



Issue 43

NEWSLETTER

June 2010

Hello and welcome to this summer edition of the Scottish Region magazine.

Thank you to the members of my own team, Jordanhill Handbell Ringers, for hosting this year's Spring Rally and AGM. Many comments have been received as to how warm and friendly the day was. 76 ringers from 13 teams participated in an enjoyable afternoon of ringing, with the massed ringing being conducted by Claire Griffiths, Ruth Cantlay and Malcolm Wilson. The AGM saw a couple of changes to the Regional committee. Isla McGeogh, Dunblane HR, stood down after serving for many years. Heather McLean, Parish of Dunkeld HR, had resigned during the year. Thanks are due to both for all their work for the Region. We welcomed onto the committee Irene Duncan, New Scone Church Belleplates, and Ruth Cantlay, Jordanhill HR.

This year's Scottish Schools Ring made digital history when it was broadcast over the Scottish Schools secure intranet. More details on this event can be read about elsewhere in this newsletter. However thanks are due to Lysbeth and Malcolm Wilson both for their creativity and for continuing to organise this event. 150 youngsters were able to make music together.

Eleven Scottish ringers attended the National Rally held at Leicester University. This was an excellent event with a wide choice of ringing and workshop sessions.

For our Autumn event, we are proposing to hold two themed Regional Ring-Alongs. These will again be ring from scratch days where you will be given music on the day which you hopefully will not have played before – and we will all have fun playing this together. All the music for the day will have a Christmas theme so hopefully you will be able to add some new pieces to your repertoire in time for Christmas concerts. Full details will be sent out at the end of August.

I am currently looking forward to participating in the 14th International Handbell Symposium to be held in Osaka, Japan. Beryl Snowden, Blair Bells and Ruth Cantlay of Jordanhill will also be there flying the Scottish flag. You will read about our adventures in the next magazine.

In the meantime, please do get in touch if there is any help the regional committee or I can offer you.

Wishing you an enjoyable summer.

Christine D Reid

Scottish Region Chair

Spring Rally at Jordanhill



Babs & Elspeth, Eden HR



Dunblane Cathedral HR



Holy Trinity, Haddington



Cathcart HR



Caithness HR



Silver City Chimes

News from the Region



Scottish Schools Ring goes into Glow!

The Scottish Schools Ring 2010 was hosted by Newton Primary School in Dunblane in May. And it made digital history!

Over 150 pupils from schools from as geographically diverse as Aberdeen and Ayrshire, Falkirk and Renfrewshire gathered to make music together. With groups using belleplates, handchimes and handbells they all worked together on three massed ringing pieces of music (including one which had all 150 children ringing, singing and walking round the hall).

This was the 11th annual event of its kind but what made this year's event quite special was that fact it was broadcast live across the Scottish Schools secure intranet, Glow, using secure video-conferencing. Glow is available to every pupil and school staff member in every school in Scotland. It is the first national intranet to do so anywhere in the world.

The system provides pupils and teachers with a vast range of online collaborative tools and content. The Scottish Schools Ring was the first time a national music event was held in this way and this year's event was a proof of concept. The Glow video-conferencing tool within the special group for schools with handbells, handchimes or belleplates anywhere in Scotland now makes it possible for the event to be visible to those schools which are unable to travel to the event itself, but who would like to take part. That means those schools which are geographically just too far away to travel to the event itself and back in the same day can log into the secure Glow site for this event and see and hear what's going on.

This Ring in Schools Glow group also has a lot of content already on the various pages (including guidance on how ringing links to the latest curricular guidelines in Curriculum for Excellence) which will hopefully

prove useful to schools using handbells, handchimes or belleplates, and provide a means to share ideas and resources within the secure Glow site.



Malcolm Wilson

SCONE NEW BELLEPLATE GROUP

Scone New Church Belleplate Group formed approximately four years ago, when a set of Belleplates was bought by members of Scone New Church for use within the church and the community. They hoped that the Sunday School would be involved in using them, but there was not enough interest, as children are so busy nowadays. Some adults from the church decided to try to learn to use them. They asked Heather Mclean of Parish of Dunkeld Handbell Ringers for some advice, and asked if they could go to Dunkeld to watch the ringers.

