



HRGB Scottish Newsletter

2015/16 Issue 4 – September 2016



Chat From the Chair.....

"Music is a world within itself with a language we all understand." - Stevie Wonder

As I write this, I am sitting in beautiful Achamore Gardens, Gigha. This morning I enjoyed a cuppa and catch-up with Susan Allan before setting off to explore the island. Susan is one of the founder members of Clag Dhiorbhail ("Dot's Bells") – the group which originally inspired me to visit this wonderful Hebridean island.

Behind me, far across the Atlantic, eleven Scottish Ringers are busy ringing with others from around the world at this year's International Handbell Symposium in Vancouver, Canada. The wonder of modern technology enables us to instantly follow their adventures online and it is clear that they too are enjoying rekindling old friendships and making new ones.

Some of you have occasionally remarked that you are not always aware of places in Scotland with active ringing teams – places you have perhaps visited on holiday and could possibly have joined them for a ringing session. We currently have HRGB registered teams in Aberdeen, Blairgowrie, Cumnock, Cupar, Dumfries, Dunblane, Dunkeld, Dunoon, Glasgow, Haddington, Inverness, Kirkcudbright, Leochel Cushnie, Linlithgow, Lossiemouth, Paisley, Stonehaven, Taynult, Thurso and Wick. We also have several Youth Teams and Independent Members not attached to a specific team. Lots of people with a shared interest = a great recipe for friendships.

And talking of technology! There is a list on our Scottish Region Website - hrgbscotland.org.uk - of teams known to exist, or have existed, in Scotland though not all are currently HRGB members. You will also find other information – including forthcoming events – on the site. There is also the national HRGB website at hrgb.org.uk. Here you will find information on membership, national/international events, handbell insurance, copyright and much more.

We also have a regular presence on Facebook and Twitter where we can advertise team news and events as well as Regional happenings – if you let us know. Please do take a look! Some of our Scottish teams – Cushnie HR, Dunblane Cathedral HR, Dunkeld HR, Jordanhill HR and Silver City Chimes – have their own Facebook pages where you can catch up with their news (even if you don't have a Facebook account of your own). Do take a look – a great way to spend a Winter's night!

There is no need to feel isolated as a team or individual, wherever you are in Scotland – as wide a geographical spread as we have within our Region! Thanks to modern technology, we are all just a click, or tap, away.

Our thanks go to three Scottish teams who have agreed to host our next three events – when we can come together "for real"! Muckairn Ringers of Taynult are hosting our forthcoming Autumn Ringing Day in Connel on 8th October where we will work together under the capable, caring, baton of our guest conductor, Sandra Winter. Jordanhill Handbells will host the 2017 AGM and Spring Rally in Glasgow on 25th March and Blair Bells will host our special "Golden" Event – celebrating 50 years of HRGB – in Bankfoot, Perth, on 7th October 2017. So much to look forward to!

I would like to thank those ringers from Scotland who travelled out to Vancouver for the International Symposium this year. They were, as always, great ambassadors for our Region (looking splendid in their Flower of Scotland tartan) and, by all accounts, had a fabulous time.

We are immensely proud of Malcolm Wilson who was, by invitation, one of the massed ringing Conductors in Vancouver. His own composition – "Spirit of Freedom" – was selected for the event and it must have been such an honour for him to direct so many ringers from around the world to play the piece, originally written for his Dad. A special moment, I am sure, for his family – Helen, Adam and Eleanor, who were there too.

Music is, without question, "a language we all understand". Take that language and share it with others, wherever you are and wherever you go!

Elaine Duffus



View from the podium at this year's International Symposium in Vancouver

Jordanhill Parish Church Handbell Ringers

On 26th July 4 Jordanhill ringers (Christine, Linda, Lynda and Ruth) attended the 17th International Handbell Symposium held in the Vancouver Conference Centre. The title of this year's Symposium was 'Soundings – The Music of Our Lands and Our Lives' and many of the pieces reflected this. We were attending as part of the Scottish Group ringing as Celtic Carillon. The other Scottish ringers were Helen, Eleanor, Judith and Alex (Dunblane and Mary (Blairgowrie). Malcolm Wilson was conducting the HRGB piece.

We had 8 pieces to ring, most of them challenging in some way but some certainly more challenging than others! Some days rehearsals would start at 0830 and we would be busy all day sometimes till 1900. Rehearsals would be interspersed with workshops and mini concerts. It was great that HRGB was represented in concert by two groups, a handbell duo and Bellplate soloist.

