

TAUNTON BRANCH

The year started with the AGM at Pitminster (2009) where all the officers were re-elected and Fred Sage was elected to the new post of Deputy Ringing Master. Thea Banks was presented with the Ringer of the Year Cup – the youngest ever to win it - at eleven years old. Rose Anne Kimber was presented with the Whatmore Cup. Throughout this last year, 12 new members have been elected and 40yrs Long Service Certificate awarded to Dennis Uphill.

Branch Striking Competition held in February at Corfe with 18 bands taking part; trophies were presented to Bishops Lydeard (Rounds), Pitminster, (Call Changes), and Langford Budville (Method). The June quarterly meeting was held at Milverton.

Our Annual May outing this year visited Honiton, Colyton, Sidmouth, Thorncombe and Chard and was well supported. In June, Langford Budville went forward to represent the Branch - in the Association Six Bell Striking Competition and they are to be congratulated on their fine performance. They won their heat at Bathampton, and came sixth in the final at Bathford.

Regular branch practices have been held at various towers throughout the year, and remain well attended. Twice yearly branch training courses to suit various abilities continue to be very successful, and have been well attended by learners and helpers alike. A new course this year – Train the Trainer – has been well received and will be ongoing. The August 'New' Ringers Outing was again popular - encouraging as it does the newer learners to venture further afield - away from the security of their own towers in a well supported environment.

In September, the Branch successfully entered a band in the Association 8 bell Striking Competition held in the Dunster Branch at Old Cleeve. The band were placed fifth out of eleven bands.

October brought the Association Recruitment Week and this was widely supported throughout the branch. The Mobile Simulator Bell was used to demonstrate bellringing to good effect, being placed during the day outside St Mary's on 16th and Staplegrove on 23rd, also at various towers throughout the week. Over 40 towers took part, either opening their practice evenings, or having Open afternoons and there has been much early enthusiasm, with many prospective recruits coming forward.

Our thanks go to everyone who has supported the Taunton Branch throughout this last year, for their interest, enthusiasm, help and support. Special thanks go to Jill and Mike Hansford for their inspirational leadership and for continuing to give unstintingly of their time and skill to support all our Branch practices and in providing much of the tuition for our many and varied training courses.

Pearl Jeanes/Valerie Contreras