When they saw me, they recognised me and asked if I would come and help them, as I live locally in Scone, and was already connected with the church.

I went along to find that as they had very limited resources, they had a sheet of wallpaper pegged to a clothes horse with notes of simple music tunes written on it. I'm sure many handbell groups have started in a similar way! When asked if I would help, I had to insist that we buy "proper music" as I couldn't understand doh, ray, me!

There were only about 4 adults to begin with, so it was quite tricky trying to cover all the notes, but we did have great fun trying. I bought Sandra Winters 8 bell music which was excellent for this purpose, because if only two other people turned up we could still play something. I had to quickly try to learn four-in-hand. Sandra has arranged a couple of books called the Aardvark 12 for 8 bells (pink) and another 12 for 8 (purple) I think these books are invaluable for small groups.

We now have 12 very enthusiastic, hardworking members who enjoy making music together, and we do laugh a lot.

We gradually felt brave enough to attempt to play in front of other people.

We have played at coffee mornings and lunch clubs at Scone New and Scone Old churches, at Christmas tree and Angel festivals at Scone New, and have taken part in worship at both churches.

We held a very successful coffee morning which was well supported by members of Scone New, Scone Old, and friends in the village and further afield. We raised over £300 which was used to buy extra Belleplates which means we now have sharp and flat notes (like the black notes on a piano) covering 2 octaves.

We played carols outside the St Johns Centre before Christmas (It was a bit chilly!) We were given donations on the day of £94.50p which we shared between Rachel House, and group funds to buy music. We were also given a donation from the Centre Management which we donated to Scone New Church.

We recently had a very enjoyable afternoon playing at St Ninians Cathedral Gold Club, and have been asked to play at Ochil House, various Guilds, and at Scone Old Church Fair in August.

If you "are ever in the area" please feel free to pop along to Scone New Church Committee Room 2 any Monday afternoon at 3.30, and have a wee ring with us. You would be made very welcome.

We do have fun trying to learn music together, and there is no pressure on anyone to take part in any of our 'performances'



Irene Duncan, Leader of Scone New Belleplate Group

Jordanhill Parish Church Handbell Ringers - A Celebration

At the beginning of March Jordanhill Parish Church Handbell Ringers held a concert to celebrate 20 years ringing. Our first 12 Malmark bells having been bought with a legacy of £1000 were dedicated at Easter in 1990. Over the next 20 years we have increased our bells to 3 chromatic octaves and 2 and a half Malmark handchimes. This has been done by fundraising and the generosity of many people in our congregation. In our twenty years we have had three leaders – Anne Thomson (who has a belleplate team in Aberdeen), David Henry and Ruth Cantlay.

Over the past 20 years we have raised considerable sums for charity. Some of the charities supported have been Quarriers, the Prince & Princess of Wales Hospice, Childline, St Margaret’s Hospice and Arthritis Care Scotland and Mary’s Meals for Haiti. We have rung in Princes Square, Kelvingrove Art Galleries, the Georgian House in Edinburgh for 2 Moderatorial receptions, St Mungo Museum of Religious Art, Iona Abbey and Glasgow Cathedral to name but a few.

We have taken part in the Glasgow Music Festival Music Making category three times and in March 2009 we were awarded first place.

Currently we have 12 ringers and all were able to take part in our celebratory concert. During our concert we played some old favourites such as Skye Boat Song, part of Phantom of the Opera and the Ash Grove – this latter one bringing back memories of our first rally in Dunblane when we rang this piece with 1 bell each! We also rang some new pieces such as A Grand Celebration and Sparkling Sound.

We have made many friends throughout the UK and made many links worldwide and we look forward to many more years of happy ringing!

Ruth Cantlay



Jordanhill Parish Church Handbell Ringers

Parish of Dunkeld Handbell Ringers

We have been kept busy since February despite the freezing temperatures and some challenging moments getting to the venues. Our first outing was to Perth Blind Society where we were very well received. We then performed in the services at Little Dunkeld Kirk for two Sundays in February. The second week was very snowy but enough of us got through to perform and all went well. Also in February we played as a group and with solo ringing for an over fifties group in Perth. There was a lovely atmosphere in a beautiful church and we all enjoyed the afternoon. On 4th March six of us were in Forfar, again a lovely friendly group of people who really liked us, especially Heather's selection of solos. They have invited us back in the future. Four of our group attended the Rally and AGM at Jordanhill and had a happy day enjoying the experience of mass ringing and listening to the variety of music performed by individual groups. We then played for a retired group in Oakbank, Perth with group ringing and solos. This was a return visit to this group who obviously enjoy our ringing.

