

Biographical Record

Gerald PENNEY (1940 – 2011)

Represented the Hertford County Association on the Central Council
from 1974 to 1980 and attended 6 meetings

Gerald Penney was born at St. Albans on March 10th 1940. He learned to ring at St. Albans Cathedral in May 1954, being taught by Geoff Dodds. Between 1964 and 1965 he rang at St. Stephen's in St. Albans, but then rejoined St. Albans Cathedral, being Ringing Master there from 1967 until his death; Gerald rang in a peal at St. Peter's St. Albans which was rung to congratulate him on being Ringing Master at St. Albans Cathedral for 40 years.

He rang his first peal, Plain Bob Major, at St John the Baptist, Aldenham on 14th April 1956. He rang 1125 peals in total, conducting 450 of them. 869 were tower bell peals of which he conducted 361 and 256 were handbell peals of which he conducted 88.

He took part in several notable performances: on October 10th 1964 he rang five peals in one day at Loughborough Bell Foundry Campanile and on 3rd February 1973 he rang four peals of Cambridge in a day – Minor to Maximus. He rang 17,824 Kent Treble Bob Major in hand on May 26th 1968 and 10,784 Oxford Treble Bob Major on May 5th 1968. He rang 32 Spliced Surprise Major, 20 Spliced Surprise Royal and 16 Spliced Surprise Maximus and 6 Spliced Surprise 14 in. He rang 4 peals on 16 bells including the first one ever rung. Gerald completed peals of Stedman from Doubles to Cinques at St. Peter's St. Albans on 20th June 1974, completing circling the tower there on the same date. He circled St. Albans Abbey to peals on 23rd August 1975. He rang a total of 163 peals with his wife, Janet. He went on many of Tom Lock's peal tours, which he started going on when he was only 21 years old and the organisation of which he took over from Tom in the late 1970s.

Gerald was the Ringing Master of the St. Albans District 1963-1969. He was Peal Secretary of the Hertford County Association 1968-1971 and a General Committee member 1964-1972. He was President of the Association in 1990. Finally he was elected as a Life Member of the Hertfordshire County Association.

He was the driving force behind the installation of the new peal of bells at St. Albans Abbey. Sadly, his illness deprived him of the chance to ring on the new bells, though he did hear a recording of them.

Gerald earned his living as a draughtsman. He died on April 2nd 2011. His Memorial Service was in the Lady Chapel at St. Albans Cathedral on Tuesday May 10th.

His obituary appeared in The Ringing World on July 15th 2011 on page 736.

