

Subject: SACR Newsletter :: Scottish Association of Change Ringers
From: Martin Mellor <Publicity@sacr.org>
Date: 20/03/2025, 19:07
To: Members <Members@sacr.org>

Dear Members

Here's the latest SACR newsletter.

Upcoming Events

Fri 28 Mar :: Advanced practice, Edinburgh St Cuthbert's, 7pm–9pm. Please let Ruth know at master@sacr.org if you'll be attending.

Sat 29 Mar :: Alloa :: Practice on the last Saturday of each month, from 3pm–5pm. All welcome. More information from dunkeld@sacr.org

Fri 25 Apr :: Advanced practice, Glasgow, 7pm–9pm

Sat 26 Apr :: Alloa :: Last Saturday practice from 3pm–5pm

Sat 10 May :: Scottish Handbell Day :: Glasgow

- The next Scottish Handbell Day will be on Saturday 10th May at 1 Albany Quadrant, Glasgow
- Participants need to be able to ring Plain Bob Minor already.
- Please let me know as soon as possible if you are going to come – also what you would like to ring (and what you are already confident of ringing, if you think I don't already know). And if you can bring bells, that would be useful (and please confirm).
- Lunch will be provided; contributions of cakes, biscuits, salads etc are welcome as always. If you have any dietary restrictions beyond vegetarian/vegan, please give details.

Simon (Simon.Gay@glasgow.ac.uk)

Sat 17 May :: AGM and striking competition :: Glasgow

Sun 18 May :: Bell Sunday



Fri 30 May :: Advanced practice, Edinburgh St Cuthbert's, 7pm–9pm

Fri 25 – Sun 27 Jul :: Inveraray Festival Weekend

Fri 5 – Sun 7 Sep :: Central Council AGM in Sheffield
<https://ccabr.org.uk/2025/01/24/save-the-date-5-7-september-2025>

Sat 25 Oct :: Inverness and Forres :: Autumn meeting

News

SACR Training Weekend :: Tulloch Ringing Centre :: Sat 8 and Sun 9 March



Here's a range of reports from Tulloch Training ... as you can see there was a lot of learning and a lot of ringing ... and a good bit of spring sunshine too:

Aspiring Change Ringers

The Tulloch ringing centre is a remarkable facility amid the Highlands, with Creag Meagidh and Loch Laggan as a backdrop. The two ringing rooms provide the scope for the experienced ringers and learners. It was encouraging and a little intimidating, the sea of ringers ready to share their knowledge and skill. The Aspiring Change Ringers course had experience on hand to advise and shape the bell-handling of the 'improvers', of which I was one.

The day focused on plain hunting but within that on the actions a ringer needs to achieve a good result. Correct technique can sometimes be counter-intuitive for a new ringer. It was invaluable to be closely observed by experienced helpers who provided a reality check on one's handling skills. Sometimes what one thinks is happening is not what is actually going on!

Just chatting with other ringers is a valuable part of the exercise. The opportunity to hear the stories of other learners is comforting, and watching some of the advanced ringing is inspirational. Thanks to Judith for organising the day.

Derry Kelleher, St Andrew's Inverness

Surprise Major

I had benefited from a full week of learning several surprise minor methods at Tulloch in February, completing the second half of our Beyond Bob Minor stepping stones course with Judith Frye. However, I found this week was a real stretch, so I had some concerns about my chances of success during the SACR training day coming only a week later as I joined the group doing Surprise Major, focusing for me on Yorkshire.

The whole training day I thought was exceptional, especially the presentation by Chris Frye who explained the structure of Yorkshire in more detail, how it linked to Cambridge Minor, and he put me at ease for the practical training ahead. I was able to understand the new method and at the same time improved my understanding of Cambridge Minor. After this, I appreciated being able to ring the method I was now more comfortable with and having the option to focus initially on one lead at a time. I was determined to succeed and eventually completed a full course of Yorkshire Major, with a willing helper standing behind for support.

Then, I watched enviously as the other trainee ringers performed, tackling Lincolnshire Surprise Major and Cornwall Surprise Major, individually and spliced;

perhaps next year that could be me!

A huge thank you to the trainers and helpers who made the day both enjoyable and achievable.