Two of our ringers have also begun our annual summer season of ringing in Dunkeld Cathedral, playing solos and duets on Wednesdays from 2pm - 4pm (until Sept 29th). Once a month there is small ensemble ringing in addition to the solo ringing.

Heather attended the National Rally in Leicester, performing solos in a Rally Ring session. She also entertained a group in Auchterarder which had requested a solo recital and in April rang solo during a service in the Cathedral, accompanying the choir for the Introit and Anthem and the organ for the Offertory and Postlude. In early May we shall be ringing during the Flower Festival in Dunkeld Cathedral whilst enjoying the beautiful arrangements and lovely perfume of the flowers.

We shall be giving two performances, one of group ringing (Thursday afternoon on the 20th) and one of solos and duets (Saturday morning on the 22nd). Caroline Skelton



Margaret and Heather at the start of the 8th Summer Season of solo ringing in Dunkeld Cathedral - Wednesday afternoons 2.00 - 4.00 pm.

The Bells of St Ninian's, Moniaive – yes, the small picturesque village you visited on the Regional Ringing Day in October last year, sends all Bell Ringers our warmest wishes.

We formed this group after we heard the Stewartry Handbell Ringers who were instrumental in making this possible. We borrowed a spare set of handbells, tables, cushions etc., until we were ready to make the commitment. We were successful in receiving funding for the equipment from 'Awards for All' and our 'Local Area Committee' - and from then on we have met each Monday evening for our Sessions.

We are pleased to say, after our first ever outing at the Paisley Regional Day, we have progressed somewhat. (We have managed to get to grips with 'My Grandfather's Clock' progressing quite successfully past Bar 17.) Many a good laugh, after the event, we have had, but not so on the day, although appreciative of the encouragement of other ringers.

We now have many invitations to play, particularly at special services in our local Church, accompanying hymns and with special pieces; entertaining the Senior Citizens and residents of local Residential Homes to Afternoon Tea and Bell Ringing; Trefoil Guilds, Rurals, playing at Drumlanrig Castle for the Christmas Fayre, dressing up as Abbey Nuns to help out the local drama group perform 'The Sound of Music' etc.

Our highlight of the year was hosting the Regional Ringing Day in Moniaive - what a wonderful experience, meeting other Bell Ringers, listening to their special pieces and expert tuition. We felt that we had gained in confidence and hope that this can be repeated.

Our next big event is a 'workshop' at our Pentecost Celebration. This is a celebration of Pentecost for Dumfries and Kirkcudbright Presbytery. It will consist of two half-hour sessions. Muriel and Elna, our directors, are working hard and other members are going to help out - perhaps some new members? Perhaps a new group? Who knows?

We lost two members last year - Patsy to Argentina and Chris to ill-health. However, two new members, Dorothy and Gil, have joined and are making remarkable progress.

We are all still passionate, but are we satisfied? Our ringers are always seeking to improve their skills, please the teachers and practise hard - all very worthwhile.

Nan Tait

Holy Trinity Handbells

Holy Trinity Handbells have had a very successful season. Ringing has included accompanying the Rudsambee Company of Singers in Eric Whitacre's Cloudburst at the Reid Concert Hall, Edinburgh, a Talents Sharing Day and Martinmas Fair (both at St. Mary's Parish Church, Haddington), a Homecoming Party at Holy Trinity Church, Haddington, the National Trust for Scotland Christmas Fair at Newhailes, Musselburgh, the turning on of the Christmas tree lights at the Town House, Haddington, the Marie Curie's Lights to Remember at Fairmilehead, raising lots of money in Tesco and entertaining the folks of Loanhead, Joppa and Currie.

Holy Trinity Handbells participated in, and thoroughly enjoyed, both the Autumn Rally in Scone and the Spring Rally at Jordanhill and have formed a happy association with one of the Region's newest teams, Longniddry Clangers.

And we await delivery of our 38th bell!

