



HRGB Scottish Newsletter

2024 Issue 1 – February 2024

Chat from the Chair

I hope you were all able to participate in some festive ringing over the Christmas period. Here in Haddington, Holy Trinity Handbells were described as having played a 'pivotal role' in the Garleton Singers Christmas concert *Ring out, wild bells!*

Laura Buist is standing down as Treasurer and National Executive Committee Representative of HRGB Scottish Regional Association at the AGM in March. I thank Laura for her dedication to these posts which she has undertaken with diligence and enthusiasm.

Might you be our next Treasurer? If you would consider taking on this role then now would be a good time to do so as you'd be able to have the support of Laura until taking over at the AGM. To find out more, get in touch with Laura at laura.buist@btinternet.com.

Mary Macgregor has handed over the job of 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.

I look forward to seeing you all at the 2024 Scottish Region AGM and Spring Rally which will be held in the Assembly Halls, Wick on Saturday 16 March – please return your application forms for this as soon as possible and by **29th February at the latest** to help the Caithness Handbell Ringers and the Poltney Ringers with organisation of this event.

John Elcock, Chair of HRGB Scottish Regional Association

International Handbell Symposium 2026

logo competition winner!

The Scottish Regional committee were delighted to learn last week that the winning logo has been designed by a Scottish Ringer! We send our hearty congratulations to Margaret Reid, of the Caithness Handbell Ringers, who designed this superb logo, incorporating both handbells and the famous bridge:

22nd International Handbell Symposium



The Sage International Conference Centre
Newcastle / Gateshead, UK

4 - 8 August 2026

HRGB SCOTLAND
SPRING RALLY

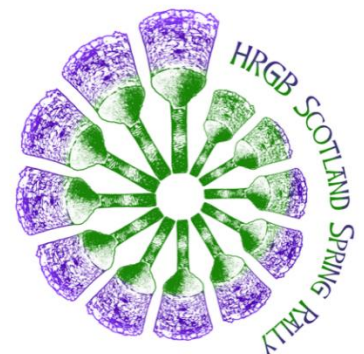


16 MARCH 2024
THE ASSEMBLY ROOMS
WICK, CAITHNESS

Incidentally, it was also Margaret Reid who designed the logos which feature this on the Scottish Spring Rally application documents this year. The design on the left features a thistle theme while the other incorporates the floorplan of an ancient broch. (We're well known for our brochs here in Caithness!)

What a talented lady you are, Margaret – we couldn't be more proud of you!

The Caithness Handbell Ringers are looking forward to welcoming everyone to Wick on 16th March this year for a bumper Spring Rally, a little different from the usual!



16 MARCH 2024
THE ASSEMBLY ROOMS
WICK, CAITHNESS

Ring out, wild bells!



The above headline publicised the Garleton Singers Christmas concert in Haddington in December.

Well known musician and critic, Alberto Massimo, wrote in The East Lothian Courier “The Garleton Singers gave an uplifting performance at St Mary’s Haddington The title *Ring Out, Wild Bells!* referred to the Holy Trinity Handbells, who obviously enjoyed their pivotal role”.

After some 3 years since their last performance, John Elcock refreshed the Holy Trinity Handbells group with an invitation in September to ‘Come and Try’ sessions. That resulted in 6 new members joining the band most of

whom had never rung bells before.

Very soon, John announced that he had received requests for the handbells band to play publicly. Gosh, now we were rehearsing for public performance. In the Garleton Singers concert we did individual performances of 2 pieces arranged for three octaves and accompanied the choir along with brass and percussion in 4 other carols.

Did we ring out? – yes, according to the audience.

Were the bells wild? - perhaps, but we should leave the critic, Massimo, to define his comment ‘pivotal’.

Did playing uplift the band members? - unquestionably yes.

We are now well into term 2 and no one has withdrawn because of stage fright in December. Learning to ring bells has been a wonderful experience and I speak for all we novices in saying a big thank you to John and Stuart, our musical director.

Douglas Burt, Holy Trinity Handbells



Dr

FESTIVE BELLS AND ST MAGNUS

The season approached, when all hankered for bells
to ring out in joyous Praise and Noels.

Two clans sought to meet, to make music and laughter,
they surely could conquer that small stretch of water.
(after all the Vikings did)

The clans practiced their music, The Pentland Firth in between,
Storm Gerrit approaching could not be foreseen.

The wind grew in force, so that no travel was sanctioned,
The Merry Men of Mey* deemed all vessels stayed anchored.

Clan Borealis, continued their plight,
anxious and lonely, no friends were in sight.

