

District Secretary's Report 5th February 2011

We began this year with a new chairman, Ian Hunt, whose father John Hunt was, until his death in 2006, one of the most respected ringers for many years in the Portsmouth District. Ian has now settled in and is presiding over various initiatives to do with recruitment and training. Also new to the team was Lizzie Hough, who has done a splendid job of upgrading the posters and generally keeping us well-informed as publicity person.

The training initiative begun last year continued with more District Training Days. In addition to the usual popular ones for beginners with the focus on handling and basic hunting, there were also two on Cambridge Minor, and one on Stedman doubles. It is hoped that more learners can benefit from these intensive mornings in the coming year.

Possibly the most exciting event in the District was the augmentation from ten to twelve of the Portsmouth cathedral bells. The sum required was raised during the preceding twelve months, and finally the bells were lowered by crane into the tower on a breezy March day, with quite a gathering of onlookers and their cameras. The two new trebles were blessed at a dedication service at the end of April. District members who attend either Thursday evening cathedral practices or District practices are gradually adjusting to the different ropesight, and the cathedral band itself is making great strides in confidence in 12-bell ringing.

Maintaining the competitive element in the District, a striking competition was ably run by Sarah Hutchinson and several towers took part. Portsmouth came second in the Inter-District 8-bell competition, and a Portsmouth Ringers team (calling themselves 'Going Like the Clappers') took part in the annual Rotary Dragon Boat race, making up for an underwhelming result with bags of youth and enthusiasm !

There was no outing to distant parts this year, but we did go on a splendid District Walk instead, starting at Ropley and taking in a few towers on the way to Easton, and including a short trip on the Watercress line.