John Elcock

Ring in Praise Seminar

The Annual National 'Ring in Praise' Handbell Seminar was held at Dunblane Cathedral on Saturday, 5th June – the 22nd year of this event – but the first for me.

In advance, delegates had selected four one hour workshops from a wide variety of twelve options offered. In addition, for those able to ring with confidence and read music fluently, there was the 'Ring All Day' group preparing pieces for a performance at the end of the event. A comprehensive information pack and schedule for the day had been compiled for the guidance of each delegate.

The day began with a warm welcome from the Minister of Dunblane Cathedral, the Rev. Colin McIntosh. A tempting array of scones and teabreads, tea and coffee, also awaited us and there was time to meet and talk with other delegates and browse through merchandise and sheet music in the Sales Stand.

Relatively inexperienced, I had chosen the four sessions recommended for those with little or no ringing experience, or limited music reading skills. The first was entitled 'Ringing for the First Time@ and covered basic ringing techniques and how they can be introduced to beginners of all ages. We had particular fun simultaneously ringing and singing 'He's got the Whole World in His Hands'. This was followed at noon by a concert in the cathedral. The Dunblane Cathedral Handbell Ringers directed by Malcolm Wilson were joined by Cathedral Organist, Matthew Beetschen, in an impressive demonstration of skill and talent. We

also enjoyed a contribution from the guest performers, the 2010 Celtic Spirituality Tour HandBells from First Presbyterian Church, Fargo, North Dakota, USA.

A delicious lunch followed, after which we sat out in the glorious sunshine and spectated as guests arrived for a wedding, welcomed by a piper.

The second workshop was 'Rhythms made Fun' (and indeed it was). This was a practical hands-on session which addressed the difficulties which arise on a regular basis in my own group. Next came 'Musical Terms made Clear'. We learned the meaning, and attempted to put into practice, the Italian instructions which we notice and usually ignore, from pp to ff, diminuendo to crescendo, allegro to lento, rallentando to accelerando. Again this session provided invaluable guidance to share with my own group. There was a break for afternoon tea, and then our final workshop which we approached with not a little curiosity! Entitled 'Queens, Tittums and Whittingtons' – this was a thoroughly enjoyable practical session simulating the sound of change-ringing tower bells using handbells. Needless to say, on Sunday morning, we listened intently (and with some knowledge) to the majestic and joyful tower bells of the cathedral!

The day ended with a Farewell in the main hall. The group which had been ringing all day entertained us with four pieces, two directed by Malcolm Wilson and two by Sandra Winter. This performance provided us with the incentive to work hard to attain the skill and musicianship of the advanced players. Congratulations to everyone involved.

I was encouraged by my friends in Border Bells to enrol for this seminar, and I am happy to say that it proved to be an instructive and enjoyable experience. Travel to Dunblane was no problem as it is served by bus and train. The accommodation at Scottish Churches House Conference Centre was excellent. The day was well organised and documented, and in the workshops, I am sure everyone felt comfortable and at ease regardless of ability. I have no hesitation in recommending this seminar and hope to be back in 2011.

Marette Hose, Border Bells



Review of New Music

Spirit of Freedom

Traditional Scottish Melody

Arr. By Malcolm C. Wilson, ASCAP

Malcolm Wilson's stirring arrangement of the old Scots tune "Hey Tuttie Tattie" has clear echoes of Bannockburn and Robert Burns' song "Scots Wha Hae". From the opening bars, with their underlying pulse of marching men through the strongly supported melody line to the rousing, closing reprise of the opening section, the mood of the music stirs the heart. The added trumpet line emphasises the martial feel, and serves to further define the melody. In its complete, 5 octave form, in the hands of a highly competent, well-drilled and well-led band, this must be a piece worth going many miles to hear.

From a technical standpoint, the arrangement exercises many different bell-ringing competencies and will present challenges to even the most proficient of groups.

In the lower register, the ringers must immediately get to grips with multi-note chord malleting to create the strong, rhythmic, bass line. While at first appearing regular, the different placing of triplets and the changing chords will require total concentration to achieve the necessary, steady pulse. Just as the bass ringers begin to feel comfortable, the second part of the melody demands a change to equally steady, 4/4, rung chords, which, together with the lower bells in the upper register, need just as high concentration levels to achieve perfectly synchronised ringing of up to 7 bells together. As the piece progresses, the accompanying bells move into steady, but never completely regular, quaver chords, all building the mood and tension to support the strength of the melody.