Then on the horizon arose the Spire of St Magnus,
it's red sandstone walls forged courage and gladness.

Scotland's oldest Cathedral embodied sounds of delight,
bells ringing Joy to the World, We Three Kings, Silent Night.
(some delights were quite unique)

The bells resounded their praise, with joyous success,
but it would have been sweeter, shared with friends from Caithness.

**Merry Men of Mey - Areas of the Pentland Firth where the current and tidal swell are particularly fierce
Sam Payne, Borealis Bells of Orkney*



*The Borealis Bells Of Orkney playing in St Magnus Cathedral, Kirkwall,
on a particularly stormy day! The Caithness Handbell Ringers were
very sorry not to be there this time and hope to join up with the
Borealis Ringers on an overseas trip this summer (fingers crossed!)*

HRGB SALES SCOTTISH REGION

HRGB Scottish Region has a selection of HRGB ringing accessories, gloves and stationery items available which can be purchased at regional events throughout the year. You can also view copies of the Mayola Collection and HRGB music which can be ordered online.

Between regional and national events if you require any sales items please place orders directly online with John Willis. See below.

Or contact Lynda Barclay. lyndabarclay@hotmail.com for assistance

Visit our online shop at
www.hrgb.org.uk
email sales@hrgb.org.uk
or give us a ring on 01837 52565

Discount Code For Members

HRGB Members may claim a 10% discount on orders for most purchases which total more than £10 in value. At Stage 2 of the Checkout look for the Discount Coupon panel

Type the following code into the Redemption Code box: **A21**



See you in
March
at Wick
Assembly
Rooms

HRGB Scotland needs You!

Would you like to be more involved in the Scottish Region or 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 these two roles at the AGM in Wick, and we are looking for volunteers:

- ♪ Scottish Regional Treasurer
- ♪ Being 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 filling one, or even both, of these roles. We really do need you and you'll be greatly appreciated!

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.

The role of an NEC Representative is to attend national committee meetings and represent the interests of the ringers in Scotland. The meetings are held four times a year 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. 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.

A Right Royal Adventure!

In June of last year, I was delighted to take part, albeit a small part, in ringing the tower bells in St Andrew's Church, Sonning, Berkshire, to celebrate the coronation of King Charles III.

Being a novice, I wasn't quite sure what to expect. However, the ringers all made me very welcome. To get to the tower, I had to enter a tiny door to the small, spiral stone stairs, and cling on to a rope to reach the tower whilst wondering how on earth I was ever going to get back down!

The actual tower is surprisingly big. Whilst I was talking to the ringers there, I met Andrew Price who told me that his father Ryan had recently passed away and that there was to be a "Remembering Ryan" handbell rally organized by the SW Region of HRGB in September 2024 in his honour. Not only had Ryan played handbells for many years, he had been a prolific composer and arranger of handbell music, too.



Linda with the Sonning Tower Bell Ringers

I had the good fortune to be invited to Andrew and Helen's house after the event and they kindly showed me videos of the Rally. The programme included all of the pieces that his father had composed, together with a selection of those that he had arranged. They were lovely pieces and hopefully we will have the opportunity to ring some of them in the future. Andrew said that HRGB are hoping to publish more of his music in aid of Alzheimer's.

On both occasions I had a lovely experience. A huge thank you to the Sonning tower ringers and also to Andrew and Helen. If I lived nearer, I would love to join their team but commuting from Scotland would definitely be a problem!

Linda Mawson

Jordanhill Parish Church Handbell Ringers

Lights, Street Fairs, Craft Fair and Concert



The lead up to Christmas 2023 for Dunblane Cathedral Handbell Ringers involved performing for the outdoor annual “Light Up A Life” remembrance event at Strathcarron Hospice (where our music adds to the lighting up of the Christmas tree as part of the service of remembrance for loved ones lost); performing seasonal music at the Christmas street fairs in both Dunblane and in Doune; performing Christmas music at regular intervals at our own fund-raising craft fair;

contributing to the music in Dunblane Cathedral Sunday morning service, along with the organ, choir and congregation;

and presenting a concert of all of our groups along with guest choir Sweet Harmony Barbershop Chorus. This concert had lovely feedback from the audience including “Absolutely fantastic night of festive entertainment...the handbell ringers played beautifully”. The concert featured the youngest children in our



groups (aged 8 and 9), our teenage handbell soloist, our intergenerational teenage and adult group, a handbell trio, and our concert group. With something for all tastes the music ranged from “I want a hippopotamus for Christmas” to “Let it go” from Disney’s Frozen, from “Dance of the Snow Flakes” to “Someday at Christmas” and “Little Drummer Boy” to “Have

yourself a merry little Christmas”. Three pieces also combined handbells with the barbershop chorus!