We had a marvellous West Coast Aboriginal Experience dinner where over and above delicious food we had cultural performances in song and dance

All too soon the concert day arrived. Two other Jordanhill ringers (Catherine and Susan) were coming over to Vancouver for a holiday and it was lovely to have them at the concert. Also in the audience was Adam Wilson who attended as a non-ringer delegate, and the Andy, Chris, Frank and Gordon – husband of Mary, Judith, Linda and Lynda. We were well supported!

At the start of the week we wondered if we would make the music musical but under excellent conductors I think we did.

It was a great Symposium – roll on Cairns 2018!!

Ruth Cantlay

Jordanhill Parish Church Handbell Ringers



Scottish Ringers ready for the final concert in Vancouver.



Caithness bids farewell to John

The Caithness Handbell Ringers saying farewell to John Heathcote, who has now moved south towards Inverness. The delicious cake in the shape of a handbell was made by Rosemary Logie (far right).

In honour of John's intellectual perspective on music making, here is a uniquely scientific and fascinating article which he wrote for our Caithness newsletter some years ago...

Music by Numbers

Is music all about beautiful sounds, or is it about maths? A school-friend of mine did a maths degree before he went on to be a professional musician!

There is maths underlying the music and getting it right matters. It comes into the length of the notes, the rhythm of the notes, and their pitch.

The length is the simplest, since it's basically about two. This is cunningly disguised by the bizarre names given to the notes in English; Italian and German use more logical names. Although musical theory starts elsewhere, it's easiest to work around the crotchet (strictly a quarter-note), which is typically one beat. Above and below this the notes vary by a factor of 2x. That's without a dot, which makes it ½ as long again. So the notes are

Name	Value (beats)	Value (number)	Time signature
Semi-breve	4	1	1
Dotted minim	3	0.75	
Minim	2	0.5	2
Dotted crotchet	1 ½	0.375	
Crotchet	1	0.25	4
Dotted quaver	¾	0.1875	
Quaver	½	0.125	8
Dotted semi-quaver	⅜	0.09375	
Semi-quaver	¼	0.0625	16
The remainder are too hard on bells!			

Having got some notes, they get grouped into clumps (bars) where there is a stress of some kind on the first note, and it also makes it much easier to read! There's no need of bars and a computer would manage without, but.....

musicwithoutbarsisratherlikewordswithoutspacesandreadinatotallyflatvoice (did you know that Chinese is written without spaces between the words?). What's in a bar is indicated by

the time signature – the top number is the number of notes of the kind indicated by the bottom number, which is the reciprocal of the note value. Thus 4/4 indicates that there are four notes of length $\frac{1}{4}$ (0.25), i.e. crotchets. This means that the value of notes in any bar should add up to one. So you can have four crotchets, two minims, or even two dotted semi-quavers, a dotted quaver, a quaver and a minim ($2 \times 0.09375 + 0.1875 + 0.125 + 0.5 = 1$) but don't ask me to ring it. For 3/4 they should add up to 0.75, as they should for 6/8. However, 3/4 and 6/8 don't sound the same, because there's six half-beats rather than three beats! You can march to 6/8, but for 3/4 you have to waltz (unless you have an extra leg).

The mental arithmetic to add up to the right number is too difficult, so there are counting schemes based on the beats. Counting **one**-two-three works for 3/4, but for 6/8 it's **one**-two-three-**four**-five-six or **one**-and-a **two**-and-a. It gets worse. When we played Noye's Fludde, there's a number in 4/2, i.e. the notes in a bar add up to 2. Sixteen quavers add up to 2, so that's fine. Until one has to play notes 5 and 16, getting in the 16 just before Susan on 1, when everyone is singing just four notes in a bar, two bars to a line of words. Try tapping your left hand exactly four times as fast as the right hand. Just to make things more complicated, that particular bar repeats 19 times. I can't count to 4, 16 and 19 at the same time! **One**-and-a-bit *two*-and-a-bit **three**-and-a-bit four-and-a-*bit* where I had the italic notes didn't help me. Katrina was an essential second conductor for this bit, and fortunately it's **v e r y s l o w**.

The fractions get more complicated for pitch. The just scale works in 24ths (excluding accidentals, which are in 120ths).

