

Handbell
Ringers of
Great Britain
(Scotland)

Registered
charity
SC038918



Dates for your diary

**12th March
2016** HRGB
Scotland AGM,
12 noon, Victo-
ry Hall, Aboyne

**1st – 3rd April
2016** HRGB
National Rally –
Newton Rigg
College, Cum-
bria (Hosted by
NW Region)

**12th
May 2016**
17th Scottish
Schools' Ring –
Newton Prima-
ry, Dunblane

**26th – 30th July
2016** 17th
International
Symposium,
Vancouver,
Canada

Autumn 2016
Autumn Re-
gional Ringing
Event

HRGB Scottish Newsletter

2015/16 Issue 2

Jan / Feb 2016

Chat from the Chair Elaine Duffus

"Music is the great uniter.

An incredible force.

*Something that people who differ on every-
thing and anything else can have in
common" – Sarah Dessen*

This could have been written about ringing teams, couldn't it? We all come from different walks of life. People of different backgrounds, ages, from different parts of the country become one in our music making on handbells, handchimes and Belleplates.

On 10th October, ringers from around Scotland gathered together in Bankfoot, Perth, for a workshop day under the enthusiastic and capable batons of Tim Willetts, National Chairman of HRGB, and Aidan Fozard, Belleplate Soloist and rising young star of the ringing world. The first playing of a few bars of the first piece must have sounded very scary to the conductors! We sounded very much like different teams playing at different tempos and even in different keys. But, in no time Tim and Aidan, with their encouragement and praise, had us working and playing together as one big team. What a remarkable difference in the three set pieces by the end of the day!

As I write this, many of you will be coming to the end of a very hectic festive period of ringing. My thanks to all of you who gave freely and willingly of your time and talents to go out into your communities – often raising money for charities - to share your music and for promoting the art of handbell, handchime and Belleplate ringing. I am sure your efforts were greatly appreciated and enjoyed by those fortunate to hear your performances. Thank you also to those who shared photographs and tales of your adventures on facebook for us all to see.

When I first joined HRGB, individual members and teams from Scotland were allocated to the NW Region – the NW of England. While we were made very welcome – and I look forward to meeting up again with this Region at the 2016 HRGB National Rally in Penrith – it was

good when, some time later, we were able to form a "Scottish Region". This reduced travelling time to events for many ringers and enabled us to cater better for the wide geographical spread of our country. It also means, of course, that we require a Committee to run the Region and organise events.



For some time now, the same willing people have been doing this – very well may I add – but it's time for some new faces to come on board. We are all busy people but isn't that the best type of folk to get things done? Please do consider coming forward to help out. Your Region needs you! As they say, "Many hands make less work" – as you know when you are ringing. The work isn't onerous – just three Committee meetings and an AGM per year with email contact in between should matters arise for discussion. Built into these meetings is an opportunity to come together with fellow ringers. No Committee means no events and no Scottish Region!

Have you got 12th March in your diaries? This is the date of our Spring Rally and AGM to be held in Aboyne on Royal Deeside hosted by Cushnie Handbell Ringers. More details to follow soon but we hope to see many of you there.

Let our music making be "The Great Uniter" in 2016 and bring people together as one with handbells, handchimes and Belleplates. Best wishes to you all.

“I was really pleased with how well the children played at this unusual event. We all enjoyed the evening tremendously!”

Miss Watson,
Castletown
Primary School

Castletown Ringers Become Monks

We are members of the Primary 6/7 class of Castletown Primary School, Caithness, which is situated in the far north of Scotland, about twenty miles west of John O' Groats.

In late November we volunteered to attend an evening event at our local Heritage Centre in Castletown, to celebrate the work of Kenneth Steven, a Scottish poet. Erica Sinclair played the harp while Kenneth read his poem, “A Song Among the Stones,” which is about monks travelling from Iona to Iceland. At this event, we rang bells whilst walking in procession with our school hoodie hoods up to resemble the Monks. This was

the first time we had played the bells whilst walking but we found the tune easy to learn and soon mastered walking and playing at the same time.

