



The Bradwell Bugle



Newsletter of the Bradwell Silver Band

February 2018

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From the Editor

Hi Everyone!

Welcome to the February edition of the Band's monthly newsletter.

The Band are currently working on the Test Piece for the forthcoming contests at Woodstock later this month and Stevenage next month. After these are out of the way, there is already an interesting list of engagements to look forward to for the rest of the year. Please see the provisional list later in the issue.

We thank Brian for the article he contributed to the Bugle this month and I look forward to receiving more articles from our readers for inclusion in future editions.

Sarah-Jayne



Development Group

Numbers continue to increase as we welcomed three new members to the group during January. These are youngsters who have already been learning to play and we are able to accommodate them straight into the main group. Regrettably we have had to put a temporary hold on accepting any new learners. We have instruments available but we do not currently have sufficient teaching resources and our repeated requests for more help from members of the senior band have gone unanswered.

With Christmas now just a distant memory and the next concert appearance not due until April, the Group have been looking at a completely new programme of music. This music has been especially selected to test the individual players as they continue to gain experience in playing and performance. We have been working on a march, a hymn tune arrangement and some classical music to give a variety of styles and tempos.

Plans are being made for the Solo Contest to be held in May, more details will be announced known once the date has been confirmed.

What's On!...February

Saturday 24th February, OBDDA Winter Contest, Woodstock, Oxfordshire.



Bradwell Silver Band has entered this contest which is organised by the Oxfordshire and District Brass Band Association. The Contest is being held over the week-end of 24th and 25th February and the venue is MEC, Marlborough School, Shipton Road, Woodstock, Oxford, OX20 1LP.

The contest takes the form of an own-choice test piece. Coming as it does just before the area qualifying events, bands that enter usually take the opportunity of playing the selected piece for their section. The 4th, 2nd and Championship Sections take place on Saturday 24th with the unregistered, 3rd and 1st Sections playing on Sunday 25th.

The ODBBA contest is less formal than the regional area contests as it doesn't use any form of registration, preferring to operate a trust system. Previously they have defined a member of a band being one who is either registered with the band, or who attends the majority of rehearsals and concerts, or who pays subs to the band. However, after the Entertainment Contest in October concerns were raised that this system was open to misuse, so they have adjusted their rules for this year.

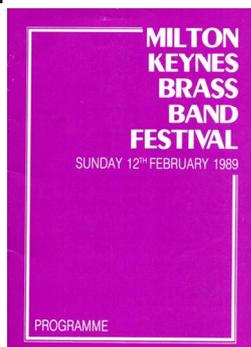
"A band may now borrow no more than five players under any circumstances. A borrowed player must be from a band that is nationally graded in the same section or a lower section than the borrowing band. If the borrowing band is graded in the Fourth Section then it may borrow two of its five borrowed players from the Third Section. Unregistered and Youth Bands may borrow a maximum of five players from any section. Any player who is nationally registered with another band **MUST** be declared as a borrowed player. Exceptions to this rule will be considered, at the Contest Management's discretion, if notified in writing by the entry closing date.



Milton Keynes Entertainment Contest - Brian Keech

This year will see the Band playing at a Contest (Oxford) before the Regional contest in March. In years gone by this was something the Band did regularly as it played in the Milton Keynes Brass Band Festival. The contest was held in mid-February and was organised by members of local bands. Bradwell members were often involved with the organising and my Dad Norman served on the contest committee for many years. In the early years Fred Gee was the Contest Secretary to be followed in later years by Beryl and Roy Lack.

The contest started in the 1970s with support from the Milton Keynes Development Corporation. They were keen for the newly emerging city to create events which would encourage people to travel to the area. There were four sections (No Section 1 in those days) and it was held in two venues, Radcliffe School Wolverton and what was then the Post Office Training Centre in nearby Wolverton Mill. In 1978 the contest moved to Stantonbury Campus with the Theatre and Sports Hall being used as the venues.



The contest was an Entertainment event with one piece chosen by the Organising committee that all bands in their section had to play. This choice created some interesting selections especially in the lower sections. Each band's programme had to last a minimum of 18 minutes and a maximum of 22 minutes from first note to last therefore including applause and compering. A green light was displayed on the Adjudicators box to show when the minimum time was reached and Red when maximum. If a band finished either early or late they were deducted points.

