

## TOWER ADVISER'S REPORT

During this Association year twenty four inspections were carried out, five more than last year, and I am grateful to Assistants Roland Backhurst and Bernard North for their valuable support in carrying out their share, based mainly on geographic location.

Five of these were final inspection reports following work being completed, and nineteen were initial inspections. The five final inspections were at Heathfield (the 5 bells were re-hung on new metal headstocks with structural improvements), Martock (the eight bells were retuned and re-hung on new fabricated steel headstocks), Chedzoy (the six bells were re-hung on new fabricated headstocks and roping improvements made), Porlock (the six bells were re-hung on new fabricated headstocks.), Congresbury (re-hang of bells 4, 5 & 6 and refurbishment of clappers),

Of the nineteen initial inspections five resulted in straightforward recommendations covered by housekeeping, maintenance and minor repair. These were at Sutton Montis (3), Wootton Courtenay, Compton Dando, Moorlinch and Kewstoke. Advice on sound levels was given at Long Ashton before the removal of existing insulation material, and at Rodney Stoke where sound reduction measures are needed. Maintenance work was needed at Congresbury and recommendation for a re-hang given. Advice on moving the ringing up from the ground floor was given at Chew Stoke and advice on roping was given at North Cheriton. A major refurbish is needed at Norton St Philip. Plans were supported at Nailsea for their proposed re-tune and re-hang. Repair to the upper tier bell frame support structure and headstock bearing refurbishment are required at Wrington. The treble and 5<sup>th</sup> bells need re-hanging at Ubley. Outline plans for external sound level enhancement and other long term improvement plans were discussed at Wedmore. Refurbishment of clapper bushes, headstock bearings and pulley sheaves is suggested for Bathwick and plans for a re-hang and new clappers is supported for Bishops Lydeard. The three bells at Pitcombe are in need of a re-hang and plans for augmentation to six are being considered. I am grateful to the ringers who joined me at Chilton Cantelo to carry out a quick health check, maintenance and ring so that the cracks in the tower wall could be monitored by the Structural Engineer.

As last year a significant number of these inspections revealed unnecessary deterioration due to a lack of maintenance. In some cases ageing steeple keepers and very difficult access contributed to this situation, in others it seemed to be a lack of understanding of the need for regular maintenance. The Tower Advisory Service section on the B&WDACR website has links giving suggestions for suitable reading material, and in particular I would recommend the booklet "Schedule of Regular Maintenance" as a good basic overview. This booklet is also a starting point for the excellent Bell Maintenance course organised by Janet Wyatt, our Deputy Education Officer and led by James Clarke of the Towers and Belfries Committee of the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers.

JOHN HALLETT