We also played the Iona Boat Song, arranged by our teacher Miss Watson, on the belleplates. The Iona Boat song was a bit tricky but we took part in lots of lunchtime rehearsals and thoroughly enjoyed playing it for everyone at the Heritage Centre.

In December, forty-seven pupils in our school played belleplates in our annual Christmas concert. Our class played the two-octave version of “Hark the Herald Angels Sing” and “In

Dulci Jubilo.” The Primary 5/6 class, who only started ringing in October, played “Jingle Bells” and “Jolly Old St Nicholas”. They also played “Boil them Cabbage Down,” an arrangement of an American folksong by Caithness composer Katrina Gordon. If you want to play this piece it is available free on www.scoreexchange.com

The concert was a huge success and everyone had great fun participating in it. Lots of the audience said how lovely it was to hear the bells at Christmas time.

Written by Emma M & Mollie McC, both age 10



News from Dunkeld

Heather McLean, The Parish of Dunkeld Handbell Ringers

Rather mixed fortunes for the group since the last newsletter. The ringers have been busy as usual performing in many venues:

AUGUST saw them in the Ballroom of Blair Castle entertaining a huge number of visitors. One result of this was an invitation to give a Christmas Concert in Pembrokeshire – nice to be asked but we didn't fancy travelling such a distance at that time of year! Blair Castle was followed by an afternoon's ringing in Dunkeld Cathedral during the Flower Festival.



On to **SEPTEMBER** and another concert in Dunkeld Cathedral to raise money for Scotland's Charity Air Ambulance. The speed with which the Air Ambulance paramedics and crew treated and flew one of our ringers to hospital following a fall, which had resulted in a serious head injury, undoubtedly saved her life. Thankfully, she is recovering well and hoping to be ringing with us again in 2016.

OCTOBER heralded our annual performance at Dougie MacLean's Perthshire Amber Festival – always an enjoyable event for us and one which attracts an enthusiastic audience every year, mostly

musicians who very much appreciate the handbell ringing.



NOVEMBER brought a return visit to Monzievaird to raise funds for the village hall and an afternoon spent ringing in McEwens of Perth at the start of their Christmas Gala Weekend. This was followed by the sad news of the death of Ellen Robertson, a stalwart of our group, who joined soon after it was formed and who was a dedicated member, rarely missing a practice, and who only left when forced to due to ill health. Ellen was a lovely quiet, gentle person with a fine sense of humour and she is greatly missed. We had all been looking forward to seeing her when we rang at The Christmas Tree Festival in Pitlochry. I felt honoured to be asked by the family to ring a solo during the Thanksgiving Service for her life – a privilege but very emotional and I rang it with tears in my eyes unable to see the music (thankfully, muscle memory took over).

DECEMBER brought "the rain" and floods to the area. We were due to take part in the Carol Service at Fossoway Church, Crook of Devon and actually set off but had to turn back as roads on all the routes we tried were flooded or actually closed. We were told afterwards that they played carols from our CD

and put a photo of us on a large screen at the points in the service when we should have been ringing. Not quite the same!

The next event was Dunkeld's Santa Day and solo ringing during the Carol Service in the Cathedral. Then a concert in Alyth Parish Church (again to raise funds for Scotland's Charity Air Ambulance plus Alyth Flood Relief Fund).

Performances in two nursing homes followed (we always really enjoy these) and the year ended with ringing in a third.

The weekly Wednesday performances of solo ringing from 2.00 – 4.00 in Dunkeld Cathedral, with the addition of small ensemble ringing once a month, continued until mid-September. These continue to be popular with visitors to the area and many purchase our CDs and DVDs which must now have travelled to many corners of the world (profits to Cornhill MacMillan in Perth). Hopefully, the performances will resume Easter 2016. Sadly, one of our founder members, Alice Melville, has decided that it's time to finish due to arthritis in her hands and wrists which has been making ringing difficult for her. Alice has been a dedicated member of the group and we shall miss her company and her quiet, calming presence.

Finally, we now have our own Facebook page. Elaine, our Scottish Regional Chair, suggested that we should have one and it is now up and running. Google Facebook and put in a search for Parish of Dunkeld Handbells to see what we're up to.

