



# PORTSMOUTH DISTRICT NEWS

# SEPTEMBER

## Ringling for Rosemary Lee

Rosemary Lee, long time ringer and tower secretary at Curdridge, died on 13<sup>th</sup> September and we have been giving thanks for her life with ringing – as she herself asked. A few years ago she gave instructions: “On my death, please have a cheerful Thanksgiving Service, and a good party for those interested. I would like my ringing friends to have a good ring, at their convenience, long and loud please!” Well, her instructions were carried out! Her Thanksgiving Service at Curdridge on Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> September was certainly cheerful, with plenty of hymns, readings by her daughters Angie and Rosie and an excellent tribute by her son Christopher (Kip). The service was preceded by thirty minutes half-muffled ringing, and followed by a party in the Reading Room where lots of photographs of her life were on display.

She was born Rosemary Vanner Early on 16<sup>th</sup> May 1915, and Kip showed us the pewter mug that her father used to toast her birth while he was on the Western Front in the First World War. He was a strictly teetotal Methodist, so used cocoa: Chris said that Mum kept the faith but did not follow the teetotal line, and invited me to use the same mug to toast her life in Black Sheep beer, of which he kindly supplied a dozen bottles for the ringers. Her father may not have approved, but Rose certainly would have! Her family owned a blanket making firm in Witney (she would have said the top firm) and after leaving boarding school, where she was apparently a challenge, she returned home after a year’s cooking and housekeeping school to help with family and household. On 2<sup>nd</sup> September 1939, the day before World War Two broke out, she married an RAF pilot, Donald Lee, seeing him rejoin his squadron at 7am next day. They were together for twenty-nine years until his unfortunate early death aged only 53.



She had a wide range of interests, including dogs, hunting, New Forest ponies, chickens, strawberries, birds, bees, bell-ringing, brewing, bread-making, bats, singing in the church choir, canal trips, Meals on Wheels and the Gardening Club, and of course her children and grandchildren. She visited them regularly, although some had moved to Australia. Her last five years were spent in the White House nursing home at Curdridge, where she was very well looked after.

Kip said that in a way she never grew up and remained a busy, insatiably curious girl who never aged in her spirit or attitudes, and of whom her housemistress said ‘she ought to do something fine’; she did indeed and many people were richer for being touched by her life.

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to tell the District, please email  
the Publicity Officer at:  
lizzie.hough @ntlworld.com

A quarter peal of 1372 Plain Bob Triples was rung for her on Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> September, in 47 minutes. It was the second attempt, after the first fired out after about 20 minutes – well, she got her long ringing! The ringers included Terry Hargreaves, former tower captain, who taught Rose to ring.

Robin Milford

# Clock Chime Incident!

An unfortunate incident occurred at Curdridge on Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> September while ringing for the Thanksgiving Service for the life of Rosemary Lee, former ringer and tower secretary at Curdridge. We had been asked to ring half-muffled by the Vicar, and were just lowering the bells after half an hour's ringing before the service when Francis Mitchell, on the 5<sup>th</sup>, said that his bell had just stopped dead. I went up to have a look and found that the clock chime hammer for the 4<sup>th</sup> bell, which strikes through the wheel of the 5<sup>th</sup>, had been knocked sideways and was jammed between the wheel and the frame. The bell was fully down.

I noticed that the top part of the muffle on the 5<sup>th</sup>, which was tied around the clapper shaft with nylon cords, was hanging down below the clapper, still attached by the leather strap below the ball. This is shown by the attached photograph, which I took later after putting the muffle back as it was found.



All three chime hammers were hooked down for ringing, although the clock has been out of action for some months because of electrical problems. It looks to me that what may have happened is that the cords came undone and wrapped themselves round the bar of the chime hammer, jerking it up and putting the hammer end through the wheel. This was the only muffle that came loose like this, and by Sod's Law, the 5<sup>th</sup> is the only bell with a chime hammer below. The hammer and supporting bracket (also bent) were unbolted from the frame and removed as we had a wedding on Saturday and quarter peal for Rose on Sunday.

As Remembrance Sunday is coming up, I suggest that anyone with a similar muffle arrangement check their knots and put a bit of duct tape or similar around the muffle to make sure it stays put!

Robin Milford

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