



THE BRADWELL BUGLE

Newsletter of the Bradwell Silver Band June 2004

MUSICAL DIRECTOR'S REPORT

ANNUAL SOLOIST COMPETITION

Bradwell Silver Band's 10th Annual Soloist competition was held on Sunday May 9th at the school.

This event organised by Anne, Norman and Rose (our Supporters Club) was very successful and enjoyable. It was nice to see so many family members supporting their own children but also giving encouragement to the other youngsters.

Our adjudicator this year was Colin Bugby. Colin, as well as playing Solo Trombone for the Towcester Studio Band, is a music teacher at Sponne School. He therefore was very well qualified to pass judgement on all the performances.

The morning commenced with the Junior Band and their teachers performing two pieces under the direction of Steve Edwards. It was then time to start the solo playing. Our learner members were split into four groups, Beginners, Novice, Intermediate and Advanced, this depending on their current standard of playing. We heard a wide variety of music with all players giving a good performance. Colin commented on the clear warm sound generated by all our younger players. After the learner groups it was the turn of the senior band. A performance of "Olympic Spirit" was the lead into nine solos. Here we also heard a wide variety of pieces with a high standard of performance. It was very encouraging to hear many senior Band member's playing solos who are not regular soloists within the Band.

After a lovely buffet lunch it was time for thanks and the prize giving. Norman on behalf of the Supporters Club thanked all the teachers for their hard work and presented them with a gift, also to our Adjudicator Colin Bugby and everyone for attending.

As well as writing clear comments for each performance Colin also spoke about the playing of each group. He commented on the difficult decision of picking a winner in each class.

RESULTS:

Beginners: Sean Edwards

Novice: Jez Billingham

Intermediate: George Bruce

Advanced: Alison Drury

Open: Nicky Davy

Our congratulations to all these winners and to everyone else who played and made this an enjoyable day. As well as the winners receiving two impressive trophies each learner member was presented with a medal and a certificate. Many thanks to Neil for producing these excellent certificates and to Alan's father in-law for writing out the winner's certificates in a special script.

Finally, many thanks to our Supporters Club for the staging of this event, a lot of time and money are invested in making this event so successful.

PLAYER NEWS

Bradwell Band has unfortunately lost the services of Alan Bruce. Alan who has been a member of the Band for over five years has decided to take a break. In his time with the Band he has demonstrated why he is widely regarded as one of the best bass players in the area. He has regularly featured as a band soloist and has won much praise from all audiences. Alan has also been one of the Band's most committed players, very rarely missing a practice or engagement.

We all would like to thank Alan for everything he has done for the Band and hope if he returns to banding Bradwell is his chosen group.

TV APPEARANCES

Band members and their families have recently been glimpsed on National Television. Ron Snape and his partner Maggie were recently seen in the audience of the Saturday night show "Strictly Come Dancing". Ron and Maggie who are keen dancers themselves had a very enjoyable time.

Lisa's brother appeared for a week on one of the daytime makeover programmes. Also Steve Osborne's sister, who is a nurse at one of the top London hospitals, has recently appeared in the Thursday night series "Trauma".

WATER BOMBS!

A recent practice of the Bradwell Band was rudely interrupted when local jobs thought it would be good fun to throw water bombs at the Band. To show their bravery they ran away on each occasion. They weren't quick enough though to escape Steve O and Alan on the second occasion, who clearly made our feelings known.

Their parents were informed of the incident, as was the school. The Band will have no hesitation in calling the police if anything like this happens again.

MUSIC & INSTRUMENT STORAGE

When Bradwell Band received its Lottery grant a few years ago, it meant that some of the older instruments would not be used. Lottery rules prevent these from being sold off, so we have had to store them. Also at this same time, our storage facilities at the school were being reduced.

We were therefore very grateful to Keith who offered the use of a company building to store some twenty six boxes of music, drum kit, three basses and various other instruments. The lease on this building has just expired so once again

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we are on the look out for more storage. We would like to say a big thank you to Keith and his company who have allowed us to freely use their facilities for the past seven years.

BRASS BAND WORLD

After the National Brass Band Championships the British Open is the next major brass band contest in the English Calendar. This event takes place in Birmingham each September. Even though this contest is mainly entry by invitation, there is a qualifying procedure. These take the form of three contests which are run at the same time in the Blackpool Winter Gardens.

