

Biographical Record

George PULLINGER (1892 – 1966)

Represented the Winchester and Portsmouth Diocesan Guild on the Central Council
from 1933 to 1961 and attended 22 meetings

George Pullinger was born 15th February 1892 at Owslebury, Hants. He began ringing in 1908 at nearby Upham. He died October 23rd 1966 in the belfry of St Mary's Cheltenham during service ringing and was buried in the Garden of Rest at the parish church of Willingdon, where he had spent the last seven years of his life as a ringer and churchman.

He was a member of Woolton Hill tower during 1913/4. From 1919-1927 he was a member of the far-famed North Stoneham tower, then a ring of eight. From 1927- 1959 he became a regular member of Bishopstoke tower. After his retirement he moved to Cheltenham. He was an excellent striker and achieved better results with his one arm than many achieved with two. Peal ringing was a secondary interest: his passion was teaching, good striking and encouraging method ringing. Wherever he went he showed a lively interest in local ringing and never lost his Hampshire accent!

He rang his first peal in 1913 at the village of Owslebury where on March 1st George Williams conducted Plain Bob Minor for him. It was shortly after this that he moved to Woolton Hill, near Newbury. This is the one peal he rang with both arms. He would be willing to stand in the occasional peal, especially if it was someone's first, though he found this length of ringing a strain for his one arm, which he lost at the Mesopotamia in the Battle of Nasiriyeh. A gunshot wound to his right arm resulted in its amputation on July 15th, 1915.

George started his working life as a gardener in the Stargroves country house in Woolton Hill in the employ of Sir Frederick Ardagh. From here he enlisted in the Hampshire Regiment and was sent to Mesopotamia.

He was a school attendance officer in the 1920s and also took his place in the choir as well as in the belfry. He was able to steer a novice through a touch of Grandsire on the treble while keeping most of the rest of the band right as well. He made a point of seeing that any of his tutees looked up the methods they were supposed to ring before visiting other towers when he cycled around the country with them. Though of dour demeanour, he had a good heart underneath this. At his memorial service he was described as having all the steadfastness and stability "which we have learned to associated with those reared in the rural setting". His memorial service was supported by the great and the good of many Associations. The address was given by the Master of the Guild, the Revd. Canon K. W. H. Felstead, who described him as "a truly great man and a perfectionist in all that he undertook". It was decided at the service to ring quarter peals at various towers in the Winchester & Portsmouth Diocesan Guild. Those rung at Bishopstoke, East Tytherley, Sherfield English and Lyndhurst were successful but others were lost.

George held many offices in the Winchester and Portsmouth Diocesan Guild; Peal Recorder 1921-23; General Secretary 1924-29. It was during this time that the Guild was split up into what were to become the Winchester and Portsmouth and the Guildford Guilds. The formation of these two Guilds was largely the result of the work of George Pullinger and George Williams. He was Master 1949-55 and upon his retirement was elected a Vice President of the Guild. Concurrently he was Southampton District Secretary from 1932. He was elected to the Central Council in that year and continued until 1955, attending 22 meetings.



George was one of the last of the older members of the Winchester Guild before its re-emergence as two Guilds. He was a lifelong friend of Frank Knapp, a pre-war captain of Kingsclere and took part in the first peal on those bells, Cambridge Surprise Major in 1929, conducted by George Williams.

Tributes to him appeared in The Ringing World in 1966, pages 759, 771, 791 & 809 and 1967, pages 8 & 21.

His peals:

Plain Bob Minor 5, Grandsire Doubles 1, Grandsire Triples 15, Stedman Triples 17, Plain Bob Major 14, Kent Treble Bob Major 5, Double Norwich Court Bob Major 22, Cambridge Surprise Major 19, Superlative Surprise Major 10, London Surprise Major 11, Bristol Surprise Major 5, Grandsire Caters 2, Stedman Caters 6, Plain Bob Royal 4, Kent Treble Bob Royal 3, Cambridge Surprise Royal 1. Total: 140. (The Central Council Biographical Record sheet claims a total of 133.)

Peals with George Williams 112; at North Stoneham 54; Bishopstoke 22; for the Winchester & Portsmouth Diocesan Guild 75; The Society of Royal Cumberland Youths 5; The Bath and Wells Diocesan Association 3; The Salisbury Diocesan Guild 2; The Oxford Diocesan Guild 1; The Sussex County Association 1.