Sue Turner, Inverness

Conducting

When registering for the Tulloch training event, SACR members were asked if they would like to improve their conducting skills. Two of us, myself and Ian Stark, expressed a positive interest. Both Ian and I have been ringing for many years and were already able to call simple touches, but we wanted to advance further. Course organiser Judith Frye very kindly arranged for Simon Gay to spend some time with Ian and me on the Saturday morning of the training event and provide us with a tailored conducting theory session.

With such a generous student–teacher ratio, Simon simply invited us to lead by asking questions. Whilst both of us had a basic understanding of coursing orders, we were looking for help in usefully applying that knowledge in the tower. Simon provided us with some useful thoughts for dealing with coursing orders whilst on the end of a rope, ideas for retaining the coursing order in our head, and recognising familiar or friendly coursing orders (apparently there might be 31 such friendly coursing orders but befriending half a dozen of them might be a useful starting point!). At this stage my head was getting quite full, and it occurred to me that handling a bell, ringing a method, putting calls in correctly, transposing coursing orders, and correcting errant ringers could be characterised as extreme multi-tasking.

I should say that as an autistic man, one of the things I enjoy is challenging myself to handle these kinds of complex tasks. Whilst I do recognise my brain may differ in some ways to others', I don't imagine those lie along gender lines, so I've often wondered why the *Ringling World* peal columns are still dominated by male conductors. Perhaps that's an issue the Exercise could ponder.

Throughout the rest of the day, both Ian and I helped with the other groups of students. Whilst assisting with the 'Beyond Bob Minor' group, we were given opportunities to call simple touches and practice some of the ideas we had learnt earlier, with Simon on hand to help and encourage.

Thanks go to Simon for generously sharing his conducting knowledge and experience, but also to Anthony Cole and his students for agreeing to be our guinea pigs; plus of course to Judith Frye for making the arrangements.

Brian Heys

Beyond Bob Minor

I originally thought I would sign up for the Surprise Major training sessions erroneously believing it to be a Surprise Minor group. On discovering that my fellow ringer Ruth Ogilvie had mentioned that she was in a group who were going to ring Yorkshire and that this Yorkshire was Surprise Major as opposed to Surprise Minor (Yorkshire Surprise Minor apparently does not exist), I opted for the "Beyond Bob Minor" group.

The day started off with ringing treble bob hunting and some helpful tips including moving our hands up the tail end of the rope when dodging at backstroke to give better bell control. After a theory session where we looked at Little Bob Minor, we had another ringing session ringing that method. After lunch we rang Plain Bob Triples and Stedman Triples with another theory session part way through.

Although these were all methods I had rung previously, it was great to pick up new

tips and to concentrate on ringing these with more precise striking and a little more finesse. At the end of the afternoon, there was opportunity to ring on twelve bells which feels very different to ringing on eight, not least because it is much harder to pick out your own bell amongst the others.

All in all, this was a great day out and time very well spent to improve my ringing. Anthony (our group leader) was able to tailor exactly what training to give and what to ring based on the ability and experience of myself and the other three students in my group. If you are undecided as to whether or not to attend one of these training days, I would urge you to sign up and join one in the future as it's a great opportunity to hone and improve your ringing skills in a class pitched at a level to suit your ability.

Thanks to all who worked to put together an enjoyable and educational day!
Andrew Mumford, St Machar, Aberdeen

Twelve-bell training day

On the second day of the Tulloch training event, sixteen eager SACR members gathered at the Ringing Centre to hone our twelve-bell skills with a focus on Yorkshire Surprise Maximus. We had all prepared by learning the method and watching a very helpful [YouTube video](#) produced by Simon Gay. The gap between helpers and students was not stark, so the atmosphere was collegiate with everyone keen to help each other and improve.

We were led by Simon. The first session consisted of exercises to develop our twelve-bell rhythmic skills. With all twelve bells ringing, we rang Plain Bob Minor on the front six with the back six staying in rounds, then we swapped over to the back six ringing Plain Bob. We then moved on to some Treble Bob Hunting and a twelve-bell version of Cloister.