In the upper register the bells must provide that melody as an absolutely defined, rhythmically correct line, with dotted crotchet, quaver sequences played, in places, against the bass triplets. The piece also requires the ringing of leading grace notes – never easy to time to perfection, particularly where, in 5 octaves, the grace and following notes are doubled. Taking both registers together, in places, as many as 12 bells have to be rung or struck in a single chord, only achievable with precise timing and perfect ringing technique.

The piece is masterfully scored to make it available to 4, and even 3 octave choirs. All that is lost in dropping to 31 bells, for the most part, is the bottom, single line of bass notes and the doubled upper notes. What remains loses little of the power and rhythm of the piece and continues to demand the utmost in technique and concentration from the smaller forces involved.

Having said that, this is not a piece to be undertaken lightly by the smaller or less experienced group. Even allowing for some use of four-in-hand ringing in the upper bells, the 3 octave reduction would still require 12 or more ringers, not to mention more mallets than the average band is likely to possess. The techniques involved, the required, rhythmic precision and the use of multiple bell chords throughout, while providing excellent training in rehearsal, would challenge lesser bands to achieve the level of concert performance that the piece demands.

Whether in 3, 4 or 5 octaves, this piece surely evokes the spirit of those Scottish heroes of bygone days, Wallace and Bruce. Perhaps if it had been played before Scotland rugby matches this season, its fervour might have given the players that added dose of passion to carry them to the extra victories they so clearly deserved! In the hands of a top-flight choir and trumpeter, this is a piece that all lovers of handbell music will want to hear and to the playing of which every band should aspire.

Stuart Clelland
Holy Trinity Handbells



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

August 3-7	14 th International Symposium Osaka Japan
October 9	“Mistletoe & Wine”, themed Ring-Along, Holy Trinity Haddington
October 23	“Mistletoe & Wine”, themed Ring-Along, Chapel Chimers in Aberdeen
October 27 – 30	UK Bronze - details in Reverberations

Deadline for next issue of magazine – 25th September 2010

The Walsh Memorial Bell Choir

High school students ranging in ages from 14 – 18 from

The Presbyterian Church of Morris Plains, N.J., USA

Concert

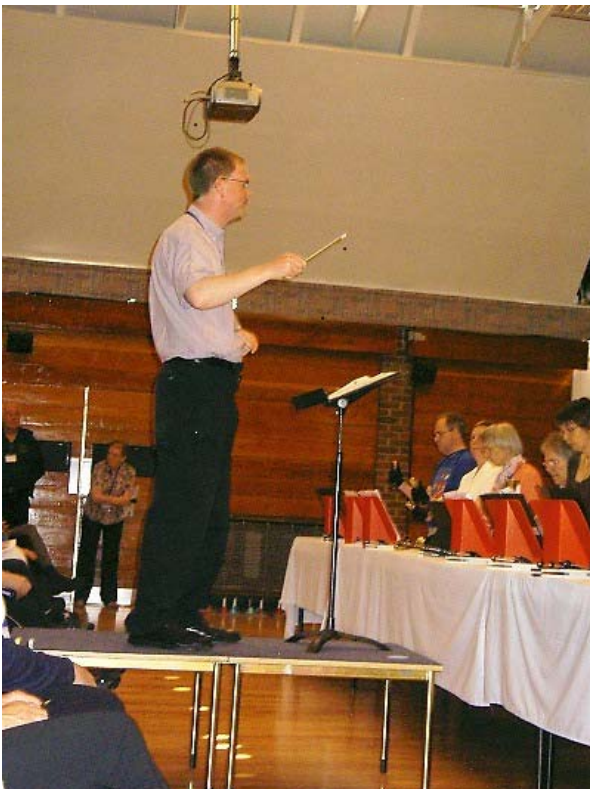
Monday 28th June at 7.30pm

in

Dunblane Cathedral

Programme will include an exciting mix of classics, traditional melodies and contemporary music.

National Rally, Leicester



Malcolm conducting his Masterclass



Judith Frye learning to change ring

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