

SOME THOUGHTS FROM THE MASTER

One of the important events in the past year of our Association was the publication of the book *The Church Bells of Somerset*, the lifetime work of George Massey. It's a fantastic treasure trove of information and interesting stories, and one of the best of its type in the country. It is well worth getting hold of a copy for your tower or as a special present for yourself. We record our debt too to David Bromwich for the enormous amount of work he put into getting it ready to print and to the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society for publishing it.

At the end of 2011 BBC 4 presented two excellent programmes, *Come Bell Ringing with Charles Hazlewood*, which ended with an extraordinary piece of music which he composed, and *Still Ringing After All These Years: A Short History of Bells*. Both gave a good impression of ringing and it was particularly good to see ringing as a fun and interesting hobby for normal young people! It is wonderful to see how well the Young Ringer competition has gone this year in the Association.

Both television programmes reminded people that the sound of bells ringing is deeply rooted in British culture, and that they provide a grand soundtrack to historic moments. We have the chance to join in some historic events in 2012.

To mark 60 years of The Queen's reign, the Diamond Jubilee will take place with celebrations, which will centre around an extended weekend of 2nd - 5th June. I hope there will be plenty of bells to help celebrate the outstanding contribution the Queen has made to the life of our nation. Try and find out how your community plans to celebrate and join in at the appropriate time!

The Olympic Games will be another special occasion, not just for those of us who love sport. During 21st – 23rd May the Olympic Torch will pass through the county, and it is hoped that we will help provide a backdrop of ringing to that. Then on 27th July, the day of the official opening of the Games, we are also encouraged to ring if not at 8am, then at some time in the day.

Finally, thank you again for all you do in your own tower and branch. I hope to see many of you at the AGM in the Taunton Branch on Easter Monday. Happy ringing in 2012.

TIM HAWKINGS