

## **TAUNTON BRANCH Secretaries' Report**

The year started with the AGM at West Monkton (2008) where Fred Sage stood down as Chairman, Margaret Jordan from the Secretary post and Edwin White from the Bell Funds Officer, all have given generously of their time over many years. Christine Sherman from Wellington was presented with the Whatmore Cup, in the Ringer of the Year competition with Adam Sherman – also Wellington - second, and Rachel and Hannah Coleby – Holy Trinity - third and fourth respectively.

The Branch 6 bell striking was held in February at Stawley with fifteen bands taking part; trophies were presented to Staplegrove - winners of the Rounds section, Bishops Lydeard the Call Change section, and to Wilton the Method section. Langford Budville went forward to represent the Branch in the Association Six bell striking, which they won - many congratulations, the first time a team has won from this branch in many years.

The Annual May outing this year visited Chewton Mendip, Chilcompton, Buckland Dinham, Mells, and Frome. It was well supported and excellently organised. Bishop Peter's walk around the Diocese was supported with ringing on 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> June, when he passed closest to us. The June quarterly meeting was held at Thurlbear. New members have been welcomed from various towers throughout the branch which is very encouraging. Long service certificates have been presented to Frank Morris and for the family of G. Salter (deceased) both of Wellington - in respect of their membership of sixty years. Also to Alan Pendlebury - Wilton - a member for 40 years. Sadly we report the deaths of Fred Mills - Wilton, Edgar Batten - East Lyng, Dermot McHugh - Corfe and Bert Knight from Ash Priors, all regular ringers in this branch for a great number of years.

Regular branch practices were held at various towers throughout the Branch during the year, and remain on the whole well attended. Twice yearly branch training courses continue to be very successful, and have been well attended by learners and helpers alike. The August Young Ringers outing was again well supported, encouraging as it does the newer learners – young and not so young - to venture further afield, away from the security of their own towers in a well supported environment.

September brought the Lichfield Mobile belfry to Bishops Lydeard Medieval Fayre and many ringers helped support the vast numbers of visitors - to try their hand at ringing. The Branch successfully entered a band in the Association 8 bell striking competition at Chard, the first time for many years.

Our thanks go to everyone who has supported the Taunton Branch throughout the last year, making it another very successful and enjoyable one.

Margaret Jordan/Valerie Contreras