



HRGB Scottish Newsletter

2023 Issue 3 – November 2023

Chat from the Chair

In spite of the appalling weather, the Scottish Region's 2023 Autumn Rally held in the Victoria Halls, Dunblane on Saturday 7 October was a huge success with representation from all parts of Scotland. Many thanks must go to Malcolm and his team for their tip-top organisation. In celebration of her award of the BEM in the New Year Honours list, the massed ringing pieces were all arrangements by Lysbeth Wilson and beautifully conducted by Malcolm, Ruth and Katrina. It was a great pity that Lysbeth was unable to attend in person, but we did manage to hear from her on the big screen!

Mary Gordon has handed over the job as Sales Manager to Lynda Barclay. May I take this opportunity to thank Mary and her team for looking after the sales table so ably over the years and to Lynda for taking it on.

Following the dissolution of the Parish of Dunkeld Handbell Ringers, the Kirk Session has made arrangements to transfer 'The Birnam Bells' to the Scottish Regional Association. The committee is very grateful to the Parish of Dunkeld for their generosity.

Laura is standing down as Treasurer and National Executive Committee Representative at the Spring Rally. Please get in touch with a member of the committee if you think you might like to take on either or both of these posts.

Our Spring Rally is being hosted by Caithness Handbell Ringers and Poltney Ringers in Wick on Saturday 16 March 2024. I, for one, have already booked my accommodation! See you there!

In the meantime, I hope you all get lots of Christmas ringing.

John Elcock, Chair of HRGB Scottish Regional Association

Opportunities for You!

Have you ever wanted to be more involved in the Scottish Region or even play a part in the national organisation of HRGB? If so, here are a couple of golden opportunities not to be missed!

Laura Buist will be standing down from two of her roles at the AGM in March, leaving two vacancies to be filled:

- ♪ Scottish Regional Treasurer
- ♪ and becoming one of the two Scottish NEC (National Executive Committee) Representatives.

Please have a think about whether you might enjoy joining the Scottish Regional committee and perhaps even filling one, or both, of these roles.

Being the regional treasurer is not as arduous as it might sound, and some simple bookkeeping skills are all that's necessary, or a willingness to develop these. As well as recording the region's financial activities, the treasurer collects in any payments to the region (for example the registration fees for rallies), banks cheques and cash, and pays out cheques for any expenses. An annual regional rebate from the national HRGB is paid automatically into our bank account, and Anthony Hayes (the HRGB National Treasurer) keeps all of the regional treasurers well informed of money coming to our regional accounts. At the end of the financial year it is necessary to produce a statement of the annual accounts, for which there is a simple spreadsheet, and we are required to have this examined by an independent examiner. The Regional Treasurers do not get involved in any of the financial regulations relating to HRGB's charity status - that is all done by Anthony.

The role of an NEC Representative (each region has two) is to attend the NEC meetings and represent the interests of the ringers in Scotland. The meetings are currently held four times a year and since COVID these have all been on Zoom. Our representative gives a short verbal report to the NEC about HRGB activities in Scotland and reports back to the Scottish committee of the proceedings of the NEC meeting. Things have become much easier since the NEC minutes have been published on the website, but there is a slight time delay with that publication, so speedier information direct from the rep is often appreciated by the committee. All the regional reps and the national office bearers are the trustees of HRGB and being a rep is very informative – you quickly learn all about the running of the organisation and get to know more about the plans for its future, while also giving each representative the opportunity to be involved in the decision making at a national level. With the International Handbell Symposium planned to take place in the UK in 2026, now is a very exciting time to become involved with HRGB at a national level!

If you are interested or even just wondering about these roles within HRGB please don't hesitate to speak to Laura about her experiences. She will be very happy to provide fuller explanations of the positions and talk you through anything that is involved before you commit yourself and to answer any questions or concerns after that if you take on one of the roles.

Please email Laura on laura.buist@btinternet.com or telephone on 0141 959 2891 or speak to any of the committee members, some of whom have already served some time as the treasurer or the NEC rep, if you would like more information.

Reflections from the Hills

[Editor's note: This is an interview-style article from Kirsty Hill of the Caithness Handbell Ringers and her son Peter Hill, who turned 9 years old on the day after he attended the Autumn Scottish Regional Rally in Dunblane. Here they are, pictured at the tea break, with Peter's dad Callum who is affectionately known as "Hilly".]



Peter: We had been practising for a while for the Dunblane Handbell Rally. I was scared. Then it was actually quite good!

Kirsty: Why were you scared?

P: I thought I wasn't going to do well. There were a lot of people.

K: There were! When you got there and you said hi to some of the people, did you feel a bit more comfortable?

P: Yes, I knew that some of the people might appreciate me playing even if I did play some of the notes wrong. I love saying hello to people, and they said hello back! I got to cross off so many bubbles on my Crescendo sheet!

K: What did you think of different people conducting the three different music pieces?

