

Dunster Branch Secretary's Report

At last year's AGM, Mike Ellicott stepped down as Chairman of the Dunster Branch and Joan Hopwood was elected as his successor. Otherwise, the committee remained the same.

The branch has enjoyed another year of varied practices, under the leadership of Jon Rose, Ringing Master. The programme consists of three practices a month. The six bell practice at Selworthy, the 8 bell at Old Cleeve, and the Saturday practice, held at a different tower each month, with a featured method. Susan Mew has established a well-structured series of 14 training sessions, with 108 students attending overall. The Young Ringers have been similarly active, again under the care of Susan, with help from Sue Atkins, participating in the Jubilee Quarter Peal Young Ringers challenge. Young Ringer Tom Mitchell, of St Decumen's, was awarded the Achiever of the Year shield.

In July 50 members went on the annual Branch Outing to Bristol, and rang at 5 towers, ranging from 6 bells to 12, with a lunch time boat trip around the harbour.

The other Branch activities were well supported. 60 members attended the annual dinner held at Oake Manor Golf Club in March, and more than 50 participated in the keenly contested skittles match, won this year by Timberscombe.

St George's day, the Olympics and the Queen's Jubilee, were marked by 20 of our towers ringing to celebrate at least one of these events.

Sadly, during the year, the branch has lost a number of loyal members: Cyril Miller, who had a long association with Minehead; Derek Poole, former tower captain at Timberscombe, and Maxine Garner of Wootton Courtenay.

A certificate was presented to Mark Davies of Minehead, to record his 40 years membership of the branch.

The branch has been pleased to welcome 4 new members this year. However this is the lowest number for several years, and recruitment remains a top priority of the branch.

To this end, the branch made the decision to take a stand at the Dunster show. A Saxilby bell, loaned by Taunton branch, was the centrepiece of an excellent display, and a good number of people passed through the stand despite the atrocious weather. But, although our aim to raise people's awareness of ringing was met, sadly few, if any, new recruits have resulted.

In summary, a busy and enjoyable year, but recruitment remains at the top of our list, for the coming year's tasks.

Glenys Tonks