

Winter 2005

VANCOUVER

Michael Connidis

Happy New Year 2005 to all. The Vancouver band started the New Year with a bang; more about this further on. It was a busy fall in the tower. All of the merry wanderers returned safely from their summer and fall travels. Our band continued to grow with four new learners coming up to the tower regularly and a new recruit joining the band before Christmas. This has meant our seasoned ringers have been busy teaching bell handling and keeping a watchful eye out. There is a friendly level of competition in the tower, with people learning to cover, lead and plain hunt. The effort being made by all is paying dividends.

Sadly for us, our Vice Captain, Ander Holroyd, has flown south to Berkeley, CA for a five month professional sojourn. He will be missed, especially by our Captain Eve Munns, as he has provided great support to all. As there is no bell tower in Santa Barbara, Ander said he would continue to think of the Vancouver band and the Holy Rosary Cathedral tower as home. Ander will be coming back permanently after the summer and until then he will be visiting us every now and again.

Visitors came to the tower throughout the fall, both to ring and to watch and listen. There were several successful quarter peal attempts. On October 12 a quarter of Grandsire Triples was rung in memory of Nel Verhorst, 1924-2004, the sister of band member Helen Leffelaar. A

quarter of Cambridge Surprise Minor was rung on November 23 to mark the beginning of Advent. In celebration of the 75th birthday of our Steeple Keeper, Jeff White, a quarter of Plain Bob Minor was rung on December 14th.

Regular ringing for Saturday weddings and Sunday services at the Holy Rosary Cathedral was maintained throughout the fall. The band also rang for Vancouver's renowned Musica Intima on December 7th and then the accomplished Vancouver Cantata Singers on December 8th, prior to their concerts.

The festive season started off with a warm gathering on December 10th at the home of Pam and Gordon Cooper. Ander directed ringing of the hand bells in the Lapping style, a new experience for some. Three of the 5 generations of the Ellis family were present, with Alan's mother and grandson, the most senior and most junior members of the family, spanning the ages.

The Christmas Eve ring was well attended by both band members and visitors alike. The tower was quite crowded with a cheerful group and the ringing was lively and bright. Hot chocolate and Christmas baking were shared around, thanks to Eve and Peter Munns as well as those who brought their favorite taste treats, chocolates included.

New Years Eve was all the more festive, with a good band of ringers to toll out the old year and ring in the New Year. With the Vancouver First Night celebrations taking place just a few blocks away from the tower, we had an audience of over 25,000 people. Just after Alan Ellis had struck the tenor for midnight and the band had begun to ring in rounds, a huge fireworks display erupted a block away, lighting up the tower through the stained glass windows. It was the first time there had been a fireworks accompaniment and it was a spectacular compliment to the bells. Thanks to Jim McDowell, this unique event was noted province-wide on the Editorial Page of the British Columbia newspaper, the Vancouver Sun, on January 4, 2005. After the New Year had been duly rung in, cider, hot chocolate and yet more seasonal goodies were enjoyed by all before we left the tower for the first time in 2005.

On a personal note, my apologies to Sue Thompson who had transferred the responsibility for writing the Vancouver Area Report to me upon her departure to Chilliwack. When I was unable to carry on her good work, Alan Ellis took on the task, for which I am grateful. I intend to submit regular reports on the progress of the Vancouver band as Sue did so well for so many years.

We look forward to the continued progress of our learners, to further accomplishments by the band and to friendly gatherings of the band both inside and outside the tower in the months ahead. Good health and good ringing to all in 2005.