

THE DEREK OGDEN MEMORIAL LIBRARY



This is the official title of the LACR library.

Derek Ogden (1933-1963) was a gifted ringer from Audenshaw on the east side of Manchester, whose life was tragically cut short by illness. He learned to ring whilst still at school just after the 2nd World War, ringing his first peal (3rd to Grandsire doubles) at St Peter's Ashton-u-Lyne in 1947 at the age of 14. The ringers of the treble and second were 13 and 12 respectively - reflecting the national drive to recruit new ringers at the end of hostilities. Such was Derek's ability and personality that he was elected ringing master at St Peter's Ashton aged 15.

He graduated from Manchester University with an honours degree in Chemistry in 1953. During his student years he became very involved in Manchester ringing and the early development of the University Guild – the MUGs. He was then called up for National Service in December 1953, forcing him to take a two year break from ringing, but on his return to Manchester he worked for Imperial Chemical Industries (ICI) and immediately became heavily involved in running the Manchester Branch of the LACR. He soon began to serve on both the LACR committee and the Central Council.

He quickly became an expert all-round ringer, composer and conductor, with a particular interest in splicing methods on 8, 10 and 12 bells. He composed some of the early record-breaking peals of spliced major, royal and maximus – and this was in the days before computers, when it was all done long-hand on paper! He was also involved in the long-length peals rung at the Loughborough foundry in the build-up to ringing the extent of changes on eight bells (40,320), ringing the 7th to a peal of 32,704 Plain Bob Major there in 1961.

He was always concerned with the part the Lancashire Association should play in promoting ringing. In 1960 he began to formulate plans by which the Association could help develop young ringers, and the branches could do more to help their members locally. He also fervently believed in the value of ringing competitions as a means of encouraging good striking – competitions that had been abandoned by the LACR many years previously. One of his earliest proposals was the establishment of an Association library in the tower of Manchester Cathedral, where he was a member of the band. A librarian was identified and a bookcase was commissioned – made by his father, who happened to be a cabinet-maker.

1963 saw Derek set new records in spliced surprise ringing at the time. He composed and conducted a peal of 5160 Spliced Surprise Royal in 12 methods at Worsley on 12 January, and similarly a peal of 5040 Spliced Surprise Maximus in 18 methods at the Town Hall on 13 March – both record performances at the time.

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TOWN HALL, MANCHESTER.

Saturday, 13th April, 1963, in 3 hours, 53 minutes.

SPLICED SURPRISE MAXIMUS. 5040 CHANGES.

In 18 methods, comprising 432 Lambeth, 288 each of Albanian, Aldenham, Belgrave, Cambridge, Lincolnshire, Lindsey, Pontefract, Prittlewell, Redfield, Rochester, Solihull, Superlative, Wigston, York and Yorkshire, and 144 each of Bedford and Pudsey; with 98 changes of method.

Cyril Crossthwaite	Treble	John Robinson	7
Robert B. Smith	2	Basil Jones	8
John Worth	3	F. John Nelson	9
Frederick Shallcross	4	John H. Fielden	10
C. Kenneth Lewis	5	Derek Ogden	11
Neil Bennett	6	Denis Mottershead	Tenor

Composed and Conducted by Derek Ogden.

This is the greatest number of methods ever rung to a peal on 12 bells.

Derek had been suffering from headaches and dizziness since the start of the year and had undergone x-rays and hospital investigations, but nothing had been found. The attempt to ring the 40,320 Plain Bob Major on the Loughborough foundry bells had been arranged for July and Derek was due to ring in it, but he had to pull out at the last minute because he was unwell with pains in his chest. He rang the treble to a peal of Surprise Royal at Worsley on the 31st August – which would prove to be his last peal.

He agreed to undergo an exploratory operation on the 17th September 1963 in an attempt to find out what was causing his illness. Unexpectedly, it was found that he was actually suffering from a form of cancer in his chest and that it was already very advanced. He did not survive the operation.

Many tributes to Derek appeared in the Ringing World issues of September and October that year, and many peals rung around the country were dedicated to his memory. In particular a half-muffled peal was rung by Association officers using one of Derek's own compositions that had not been rung before.

The library bookcase was completed a week later and the first librarian was formally appointed. The committee decided that, as a fitting memorial, the library should be named "The Derek Ogden Memorial Library" and that an inscription to that effect should be placed on the bookcase.

The library has a collection of both Association archive material and ringing publications collected over the last 60 years, including all LACR annual reports since the reconstitution of the Association in 1879 and all copies of the Ringing World since the first issue of March 24th 1911. The collection is currently being re-catalogued so that a list of its contents can eventually be published on-line. Scans of all the annual reports are now available to LACR members on a DVD from the librarian at a cost of £10.

K. George Lee.
Hon. Librarian.