

Biographical Record

Leslie EVANS (1912 – 2011)

Represented the Hereford Diocesan Guild on the Central Council
from 1945 to 1947 and did not attend any meetings.

Leslie was born on 7th December 1912 in Mansel Lacy. His father was a skilled craftsman who made farm and other wagons as well as smaller two wheeled wagons. He also repaired water mills, made furniture and coffins. As a small boy Leslie used to help with the wheel making by using a watering can to cool the iron rims after they had been put onto the wooden wheels.

When he was 5, Leslie started at school in Mansel Lacy, but transferred to Eardisland when the family moved there in 1924. Having moved to Eardisland to 'The Brouch', Leslie lived most of his life there. Leslie won two Whittington Scholarships but did not go to the Grammar School in Leominster, because his father wanted him to work.

He followed in his father's footsteps in that he made beautiful garden seats and garden chairs, and lovely gates for churchyards. He could also make bell frames, and did, as he worked from time to time for Taylors, hanging bells.

Leslie was well known for his love of and advocacy of Taylor bells. Eardisland was an ordinary six until Leslie became involved, the money was raised and a Taylor eight was installed in 1952.

Shortly after moving to Eardisland, Leslie joined the church choir and served in it until 1937, when he became organist at Pembridge. Leslie was then organist at Pembridge for 56 years (playing for 57 Harvest Festivals, and only failing to get there twice in the whole of the time).

Music played a very large part in Leslie's life, singing with a number of choirs one of which was the Vale of Arrow mixed choir which made two records as well as singing in Liverpool Cathedral, Hereford Cathedral and Gloucester Cathedral.

At the age of 93 Leslie became an author in 2006, with the publication of his book 'A Herefordshire Life', the proceeds from which go to St Michael's Hospice, Bartestree, Herefordshire. This is a fascinating book and well worth reading.

Leslie died 26th August 2011, aged 98.

Leslie started ringing shortly after the family moved to Eardisland. This was on the old bells, and Leslie soon found that in order to advance he needed to visit other towers and started by cycling to Kimbolton (a distance of about 8 miles). Progress was then rapid and Leslie was soon ringing peals.

According to PealBase, Leslie rang a total of 388 tower bell peals, conducting 14 between 1952 and 2011. However, he rang a number before the PealBase record begins, these include 5 rung for the Swansea and Brecon Diocesan Guild, the first being on 6th May 1939 at Bronllys, and a further 240 for HDGB, the first being Grandsire Doubles on 20th Dec 1930 at Eardisland.

The majority of peals were rung for the Hereford Diocesan Guild of Bellringers (573 rung, 54 conducted according to HDGB Peal Record) but there was also a long association with the Swansea and Brecon Diocesan Guild (22 rung, 5 conducted according to PealBase with another 5 rung before 1953).

Leslie was one of the six ringers who on 15th April 1952, rang five peals in a day at Llanfihangel Rhydithon, Radnorshire, setting a new record.

He was elected Vice-President of the S&BDG in 1992, and judged the guild's striking competition for many years.

Leslie was elected Master of the HDGB in 1951 for one year only.

Leslie was a member of the Ancient Society of College Youths.

Leslie taught a new young band after WWII including Peter and John Rock, Frederick R. Harris and Laurence Mainwaring (Father of Andrew Mainwaring) and others. Much of the learning was done on the Eardisland bells with the clappers taken out because of the war-time ban on ringing, and they had progressed to Kent T.B. Minor before the clappers were re-fitted – their striking needed a lot of improvement, but Leslie did a really good job.



His obituary is on page 1148 of The Ringing World on 11th Nov. 2011.

A review of his book x 'A Herefordshire Life' (SaxonPress) appeared in The Ringing World on 28th Jul 2006