This year they took place on Saturday May 8th. The three contests are the Grand Shield, Senior Cup & Senior Trophy. The rules are quite complicated but I'll try to explain them. The top six bands in Senior Trophy are promoted to the Senior Cup, the bottom six bands in Senior Cup are relegated to Senior Trophy. The top six bands in the Senior Cup are promoted to Grand Shield. The bottom six bands in the Grand Shield are relegated to Senior Cup. Finally the top three bands in the Grand Shield are promoted to the Open, with the bottom three being relegated to the Grand Shield. (I said it was complicated).

For those who attend the event in Blackpool it is a great day out. The entrance ticket allows you to listen to any contest you like, and with twenty two bands in each section, you have your pick of sixty six bands to listen to.

One of the excellent results this year was Kibworth gaining 4th place in the Grand Shield. After a poor regional contest, which saw them relegated to the 1st section, this is a massive result finishing ahead of some of the finest Championship section bands in the country. Kibworth are conducted by John Berryman who helped in the preparations for our last contest by taking a practice. John will also personally receive a major award at the end of May. He has been selected to receive the Iles medal awarded

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for his service to the brass band movement and especially his teaching of younger players. We pass on our congratulations to John and Kibworth.

**RESULTS:
GRAND SHIELD**

**Sellers International
Rothwell Temperance
Desford Colliery**

THE SENIOR CUP

**Ransome
Pennine Brass
BT**

THE SENIOR TROPHY

**Staffordshire
Dobcross Silver
Unison Kinneil**

The week prior to this contest the European brass band championships took place in Glasgow. The winners for the sixth time in a row were the Yorkshire Building Society Band. A fantastic achievement over such a long period of time.

As many of you are aware, Bradwell Band have been advertising for a cornet player over the past couple of months. Even though this has been in the local press and appeared on the internet, we have not yet received any applications.. This kind of problem though is not just experienced by our grade of band. The world famous Grimethorpe Colliery Band have been advertising for a Repiano Cornet player for the past six weeks. They also have had no replies.

Many think that players can't commit to their demanding schedule of concerts and contests. The National Brass Band Champions for the last two years, the Fairy FP Music band are also

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going through a problem period. Though not announcing the reason (I think money) they are recently lost their Soprano, Principal Cornet, Principal Horn, Principal Euphonium, Principal Euphonium, Principal Trombone, three Bass players and two percussionists.

The knock-on effect of this is that many other Championship/First Section bands in the area are losing their "star" players to fill the positions whilst not having the funds to pay the fees expected by the departing Fairy players. This has made the Brass Band world in that area of the country very unstable with a lot of problems being caused by a shortage of players.



Brian Keech

100 years Ago

Committee Meeting held June 9th 1904

Present: Messrs Saunders, Walton, Panter, Jones, Farrow, E. Johnson, Walters, Facer, Vice President, W. Hardwick Bandmaster & Tucker

Mr. D. Edward in the chair

Proposed by Mr. Jones seconded by Mr. Facer that the minutes of the previous meeting be confirmed.

Proposed by Mr. Walton seconded by Mr. Saunders that the Band sub committee's action in not entertaining Master A.F. Ellis's application for membership be confirmed - carried

Proposed by Mr. W. Hardwick seconded by Mr. Saunders that the adjourned date of the Great Linford Bazaar be accepted whenever fixed – carried

Proposed by Mr. Walton seconded by Mr. Farrow that the Secretary apply to the School Manager for No: 1 Girls Room for a practice room as the present one is too unsuitable owing to extra furniture being put in recently this entailing considerable work and loss of time to members on practice nights – carried

Proposed by Mr. Walton seconded by Mr. Walters that Messrs Saunders and Godfrey be appointed to overlook Besson's account with the Secretary – carried

Proposed by Mr. Jones seconded by Mr. Facer that this meeting empower the Band Sub Committee to order a new silver plated Solo Cornet providing Besson's account is found to be correct – carried

Proposed by Mr. Saunders seconded by Mr. W. Hardwick that the secretary write to the chairman of the Parish Council and draw his attention to the nuisance caused to adults by children throwing tufts of grass among them on Friday evenings in the Recreation Ground – carried

Proposed by Mr. Tucker seconded by Mr. Farrow a vote of thanks to the chairman - carried

Meeting closed at 8:40 p.m.

