

AXBRIDGE BRANCH Secretary's Report

We welcomed 15 new members into the Branch over the course of the year, but it was sad to learn of Walter Champion's death on 6th June. A well loved gentleman and lifelong active participant of East Brent Church, he leaves his community with fond memories.

We've had more than our usual 'run of the mill' branch events this year, as it was our turn to host the Association 6 Bell Final Striking Competition. This was quite a task to organise, but we planned well in advance, and took advice from previous Taunton hosts and Jay Bunyan. This paid off, with everything falling into place on the day, and believed to be a success. A total of four towers were needed, with stewards and judges at each, finishing off with a (fabulous!) reception tea provided by the local ringers of Locking. Thanks are given to all concerned, and to Kathy Carter and Ian Hill for acting as judges. It was refreshing to have a new name engraved on the trophy. Well done Langford Budville!

We held our key branch events this year at Kewstoke in April for our own 6 bell striking competition, and Wedmore hosted our AGM in October. Thank you to Brian & Barbara Wylde for acting as judges. I'm always very impressed (and grateful!) to the local tower band members themselves for their active support and helping hands, without whom these events would not happen or be the enjoyable occasions they have become. Marjorie, Betty, Ray, Barrie, Pat, Suzie & Ann to name but a few (you know who you are!) Helen and Fran matched last year's 'brain teaser' in April, this time coming up with an intriguing and inventive quiz, which resulted in many people staring at the walls scratching their heads. Hmm..? Dingbats, obscure photographs, quotations & all sorts to solve.

Hutton launched their Clock and Bell Appeal in March, offering tea and cake after our branch practice, then onto the Coach House Inn for a friendly skittles match to help raise money... and let our hair down. It was well supported, thank you.

We were delighted with the success at the Assoc 8 bell striking competition in September. Maryl Chambers picked a winning team, and indeed they proudly brought the trophy to the Axbridge Branch. Congratulations!

Karen Court, our popular newsletter editor, stepped down in June. We all enjoyed her paper, which grew from strength to strength, and her sense of humour shone from the pages. Karen is missed as a Committee member, and we know she is missed as our monthly 'correspondent'. Heartfelt thanks go out to Karen for all her hard work, and we wish you very well for the future.

Like other branches, we responded positively to Bishop Peter's walk of the boundary and various towers rang bells along his path.

Jude Akhurst