

Cary Branch Secretary's Report

The year started well with our branch social at the end of November, an opportunity for everyone to get together away from the bells, and it made a useful sum for the Association Bell Fund again.

Our young ringers have become a very successful group under the guidance of Anna Piechna, our training and education officer. They have been having a succession of lively practices around the Branch and beyond and their abilities are coming on apace; a very good example. This year's winner of the Osborne Trophy for Young Ringer is Tobias Dando who has progressed in a short time to an excellent proficiency. A continuing innovation this year has been Anna's "Rides to Ring" with a biking outing into Dorset.

Practices and training courses have had a good run but we still need to encourage some bands to venture out from their own safety zone and reap the benefits which come from handling other bells and the confidence which can come from experience with a wider band of helpful ringers. Then Sunday ringing back in the home tower would be sure to benefit.

In the Spring Batcombe hosted our Branch Six Bell Striking Competition with Bruton runaway winners (again) and South Cadbury second. Both went on to the Association Six Bell Striking Competition in the Bridgwater Branch in June but unfortunately didn't progress beyond the heats. Better luck next time. And September our Branch sent off a team to the Association Eight Bell Competition at Shepton Mallet, coming back with sixth place.

At Charlton Mackrell's practice night on 15th July a broken stay on the 4th bell led to the discovery of a radial crack, some 10mm wide, round the crown of the bell. It was cast in 1665 by Robert Austen of Compton Dundon. At the time of writing the bell is at "Soundweld" with the prospect it will be fully repaired and restored to the tower.

Ringling for the Royal Wedding of HRH Prince William and Miss Kate Middleton in April included four quarter peals and organised general ringing as well as our ringers helping in towers outside the branch.

This year's outing was to towers in south west Somerset: Haselbury Plucknett, North & South Perrott, Crewkerne, Chard, Combe St Nicholas and Donyatt.

With the passing of Lloyd McCreadie, our Chairman for the last eleven years, we have lost a very special member of our Branch ringing life. He has lived in the same area all his life, starting to ring at the age of 13; was our Secretary for 25 years and this year shared the distinction of being the joint oldest Honorary Life Member of the Association. He is specially remembered for bringing on new and young ringers to the exercise and we miss him greatly.

The books left to us by Tim Watt have been divided between the Association Library at Bridgwater and a branch resource at Bruton tower.

We enter the new ringing year with Brian Shingler as our new Chairman, our branch membership up again, with a vibrant group of young ringers of whom we are justly proud and the branch and its bells and ringing in good shape.

Peter Alderson