



# HRGB Scottish Newsletter

2025 Issue 1 – February 2025

## Chat from the Chair

I hope you were all able to participate in some festive ringing over the Christmas period. Here in East Lothian, Holy Trinity Handbells rang at Dobbies Garden Centre in aid of the Teenage Cancer Trust, at the St Columba's Hospice Light up a Life service at St Marys Parish Church and at the ecumenical Carol Service in Holy Trinity Church.

A very successful Autumn Rally was held at the Netherthird Community Centre, Cumnock on Saturday 12 October. The rally commenced at 11.30am and continued until 3.30pm with breaks for lunch, coffee and tea, served by Cumnock and District Handbell Ringers. The massed ringing music all had an Ayrshire theme, with two arrangements of songs by Robert Burns and Malcolm Wilson's arrangement of a piece by Sir James MacMillan.

Those present were also entertained by pieces rung by the hosts Cumnock and District Handbell Ringers, Blair Bells, Dunblane Cathedral Handbell Ringers, Jordanhill Parish Church Handbell Ringers and Poltney Handbell Ringers. We all had a fantastic time.

Having acted as Chair of the Scottish Regional Association since 2017, I have decided not to stand for re-election at this year's AGM. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your support and friendship over the last 8 years; it's been good fun!

I look forward to seeing you all at the 2025 Scottish Region AGM and Spring Rally which will be held at Holy Trinity Church, Haddington on Saturday 15 March. The massed ringing pieces will be *Sweet Nightingale* arranged by Elaine Duffus, *Willow Waltz* by A Ryan Price and *Messing About on the River* by Tony Hatch, arranged by D De Salis.

My best wishes to you all for a musical 2025.

## 21st International Handbell Symposium 2024 Hamamatsu Japan

Ring The Future



Once again a trio of ringers from Jordanhill set off on their travels to meet friends from around the world and participate in the 21<sup>st</sup> Symposium in Japan. Ruth had ventured to the land of the rising sun in 2010 and was eager to return. Linda and Lynda quickly signed up to join the adventure.

Planning and preparation are key to a successful trip. Many hours were spent deciding which airline to use, when we fit in a holiday, and which of the numerous workshops to select. Cultural and musical workshops are offered and led by members of the different International Guilds relating to their own culture.

Linda chose a Japanese Tea Party and a traditional Chinese paper cutting class at which she made a delicate bell design and even managed to bring it home in one piece.

Lynda persuaded Ruth to join the Advanced Mirai Choir conducted by Toshikazu Yoshida. We had worked with him at a previous Symposium and were keen to do so again. All 3 workshops were rehearsing the piece to be performed at the Concert Hall and the Final massed ringing concert. First look at the music was when we entered the ringing room. A baptism of fire.

‘Dance of the Yao People’, available to view from the link below recorded in the City Concert Hall.

<https://youtube.com/watch?v=SwUVGF2009s&si=kFxSIPpNLwNDkHJL>



Hamamatsu Castle and Shrine.



Top: We made it!

After a busy day ringing!

Below: 700 + ringers rehearse for the final concert.

The International Handbell Symposium IHS is held every 2 years in 8 countries around the world.

The International Handbell Committee (IHC) is made up of the following 8 countries: Great Britain, Canada, Australasia, United States, Japan, S Korea, Hong Kong, and Singapore.

On this occasion Macao, Taiwan, Thailand, Iceland, Germany, Hungary, and Puerto Rico were represented.

Each Guild selects a piece of music for massed ringing and the host country selects 2.

We receive the music about 3 months beforehand to allow practise at home. This is vital as rehearsal time is limited and you hit the ground running, however you have the security of knowing that at least 50-70 other ringers are also playing your notes. Thank goodness for that we all cry, especially as the young ringers seem to have memorised all the music already.

It is a very sociable event, particularly during mealtimes and outings and friendships are formed which can last a lifetime.

Lynda and Ruth attended their first IHS in Toronto in 2004 and befriended a Japanese teenager ringing in the row in front of them. 20 years on she came to hear the concert and sought us out. A memorable reunion. Mr Nozumo Abe from Japan was one of the first international conductors Malcolm Wilson introduced to Scotland at the inception of the NRRW in Dunblane. Over the years we have met him with his wife and daughter at various ringing events. This time in their homeland we had the great pleasure of passing on best wishes from Scotland.