Silver Jubilee

JORDANHILL PARISH CHURCH HANDBELL RINGERS CELEBRATE THEIR SILVER JUBILEE

Twenty five years ago a legacy of £1000 pounds was left to Jordanhill Parish Church. The minister at the time asked the lady's son what he thought his mother would like done with the money. He lives in Canada and he said that when she was

ed. He came with his mother Lysbeth and his brother, Douglas and when we heard them ring The Ash Grove with 4 bells each we wondered if we would ever get there! I remember us at our first rally in Dunblane ringing that same piece with one bell each.

We gradually progressed by attending rallies and workshops.

chilly experiences.

Over the years we have raised money for many charities:- Quarriers, Barnardos, Arthritis Care, Mary's Meals, Childline, St Margaret's Hospice, The Lodging House Mission and many more.

We took part in the Glasgow Music Festival entering under the music making category. On two occasions we came second and on our third time we were delighted to be awarded first place.

We were thrilled when Elaine Duffus gifted us an arrangement of the Rowan Tree to celebrate our Silver Jubilee. It is a beautiful arrangement of this melody and is for three octaves. We were very pleased when Elaine told us that she and three other from Silver City Chimes would be at our concert in October to hear us ring it.

It has been a wonderful 25 years. We have had a few sad times during our twenty five years but it has mostly been good times. It has been a truly wonderful legacy.

Ruth Cantlay

**Jordanhill Parish
Church HR**



When the first Residential Ringing week was announced six of us signed up for it. We learned so much at that week ringing under the batons of Nozomo Abe, Alison Wood and Lysbeth and Malcolm Wilson. We also had a huge amount of fun and made many friends.

We then started to go to the international symposium and have been represented at Birmingham, Toronto, Orlando, Osaka, Liverpool, Jeju and some of us are signed up to go to Vancouver.

We have rung in many different settings. Some of the more iconic are Kelvingrove Art Galleries, Princes Square and the Georgian House in Edinburgh. We have rung at the Perth Traders Christmas Fayre and Winterfest in George Square –both

over visiting she enjoyed handbells and thought that would be a good thing to buy! That legacy bought our first 12 bells, the case they come in and some books of music. Through the generosity of many of our congregation and through fundraising we now have 3 chromatic octaves of Malmark bells and 3 chromatic octaves of Malmark handchimes.

Malcom Wilson was asked if he would come and give a workshop to get us start-

LIZ JAMIESON



Cumnock and District Handbell Ringers were saddened by the sudden and untimely death of Liz Jamieson on 27th September 2015. In addition to leading the group, she prepared the music for each individual ringer and sourced appropriate music for various concerts depending on the theme, situation or circumstance. Liz gave over hours to the bell-ringers and every one of the ringers appreciates what she did to encourage them in practices as a

group or when she took individuals for extra tuition. Liz was a member of the Scottish Committee of HRGB and attended rallies whenever it was possible. At the time of her death, a member of the Scottish Committee said, “Liz was a very pleasant, quiet, faithful member of our Scottish Region Committee. Always one of the first to reply to emails, her thoughts were always sincere and full of wisdom.” Our thoughts and prayers are with her husband Ian, her daughter Aileen, her son Andrew, his wife Charlotte and her grandson Cameron. She will be sorely missed by all.

Marge Paterson

Your newsletter - YOUR news!

Thanks to everyone who has taken the time to contribute to this newsletter. It's lovely to share news, whether it's exciting, silly, happy or sad.

We're experimenting with two different formats for this issue—this colourful, pictureful electronic version and a more 20th Century printed version for those who do not

have computer access. Give us your feedback please!

The next deadline will be 1st April (no joke!) I do work best with memorable deadlines...

You can send me material at any time before then, preferably by email to katrinathurso@aol.com.

If you **really** don't do email then you can send me your article by post to 26 Grove Lane, Thurso, Caithness KW14 8AE

Looking forward to hearing more of your news! ☺

Katrina Gordon (editor)

National Residential Ringing Week

Sheffield 2015

This was my first National Ringing Week so I arrived there not quite sure what to expect, as I have only been ringing handbells for two years. I didn't have the best start as due to traffic delays I arrived late and therefore missed the introduction and everyone had started playing the first piece!

