

# Biographical Record

## **Kathleen WRIGHT (nee HIGGINS) (1926 – 1999)**

Represented the Oxford University on the Central Council from 1954 to 1956, and attended 2 Council meetings (the first as Higgins, the second as Wright)

Kathleen was born in Bradford in December 1926. She obtained a scholarship to Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford in 1944 and graduated in 1948. She stayed on and took a DPhil while working as Assistant Curator at the Museum of the History of Science from 1948 to 1953. From 1954 to 1959 she taught physics at Selhurst Grammar School for Girls, Croydon, where Peter, whom she had met and been friends with in Oxford, was already teaching. They married in 1955, in Bradford. She retired from teaching when they moved to Wells in 1959. After raising her family (now in Ampthill) she resumed teaching full time, and became head of the physics department at the Dame Alice Harper School in Bedford until she retired in 1987. She died after a short illness on Jan 1st 1999, aged 72 years.

Kathleen learned to ring in her first year at Oxford, and became a keen and skillful member of the Oxford University Society, the Oxford Diocesan Guild and the Yorkshire Association. After graduating, she remained active with the OUS, and rang in the first peal by a resident OUS band, Stedman Caters on 23 Feb 1952. In 1953 she served as Master, and initiated a spectacularly successful recruiting drive and subsequent programme of teaching. She gave up ringing in her middle years while raising her family, but resumed again later in life, and was very active teaching new ringers at Ampthill after she retired.

Her first peal was at Addingham, Yorks on 28th Sept 1946 (Kent and Oxford TB, and Plain Bob Minor) and in December she rang three peals in a week (spliced Surprise Major, Little Bob Major and Plain Bob Royal). She conducted her first peal, of Plain Bob Minor, at Silsden on 12 April 1947, and her first in hand, also Plain Bob Minor, in Oxford in 1953. She rang 63 peals, 17 of them in hand, in all the standard methods. Over half of her peals (34) were for the OUS, divided equally between tower and hand. She rang her last peal (Plain Bob Major at Yatton, Somerset) in 1961. Thereafter she was content to be a Sunday service ringer, and take part in occasional quarter-peals, one of which was Plain Bob Major conducted by Peter for their Ruby wedding in 1995. Her last quarter peal was Grandsire Triples, also conducted by Peter, in 1997.

While she was working for the Museum of the History of Science in Oxford, Kathleen undertook research on sundials, and published a classification scheme, the 'Higgins scheme', that has been widely used by writers, notably of museum collections of dials. Little is known of her activities outside ringing and her career. As an undergraduate, she took part in the Oxford University Society walking tour of the Lake District in 1947, and in later life at Ampthill, she was a chorister and generally active member of the church.