Simon continued to emphasise the objective of internalising the sensations and handling style associated with ringing to a twelve-bell rhythm. For those of us most used to ringing regularly on six or eight bells, development of the twelve-bell rhythm is key – more important than the complexities of the blue line. It became apparent that our overall ringing speed during the exercises was a little ambitious (Jonathan Frye calculated that our peal speed was around 2hrs 48mins) and that we wouldn't be able to sustain that when attempting Yorkshire, so we all took a chill pill and tried to calm our enthusiasm with a slightly slower pace before taking a well-earned break.

Refreshed from our break, we all returned to the ringing room with mild trepidation to tackle Yorkshire Surprise Maximus. We rang many half courses of Yorkshire, swapping the band around each time so that we could all ring different leads. When not ringing we were encouraged to stand behind others so no time was wasted. The confidence of the ringing gradually improved but then waned a little towards the end of the session – this was intense stuff.

After ringing was over we had some time to enjoy our lunches in warm Highland sunshine before dispersing to our various corners of Scotland.

Speaking for myself, my previous experiences on twelve bells had felt a little like wandering through a fog, not helped by the very poor acoustics at the tower where I regularly rang. The quality and structure of the tuition together with the friendly ringing conditions at Tulloch significantly improved my confidence. So the thanks of me and my fellow students go to Simon and all who helped plan and deliver such a useful event.

Brian Heys

So, a lot of happy students overall! One of the abiding themes is the magnanimity of teachers and helpers ... whenever thanked, the retort is usually "But we also learned something and enjoyed the teaching and the ringing." As we know, ringing is always a team effort and this is reflected in all of the above reports ... and in the reports below from other recent meet-ups at Tulloch:

Highland Handbell Day at Tulloch in February

(<https://bb.ringingworld.co.uk/event.php?id=20823>)

7.30 on a Saturday morning is a bit early to be leaving the house for a handbell day in Tulloch! But the Edinburgh ringers needed to be on the way to get to Helen and Peter's lovely house in time for coffee, and to pick up Stephen in Perth on the way. An astonishing 17 (I think!) handbell ringers from all over Scotland, including the ultra-keen Highland Handbell Ringers in their smart polo shirts, were assembled and ready to put into practice all the methods they had been studying.

But first find the right room, with the right number of bells ... And if you were with Helen, make friends with her beautiful dog.

There were lots of opportunities to practise ringing on higher numbers of bells, and many quarter peal attempts. Most people achieved at least one quarter peal, and had a go at ringing on higher numbers of bells, or at ringing methods which stretched us beyond our comfort zone. A wide range of methods were rung, including Plain Hunt Royal, Kent Maximus, Hitcham Delight, Cambridge Minor and Royal, and Plain Bob. Nick, who organised the day brilliantly, gauged everyone's ability so that we came away feeling that we had all worked hard and achieved most of our goals. Fortunately there were many tea and coffee breaks and a delicious lunch provided by Peter to keep us going, and allow us time to socialise with so many people.

And then back on the road for the return journey (though some people stayed longer). Would we be able to fit in Fish & Chips at Dunkeld on the way back and still allow Stephen time to catch his bus back to Dundee? We did! And the car has at last lost the smell of an excellent fish supper!

Thank you to Nick for organising a great day, and to Helen and Peter for hosting us at their house.

Barbara Bell, St Mary's Cathedral, Edinburgh

Minor Stepping Stones, Part 2 :: Tulloch Ringing Centre :: February

(<https://bb.ringingworld.co.uk/event.php?id=20694>)

At the end of February Tulloch hosted a follow-on course from last year's Minor Stepping Stones course which focused on plain Minor methods such as Single Court, Double Oxford, etc. This year the minimum requirement was to have already achieved a Quarter Peal of Cambridge Surprise Minor, which is quite a high benchmark. The students this year initially rang Cambridge with a different lead end (which is Primrose Surprise Minor) and then a different half-lead change (Ipswich Surprise Minor) and then both a different half-lead AND a different lead end (Norfolk Surprise Minor). Days were structured around quarter peal attempts (which whilst not all successful, gave plenty of practice at the chosen method and brought the students on in their ringing rapidly). As the week progressed other methods were introduced such as Norwich, Bourne and Hull (the same but with different lead end changes), Beverley and Surfleet (different lead ends again), and London.

