

ILCHESTER BRANCH
Secretary's Report

Since the writing of the last annual report, the Branch has gained 16 new members to lift the membership to over 200. Unfortunately, the Branch has lost several ringers of long standing. Malcolm Crothall died just before the start of 2009: having learnt at Westonzoyland, Malcolm moved to Somerton where he had rung for the last 30 years. John Bentley was the tower captain at Norton sub Hamdon for the last 40 years of his 60 years of ringing: John died just short of his 77th birthday. Malcolm Butcher, the tower captain at Martock, also died unexpectedly. Malcolm was a well-liked, staunch supporter of Branch ringing whose passing attracted tributes of a peal and no less than 16 quarters. As well as guiding the restoration of Martock bells, he had just organised the Branch's annual outing to the Dorset coast.

The dedicated 3 ringing masters had planned an interesting 2009 programme. The ring and walk day proved popular again, being held this year between the towers at Huish Episcopi, Muchelney and Drayton. Yeovil, too, had an intriguing extra for the quarterly meeting held there – a mystery object competition. The Branch AGM was also spread over the 2 adjacent towers of Montacute and Stoke sub Hamdon. At these and various social functions, the Branch raised £458 towards the Martock and Association bell restoration funds. The programme planned for 2010 follows a similar pattern with general practices on the first Saturday and advanced practices usually in the third week of each month. The Branch AGM will be at held jointly at Langport and Drayton on 11th September 2010. The full programme is available on the Association website.

Having served the Branch well as Treasurer for the past 5 years, Jennie Curzon has passed the books on the Peter Bartin. The rest of the officers remain unchanged. The officers would like to thank the Branch members for their continued support and enthusiasm and wish them rewarding ringing, good striking and friendly comradeship for 2010.

Brian Dodd