

Prolific Peal Ringers

46: ARTHUR VAUGHAN PEARSON (1911-1988)



Arthur Vaughan Pearson was born in Bridgnorth, Shropshire on February 4, 1911. He started his secondary school education here, passing his school certificate, but moved with his parents to Wolverhampton around 1930. Gillett and Johnston had recast the bells of Penn, Staffs into a new ring of eight about this time, and he learned to handle a bell in this tower. He became an excellent striker, although one colleague described his actual handling of a bell as "curious"! His first peal followed on February 18, 1931, one of Grandsire Triples at Penn. This was to be his last peal for the next seven years, as golf took over all his spare time!

In 1938 he left Staffordshire and went to work in Ipswich. Here he was very fortunate to meet Charles Sedgley, George Symonds and Jim Pipe. Although his ringing was still in its early stages these stalwarts gave him every help and encouragement to ring more advanced methods, and he was very pleased to be invited to become a member of the famous St Mary-le-Tower Society.

He made rapid progress with their band and rang a peal of Cambridge Surprise Maximus in 1939. His Staffordshire friends didn't realise the rapid rate of his progress, and when they were arranging a local peal of Plain Bob Maximus some time later didn't invite him to take part as they thought he wouldn't be good enough!

After the war he acted as secretary to the Stafford Archdeaconry Society during 1947 and 1948 and then he began peal ringing in earnest, with his first peal as conductor being one of Cambridge Surprise Major at Halesowen, Worcs on May 15, 1948. His 300th peal came up three years later in 1951 and a quick glance at the methods rung gives an indication of his proficiency, with nearly one hundred peals of Surprise Major in two dozen different methods; twenty-two of Surprise Royal in twelve methods; eighteen of Surprise Maximus in nine methods and seventy nine peals of Stedman!

Another three years passed and in 1954 he scored his 500th peal. Surprise Major ringing had grown in popularity and his list shows he had rung 228 peals in over fifty different methods. He was also ringing a considerable numbers of new Surprise Royal and Maximus methods.

By profession Arthur was an installation and service manager for a subsidiary company of the British Motor Corporation Group, and he travelled abroad very extensively, with visits taking him to Norway, Finland, Germany and Russia. When he was at home he was attached to the band at Claverley, Shropshire.

He was Personality of the Exercise No 36 in September, 1961 and APACE described him as

having 'a quiet and unassuming manner' and that he had shown that 'provided a ringer had the necessary ability and enthusiasm and, more importantly, got in touch with the right people, all the interesting fields of ringing were open to him'.

His 1000th peal was at Broughton, Staffs on October 5, 1973. He chose London Surprise Major for the method and conducted it himself. He was a fine conductor, especially of spliced Surprise. More than 780 of his peals were of Surprise, of which he conducted 118. He enjoyed spliced Surprise Major and rang 37 peals, conducting 26 of them. He was also one of the first three people to complete the alphabet in Surprise Major.

He rang more than half his peals with George E Fearn and several hundred each with Muriel Reay, John Pinfold, Terry Hampton and Henry Fearn. He rang his last peal on November 11, 1978 at Wolverhampton, which was Stedman Cinques conducted by Robert Dennis. His total number of peals, calculated from Pealbase and his 1000th peal, was 1056, of which he conducted 145,

Alan Ainsworth, who went on a couple of peal tours with him, commented that *He was a most interesting person with a typical droll, Black Country sense of humour. He had a fund of stories, and was always a very cheerful chappie, never stuffy or snooty.*

He died in the second quarter of 1988 at the age of 77, but no obituary was published in *The Ringing World*.

Note: APACE, reference 1961/605, gives his place and date of birth as Fulham on February 4, 1918. These facts were not corrected in subsequent weeks. However, no one with the name of Arthur Vaughan Pearson together with the date of his death could be fitted to all the other facts.

References

RW1931/147; 1951/718; 1954/766; 1961/605; 1973/903, 979; 1988/1178