

Biographical Record

Arthur Charles BERRY (1946 – 2013)

Represented the Worcester & District Association on the Central Council from 1972 to 1984 and attended 12 meetings.

Arthur Charles ('Bill') Berry was born in Malvern on 1st February 1946, but moved shortly after to Pershore, eventually settling down at 25 Priests Lane. Arthur finished his schooling at Pershore High school, then became an apprentice carpenter at Pettifers, a local builder based in Pershore High Street, where he mastered joinery and cabinet making. His work may be seen in such places as the Tythe Barn at Middle Littleton, and church doors at places like Bosbury and Bromyard.

Arthur started to ring in 1959, taught by Albert Grinnell, learning at Pershore Abbey and Pershore St Andrews in tandem. He rang a total of 611 peals (Pealbase), conducting 124. He rang at least one every year from his first at St. Andrews, to his final peal at Eckington June 2012 for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. (He conducted peals at the same tower and in the same method for the Queen's Silver, Gold and Diamond Jubilees.) He called his first peal at the age of 17.

He was a member of the Ancient Society of College Youths. He represented the Worcestershire and Districts Change Ringing Association on the Central Committee representative, and in the Southern Branch served spells as Branch Secretary, Branch Master and Central Committee Representative.

He married Hilary in 1979, and they had two daughters, Elizabeth and Catherine. In 1996, he asked to be known as 'Bill'. Subsequent use of the initials ACWB in the WDCRA annual report, and the logo cast on the Kidderminster bells suggest W was for William but this was not made clear.

In 1970, with the restoration project at Pershore St Andrews, Arthur found himself assisting Eric Fowler, Taylors' bellhanger, and he became a bellhanger in his own right. Notable tasks include the refurbishment of the wooden ten-bell frame at Lichfield Cathedral in conjunction with Messrs Taylors, the 10 bell installation at Clun and the 12 bells at Kidderminster. Arthur would always paint a frame, even if it was already galvanised. There were also many 6 and 8 bell installations. It is estimated that he may have refurbished or rehung about 1500 bells.

Whilst maintaining an allegiance to Taylors of Loughborough throughout his career, he was able to readily touch base with their competitors without restriction or compromise, something he held of great value, and can be recognised as a mark of the person he was – unassuming, selfless and always courteous and helpful.

Arthur collected wooden moulding planes, becoming an expert in them and their makers, in particular Barnes of Worcester and Parker of Tewkesbury.

He became ill in 2012, and died on 30th January 2013.

His obituary appeared in The Ringing World on 29 March 2013.

