

Biographical Record

Yvonne Lucie ELOIE (1904 – 2009)

Yvonne Lucie Eloie was born in Paris on 9th January 1904 to a French father and English mother. Following her mother's death in 1913 she was brought up by her uncle and aunt, Charles and Lucy Hazelden, in Guildford. Charles Hazelden was an enthusiastic ringer and rang at St Nicolas, Guildford from 1901 to 1907 and from 1922 to 1963, and at Holy Trinity, Guildford from 1907 to 1922.

Yvonne was taught to handle a bell in 1918 at Holy Trinity and began handbell ringing. However, in 1919 her father took her back to Paris, returning to Guildford in 1921. She did not continue with ringing because, in her words, 'I just could not grasp ropesight'.

By the end of World War II in 1945 Yvonne was secretary to the Bishop of Portsmouth (Bishop Anderson) and living in Wickham, Hampshire. She decided to make a real effort at learning to ring and was helped there by six easy-going bells, a welcoming tower captain, George Chappell, and some helpful young ringers from Titchfield, including Tom Page and his brother Pat and John H Hunt. Yvonne joined the Winchester and Portsmouth and Guildford Diocesan Guilds in 1947 and rang her first quarter peal at St Nicolas, Guildford, on 27th December 1948.

In 1949, when Bishop Anderson became Bishop of Salisbury, she moved with him to Salisbury to continue as his secretary. She became a member the band at St Martin's, Salisbury, joined the Salisbury Diocesan Guild and rang her first peal on 11th February 1950 at Sherfield English (Grandsire Triples, conducted by Frank Harris). She was Salisbury Branch secretary from 1950 to 1964 and in that time rang 9 peals for the Salisbury Guild.

In 1964 she returned to Guildford following the death of Charles Hazelden to be with her Aunt Lucy. There was no regular ringing at St Nicolas, Guildford, at that time so she attended practices at Stoke-next-Guildford, occasionally at first but regularly after her aunt died in 1965.

Yvonne returned to ringing at St Nicolas in 1967 when Malcolm Powell raised a young band from the congregation and after the University of Surrey Society was formed in 1971 it adopted St Nicolas as its home tower. Yvonne was elected President of the USSCR in 1980.

Yvonne was highly respected in the Guildford Diocesan Guild and held various offices: Librarian 1966 – 1989, Guildford District Secretary 1967 – 1978 and Treasurer 1967 – 1981, Vice-President 1989 – 2009

Between 1978 and 1987 Yvonne rang 9 peals for the Guildford Diocesan Guild, the last one being the last on St Nicolas' bells before their 1987 restoration (Plain Bob Royal). Altogether she rang 18 peals and about 185 quarter peals.

Yvonne's 100th birthday party was attended by a great many ringers, including her oldest ringing friend, Jessie Kippin, who had also been brought up in Guildford.

Yvonne died on 11th February 2009, aged 105. Her funeral was held at St Nicolas, Guildford, and a half-muffled peal of Stedman Caters, 5105 changes, was rung there to her memory on 16th March 2009.

