

*Michael Connidis*

It is a pleasure and added support for all to have Ander Holroyd back with us full time after his sojourn in Berkeley, California. During the spring months, Vancouver band members continued to improve their ringing skills and attempted more challenging work. Those stalwart members who guide us and take an interest in those of us who are struggling with counting places, rope sighting and the like, in particular Eve Munns, Alan Ellis, Jeff White and more often these days Barbara Vogl, are seeing some positive results. Our star learner, Omer Angel, successfully rang inside on both Plain Bob Doubles and Stedman Doubles and rang a quarter peal for the first time; Plain Bob Doubles on the tenor. Not wanting to rest on his laurels, Omer went on to ring a quarter peal on hand bells while visiting in Berkeley. Peter Alexander also rang a quarter peal for the first time, on the tenor for Plain Bob Doubles. Ruth achieved her first milestone when she handled a bell solo. As for those of us who have been at it for awhile, well, we just keep at it, encouraged by the success of others, determined to succeed as well. From my perspective, there does seem to be a definite correlation between the age at which one starts learning to ring and the rate at which one develops good ringing skills.

This past season two quarter peals were rung in our tower. The first was of Plain Bob Doubles on May 3rd when the new Pope was announced, Pope Benedict XVI. Then on May 17th another quarter peal of Plain Bob Doubles was rung to welcome HRH Queen Elizabeth II to Canada. On June 11 we rang prior to the Ordination Services for 5 Deacons, ringing rounds and call changes on 8, Plain Hunt on 6 and Plain Bob Doubles. At the rate people in our band are progressing, there will soon be more quarter peals to report.

During the Victoria Day weekend there was a joining together of bands in Victoria, B.C. This is an annual event, an opportunity for long time friends from the Vancouver and Victoria bands to reunite. There was ringing in the tower at Christ Church Cathedral and the Izards graciously hosted a gathering at their home. Another event which took place during May, the Annual Dinner, was held at the Vancouver Lawn Tennis and Badminton Club. Pam Cooper once again did a marvelous job of organizing the dinner. The ambiance of the setting, the good food and drink and the camaraderie of those present made for a delightful evening. As Tower Captain, Eve gave a wonderful speech, acknowledging the individual efforts of people in the band as well as the support of their spouses. Eve also spoke eloquently about bell ringing and the collective efforts of the band, so eloquently that I feel it is fitting to include her words here.

Excerpt from speech by Eve Munns, Tower Captain, VSCR Annual Dinner, May 2005.

“We ring the bells for many different reasons: to be part of a social group, for therapy to get through rough times, for an intellectual challenge, as a interesting hobby and as a service to the cathedral. We are very lucky to have this jewel in our lives that for whatever reason gives us so much pleasure. We are very lucky that

within reason we can ring whenever we wish, but we must never take it for granted. What is wonderful about our group is that we do recognize that. Recently we have made a small but none the less significant contribution to a very important event in the history of the Church. The band of Holy Rosary Cathedral hail from many different faiths but through our ringing we have been able to join with the congregation to mourn the passing of Pope John Paul and have helped the cathedral celebrate the appointment of the new Pope Benedict 16th. We have been an important presence at the Cathedral.

This happened because committed generous people made themselves available to ring at very short notice on at least 6 different occasions over the twelve days of mourning and Conclave, Twice, within half an hour of a phone call, 8 ringers had put their lives on hold, on a weekday, to come down to ring. This was the case after Pope John Paul died and also when Pope Benedict 16th was elected. Whenever the bells of Rome rang, so did ours! Some people would say that that was a miracle, some would say that it was just good timing, but whatever it was we should also be proud of ourselves for making it happen.”

Our final happening of note is that on July 1 we rang on 5 to celebrate Canada Day. We enjoyed ringing Plain Bob Doubles on different combinations of bells, as well as rounds and call changes. Alan commented that it didn't seem that long ago that the band would ring a quarter peal for Canada Day. The first peal to be rung on the Holy Rosary bells was on Canada Day, then Dominion Day, July 1, 1911. It will be interesting to see what we manage to ring next year.