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Newsletter Issue 47

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Hello Ringers

Many thanks to all those who have contributed to this, the latest issue of our Newsletter. If you are sending something to me, please do not embed any photographs within the text. Send them to me as separate items please.

Having heard all about the efforts to fundraise for it,

you can now read about

Dunkeld's trip to the Western Isles.

Those of you reading an emailed version of this will be able to access a link which you can find on page 4.

Of course, if you are reading a paper version, you'll have to carefully copy the

web address onto your computer to see the YouTube item. One more reason for giving us your email address!

Anyway, I hope you enjoy this latest issue.

Sue

Editor

From The Chairman



I trust you have all had a good summer and are looking forward to another year of joyful ringing.

Plans are well in place to celebrate the Region's 15th birthday at our rallies in Bankfoot and Cathcart. I am looking forward to hearing the 'celebratory' pieces from all our teams attending. If your team is unable to attend, you are more than welcome to come on your own and join us – just bring your bells so that you can participate in the massed ringing.

The Spring Rally and AGM will be held in Aberdeen on the 24th March hosted by Silver City Chimes. So please put this date in your diary

now and give some thought to serving on the committee or offering to host an event – there is plenty of help and support to assist you with all arrangements.

In August, 5 Scottish ringers participated in the National Residential Ringing Week held at Kingston-upon-Thames. This was a superb chance to improve our ringing skills and techniques working with international conductors Arnold Sherman and David Harris as well as Sandra Winter and Keith Rowland. This took place during one of the hottest weeks of the summer, although the open air concert at Hampton Court Palace on the Saturday was

threatened with rain showers.

We will form a Scottish team to attend the International Symposium in Liverpool next August. So if you have not already let me know of your intentions to attend, please do so as soon as possible. Further details are given elsewhere in the magazine. Following the Symposium, 150 Japanese ringers will be touring Scotland. They will be performing in concert of the evening of the 7th August in the Edinburgh area – so another date for your diary and it will be a concert not to be missed as the Japanese are fantastic ringers.

In December you will receive your membership renewal details. The membership fee is very reasonable for all the benefits you receive. If you are a tax payer and have not signed up to pay by means of Gift Aid, please do so as this increases the money HRGB receives at no extra cost to yourself.

I look forward to seeing many of you at one of our Celebration Rallies in October.

Please do get in touch if there is any help the regional committee or I can offer you.

Best wishes

Christine D. Reid
Scottish Region Chair

Dunkeld Ringers in the West of Scotland



Exactly two years after visiting Orkney, members of The Parish of Dunkeld HR set off on their travels again, this time to the west. They were to enjoy a week of lovely weather, beautiful scenery, good company and four highly successful concerts in fantastic locations, at the same time raising over £1028 for charity.

First stop was Kilmore & Oban Church where, not having experienced a handbell concert before, mouths were agape at the number of handbells (2 + 3 octaves) and the amount of equipment we carried in. The concert was in aid of the church's Organ Fund (for a badly needed new organ) and the audience donated generously to this. Sales of our CDs and DVDs were also a good indication that our music had been enjoyed. (15% of the proceeds from these is donated to the Cornhill Macmillan Centre in Perth.)

Early next morning we sailed to Mull and, on approaching the island, passed Duart Castle where our next performance was to take place. Duart Castle is the ancestral home of the Chief of Clan McLean. Sir Lachlan McLean was there to welcome us, providing a delicious lunch before we got started and helping us to carry all our equipment into The Great Hall where he swept a mass of beautiful, and no doubt invaluable,

silverware off the long table at which we were to ring. The afternoon was very relaxed. We rang twice through our concert programme with visitors continually entering the Hall and listening for a while before being moved on (although some stayed listening all afternoon!). No collection was made this time. Instead a generous payment to the group from Sir Lachlan was donated to Macmillan Cancer Support.

Day 3 brought a return to the Island of Iona. We had first rung there in the Abbey four years ago. The start of our performance, a processional round the cloisters and then down the aisle, was a surprise to the audience packed into the nave and we were greeted with much enthusiasm. At the end, we were the ones to be surprised by the mass of people who came up to have a closer look at the bells and to ask questions.

Our final concert, the following day, was in the evening and so we had free time to enjoy more of the island's beautiful scenery before meeting at Tobermory Church to set up.

Tobermory is famous for its colourful houses all along the sea front, for its beautiful bay where, supposedly, a sunken galleon still lies at the sea bottom with a hold full of gold and for its Les Routier accredited Fish and Chip van on the Pier.

