Biographical Record

Alison Katharine REGAN (nee SURRY) (1958 – 2012)

Alison Katharine Regan (nee Surry) spent her childhood years in Winchester, with her brother and sister, Richard and Helena, their mother, Marion and father, John, a Master at Winchester College.

Alison learnt to ring at Winchester Cathedral, taught initially by Bill Young, but soon taken under the wing of Charlie Kippin, who gave her a great deal of encouragement in her early ringing career. She was one of a number of very competent young female ringers to learn at Winchester at the time. Progress was very rapid, and Alison rang her first peal just before her 15th birthday, a young persons' peal of Grandsire Doubles on the six bells at Eling, followed four days later by a peal of Stedman Cinques on the heavy twelve at the Cathedral.

Her peal ringing career soon took off, ringing many of her early peals on both tower and handbells, with Hampshire ringers such as John Collis, Roy LeMarechal and John Dodd. She went on to ring a total of 1866 peals.

Initially, after A-levels and further studies at Eastleigh College, Alison started work as a legal executive, but decided to leave her job and go to university in London in 1980 to study linguistics. She was a huge asset to the UL, socially and as a ringer, being a key member of the band which achieved a number of ground breaking peals for university societies over the next three years. Included in these were 'all the work' Spliced Surprise Royal in 14 methods, Spliced Surprise Maximus (36 methods), 15,120 Surprise Minor in 21 methods at Huntington, York, the then record length of Surprise Minor, and silent and non-conducted Stedman Triples, as well as taking part in the first peal of Richard Harris' Cat Little S Major and other methods of similar nomenclature. She was also part of the UL band which reached the final of the National 12 Bell Competition at Evesham in 1983.

However, Alison never shied away from controversial ringing, taking part in "performances" on buckets and flower pots, which were not recognised by the Central Council. There was also a contentious peal at Greenham Common, which no longer appears in the Cumberland's record books. She was also a member of the Liss Campanile Youths band who reached the National 12 Bell Final 3 times before the rules were changed to prevent them from entering, creating quite a stir when they came second in the 1986 contest at Leicester Cathedral, only 1 fault behind the winners.

Alison was elected a member of the Society of Royal Cumberland Youths in January 1981, and was a regular attendee at Wednesday night practices and Sunday service ringer at St Martin-in-the Fields. She was a key member of the Cumberland band that, over the years rang some notable ladies peals on some of the heaviest and most challenging bells in the country. For example, peals at York Minster and Exeter Cathedral (4th and 2nd heaviest rings

of bells in the country) ringing the tenors with her goddaughter, Julia Cater (Alison became Julia's godmother at a very early age because the Cater family also rang at Winchester Cathedral), and at present the only lady to ring a peal on the 37 cwt tenor at St Buryan, Cambridge Surprise Minor in 1996. She has also circled the tower to peals 5 times at Bow and once at Worcester Cathedral.

When considering these feats, remember that Alison was 5 ft nothing, 8 stone nothing!

Alison rang a total of 1866 peals, nearly 500 being on handbells, calling 144 of them including the first peal for her son, William, at Hanbury. Her first peal as conductor was at Cubitt Town, to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the first ever ladies peal. She called the same composition, and from the same bell as Edith Parker 70 years previously. Of the peals rung to commemorate the 100th anniversary, many were dedicated to Alison.

She was elected Master of the Worcester and Districts Change Ringing Society at the 2011 AGM, and re-elected unopposed in 2012. She was also Tower Captain of All Saints, Worcester.

Outside ringing, she enjoyed other sorts of music too. She played the cello, playing in the Winchester College Orchestra, and went choral singing with her mother, and sang with the Imperial College and University of London choirs. She was considered good enough to sing solos too. As well as music, she also enjoyed acting, once playing Hermia in a production of "A Midsummer Night's Dream".

In the local Worcestershire community, she worked and volunteered in all ages of education, at London Road Playgroup, Red Hill Primary School as a parent, Friend and Governor and exam invigilator at Nunnery Wood High School. She also helped run a Guides and Rainbow group.



Professionally, Alison was a sub-editor of technical and specialist journals, including the China Quarterly, and publications of the School of Oriental and African Studies.

Alison was a loving mother to Catherine, William and Nicola and had been Married to Mark Regan.

She died unexpectedly of a previously undiagnosed peritoneal cancer at the age of 53, and is greatly missed by many ringers and non-ringers alike.

Tributes appeared in The Ringing World 2012 on pages 869, 870, 965-967, 968 & 970.