P: Confusing and surprising! I thought it was all going to be one conductor, it gave me quite a surprise that there were three different conductors for the three different songs. It was quite easy because I copied you and I listened to the tune and read the music, I knew I could play at the same time as my mum because we were on the same notes. (Sometimes I got it right, and sometimes I missed the notes but I really enjoyed it even if I didn't get them right)

K: Did you have a favourite tune you played or listened to?

P: Played: Yankee Doodle. Listened to: Scots Wha Hae from the Dunblane ringers. Yankee Doodle is just a good tune, it is easy to play, and Scots Wha Hae is quite a Scottish song. I think it would be a good song to listen to again! (Maybe even play it)

K: Would you go to another rally?

P: YES! It was such good fun! I'm going to imagine what song we are going to play at the next one. We're ringing Christmas carols just now because it's near Christmas, but I'm wondering what it would sound like with more ringers to play too.

P: Were you scared, mum?

K: I was a little bit nervous, because this rally was different than my first one I went to in Stirling earlier this year. For the National Rally I was on my own (still with the handbell team) but this rally I had you and Hilly with me. I was a bit worried that you might struggle, because you were just 8 years old, and potentially not having any other children to speak to might have dampened your spirits. There weren't any other kids playing, but you were more than happy to eat all the cakes put in front of you and speak to anyone and everyone! It was an absolute dream being able to take you to the rally, and for you to fit in so well with all the other ringers, no matter how different we all are.

P: Did you feel good?

K: I felt great. It was wonderful being able to see and listen to all the other teams play their songs, and the variety of tunes was marvelous. I really enjoyed being able to see the chimes, Belleplates and handbells all in the same room. They all sounded so different yet beautiful in their own ways. My husband felt like it was such a friendly day, and that everyone played so well. He wished there was more time to play!

P: Do you have any favourite song that you played or listened to?

K: I really enjoyed playing the Loch Tay Boat song once we had practised a couple of times, it was such a lovely tune that I hadn't heard before. I will admit I teared up a little at the beautiful playing of the Blair bells. I think it was the Jordanhill ringers playing the Hebridean Suite that was my absolute favourite, but I can't think of any that I didn't enjoy listening to!

P: What was your favourite part of the whole day?

K: Being surrounded by like-minded people who all enjoy the bell music was wonderful, I certainly feel like my cup has been filled up. I especially enjoyed being able to share it with my family, that has made such a nice added bonus for me. I didn't get a chance to speak to as many people as I would have liked, but hopefully at the next rally in Wick I will be able to get more of a chance to have a blether (you did most of the talking at Dunblane!)

Again, I've come away from a rally excited and looking forward to what the future holds for the bells. It was such an inspiring setting too, the Victoria Halls is a gorgeous building, and the size of the hall was perfect for the bell rally. The Dunblane ringers did such a good job of organizing everything, it was just so seamless and ran pretty true to timings on the programme which I was amazed at! Hopefully our teams in the North of Scotland can do the next rally organization justice, but I get the feeling that as long as enough of you wonderfully talented people turn up it could never be a bad day of bell ringing.

Come say hello to us when you're up in Wick on the 16th March 2024, Peter in particular loves talking to people and showing how good he is at smiling while ringing! But be warned... It's contagious! When you see someone enjoying playing as much as he does, you'll not be able to stop smiling either!

Kirsty and Peter Hill

Thankfully, rain didn't stop play...



HRGB – Scottish Regional Association Autumn Rally 2023.

There was record breaking rain which hit parts of Scotland causing widespread flooding and multiple landslides during the weekend of the Scottish Regional Association Autumn Rally, held at Victoria Halls, Dunblane on Saturday 7th October. Nonetheless it did not deter many of our handbell ringers who attended the Autumn Rally with most of the fourteen groups participating in the event.

In celebration of Lysbeth Wilson's recognition and richly deserved Medal of the Order of the British Empire (BEM), the pieces for the Massed Ringing were all arrangements by Lysbeth, who unfortunately was unable to attend in person due to contracting Covid. Thanks to Malcolm she was able to attend via digital link up from the comfort of her own home, no doubt delighted to hear all the massed ringing pieces, and individual group selections of handbell pieces.

The programme for the Rally provided a variety for all the participants, from the Raffle raising funds for the Dunblane Centre and HRGB Scotland, respectively.

It was interesting to hear the Wilson family history of Dunblane Village Hall in which Malcolm reminisced about the music played by the late Jimmy Shand, with connections to his mother and Father who danced in the unique sprung floor which is apparently perfect for dancing. The ornate feature of the Main Hall with its beautifully decorated was also admired.

Delicious soups, as always, were enjoyed by all our ringers with special thanks to Lysbeth, Jayne, Allison and Elizabeth. A most enjoyable day indeed for all our handbell ringers, sincere thanks to Malcolm and all the team involved.