The Contest committee were very hardworking and gained sponsorship for the contest which meant prize money was good and therefore attracting bands from all over the Country. Winners of the Championship section included Northumbria Police, North Skelton, Dodworth, and Birmingham School of Music. In the early days the winner of the Championship section was invited back the following year to give a Saturday night concert ahead of the following day's contest. The contest was well supported by local bands with Wolverton, Stantonbury Brass, Woburn Sands, Towcester, Brackley, Bedford as well as ourselves competing.

Members of local bands also acted as helpers on the day with Keith having the demanding role of Contest Controller for the Theatre. It also meant long days as normally a 8am practice before the Contest and leaving the contest 10pm or later after clearing up etc. Bradwell was successful at the Contest on many occasions with our highest placing being at 2nd in the 3rd Section in 2004.

There were many events linked to the contest of course but a few I remember. One year the Huddersfield Tecol band were getting their kit from the coach when the key snapped in the boot lock trapping all their kit in the coach. With music and instruments unavailable they had to no option to withdraw and make the long trip home without playing a note. Also one band's performance finished with "Choral and Rock out", a piece which finishes with a drum cadenza. The drummer started his cadenza before the green minimum timing light showed and continued for what seemed an age until the green light came on. They stopped playing immediately, took the applause and walked off.

One year the contest took place on Valentine's Day 14th February and I asked Tug to play "My Love Is like a Red Red Rose." Karen who was not a member of the band at that time sat in the audience and at the end of Tug's solo presented him with a red rose (who says romance is dead!).

Sadly the contest's demise came in 2004 as costs became higher and sponsorship harder to find but it had been an excellent event in the Brass Band calendar for nearly thirty years.

Bradwell Band Looking Forward To "World Tour"

The 2018 contest of the London & Southern Counties Region of the National Brass Band Championships of Great Britain will be taking place at the Stevenage Arts and Leisure Centre over the weekend of March 17th/18th 2018.

The selected test piece for the Fourth Section is "World Tour" composed by Rodney Newton. This extended work was originally commissioned in 2006 by Besses o'th' Barn Band to mark the centenary of it's 1906 world tour. There are four movements in contrasting styles that take us on a musical journey from Liverpool to Melbourne and home again. The movements are titled:

1. *The Leaving of Liverpool*
2. *Chicago Rag*
3. *Pacific Paradise*
4. *Australian Walkabout and Homeward Bound*

More about the Test Piece and composer in next month's Bugle but who are Besses o' th' Barn Band and how did they get to make a world tour all those years ago?

The quaintly named Besses o' th' Barn is an old industrial town situated between Manchester and Bury, in Lancashire. Competing theories for the origin of the name abound. Perhaps the most colourful involves Dick Turpin's famous mount – Black Bess! The most likely, though, is that it stems from the name of a public house that looked like a barn and was run by a lady called Bess. The local invitation to go for a drink would be "Let's go see Bessie at the barn". Later as houses were built around it the name came to mean the whole village and not just the pub. It was the birthplace of what is certainly one of the oldest and arguably one of the most famous brass bands in the world.

By the late 1800's, Besses were already firmly established as one of the country's leading musical ensembles – amateur or professional. At that time, much of the repertoire of brass bands still consisted of arrangements of popular classical music, designed to provide the working classes with access to the works of world famous composers. People from the cotton and coal towns of Lancashire could afford to listen to their local brass band playing classical arrangements in local venues, whereas there was virtually no prospect of them being able to pay to travel and listen to professional orchestras in the major city centre venues. Many such arrangements and most of the early Henry Round selections were written especially for Besses. Even by the high standards of today's top bands, many of these pieces demand a remarkably high degree of both technical skills and endurance.

A major contributory factor in the Band's early successes was their partnership with the great Alexander Owen, at that time the most famous arranger of brass band music in the country. Although associated with many bands of that era, it was with Besses that he gained most success.

The early years of the 20th century saw Besses at the peak of their success, starting with the Band's surprisingly one-and-only National Championship win, at the Crystal Palace in 1903. They were now considered themselves to be so successful in the competitive arena that they decided to stop contesting and embarked on a series of truly pioneering events and adventures.

