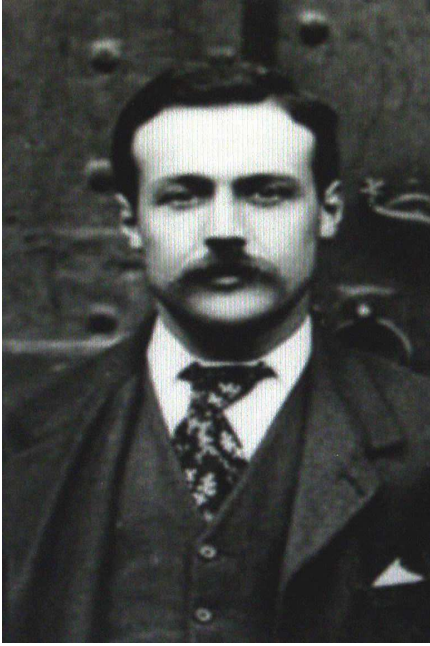


Prolific Peal Ringers

9: KEITH HART (1874-1947)



Keith Hart was born in Brighton on March 27, 1874, the second son of Isaac Hart. He began ringing in 1890 at St Peter's Brighton, an association which was to last all his life. When he started ringing there their band was becoming one of the centres of excellence in method ringing and good striking in the southeast of England. George

F Attree, Frank Bennett and George Williams were ringing there when Warners installed the new eight in 1882 and, with George Attree as captain, in the next ten years they established a very competent band of peal ringers. Keith Hart with his easy, graceful style and perfect accuracy of striking quickly became an essential part of this team. His first peal was one of Grandsire Triples in this, his home tower, on November 9, 1891.

By 1897 surprise ringing was a regular part of the ringing programme and his first one hundred peals was achieved on January 23 with one of Superlative Surprise Major. Included in this total was rung nine of Cambridge, six of London, seventeen of Double Norwich and two of Champion Surprise Major! His second hundred peals was scored on December 28, 1898, at the end of a three-day post-Christmas tour when he rang nine peals!

On March 21, 1900, he married Ada Baker, of Lewes, Sussex and they had two sons, Stanley and Harry. His peal ringing continued and for several years he rang over fifty peals per year, with fifty-five in 1912 and seventy-six (conducted sixty-one) in 1913. His one thousandth peal was on April 6, 1931 and it is interesting to speculate why he was the only ringer of one thousand peals who was not invited to stand in the special peal rung at St Olave, Hart Street on February 15, 1936.

When discussing his career, the item that usually gets mentioned as extraordinary is that in January 1905 he rang three peals of London Surprise Major in two days without making a single blow wrong in the whole 15,296 changes.

He rang a total of 1164 peals of which he conducted 462. His handbell total was four, all of which were Grandsire Triples. Nine hundred and twenty-four of his peals were credited to the Sussex Association.

One of his contemporaries who rang scores of peals with him confessed that he had never seen him make a miss blow. With his mastery of ringing he found it difficult to understand how other rational beings could make errors. Indifference in ringing and striking he would not tolerate and, because he was so outspoken, he was, at times, misunderstood.

He became captain of the St Peter Society in 1908 when George Attree emigrated to Canada and was in charge of the band when the new ring of ten was installed in 1914. I wonder if he was in favour of the church authorities turning down the ring of twelve which was offered by the donors. He rang fourteen peals on twelve bells, twelve of Stedman and one each of Plain Bob and Kent Maximus. He represented the Sussex Association on the Central Council from 1912 to 1914 and attended three meetings.

He did little ringing after 1938 but retained the captaincy of the tower until 1946. He died on July 30, 1947 aged 73 and was buried in Hove Cemetery.

References

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