No debate about where to eat before the concert. It had to be sitting in the sunshine on the steps around the Clock Tower eating fish

and chips – definitely the best meal of the tour! The charity to benefit from the collection at this concert was The



Ringing in Iona Abbey

Royal National Lifeboat Institution, a charity dear to the hearts of many in the audience and they gave generously. Here we were delighted to find fans (yes fans!) who had heard us ringing in other locations and come along to hear us again.

Few in any of our audiences had seen handbell ringers in action before and all our performances were received with much enthusiasm. Tours such as this (and the sales of our 3 CDs and 2 DVDs) help to promote the art of handbell ringing which is one of the aims in our Constitution. Members of the public, who thought handbells were a bit of a novelty only to be brought out at Christmas, suddenly realise they are a musical instrument requiring skill to produce music which is enjoyable to listen to, with the added bonus of an intriguing visual performance.

At each venue we were asked to return but this is unlikely as tours are costly to organise, especially to the islands. We feel that future tours should introduce handbells to new audiences.

Heather I. McLean
Dunkeld Ringers



Ringing in the Great Hall at Duart Castle

Poltney Bell Ringers Celebrate third birthday.

Since being formed over three years ago, the Poltney Bell Ringers have been spreading enjoyment of the unique sound of handbell ringing around the community.

The group began life in January 2008 as the St John's Ringers, having been formed by some members of the congregation of St John's Scottish Episcopal Church in Wick. Within a year the group took on the Poltney name, using the local phonetic spelling. This reflected the spirit of the ringers as their meeting place was the church hall in Moray Street, Pulteneytown, and a number of the members resided in the area.

They started learning ringing techniques using borrowed Belleplates and Handchimes on loan from the Caithness Handbell Ringers, but the aim was to ring real handbells. By July 2009 they had their own set of 25 American handbells funded by an Awards for All grant.

The ringers' reputation was growing beyond the Ord and they were invited, with the established Caithness Handbell Ringers, to ring at St Andrew's Cathedral in Inverness.

With a growing membership, the group purchased 14 more bells in 2010 – the cost being met by a loan from two of the members. Immediately the ringers commenced a programme of fundraising to repay this loan, and with activities such as a bread-and-cheese

lunch, an open garden afternoon and a word quiz, as well as an award from the Highland Council discretionary fund, it was soon paid back.

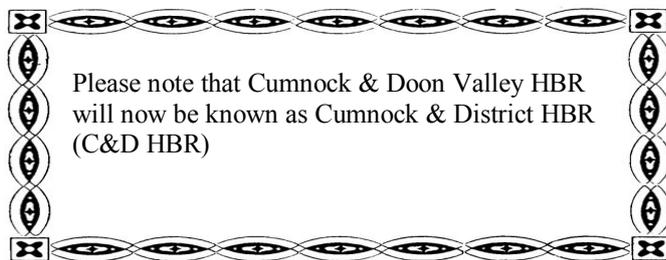
Membership of the group is open to all, with no previous musical knowledge necessary. There are 14 ringers at present, with both men and women involved. Newcomers are always welcome – ring Lyn Ball on 01955 611339 for further information or drop by the church hall in Moray Street on Tuesday mornings between 11am and 12.30pm.

Highlights of 2010 included a day busking at Wick's Tesco store, a session at the outdoor Christmas fair in Argyle Square, after-dinner entertainment for the Thrumster SWRI, afternoon entertainment at Pulteney House and Seaview care homes, competing in the Caithness Music Festival, being guests at a St Fergus Church open day and hosting an afternoon of Christmas music in St John's Church.

January this year the group celebrated its third birthday with lunch at the Queen's Hotel, Wick. With two new bells ordered, the ringers are looking forward to another successful year of music making.

Lyn Ball

Poltney Bell Ringers



News from Jordanhill Parish Church

Christine and I had a good week in Kingston at NRRW 2011. It was a great opportunity to ring under the direction of Arnold Shermann and Dave Harris as well as our own UK conductors Keith Rowland and Sandra Winter.

We started back our session at the end of August and we have quite a few engagements to look forward to. September sees our annual Craft Fair and Book sale, then in October we will be represented at both the autumn rallies but sadly not with a complete team at either event.

As always December looks extremely busy!

Our Facebook page can be accessed without being a signed up to Facebook. Simply go to Google and search Jordanhill Handbells Facebook and it should appear.

