

Taunton Branch Secretaries' Report

The AGM was held at Wilton (2011) and a record 36 new members were elected, with a further 3 at the June meeting. Long service certificates were awarded to Chris Marshall and Beryl Morris (60) and Felicity Marshall (40). The Whatmore Cup was presented to Thea Banks and the Runner up Cup to Ally Gabell.

Sadly we report the death in January of our dear friend Jeremy Dugdale, captain of Corfe. An enthusiastic recruit to ringing later in life, always cheerful and encouraging he was an inspiration to us all. As Education Officer, he had the vision to start local training within the Branch, the backbone of the successful programmes we run today.

This year, we have continued to run an impressive number of courses (65) and quarter peals have also been called to consolidate methods learnt. With training in mind a Simulator has now been installed at Hillfarrance where most of our courses are held. The accessibility of the bells, the excellent facilities and welcome make the church an ideal location. A timetable of regular Branch practices throughout the year continues to support learning at every level. Our grateful thanks go to Jill and Mike Hansford for their time and skill given so freely to support this Branch and to our loyal team of helpers, who make it all possible.

A new venture this year has been to regularise Young Ringers practices (9) during school holidays. These have been enthusiastically supported variously by a total of twenty five young ringers from the Taunton and Dunster branches. Our thanks go to all parents and helpers in making this so successful.

The Striking competition was held again at Hillfarrance with 20 Teams competing. Staplegrove won the Rounds trophy and Bishops Lydeard the Call Changes and Method trophies. The Annual May outing to Devon was well supported; a memorable well organised day out for all and our thanks to Tom Harris and Martin Cursham again for their excellent planning. Newer ringer's outings were held in January in the Taunton Branch and August in the Bridgwater Branch. All these have been excellent social events aimed at supporting emerging ringers and building new and ongoing friendships.

The Appeal for the Restoration of St Mary's (Taunton) Bells and Carillon was launched in June and is ongoing. A good start of £26,000 has been made so far.

Pearl Jeanes/Valerie Contreras