

## **SOME THOUGHTS FROM THE MASTER**

I hope you find this Report an encouraging read. For me it underlines the enormous time and dedication put into the Association by so many people, week in, week out.

You will see some very encouraging news this time about the training of new ringers that continues through the work of Education Officers, Teachers, Mentors and all those involved in helping people who want to learn to ring. There is indeed a lot of support now available locally through our Branches and the Association. Nationally too the Central Council and the Ringing Foundation have useful initiatives for us to join in with. One of the ambitious goals across the country is to ensure that an additional five hundred new ringers are trained up to at least Plain Bob Minor level each year to replace those ringers that are likely to retire over the next 20 years. We want to be part of this!

I know first-hand the buzz that an enthusiastic new ringer can bring to a tower. The attractions of learning to ring are just the same as when I learned over forty years ago. It provides you with an instant and wide circle of friends and a warm welcome in most (!) towers, no matter how long you have been ringing or what your ability. It offers to give you a great mental workout and gives you plenty of opportunity to learn new things throughout your life. Together we are maintaining one of the traditional sounds and skills of the British landscape. Just as important a reason as these, is that you are offering a valuable service to your local church.

This year I would like to offer our particular debt of thanks to those who continue the unseen but important care for our bells, and keep them in good working order. It is vital that bells and towers continue to be well maintained. If this is proving difficult for you or your tower, please ask for help.

As an Association I would also like to thank David Floyd for the work he has put into producing the Report again for us. Together with the website, it provides an invaluable source of information of what is going on in and around the county. David will be standing down as Report Editor at the Annual Meeting, but thankfully will continue to maintain the website.

I am very much looking forward to welcoming you to the Axbridge Branch for the Annual Meeting on 1st April!

**TIM HAWKINGS**