Promoted by John Henry Iles as the 1903 National Champions, it started with an extensive tour of the UK. Little could they imagine then where this first tour was eventually to lead them. Hints of great things to come started with an invitation by the then Prime Minister, Henry Balfour, to play By Royal Appointment for King Edward VII at Windsor Castle. This performance led directly to a tour of France with concerts in Paris to commemorate the Entente Cordiale pact between France and Great Britain. On the Band room wall sepia photographs can be seen of Besses performing to huge crowds in the Tuileries Gardens in the very heart of Paris. Henry Iles and Alexander Owen were both presented with Officier de L'instruction Publique medals to mark the occasion and Besses had the "Royal" prefix bestowed upon them as their fame spread throughout the world.

Bradwell Band Looking Forward To "World Tour"

Invitations for them to play were received from all around the globe and the Band decided to tour the World. Between the years 1906 and 1911 they did just this not once, but twice! Both trips lasted an incredible eighteen months. Stories of players leaving home, on the pretence of heading for normal band practice, and arriving back home one-and-a-half years later may contain more than a grain of truth. Detailed itineraries show that the Band played hundreds of concerts covering venues in North America, Canada, Hawaii, Fiji, South Africa, New Zealand and Australia. In the days before air travel this was a remarkable achievement and they were regarded as the pop stars of their day being welcomed by enthusiastic crowds of thousands wherever they went. An arrival parade in Melbourne during one of the tours saw the Band preceded by no fewer than twenty-two of Australia's finest brass bands. Their stay culminated in four days of concerts in the city that attracted a total crowd of over 100,000. It took the arrival of The Beatles more than sixty years later before the city once again saw such vast crowds for visiting musicians.



The wealth of information on these early tours comes largely from diaries written by various members of the Band. Luckily some of these very personal records are still in existence and carefully tended in the Band's archives or by descendants. The details in the diaries are truly fascinating and even include train and boat timetables from all over the world. One such document dutifully records that during the Band's second tour of New Zealand Alexander Owen composed a march, which he named after a famous porpoise, known to seafarers as Polorus Jack. The diary faithfully chronicles the event, even down to the name of the ship (SS Pateena) on which the Band were sailing when the idea was first conceived. The score even includes a triangle part, said to be an imitation of the dinner gong, which rang to summon the players to their meal just as Alexander finished writing the piece. Polorus Jack has now become one of the Band's favourite signature tunes and is often included in present-day concert programmes.

Other notable souvenirs from those early tours include a genuine wild boar trophy presented to the Band in New Zealand in 1910. None of the music in the Band's immense library, however, is thought to be inspired by that awesome creature! It is still proudly displayed on the Band room wall, opposite the large (some would say intimidating) photograph of Alexander Owen, whose eyes seem to follow you around the Band room – especially if your playing isn't up to standard!

The Band is still going strong today although they now compete in the Second Section in their regional area.

End of Regular Brass Band Broadcasts on BBC Radio

With acknowledgements to 4Barsrest

The BBC has announced that the Radio 2 'Listen to the Band' programme is to be 'rested' indefinitely following an announcement made recently of a comprehensive revamping of the station's output. First broadcast in 1946 and hosted for the past 23 years by Frank Renton, it will mean the end of any regular brass band programmes on national BBC radio, although it was announced that the yearly Young Brass Award will be featured as a 'Friday Night Is Music Night' special in April.

Although audience figures have dropped since its peak due to changes in listening habits and time slot changes, the programme which has been produced in Birmingham by Terry Carter for over a decade has maintained a substantial core listening audience throughout the world.

In a BBC media press release Frank Renton was reported as saying: "My 23 years presenting 'Listen to the Band' have been hugely enjoyable, especially playing so much of the music that I love.

It has also been an absolute pleasure being part of the Radio 2 family, and I want to thank all those who have listened or contributed to the programme over the years. Of course the next thing on the agenda is the continued celebration of the talent of young British brass players when Ken Bruce and I present the final of the BBC Radio 2 Young Brass Award in April."

Meanwhile, in a blog outlining the changes, which will take effect from May and includes the demise of 'The Organist Entertains', the Head of Radio 2, Lewis Carnie, said: "They have been long-serving programmes on Radio 2, but as the audience evolves we have to reflect what best serves their needs and where there is scope to broaden our offering." He added: "I'd like to thank Frank, Nigel and Paul for entertaining their listeners for many years, and on behalf of the listeners, and everyone at Radio 2, wish them the best of luck for the future."

There has already been considerable disquiet over the decision, with many media commentators wondering if it continues to signal the end of the BBC's true public service broadcasting remit. It is understood that the last 'Listen to the Band' programme is scheduled to be broadcast on May 8th.