Brass Bands – An English Way of Life

My attention was drawn by Paul Harris to the following article written by Alf Hailstone that first appeared in the "This England" magazine in 1992. I thought it well worthy of inclusion. Pictures have been added from various sources.

In the mid-19th century the life of the working man was dull and hard. He worked six days a week, often for twelve or more hour a day and in many cases alongside his wife and family. Unions

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were struggling for recognition, and squalor, vice, crime and brutality were commonplace in the unplanned and overcrowded areas of the burgeoning industrial towns. The disease-ridden atmosphere of the inadequately lit, unsafe and ill-ventilated mill foundry or factory could be, perhaps, forgotten by drunkenness, by singing hymns, or by herding together in recreational activities, but otherwise there seemed to be little escape.

It was from these conditions that a musical phenomenon, the English Brass Band, swept England from Cornwall to Yorkshire. Men, often with less than five years education reached out from despair to find a cultural pursuit. Teachers, administrators and conductors surfaced, as groups of players found or begged battered brass instruments – often discarded from army bands and affluent orchestras – and taught themselves the intricacies of musical notation.

Before long these bandmen, full of workplace or civic pride, challenged each other before agreed judges to see which was the best band. This competition culminated with a national contest at the Crystal Palace. Crowds of over 100,000 attended, more than went to the FA Cup Final in those years. Special railway excursions brought people from all over England to London and when the winning band was announced, the Prime Minister would send a telegram of congratulation.

On the triumphant return to native towns or villages, it was not unusual for 40,000 people to welcome each band home, supporters having travelled from over 20 miles away. So great was the excitement that fog warning signals were frequently placed at mile intervals to herald the approach of the conquering heroes.

At the time of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897, the glorious sound of brass rose from England's cities, towns, villages and hamlets as hitherto unknown brass bands and at least 7,000 Salvation Army bands, headed the celebratory processions.



It was estimated a few years later that about 10,000 of these brass bands were active in the grime and gloom of the great industrial cities, a phenomenon that did not escape the notice of Buckingham Palace. King Edward VII invited the Kings Cross (Halifax) Band to play in the courtyard, and although the Royal Family were delighted at the performance, they took some convincing that the players were all working men.

Such was the publicity given by the newspapers, that Europe, America and the countries of the British Empire wanted to hear these bands, and some toured the world. Black Dyke Brass Band went to America and Besses o' th' Barn Band went to Australia. France and Germany welcomed any band which could scrape together enough money to make the trip.

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A year before the First World War began, Castleford Brass Band toured Germany, playing before huge crowds which culminated in an audience of 18,000 in Frankfurt. Ironically, one German newspaper said the tour had cemented the friendship between Germany and the people of Great Britain forever, and went on to say that the English brass bands were “more musical than the predictable German bands which played in the town squares on Sunday morning”. These German bands were really military style bands with woodwind instruments and not purely brass.

The eagerness to form a band now knew no bounds. There were Primitive Methodist, fire brigade and postmen bands, League of the Cross, mission, orphanage, tramway, railway and lifeboat bands. Thousands of industrial firms, construction, mining and manufacturing concerns had one, as did the Red Cross. No colliery was a colliery unless it had a brass band and no village worth its name could be without one.

Brass instruments manufacturers and uniform clothing firms proliferated as these brass bandsmen took to imitating the military, dressing up in the most gaudy, ostentatious and colourful uniforms in order that their supporters could easily identify them. Even to this day Brighouse and Rastrick Band retain the original colours.

Sir Henry Wood and Sir Frederick Bridge of the Incorporated Society of Musicians were dedicated converts to this new music. The young Thomas Beecham was, too, until the discovery

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that brass bands were a threat to orchestras led him to declare “Brass bands are tosh; don’t listen to ‘em!”

Although born of the working class, the music united all and sundry. It did not please some, however, and angry letters appeared in newspapers. The following was typical:

Dear Sir,

As a Minister by the Grace of God, I raise my voice against the flagrant evil of the brass bands which are ruthlessly ignoring, scorning and trampling underfoot the Fourth Commandment. Their Sunday playing encourages immorality.

