

Biographical Record

Shelagh Rosemary Melville (nee Collins) (1929 – 2013)

Represented the the Peterborough Diocesan Guild 1963-1966
and attended three Council meetings

Shelagh Rosemary Collins was born on August 2nd 1929 at Kew in Surrey. Her family moved later to Burpham near Guildford, where she learned to ring in February 1952 at St. Nicolas in Guildford, being taught by Albert C. Hazelden. She rang her first quarter peal a year later. Her first peal was also in 1953 when she rang the second to a peal of Plain Bob Minor on Coronation day, June 2nd , at Keele in Staffordshire.

Shelagh was attached to a number of towers in her ringing career. She rang at several towers in the Newcastle under Lyme area while she was employed at Hanley in the Civil Service. In 1956 she moved to Kettering where she rang for several years whilst being employed teaching Mathematics at Kettering Technical College. In 1964 she became the first lady to be Master of the Peterborough Diocesan Guild. She was the Branch Secretary in her time at Kettering and was on the Guild Committee. While at Kettering she was the tower secretary for Kettering church. In 1965 she moved to Kings Lynn, where she taught at the Technical College and rang at St. Margaret's, Kings Lynn. Her last move was to Bedford, where she became a much valued member of the St. Paul's band. She rang in the first peal on the 12 bells at St. Paul's Bedford in 1978. In 1982, which was the Centenary year of the Bedfordshire Association, she rang and conducted several ladies' peals. In 2001 she became the secretary and treasurer of the St. Paul's Bedford company of ringers. On August 9th 1969 she married Rev'd Malcolm Melville, also a ringer, at St. Paul's Bedford.

She rang a total of 499 peals, of which she conducted 19. Two of her peals were on handbells. She was a very keen tower grabber, ringing at over 4600 towers. She shared this passion with Malcolm and there was a certain amount of friendly rivalry between them as they collected new towers.

Shelagh obtained her B.Sc. degree at London University and her PGCE certificate at Leeds University. Among her other interests, she enjoyed quiz programmes and took part in the T.V. programmes 'Countdown' and '20 – 1'. She was a member of Mensa. She was a gifted teacher and, after Malcolm's death, she presented a cup (the Melville Cup) in memory of Malcolm. This cup is competed for by the young ringers of the Bedfordshire Association.

She died on 18th October 2013. Her funeral was on Tuesday November 12th at St. Paul's church Bedford, with a Requiem Mass, followed by private cremation.



An obituary appeared in 'The Ringing World' on page 243 on March 7th 2014.