

Biographical Record

Frank Courtenay PRICE (1933 – 2005)

Represented the Oxford Diocesan Guild from 1966 to 1973 and attended 5 meetings

Frank was born on 27th July 1933 at Feltham, Middlesex, where he learned to ring on clapperless bells during the 1939-44 war at the age of seven, taught by his father, Tony. His first peal was on January 8th 1944 at Cranford, Middlesex. He rang the treble to Plain Bob minor. It was also his older brother, Richard's, first peal and he rang the second.

He was attached to Hillingdon tower from 1953 – 63, Easthampstead from 1963 – 1973 and to Marlborough from 1973 until he moved to Newmarket.

He married Sheila Coles in 1954 and they had four daughters, Beverley, Karen, Cherril and Fiona. Cherril was Frank's leading peal ringer and is an accomplished hand-bell ringer herself.

In 1964 Frank moved to Crowthorne and became instrumental in the rehanging and augmentation of the bells at Easthampstead to 8 in 1966. He followed this with the augmentation of Warfield to 10 in 1969, doing a great deal of the work himself while also coercing other people to assist him, and in 1993 he undertook the rehanging of the bells at Dalham, in Suffolk.

Frank attended the Easthampstead Ringing Course for at least 15 years as a tutor and, not only played for the Service on the Sunday morning, but also entertained everyone for several hours on the Saturday night, often into the small hours, leading the handbell tune ringing and the 'sing along' from the piano. On one occasion he was amusing himself by playing Grandsire Caters on the piano when Jim Diserens decided to put some bobs in! He was asked if he could play Grandsire Cinqes to which he replied that he could but that it made legato playing very difficult.

He preferred ringing on higher numbers and his peal total includes 251 peals of Surprise Maximus, both tower and in hand, including one double-handed, which he also conducted. Frank's peals include several on 14 and 16 in hand and he was a member of the band which rang the Little Bob 22 for a recording. He was one of the squad who were attempting to ring the first peal of Bristol Surprise Maximus in hand but couldn't be in the first peal because of work commitments. He was, nevertheless, very pleased that the peal had been scored and went on to ring in the second attempt.

He was a very fine heavy bell ringer, turning in the tenors at Redcliffe, Southwark, Manchester Town Hall and Inveraray: in total 9 single-handed peals on tenors of more than 40 cwt. He rang 127 peals of Surprise Maximus in hand, including the alphabet twice, in different methods. He also rang the Cambridge family from Minor to Maximus double-handed and took part in double-handed peals of Minor, Major and Maximus where all the

ringers rang two bells. This skill came in very useful when the tower band was short of ringers for a Branch 8-bell Striking competition which was won with only seven ringers. Coincidentally, he shared his birthday with James Washbrook, one of the earliest exponents of double-handed ringing and the first to ring a double-handed peal. His peal total included several long lengths, over 10,000 changes on tower bells and a record length of 15,047 Grandsire Caters on handbells.

As a Central Council member he served as a member of the Standing Committee 1969-1972 and the Overseas Ringing Committee 1969-1972

He was a talented musician who also played the organ as well as the piano and he learned to ring by listening: his father had just about given up teaching him to ring Bob Minor, even though he was very young, when one of the band said, "Dodge when the treble is leading." This worked for Frank and he never looked back.

In his working life he was an R. A. F. fighter pilot and later, Air Traffic Control Officer: he went on to be Chief Officer, first at Stanstead and later at Manchester. He was also a very eminent Freemason and was proud of the honours he gained.

After he retired he set the peals for *The Ringing World* for many years and could always be relied on to return the work quickly: he did other typesetting work when an immediate turn-round was needed.

Frank did a lot of building work including all the electrical and plumbing work involved as well as drawing up the plans to a professional standard. He built two extensions on his own houses in Crowthorne and Newmarket as well as doing building work for other locals.

At Newmarket he built his own campanile, Mindinho le Tower, and rang 216 peals on it.

Frank was an extraordinary, larger-than-life man, with many talents and a huge amount of charisma and charm.

He died on May 16th 2005 and was buried in Shouldham churchyard, Norfolk, home of many of his family.

Frank rang 1609 peals and conducted 337.



Tributes to him appeared in The Ringing World in 2005 on pages: 492, 624, 632, 742, 756 and 1223.