

## Reverend Giles Galley - 8.8.1932 – 10.4.2024



Giles was born on 8<sup>th</sup> August 1932 in the vicarage at Oakington, Cambridgeshire to the Reverend Leonard and Evelyn Galley, a younger brother to sister Pamela. His father's promotion took the family to St. Neots, and it was here that Giles learned to ring when he was eleven.

He was a pupil at Marlborough, a public school in Wiltshire and then went on to study Classics and Theology at Queen's College, Cambridge, where he gained a Masters in Classics.

National Service saw Giles being called up into the army at a time when the Cold War was at its height. Having a good brain and being good at languages Giles was tasked with learning Russian with a view to listening in on enemy communications and possibly interrogating prisoners should war break out. Others studying Russian at the same time included Cyril Wratten, former Central Council Secretary, and Alan Bennett the famous playwright. From this period in his life Giles recalled a visit by Churchill when he and others had to hold forth in Russian – despite Churchill not speaking a word of the language. Giles' niece, Alison, recalls that years later when her parent's home in Zimbabwe was being rewired by an Estonian electrician, the electrician and Giles conversed daily in Russian.

After army service Giles went to Theological College in Lincoln and after ordination was appointed to his first curacy at Great Yarmouth under Gilbert Thurlow, one of the best-known clergyman ringers who went on to become Dean of Gloucester.

Giles' next post took him to Leeds Parish Church, and then to his first parish as vicar at Orchard Park in East Yorkshire. This appointment to a deprived area of Hull proved to be very successful, with Giles' easygoing nature breaking down any mistrust of the Establishment. The parties Giles held at the vicarage there are still talked about with great affection.

A young Liverpool ringer, John Ridley, came to Hull University at this time to study Russian and with this common bond he became Giles' lodger. So Russian conversation and notes as to where the house keys were hidden became the norm at St Michael's Vicarage.

After ten years at Orchard Park Giles moved to York in 1979 to take the living at Strensall, and he stayed there until retirement. Although the steeple at Strensall is only six and a half feet square internally Giles was keen to have a ring of bells, and in 1985/6 a lovely new 4 cwt six was installed in a two-tier bell frame.

After retirement in 2000 Giles went to live in Stamford Bridge in the East Riding. For the next twenty years Giles enjoyed an active retirement which included plenty of ringing, socializing and holidays. With his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday approaching in 1992 a group of his ringing friends arranged a celebration curry at his favourite local curry restaurant. By this stage Giles was quite frail, but it was a happy occasion and Giles was pleased to catch up with the 25 ringers who'd made it that evening. He moved to Bessingby Hall, Bridlington for the last 18 months of his life and was well cared for and happy there.

Ringing was an important part of Giles' life, and he took an active part locally wherever he lived. Although not an avid peal ringer he still managed to ring a total of 639, many of them on the annual Around Peal Tour with ringers such as Tudor Edwards and Ken Hesketh and on Wilfrid Williams' Peal Tours with ringers like Ralph

Edwards and Stan Mason. He was a proud member of the Ancient Society of College Youths and rang 70 peals for the Society.

Giles was an accomplished ringer on all numbers from doubles to maximus and was a member of the York band that rang the first ever peal of Horton's Four, which has now become standard fare in advanced eight bell ringing.

Giles was an active member of The Beverley & District Ringing Society throughout his time in Yorkshire and served as their Chaplain, and as a Trustee of their Bell Repair Fund, and was eventually elected to Honorary Life Membership. B & D Boating and Ringing holidays could be raucous and Giles thoroughly enjoyed the relaxation that came with the drinking.

Giles was elected as President of The Yorkshire Association of Change Ringers and held this office for four years from 1992. He also served on various committees of the Yorkshire Association and was a Trustee of their Bell Repair Fund.

Giles was an active and loyal member of the York Minster Society of Change Ringers and often talked of his love of ringing at such a high standard on such a heavy tuneful ring of bells. He was a Trustee of The York Bell Fund until his death and took an active interest in the many bell restoration schemes undertaken in York during this period.

No obituary of Giles would be complete without a mention of his famous limericks. He had a wicked sense of humour, and a new limerick was regularly produced as the Grace before a dinner or on many other formal occasions. The limericks painted such vivid pictures, but some of his finest would just not be suitable for any funeral or memorial service. They will, however, remain in the memories of those privileged to have heard them!

Giles was a lovely man with good friends all over the country, and he will be sadly missed by all those who knew him.

David E Potter