Note	Ratio to C
C'	48/24 2
B	45/24 15/8
A	40/24 5/3
G	36/24 3/2
F	32/24 4/3
E	30/24 5/4
D	27/24 9/8
C	24/24 1

Unfortunately this doesn't work for things like a piano or bells, because it works out that C in the scale of D isn't the same note as C in the scale of C. To play each key correctly, we'd need 12 sets of bells, one for each key. So instead, there is the equi-tempered scale, where a whole tone is $(\sqrt[12]{2})^2$ and a semi-tone is $\sqrt[12]{2}$. Thus D is $1.1224555 \times C$ and F is $1.05946 \times E$, etc. The only notes that are correct are the octaves, because $(\sqrt[12]{2})^{12} = 2$. The maximum error is just under 1%, in the A. There are some more complicated scales – have a look at Wikipedia! As a result of all of this, different keys sound different, because the pattern of errors is different. In a perfect scale, C# major (7 sharps) would sound just like C major, only a diminished second higher.

How's your head? Nobody ever said music was easy!

CHAPEL CHIMERS - ABERDEEN



We have been going now for about 20 years and thought it was about time to contribute something to the newsletter.

There are eleven in our group – all female – all retired but not retiring! Interested gentlemen would be made most welcome (to join in the ringing!)

As our name suggests, we play handchimes and very occasionally Belleplates. We are hoping to extend our use of the Belleplates in the coming session.

Our rehearsals begin in September and continue until ringers start going on holiday around April or May. We meet in Queen Street Church once a week on Tuesdays at 10am until 12 noon with a coffee break somewhere in the middle. Our repertoire ranges from classical, secular and spiritual to fun pieces. We are regularly invited to entertain local groups such as Guilds and pensioner groups. To vary our programme we make use of Sandra Winter's 'Have-a-Go' material, allowing the audience to use Belleplates. This has proved very popular with audiences while providing a rest for the ringers. It also helps the listeners to appreciate the 'proficiency'!! of our ringers.

Last December we had a first in that we were invited to Drum Castle (National Trust property) to play for the lighting of the Advent candles. This was very well received and in spite of the winter conditions we played Christmas music before, during and after the lighting of the candles. We were asked back during their activities in May but had to decline because too many members of the group were on holiday. We hope to be asked again in the future.

We try to attend rallies and workshops whenever possible, but distance is becoming a problem as we age! We enjoy taking part and meeting other ringers from the Scottish Region.

New members are always welcome to join Chapel Chimers.

Jan Smith



Scottish Region Tops!



We will soon be taking orders for poloshirts/sweatshirts bearing the Scottish Region logo. These were available when the Region first started and proved very popular.

Sample sizes, further information and order forms will be available in the first instance at our Autumn Ring in Connel on Saturday 8th October.

Dates for your diaries...



- ♪ Autumn Ring - Connel Village Hall - 8th October 2016
- ♪ Spring Rally & AGM - Jordanhill Parish Church, Glasgow - 25th March 2017
- ♪ Golden Ring - Bankfoot Church Centre - 7th October 2017
- ♪ 2017 – is HRGB's Golden Anniversary Year! Look out for fun activities coming your way.

YOUR Region Needs YOU!

We are still in need of a Secretary for our Regional Committee!

This is NOT an onerous job – just taking & distributing minutes of three Committee Meetings and one AGM per year along with occasional communication (general external queries, Thank-you cards etc) and a brief report on the Region's "happenings" for HRGB's Reverberations magazine. If you think YOU could help us, please get in touch with me ASAP.

Members of Jordanhill Handbells, headed up by Ruth Cantlay, are currently the "Acting Sales Team" for our Region. We are so grateful that they are doing this (otherwise, no Sales!) but it would be great if someone – or another team – would come forward to take this on. If you would like more information, please get in touch.

A Region requires willing people to come forward as Officers and members of the Committee. People who can give a little of their time (can be as short as one year!) to benefit others in the Scottish Region and to continue the excellent work which has already been, and is still being, done. We have a great bunch of people who do so much, year in, year out, but we really do need some new faces to come on board to give them a hand – or two!

No Committee....No Scottish Region!

Elaine Duffus – Chair

Your Newsletter, YOUR News!

Thanks to those who have taken the time to contribute to this edition of the Newsletter – it would be lovely to hear from some different teams. Even a few sentences about what you've been up to?

Continuing the success of my memorable deadline policy, please send me your contributions **before December 25th** 2016 for the next edition, ho, ho, ho!



Looking forward to all of your news & pictures from Christmas events and also details of any forthcoming events for the 2017.

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)