Ruth Cantlay

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

October 8	Regional Rally, Bankfoot, Perth
October 22	Regional Rally, Cathcart Church, Glasgow
March 24, 2012	Regional AGM and Spring Rally, Aberdeen
March 30 – April 1	National Rally, University of York Details in Reverberations
July 31 – August 4	15 th International Symposium, Liverpool
September 8	Ring in Praise, Dunblane Details from Malcolm Wilson at www.ringinpraise.org.uk

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Fun Corner

Check out Sail Away by these kids. I love the one counting 1 and 2 and 3 and 4 right through it. Not an easy rhythm either!

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Uj9nPos08U>

New Member

I joined a handbell ringing group.
They were so kind to me.
They showed me how to ring and damp
And gave me middle C.

Well that was fine with just one clef.
I knew just what to do,
But then we played another piece
And that had bass clef too.

My C was in the treble clef
And sometimes in the bass.
Composers just cannot decide
Which is its proper place.

My eyes were popping up and down.
I tried to get the gist
Of playing C on both the lines
But there were many missed.

Don't get me wrong. I still enjoyed
The ringing. It was fun.
It keeps the brain cells working and
I've only just begun.

© S Wilson

15th International Symposium 31st July to 4th August 2012

If you wish to attend the Symposium as part of the Scottish team and have not already let me know, please can you do so as soon as possible.

Registrations must be received by November. Therefore if it is your intention to attend, I must be in receipt from you of a cheque payable to HRGB Promotions Ltd for the deposit sum of £200 **no later than the 20th November**.

I also need to know if you have any special requirements; the size of Symposium shirt required (please state if this is a ladies or men's shirt); require a group photo and if you have volunteered as a part-time steward.

Please remember that you are responsible for booking your own accommodation.

Full details of the Symposium are available on the HRGB website.

Christine Reid

BELLS ART International Handbell Festival



Tallinn Rooftops

On a very hot June afternoon the Town Hall Square of Tallinn resounded to the music of handbells played by a selection of invited international ringers.

2011 saw the Estonian capital designated European Capital of Culture. The medieval old town of Tallinn is situated on the north east corner of the Baltic Sea region.

Throughout the week the invited teams performed in a variety of venues large and small in this most beautiful of European cities. The opening event of the festival centred on the premiere of Peeter Vahi's piece 'Bronze Reflections for Handbells and Carillon'. This was performed by 3 teams of ringers directed by Alvar Mae. The senior team involved was the Arsis Handbell Ensemble, remembered by many of us for its stunning performance at the Cirencester

Rally. The music was very inventive and the local church bells were cleverly added to the finale of the piece.

Japan was represented by the amazing Kiriku Handbell Ensemble providing a stunning visual presentation as well as musical brilliance.

The USA team Sonos from California directed by James Meredith gave a polished performance also. One of

Last but by no means least was the team representing HRGB, the Pizzazz Handbell Trio. This was a new name to me and I checked the internet to see who they were. Imagine my surprise and delight to discover Gay and Alan Cooper and Carla Runciman smiling out from the screen. Their 4 in hand performance was well received as the crowd admired their skill. Sadly the sound did not carry well in such a large open space and it was windy too which carried the sound away.

I was on holiday in the area on the



Pizzazz on stage

their ringers is Michele Sharik who toured the UK a few years ago as a solo ringer playing in Dunblane Cathedral.

day of the open air performance and had time to chat with Pizzazz and Michelle. Unfortunately I could not give Alan any clothes pegs to stop his music flying away. Normally that is something I always carry!!!

Alan and Margaret Hartley and John Pfeiffer (President of The Handbell Musicians of America - formerly AGEHR) were there to support the teams. I thoroughly enjoyed my afternoon's entertainment. Glorious setting, magnificent weather, and marvellous musical entertainment. I was sorry not to hear more of the teams' performances.

Lynda Barclay



Youth Team of Arsis Handbell Ringers

Don't Be Afraid—Breathe!

(My memories of National Residential Ringing Week 2011)



On Monday, August 1st five ringers from Scotland arrived at Kingston-upon-Thames for the 2011 National Residential Ringing Week. There was Beryl and myself from Blairgowrie, Christine and Ruth from Jordanhill and Heather from Dunkeld (me being the only novice). I'd had a relaxing (and cheap!) train journey to London on the previous Thursday to spend a few days visiting my sister, much of the time being spent in a heatwave on her allotment (where I carelessly dropped her garden shears into my foot!).

The heatwave continued as we arrived at Kingston University for the ringing week. Ruth, Heather and Beryl had not



Scrubbed up for the concert

been so fortunate with their journey from Scotland – their flight had been cancelled in the early hours and they had spent most of the night making new travel arrangements; they succeeded in arriving in time but started the week feeling a little jaded! I started the week by finding the registration process somewhat confusing – so how was I going to cope with the 13 pieces of (by my standards) VERY difficult and confusing music?!