Catherine Vost

Jordanhill Parish Church Handbell Ringers

Welcomed into the HRGB Scotland “Family”

Arriving at the Victoria Halls in Dunblane on Saturday 7th October for the Scottish Region Autumn Rally, I was feeling rather apprehensive, as a novice bell ringer at my first rally. However, my fellow bellringers from Cumnock and District Handbell Ringers were very supportive and reassuring.

The whole experience was very positive and enjoyable. Everyone was so welcoming and encouraging and the hospitality was lovely. It was really entertaining listening to different individual groups performing from across the country. In particular I enjoyed participating in the massed ringing, feeling part of bigger ‘family’ of bellringers, even if I did miss a note or two!

Sheila Blamey

Cumnock and District Handbell Ringers

National Residential Ringing Week 2023

The Edge, Sheffield

On 31st July, Kirsty, Lynda and I set off bright and early for the National Residential Ringing Week (NRRW). We arrived at the venue with a little time to spare before ringing started at 1345. Just enough time for us to get our cases into our rooms – a real bonus!

Aidan Fozzard welcomed everyone to the ringing week and invited us to ring a bell to signify the start of the event. Over 80 ringers attended with 7 coming from Scotland. Teams represented were Blair Bells, Dunblane Cathedral, Inverness and Jordanhill.



We were introduced to our conductors – Nick Hanson from USA, Emily Li from Hong Kong, and Kate Sawallisch from the UK. The Hong Kong Youth team were also welcomed to the event. Each conductor had three pieces of music which we were to be familiar with prior to arriving at the NRRW. The difficulty of the pieces ranged from Level 2+ to Level 4+. I had created a YouTube playlist which allowed people to listen to the pieces while looking at their music. I was also able to set up 3 rehearsals in Jordanhill Parish Church which some of the other Scottish ringers were able to come to. Grateful thanks to Jordanhill ringers who, not going to the NRRW, came along to fill the gaps! This enabled us to have a sound knowledge of at least some of the pieces.

Ringling started, and with various breaks we rang on until 2030 so some of us were pretty tired. As it was Nick's birthday, a cake had been arranged and we all sang Happy Birthday.

The pieces chosen this time were:

Bound for South Australia arr. Alex Gruebert
The Butterfly Song by Brian M Howard arr. Valerie W Stephenson
Jubilant Praise by Jantz A Black
Nocturnal Fantasy by Emily Li
One Foundation by Mathew Compton
Prayer for the Innocents by Michael Helman
Resonances and Alleluias by Cathy Moglebust
The Unclouded Day by J.K. Alwood arr Brian Seemann
With All My Heart by Kathleen Wissinger.

Each morning we were expected to arrive at our positions by 0845, ready for 'notices'. Tuesday and Thursday were our long days ringing from 0900 until 2030. Despite being tired we always made time for chatting in the bar!!

Wednesday was our half day when some of us went on the planned excursion to Chatsworth House. We had a packed lunch to take with us. On arrival there we had our time slot to go round the house, which was stunning. The grounds too were beautiful but unfortunately the weather could have been better.

Some people took the opportunity to go to Heritage Quay, Huddersfield, home of the HRGB archives, to see the handbell exhibition. By all accounts it was extremely interesting.

In the evening after our dinner there was time for entertainment which could be anything as long as not handbell related! All good fun!

All too quickly it was Friday, and it was time for last-minute tweaks to the music, the dress rehearsal and the concert. The concert went well and it was good to see so many friends in the audience including Susan and Neil who had come down from Glasgow especially for the concert!

The NRRW is a fabulous opportunity to learn more about the art of Handbell ringing and become more proficient in it. It is also great to catch up with friends and make new friends.

All being well I will be back in 2025!

Ruth Cantlay

Jordanhill Parish Church Handbell Ringers

Double Trouble?!



Katrina Gordon (HRGB editor and director of the Caithness Handbell Ringers) has recently persuaded her twin sister, Fiona, to become a handbell ringer and join the team so look out – it's not always easy to tell who's who! We're both very much looking forward to confusing everyone at the Spring Rally in Wick next year on March 16th – see you there!

Important Dates for your Diary:

- Today (or tomorrow...)** Get in touch with Laura Buist to find out more about joining the Scottish regional committee and perhaps even becoming our new regional treasurer or representing Scotland on the HRGB National Executive Committee!
- Saturday 16th March 2024** Scottish Region Spring Rally, Wick Assembly Rooms, Wick, Caithness
Check out the Caithness Handbell Ringers' [facebook event](#) to find out more, register your interest or intention to attend, and to get in touch if you need any advice about accommodation or travel to the far north!
- 4th-8th August 2026** International Handbell Symposium will be held 4th – 8th August **2026** at The Sage International Conference Centre Newcastle
You have just two years 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 and get talking with your team mates!

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 or post to 26 Grove Lane, Thurso, KW14 8AE with all your news and pictures.
Thanks!