Do please join us for our next concert featuring all of our groups in “Music for a Summer Evening” in Dunblane Cathedral on Sunday 9 June.

Malcolm Wilson,
Dunblane Cathedral Handbell Ringers

JORDANHILL PARISH CHURCH HANDBELL RINGERS



This Christmas we were invited by the Glasgow Cathedral Choral Society to ring as part of their Christmas Concert in the Cathedral. We were excited to be doing this and all our ringers were able to confirm that they were available. The theme for their concert was 'A European Christmas' and I was told it didn't need to be all Christmas Music.

Our first piece was **Behold a New Joy** – Ecce Novum Gaudium, a 17th century Scottish Carol arr Malcolm C Wilson. This was

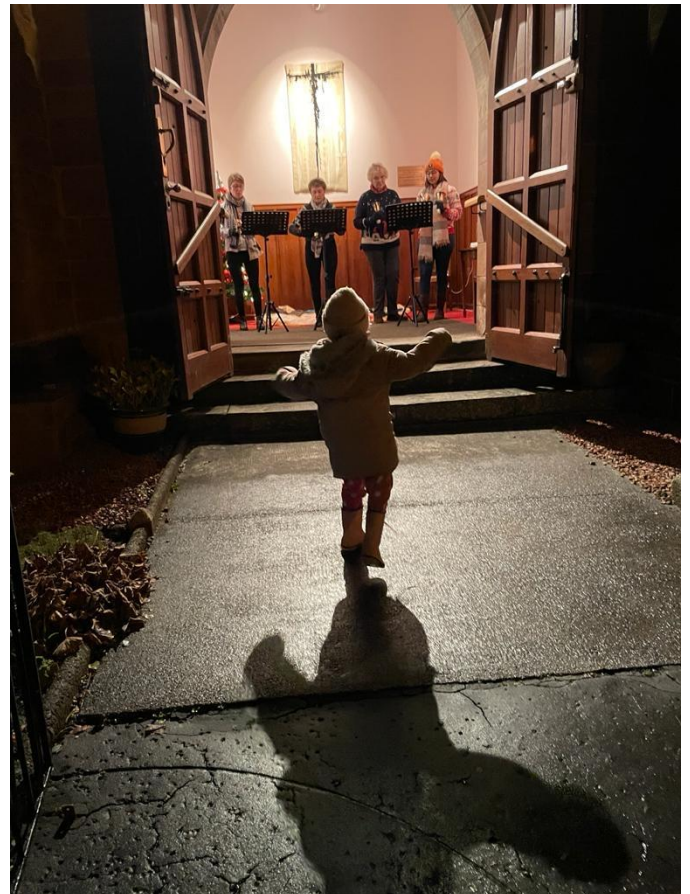
accompanied by a drum. Our next piece – Celebrate With Gladness is a Traditional Hungarian Folk Song arr Susan E. Geschke. We then put in a couple of 12 bell pieces rung by three ringers to show the variety you can have with handbells. The pieces chosen were A Hebridean Suite arr by Wendy Swain (which had been requested!) and Quem Pastores which is an old traditional German carol. We then returned to our 3-octave music, ringing Carol of the Bells by Mykola Leontovich arr Cathy Mokolbust followed by Ding Dong Merrily on High arr Sandra Eithun. Our final two pieces were Still, Still, Still arr Bill Ingram and finishing with O Holy Night by Adolphe Charle Adam arr Ron Mallory.

It was a wonderful setting to be ringing for Christmas!

Since the first Covid lockdown, we have rung for the community at 6pm prior to the start of the Christingle service at 6.30pm. At that time people were encouraged to come out and ring a bell at 6pm. I suppose it will now be a new tradition for us! We had quite a crowd, but Michelle's daughter stole the show!

Ruth Cantlay

Jordanhill Parish Church Handbell Ringers



Important Dates for your Diary:

- Today** 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 – we can't wait to welcome you to Caithness!
Application forms must please be returned by 29th February and can be downloaded, along with the massed ringing pieces and the AGM paperwork, at this link: [Massed Ringing resources Wick 2024](#)
- Saturday 12th October** Scottish Region Autumn Rally, Netherthird Community Centre, Cumnock. Hosted by the Cumnock and District Handbell Ringers who are looking forward to welcoming you.
- 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!