

CARY BRANCH

The trend of looking beyond the boundaries of the Branch has continued and developed over the year to embrace neighbouring towers for practices, training and special events even more than last year and this is a fruitful and enjoyable aspect of our ringing. Our band of promising young ringers have driven many of these new departures and they are to be encouraged and congratulated. At the same time the pattern of activities has continued much as before within the Branch. The experiment with 'change of format' to some of our meetings did not lead to the better overall attendance intended but we hope further changes planned for next year will.

Winner of our Branch 'Osborne Trophy for Young Ringer of the Year' was Tobias Dando and in the Association Competition Tobias came second, Lily Carswell third and Saffron Prior fifth. Lily and Tobias travelled to York in the Summer as part of the Association team taking part in the Ringing World National Youth Competition and were placed joint fifth. In the new Young Ringer Awards scheme Will Tearall of Charlton Adam, Georgie Green, Maddie Green, Tom Power Luke Read and Daniel Vitiello, all from Wincanton, won awards and we are proud of them all.

In the Spring we had our best turnout yet for the Branch six bell striking competition at West Lydford, won by Queen Camel (again) with South Cadbury second and two teams from Templecombe as runners up. Five of our towers were rung as part of the nationwide recognition of St George's Day, the same number but not the same towers as last year. In response to the new initiative of our Association Bell Fund Officer seven quarters were rung in aid of the Bell Fund. We once again entered a team in the Association Eight Bell Competition at South Petherton and our annual outing was to Devizes and towers around, where we enjoyed a good selection of rings.

The tower to watch this year has been Pitcombe where after considerable delay the initiative to upgrade their bells from a difficult three to a good light ring of six has taken off. A trip to Whitechapel in the Autumn enabled ringers from the tower to see two new bells cast and we are awaiting the inauguration of this upgraded ring in the Spring of next year and inclusion of this tower in our regular programme. Meanwhile Barton St David and Stoke Trister both are 'out of the ringing' at the turn of the year and need attention. Ditchat suffered a broken clapper which has been repaired. Barton St David and Horsington have been designated as our training towers, each with a simulator and Horsington is already in use as planned.

Fortunately the road at Cary rail bridge reopened just in time for our Social and Skittles evening in November at the Brook House Inn near Cary, in aid of the Association Bell Fund, where we enjoyed the good company to complete our ringing year.

Peter Alderson.