian Bicentennial ANZAB bell restoration projects, working as 'point man' with the British Committee on the many Bicentennial projects. He was particularly involved in raising funds for the restoration of the bells at Holy Trinity, Hobart, one of the earliest rings of bells in Australia. He also organised the gift of seven tonnes of new bell metal from Australia to cast the new ring of bells for St Martins in the Fields, London when their old bells were moved to the Swan Tower in Perth to form the nucleus of the new ring there.

In his professional life as a metallurgist, Philip was chiefly involved in developing processes for refining metals from ore, including uranium, zinc, lead and other rarer metals. He was elected President of the Institution of Mining and Metallurgy in 1984-5, and also elected a Fellow of the Royal Academy of Engineering (FREng).

He died on 10 May 2017.

