

Biographical Record

Alan Robert Smith (1947 - 2013)

Represented the Suffolk Guild on the Central Council from 1984 to 2008 and attended 22 meetings

Alan was born at Cuxton, Kent on November 27th, 1947. He appears to have been the oldest of four children, being the only boy. When he moved Suffolk, he named his house in Coddanham 'Cucclestone' which was an old variant of the spelling of Cuxton, his home village in Kent

He began ringing, also at Cuxton, in 1964, but only really began to get a different insight into the world of ringing when he joined the band at Henley, Suffolk under Howard Egglestone. It was probably Howard who first recognised that Alan's financial skills and knowledge would benefit the Guild. He was employed in the financial department of Suffolk County Council, where he worked with very large sums of money. He was elected Guild Treasurer in 1978, and immediately changed the system of accounting, which revealed a sizeable deficit in the General Fund – of £84. As a result he sought, and achieved, a doubling of the annual subscription. It caused shock waves to reverberate through the Guild members, but he rapidly succeeded in putting the Guild's finances on a sure footing, making sound investments which then returned a healthy interest rate.

It must have been about this time that Alan became involved with the Prince's Trust. He probably became involved because of his work, and was involved with the Trust for many years, and seemed to know Prince Charles quite well.

In 1984 Alan was elected to the Central Council where, once again, his financial skills were soon recognised. He served on the Bell Restoration Funds Committee from 1984 to 1999. He retired from the Central Council in 2008 having only missed two meetings. 2008 also saw him elected an Honorary Life Member of the Suffolk Guild in recognition of his contribution to the Exercise.

Alan was not a prolific peal ringer, only ringing a total of eight peals. The first was a peal of Surprise Minor in seven methods, rung at Ashbocking on April 13th 1977, but the last gave him great satisfaction, being Cambridge Surprise Major at Coddanham on May 1st 1993. This was because he had been instrumental in re-hanging of Coddanham bells, overcoming much local opposition to the project, and having made a significant contribution to the cost of the work.

Little is known of Alan's life outside ringing for he was a very private man, although he had good general knowledge and in the early eighties a team of Henley ringers, including Alan, took part in a pub quiz league competition that resulted in them coming second, only losing in the final to a team from Cambridge. The church occupied a substantial amount of his time. He served on the PCC and it is believed that he never missed a communion service in any of the churches in this benefice. Alan was always cheerful, even in the latter years when life must have been very difficult.

He suffered from Parkinson's disease, and lost a lot of mobility and speech but would accept very little help. He died on August 5th 2013.

