

GENERAL SECRETARY'S REPORT

My thanks to all the towers that completed the Central Council Ringing Trends survey. This information has now been assimilated into the national figures and overall Somerset is in line with the national figures. The survey results have prompted our new Education Officer, David Purnell, to organise a seminar on recruitment, retention and development of ringers. The 49% response was disappointing but is apparently average per association.

There was a lot of activity on the Newslister regarding the role of our Central Council representatives and the work of the Central Council. This year's meeting was held in Worcester. The new ringing teaching centre in the cathedral was open for demonstrations and ringing on Sunday and this proved very interesting. The Open Meeting gave an update on the activities of the Ringing Foundation over the past 12 months. Subsequent workshops focussing on what works in the teaching of ringing were attended by several members of our Association. A new secretary was elected – Mary Bone from Essex. The first 2 motions were passed with little comment - committees may now co-opt any number of members and the remit of the Peal Composition committee now includes compositions of all lengths. In the past the Biographies Committee has only included details of members of the Central Council. The proposal to include records of any ringer prompted lively discussion and the motion was passed. However the motion limiting the functions of Honorary Members failed narrowly, after considerable discussion, to achieve the two thirds majority required. This may be raised again next year. On behalf of the Tower Stewardship Committee Chris Mew gave a presentation on the new requirements for Child Protection. This helped to clarify a somewhat confused situation.

Child Protection is a matter of concern to us all and details of the new requirements have been sent to all towers. We have a responsibility to ensure that these requirements are met, especially at training events. All PCCs have an appointed person for child protection who will arrange clearance and answer queries.

The project to supply a replacement bell for Chilipi cathedral in Zambia is moving very slowly, due mainly to communication difficulties. It is hoped that a new line of contact will speed matters up.

I attended the dedications of three projects assisted by the Association Bell Fund. All were very different – Shepton Mallett being the refurbishment of a difficult ring, Charlton Adam the conservative restoration of a previously unringable five and Tolland being a brand new, very light, ring of 8. The common factor was the will of the ringers, PCC and local people to work together to make the projects work.

New officers have again been elected in several branches and I would like to thank the retiring officers for all their hard work and wish their successors well. As ever, my thanks to the association officers for their help and support during the year.

JAY BUNYAN