

## **Frome Branch Secretary's Report**

Ringling in the Branch this year has been uneventful. Membership has remained static, attendance at meetings has been on the low side, although the last practice meeting did show some improvement and the AGM may have been slightly boosted by the day's ringing outing prior to the meeting. It is heartening that there are pockets of very keen ringers who regularly keep their own tower going. Jenny Cornwell has now got her training courses under way, and we hope that these will show benefit to the Branch and ringing in general.

A notable event was brought to the notice of the members at the Branch AGM. John Fowler, of Kilmersdon, became the longest serving member of the Association with a total of 75 years. He came to Kilmersdon with his family as an 11 year old boy in 1934 and in 1936 his name first appeared in the list of the B&WDACR as a ringer at Kilmersdon. He has been attached to the tower since that time, interrupted only by WW2 service in the Royal Navy. For the last 10 years he has been tower captain, latterly assisted by Dennis Taylor.

Some good news from Norton St Philip where the bells were taken to Whitechapel Bell Foundry, retuned and rehung in the original frame. They are now much improved. The local ringers are to be congratulated for their outstanding work in raising the total cost involved for the work to be undertaken.

The Branch 6 bell striking competition was held this year at Farmborough. There were seven teams entered with Chilcompton and Beckington going through to the Association Competition. In the heats at Chedzoy, Chilcompton were placed first and Beckington came third at Shapwick. In the final at Wembdon, Chilcompton were placed third.

The highlight of the year was at Shepton Mallet in September when the Branch hosted the Association 8 Bell Striking Competition. The weather stayed fine. The refreshments were outstanding and the two Judges, John Hunt and Mick Hobbs provided a very witty description of the ringing and marking. There was tension right to the very end when it was announced that Frome Branch had won the trophy by half a point from second place Axbridge 'B'. Tim Phillips and his band are to be doubly congratulated as this is the first time that the trophy has been won by a team representing the Frome Branch.

Ray Haines