One person who has worked closely in arts broadcasting with the BBC said: "It's been well known that the axe was hovering over these niche programmes. We are finding that the hierarchy no longer shares the view that the BBC must offer something distinctive and different to commercial radio, and the comments of Lewis Carnie seems to sum that up."



All Our Yesterdays

We dip into the archives again for a report that appeared in the Northampton Mercury 64 years ago on 29th January 1954.

Band out 54 times in year

New Bradwell Silver Band made a public appearance at least once a week, on an average, Mr. W. G. Walters (secretary) reported at the band's annual meeting. He remarked that without including practices, the band had been out for concerts, marches or other engagements 54 times during the past year—"I think it is nearly record," he commented.

Officers elected were: President, Dr. M. A. Elides; vice-presidents, re-elected en bloc, secretary. Mr. W. G. Walters; assistant secretary. Mr. T. Kelly; bandmaster, Mr. B. Breedon; assistant bandmaster, Mr. M. Pepper; treasurer, Mr. W. Kightley; librarian. Mr. H. Walters; committee. Mr. W. Campbell Mr. W. Frost. Mr. R. Thompson. Mr. R. Smart. Mr. S. Eldred. Mr. C. Homer; auditor, Mr. G. Gardner. The band agreed that its title should be changed to Bradwell Silver Band. It was decided to ask for long-service certificates for Mr. Walters and Mr. Johnson, who have over 53 years' service with the band.*

The 1954 Band

The band are pictured below in 1954, wearing their new uniforms, with President, Dr. M. Fildes, and the new bandmaster appointed that year, Mr. B. Breedon.

- | | |
|------------|---|
| Back row | - T.Kelly, C.Bennett, B.Tilley, W.Campbell, J.Horne, D.Atkinson, Roy Campbell |
| Middle row | - A.Bennett, M.Pepper, H.Walters, B.Nash, B.Cross, Robert Campbell. |
| Front row | - T.Pakes, A.Pepper, E.Blackburn, R.Smart, B.Breedon, Dr.Fildes, W.Walters, W.Frost, H.Sapwell, L.Bowler. |



Dates For The Diary

A provisional list of Band engagements for the coming twelve months, dates underlined still to be confirmed. Other dates are likely to be added to this list.

Saturday 24th February Oxford Contest, Marlborough School, Woodstock

Sunday 18th March Regional Contest, Stevenage

Saturday 21st April St James Spring Concert

Saturday 28th April Potterspury Church Evening Concert

Sunday 6th May Abington Park Northampton Afternoon Bandstand Concert

Monday 7th May May Day Fun Day New Bradwell ?

Sunday 3rd June Big Lunch Stony Stratford

Saturday 23rd June Milton Keynes Museum Victorian Week-end

Saturday 14th July New Bradwell School Fete ?

Sunday 29th July Patronal Service St James Church New Bradwell

Saturday 6th October St James Autumn Concert,

Saturday 10th November Stantonbury Theatre? (Evening concert)

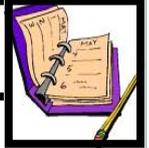
Sunday 11th November Remembrance Day

Saturday 17th November Christ the Vine Coffee Hall ? (Evening Concert)

Saturday 15th December St. James Christmas Concert

Sunday 16th December Stantonbury Sports & Social Club Christmas Concert

Contacts



<i>Chairperson:</i>	James Lawrie	chairman@bradwellband.co.uk
<i>Secretary:</i>	Robin Allen	secretary@bradwellband.co.uk
<i>Treasurer:</i>	Karen Wilson	treasurer@bradwellband.co.uk
<i>Librarian:</i>	Sam Lawrie	-
<i>Musical Director:</i>	Brian Keech	md@bradwellband.co.uk
<i>Publicity Officer:</i>	Steph Chappell	press@bradwellband.co.uk
<i>Newsletter Editor:</i>	Sarah-Jayne Edwards	sj.cc23@gmail.com
<i>Webmaster:</i>	Fraser Cousins	fras@sky.com
<i>Quartermaster</i>	Adam Chappell	-
<i>Website:</i>	www.bradwellband.co.uk	

If you're on Facebook, then visit and "Like" the Band's page: <https://www.facebook.com/BradwellBand>

Here you will read the latest news on the Band and also there are many photos and videos to peruse as well.