As a helper on the course (and having not rung many of these methods myself for several decades!) it was a challenge both to keep myself right and also to try to help the students succeed in ringing the new methods. I also conducted a few quarter peal attempts with one new method as conductor during the week (Norwich Surprise Minor), so it brought my conducting skills up a level too.

By the end of the week 34 quarter peals had been scored by those attending, brains were tired, and hands and arms were aching, but it was amazing to see how far the students progressed in such a short space of time. Huge thanks must go to Helen & Peter Bevis, and to Judith Frye for their organising and teaching skills – a most enjoyable week. Roll on next year :)

Anthony Cole, Inverness

In other news...

New ropes for Haddington

Haddington have recently taken delivery of a full set of new ropes from Avon Ropes. This has been made possible with a grant of £1000 from Haddington Common Good Fund, with the balance of the cost paid by the Church.

The Common Good Fund dates back to the 15th century and derives income from land, property and investments of the former Burgh of Haddington. It is now administered by East Lothian Council and by law must continue to exist for the common good of the inhabitants of the former Burgh. Applicants to the fund must be situated within the historical boundaries of the former Burgh, or undertake activities within that area.

The eligible area is quite a small when compared to the size of modern day Haddington. Fortunately St Mary's lies with the boundary.

Sally Thomas, Haddington



Hollywood Church, Dumfries

And some non-change-ringing bell news from Hollywood Church in Dumfries: <https://www.theplanner.co.uk/2025/02/20/appeal-medieval-bells-must-be-retained-listed-scottish-church>

50:50 Club for the SACR Bell Restoration Fund

Two monthly draws were made for the 50-50 Club at the Training Weekend in Tulloch. We have increased the number of tickets sold to 80 per month – and again we managed to sell them all so the prizes this month were £40 each. The winners were:

- Feb 2025 – Nick Jones, Tulloch
- Mar 2025 – Carly Cooper, Dundee

Congratulations to both. If anyone wishes to buy draw entries for the 50-50 and support the SACR BRF each month, please email Ruth Ogilvie on 50-50club@sacr.org. Don't worry – we won't run out of numbers: we can go up to 100 each month!!

Ruth Ogilvie

Bellboard :: Here's a link to SACR performances since the last newsletter: [link](#).

Tulloch is the clear leader for Quarter Peals this time round, with dozens rung during the Surprise Minor Stepping Stones week in February. And there's been a broad array of Surprise Royal, both quarters and peals, over the last few months at St Cuthbert's in Edinburgh. Plus a wide variety of handbell ringing. And not forgetting a [peal of Bristol Maximus](#) at St Mary's Edinburgh by the Cumberlands.

- Quarter Peal firsts:
 - First quarter for Andrew Cumming
 - First quarter on the treble for Fiona Bridge
 - First in method for Penelope Bellis, Barbara Busby, Andrew Craig, Elspeth Craig, Julia Lee, Lynne Sydes, Bridget Taylor, Ian B Turner, Helen M Wells and Aileen Wilson
 - Circled the new bells Last Tower bells to Quarter Peals for Paul J Wells
 - First quarter of Surprise Minor ringing the tenor for Helen M Wells
 - First Norwich Surprise Minor as conductor for Anthony C Cole
 - First as conductor from 5/6 for Jenny M Page
 - 150th tower bell quarter as conductor for Anthony C Cole
 - 250th quarter as conductor for Ashley Law
- Peal milestones:
 - 1,150th peal for Mike Clay
 - 100th together for Peter Kirton and Peter Williamson
- Celebrations:
 - 5056 Bristol Surprise Major rung to welcome Rev. Dr Conor Fegan as the new Minister of the New Town Church, Edinburgh
- Commemorations:
 - Celebrating the life of Enid Mary Aves (20/8/29–21/2/25)
 - In memory of Ralph Beaumont, Ringing Master Whiston Parish Church, Rotherham 1979–2004, formerly All Souls, Halifax.

Please send in photos, articles, your social media posts and other updates about your local ringing to publicity@sacr.org

Social media

See Scottish Bellringing's facebook and instagram pages for more photos and items

For up to date info on social media:

<https://www.facebook.com/scottishbellringing>

<https://www.instagram.com/scottishbellringing>

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The SACR Committee
