

Biographical Record

John Robert COOPER (1927-1996)

Represented the Kent County Association on the Central Council
from 1957 to 1965 and attended 8 Council meetings

John Robert Cooper was born on October 1st 1927 at Bromley in Kent. He learned to ring at Charing in Kent in 1944. He rang at various Kent towers during his ringing career: Penge from 1947-1949; Lydd from 1949-1953; Ashford from 1963-1964; Hothfield from 1964-1967 and finally at Lenham from 1967 until his death in 1996.

John was a very talented ringer and an asset to all the towers where he rang. His first peal came on January 29th 1953 and was Cambridge Surprise Minor at Burmarsh in Kent. He rang a total of 685 peals of which 584 were for the Kent County Association, 19 for the Society of Royal Cumberland Youths and 13 for the Australian and New Zealand Association. His leading peal tower was All Saints, Maidstone, where he rang 70 peals. He conducted 16 of his peals. He was a member of the band which rang the first peals of Pitman's 6, 7, 8 and 9 Spliced Surprise Major 'all the work' for the Kent County Association. His last peal (Plain Bob Triples) was rung at Lydd only a few weeks before his death. He was a founder member of the Railwaymen's Guild, which was formed in 1956.

John married Audrey Hollis in 1965 and they lived at Hothfield, where John was responsible for building up the local band. John and Audrey had two sons but sadly, Audrey died only five years after their marriage and this caused John to move to Lenham to be near his mother so she could help to look after the boys. In 1977 John married Maisie Vantom, a Lydd ringer whom he had known for years and in whose first peal has had rung many years previously. John worked for British Railways at the Ashford Railway works for forty years, apart from when he did his National Service. He had started as a clerk but worked his way up to hold a senior position. Eventually when the works closed he became redundant. Then he took a post as a security officer for a financial institution. This necessitated a move to London where he was able to enjoy ringing with the Society of Royal Cumberland Youths and the London County Association. When John retired the family moved back to Lenham and John became involved with the ringing there. He helped with the re-hanging of the bells at Charing several years before his death. In Lenham he organised putting in a ringing gallery which was dedicated only a week before his death.

In 1988 John and Maisie went to Australia and New Zealand on a ringing tour to celebrate the bi-centenary of Australia.

John had several other interests as well as ringing; in his youth he played both cricket and football, refereeing the latter. Later in life he and Maisie both played bowls. John enjoyed music. He played both the organ and the piano and had a fine tenor voice.

He died on November 1st 1996. His funeral was at St. Mary's in Lenham, and he was cremated at Charing.



Obituaries were in The Ringing World 1996 pages 1140, 1266 and 1997, pages 99, 156.