We followed the symposium with a wonderful holiday visiting Kyoto, Tokyo, Nagano, and Yudanaka to see the Snow monkeys. It is the most amazing country. So well ordered and friendly, and thanks to Google Translate and our excellent tour company and city guides we came home with a multitude of stories about our adventures.

Ruth, Nami, Lynda.

**Scotland 2026/Singapore 2028.**

Ruth and Lynda with Mr & Mrs Abe



**“Where next?” I hear you cry... 2026. P&J Live Aberdeen 4-8 August**

Why not join us in Aberdeen to ring or as a volunteer helper? It will never be so close again.

By Lynda Barclay

The Annual General Meeting  
of the Scottish Regional Association of  
Handbell Ringers of Great Britain  
will be held in  
Holy Trinity Church, Haddington  
on Saturday 15 March 2025 at 11:30 am

**N.B.** John will be retiring from the chair, so please consider whether you or someone you know might be willing to take on this interesting role, overseeing our supportive and hardworking committee. **We do need a chairperson to be able to continue**, and we're looking forward to welcoming the new chairperson to the committee. Thanks! 😊

**In Memory of Mary Wilson**  
**7<sup>th</sup> June 1944 – 21<sup>st</sup> October 2024**

Mary Wilson was a founder member of Jordanhill Parish Church Handbell Ringers. She rang with the group for about 28 years, bringing loyalty and also her wonderful sense of humour. She attended rallies and workshops hosted by the Scottish Region. She also attended National Rallies and the National Residential Ringing Weeks in Dunblane. Sadly, from 2018 she was unable to be part of the group due to the onset of Alzheimer's. She will be missed by many.

Ruth Cantlay,  
Jordanhill Parish Church Handbell Ringers



(Mary Wilson, front right)

## McLean Bells return to Scotland

The Caithness Handbell Ringers are delighted to have received the “McLean Bells” on loan: two octaves of Malmark bells which were donated to HRGB’s William Hartley Memorial Fund by the wonderful Heather McLean from Dunkeld after her death in 2017. This has enabled the team to “double up” on parts, with every member now ringing bells rather than using belleplates and chimes for this purpose. Our youngest ringer, pictured below, has finally been able to make the move from child-friendly belleplates to playing on Heather’s precious bells, and we are beyond grateful to the WHMF and to Heather’s family for facilitating her final gift to HRGB. We imagine her smiling down on Peter as he takes his first steps into the wonderful world of bellringing!

To see some videos of Peter and the rest of our team in action, visit our facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/CaithnessHandbellRingers/>



**Heather McLean, in one of her last solo ringing performances**



**Peter (age 10) ringing actual bells in rehearsal for the first time, thanks to the generous WHMF loan of the McLean bells to the Caithness Handbell Ringers**

## Important Dates for your Diary:

**Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> March 2025** Spring Rally and AGM, Holy Trinity Church, Haddington. There’s still time to book if you’d like to join in – please return your forms by 1<sup>st</sup> March! The massed ringing music and registration form can be downloaded here: <https://www.hrgb-scotland.org.uk/calendar/hrqb-scottish-regional-association-spring-rally-and-agm-in-haddington-15-march-2025>

**Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> June 2025** A one-day regional workshop, open to all HRGB members, to be held in [Jordanhill Parish Church](#). There will be three sessions and every participant will have the opportunity to attend all sessions:

1. Understanding various handbell techniques, finishing with a piece of music which uses the techniques, led by Ruth Cantlay
2. Weaving (a technique used in solo ringing and also especially useful for managing bass bells in off-table team ringing) including how to incorporate accidentals into your weaving technique, led by Malcolm Wilson
3. What it’s like to attend a National Event and/or an International Symposium, led by Lynda Barclay. (see next page... 😊)

**4<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> August 2026**

International Handbell Symposium will be held 4th–8th August 2026 (**Next year!**) at The P&J Live in Aberdeen, Scotland! Don't miss it!!

You still have time to plan, dream, save up and fundraise to make sure your whole team makes the effort to attend this AMAZING event!!! The next time the International Symposium might come to the UK could be 2042, so please don't miss this unique opportunity – get the date in your diary now, get talking with your team-mates, and do your best to attend Lynda's session on 14<sup>th</sup> June 2025 giving information about this and providing lots of inspiration to encourage us all to attend the Symposium (see event above!)

Whatever you've been up to, please do send me your article about it for inclusion in the next newsletter. 😊

Please email [katrinathurso@aol.com](mailto:katrinathurso@aol.com) or post to 26 Grove Lane, Thurso, KW14 8AE with all your news and pictures. Thanks!