But protest like this did not stop the aristocracy and the working class mixing in the parks. The perimeter roads of London’s Hyde Park in the early 1900s were full of carriages as gentlemen and their ladies surrounded the bandstand to listen to brass bands. Totally identified with the working class, the brass bands were everywhere.

When the Old Age Pensions Act of 1908 became operative in January 1909, a large group of pensioners queued outside the Braintree Post Office in Essex, waiting for the doors to open at 8am to draw their first pensions. The Braintree Brass Band assembled outside at 7.30am and played a selection of music including “Hail Smiling Morn” as the postmaster, dressed specially for the occasion in a frock coat and top hat, ceremoniously unlocked the door at the front. He, and his staff and the pensioners, doffed their caps and stood to attention as the band played the National Anthem, which everyone sang with great gusto.

When King George V and Queen Mary toured England, brass bands were always booked for the civic receptions. Her Majesty was enthralled, and on one occasion asked the conductor of the Foden’s Brass Band to extend his programme for another 45 minutes.

At the outbreak of the First World War, brass bands accompanied the troops to the railway

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stations amid poignant and patriotic scenes. There were hardly enough bands to cope. It took the clergy to point out “how doomed already a battalion looks when marching to the station without a brass band. Nothing sustains pride more than the sound of brass”.



Many brass bandmen took their instruments to France. In the orderly retreat from Mons in 1914 a shattered battalion was harassed for some miles by long-range guns. When the soldiers reached the hastily –prepared transit base they collapsed with fatigue to be joined by thousands more staggering in with whatever weapons they had been able to salvage. The officers were as exhausted as the men and lay on the ground too tired and shocked to sleep. Then suddenly over the still air of twilight there was an unmistakable sound of cornets playing the Welsh air “All Through The Night”. The weary soldiers rose to greet the sight: 50 soldiers, marching in step with rifles at the trail and heads held high, marched in behind the two cornetists from the Well Bourne Brass Band.

Back home, other stories of brass bands kept the newspapers busy and an extraordinary story emerged. General Sir William Campbell took the salute at a big military parade of more than 1,000 soldiers at Stockport. After column after column had marched past the saluting platform crowded with military and civic dignitaries, the General asked his aide to call the conductor of the band before him. He congratulated the band on its performance and complimented it on its immaculate turn out. He said he hoped to have

the pleasure of hearing them again and asked his regards be sent to their Commanding Officer. No one had the heart to tell him that it was the London and North West Railway Brass Band which had been asked to play as there were no military bands available in the area!

After the First World War, brass bands became part of the accepted musical scene, but the 10,000 brass bands of the early century has now gradually fallen to an estimated 3,000, victims of changes in society and entertainment. A few years ago Plymouth City Council declared that a bandstand should not be erected on the famous Hoe "as such a place is old fashioned".

But England can be justifiably proud of the contribution brass bands have made to the rich tapestry of our homespun music. Brass bands are alive and well and now contain players with the highest qualifications in music and on a par with those found in the symphony orchestras of the world.

MUSIC IN THE PARK



Leighton-Linslade Town Council arranges a series of free summer band concerts beginning in June. These take place on the bandstand in Parson's Close Recreation Ground each Sunday (except 29th August) until the beginning of September

FORTHCOMING ENGAGEMENTS

Engagements will appear here when they are confirmed. Please look at the list carefully.

If you are not going to be available for any of these engagements you must let the Bandmaster and your Section leader know as soon as possible. This will allow time for arrangements to be made to cover any missing parts.

Sunday 6th June

**Cheshire Home, Ampthill
Fete 2:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.**

Sunday 20th June

**Leighton Buzzard Afternoon
Concert
Parsons Close 3:00 p.m.**

Sunday 27th June

**Willen Lake
(TO BE CONFIRMED)**

The Bradwell Bugle**Thursday 8th July**

Paganell Grange

Evening Concert

Saturday 10th July

New Bradwell School

Carnival Parade and Fete

Saturday 21st August

Drayton Parslow Horticulture Show

Sunday 22nd August

Tiger Moth Rally Woburn Abbey

Saturday 28th August

Wedding

*The next edition of the
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published on Tuesday 6th
July, any contributions to be
handed in to the editor by
June 29th please*