After a walk and lunch in nearby Richmond Park, I managed to get myself to the first rehearsal on Monday afternoon, still in a state of confusion and heat! However, the enthusiasm of the conductors was infectious and inspiring and, although an underlying feeling of inadequacy was still lurking, I did learn “not to be afraid” of the music and that musical expression and confidence are more important than playing the correct notes. I was even taught how to breathe! Another very useful tip: to draw “picture frames” around sections of music that needed special attention. When memorising sections (e.g. for page turning and watching the conductor) there's actually no need to memorise, just don't look at the music – easy! (and it worked!)

We rehearsed until 9 o'clock on Monday night and then from 9 am till 5.30 pm on Tuesday, with evening lectures from our two American conductors (composer Arnold Sherman and Director of Raleigh Ringers, David Harris). Wednesday was a LONG day (especially with a now very swollen foot and still in a heatwave), rehearsing from 9 in

the morning till 9 at night. Light relief came on Thursday, rehearsing only until lunchtime. Ruth, Beryl and I missed out on more lectures, rescheduled from evening to afternoon at the last minute, as we had already arranged a trip to Kew Gardens, but it was great to get some fresh air and exercise and we enjoyed a very welcome change of scenery.

Before we knew it, Friday had arrived – rehearsals in the morning and dress rehearsal after lunch, after which I decided to listen to Nurse Ruth's advice and visit the local doctor, who prescribed antibiotics for my now badly infected foot! Friday evening I joined the other 51 ringers, from various regions, to perform our 13 pieces, with our two American conductors and two British conductors, Keith Rowland and Sandra Winter, in a concert watched by a handful of friends and relations (a quarter of which belonged to me!) They were very impressed by our achievements, thoroughly enjoyed our varied repertoire and were amazed at all the different sounds that handbells can produce – not just ringing. Even though I was definitely stretched beyond my capability, I stretched a lot further than I thought possible and managed to play “expressively and confidently”, although I didn't always remember to “breathe”! It was a wonderful and exhilarating experience, performing a range of beautiful, exciting and fun pieces of music, alongside some very talented ringers and with such inspiring conductors, who enabled me to understand and “feel” the music. I shall always remember Arnold Sherman's words “DON'T BE AFRAID”, and I'll try to remember Sandra Winter: “BREATHE”.

Finally, on Saturday morning, with van, trailer and car loads of equipment, we all descended on Hampton Court Palace and rang our hearts out to unsuspecting, but appreciative, tourists, before going our separate ways and, in my case, looking forward to next time with a lot more confidence – can't wait!



Scots at Hampton Court

Mary McGregor
Blair Bells, Blairgowrie

News from St Ninian's, Moniaive

'Greetings to all our fellow Handbell tune ringers from 'The Bells of St Ninian's, Moniaive'.

We are still ringing and keeping our membership. Three new members have joined since our last communication and some, through health reasons, have left. At present we have eleven enthusiastic members. We still meet on a Monday evening and Muriel and Elna have introduced lots of new music, emphasising pulse, time signatures, damping, legato, piano and forte and tune leading lines – a lot of patience exercised by Muriel and Elna! However, progress is notable and we have a large repertoire of music. During the summer months, when we usually take a break, several of the members continued just enjoying ourselves with no particular programme, giving each of them a chance to conduct or lead.

Besides the sound of the bells, handbell ringing is fascinating to watch. We have at last managed to make drapes and a banner for the tables – the visual effect of the magnificent handbells, drapes and our pink blouses not only looks good but helps us focus.

We have many invitations to play at Guilds, Rurals, Alzheimer Clubs and

in Church. Every year we invite residents of local Residential Homes and Evergreen Clubs for an afternoon of handbell ringing and afternoon tea. This is very well supported and the programme is interspersed with a musical quiz, programme notes for concert pieces, stretching the ringers to research the composers and the story behind the music. The music is varied with popular concert pieces, evoking memories of bygone days. It is wonderful to hear them singing along and tapping their feet. This has

become an annual event and very much enjoyed by ringers and our audience.

Like many other groups, due to the hazardous weather conditions, we had to cancel some of our engagements during the winter but where possible we will 'Keep Ringing'.

Agnes Tait

The Bells of St Ninian's



Closing date for Issue 48

Wednesday 25th January 2012

Have a good Christmas!

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