However once we were settled into our accommodation and had dinner, everything started to fall into place and after the aforementioned shaky start everything became better and better.

The conductors Emily Li, Michael Glasgow and Tim Willetts were absolutely wonderful; totally professional, enthusiastic and at the same time making it fun. The music chosen for the week was an excellent mix and some of it quite challenging.

For me the highlights happened on Thursday, the day before the concert when firstly, Michael contacted Nicholas Hanson, the composer of Triumphant Spirit, via the internet, so that he could listen to us playing it live, and he seemed really pleased by our performance. This is the most amazing piece of music and definitely sounded triumphant! As if that wasn't enough excitement for the day, later Michael contacted Erik

Whitehill, again by internet, so that he could listen to us performing his arrangement of There is a Balm in Gilead and he was quite overcome. It really is a beautiful piece and a complete contrast to Triumphant Spirit.

I was ringing Whitechapel bells - a new experience for me as we ring Malmark bells and chimes. However everyone around me proved to be so helpful and kind, offering me tips along the way and I was delighted to have the benefit of their experience- after all, I was there to learn as much as possible!

The added attraction for me was that we were also playing pieces being conducted by the composers themselves i.e. Whimsical Praise by Michael and Cantabile by Emily who had also, with Sierra Tse, arranged a traditional Cantonese nursery rhyme, Moonlight Lullaby.

The concert on Friday evening was unforgettable. When I was young (feels like 100 years ago) I played in a youth orchestra and I had forgotten the incredible feeling of playing in a group making the most wonderful sound. I could have happily stayed there playing all of the music for at least another week. A lovely surprise too was that the Wilson

family from Dunblane arrived to support us at the concert. This was much appreciated by everyone but mostly by the Scots as our families were too far away to attend.

It wasn't exclusively handbell ringing all week as on the Wednesday afternoon we had a trip to Haddon Hall followed by a BBQ later and then an entertaining evening where some of us had brought along fancy dress, musical instruments etc. to entertain each other amidst much laughter and lots of fun. Scotland the Brave will never be the same!

Finally, a huge 'thank you' to the conductors Emily, Michael and Tim, to the staff in Sheffield University (especially the catering!) and to Aidan who had done a tremendous job organising the week and sailed through all of it good heartedly especially when there was a problem with the sizing of the polo shirts- no one there will forget the saga of the polo shirts!

A huge 'thank you' to all concerned- roll on Vancouver!

Linda Mawson

Jordanhill Parish Church Handbell Ring-

NRRW Sheffield 2105

With a modicum of artistic licence the events below are a précis of the fun we had in Sheffield. For those who weren't there, the saga of the polo shirts really deserves a full length novel and the lost luggage, a short story. The chance of two groups of ringers performing almost identical and very droll Cinderella skits are infinitesimal and the squirrels were only a figment of the conductor's vivid and hilarious imagination. To protect the identity of those involved, only Christian names have been used...

We went to a great ringing week.
At first I was quiet and meek.
All those crotchets and quavers,
Played fast by my neighbours,
I'll never play them. "Help", I shriek!

Said Aidan (the man who plays solos),
"I've got you some lovely green polos".
They were such a tight squeeze,
That we all couldn't breathe,
So everyone said they were "no-no"s.

He ordered some more shirts to suit.
The makers said "Sorry" to boot.
Sent to the wrong town ...
Then Dave drove them down ...
A very circuitous route!

Entertainment on Wednesday night,
Was a humorous panto that might
Have been funny and neat,
Then the next's a repeat!
But Cinders said it was "A'right".

To exercise, "Massage each eye.
Now bend down, then reach for the sky".
Relaxed with smooth motion,
We played with emotion,
And almost made Emily cry.

Michael is not all that tall,
And the back row won't see him at all.
So they made a huge base,
And the squirrels he'd chase,
But his luggage won't come 'til the fall.

The conductor said, "Start from the top",
But the rhythms were always a flop.
So Tim said the art
Of semis, then mart,
Was to say to yourself, "Tiddle, tiddle,
plop".

Practice makes perfect it's true.
And the week - it most certainly flew.
We learned musicality,
With so much hilarity.
To conductors and Aidan - THANK YOU!

Judith Frye