



The Bradwell Bugle

Newsletter of the Bradwell Silver Band



January 2021

Inside this issue:

Editors Note	1
Christmas Day 2020	2-3
More Christmas Memories	4-5
Area Contest To Be Held In 2021?	6
A Bit Of Humour	7



From the Editor

Hi Everyone!

A very warm welcome to the January edition of the Band's monthly newsletter. I hope you and your families managed to enjoy Christmas despite everything else going on at this time. Normally this first edition of the New Year would reflect on the many activities of the Band during the Festive Season. Unfortunately as we all know, the restrictions imposed on us because of the pandemic meant it has not been possible for the Band to perform either indoors or outdoors. We are facing a continuing uncertain future with the very real possibility of yet more restrictions as attempts are made to control the virus from spreading even further. Of course, this means there can be no hope of a return to rehearsals until we are out of Tier 4. As soon as Milton Keynes goes back to Tier 3 - or less - the committee hope to be able to resume in accordance with the necessary risk assessment and social distancing rules.

My thanks go to Brian for his contribution this month. If you would like to send me something for inclusion in future editions I would be very grateful.

May I wish you all a Happy New Year with the sincere hope that 2021 will see for us all a return to some sort of normality

Sarah-Jayne

Christmas Giveaway!



And we have a winner.....

Thank you to those who entered the Christmas Giveaway featured in December's issue.

If you were "unfortunate" enough to tune in Facebook to see me do the draw live, then I do apologise for my Elf onesie! I thought I would bring some added festive cheer to proceedings.

The lucky winner who was chosen at random to win the £10 Amazon e-gift card was the Band's very own **Robin Allen**, so many congratulations to you Robin. I hope you treated yourself to something nice?

I will run some more competitions throughout the coming year, so stay tuned. Note though, they won't always be as easy as this one!

Christmas Day 2020

Usually this January edition of the Band's newsletter would be full of reports on all the many Christmas engagements undertaken during the month of December. None of us needs reminding that 2020 was not a good year and the restrictions forced upon us meant that there were to be no public performances by the Band during the year. It had been hoped and planned that small groups would be able to play around the streets on Christmas Eve and on Christmas morning and had we stayed in Tier Three this would have been possible. Sadly but inevitably given the drastically increased rate of infection, the announcement was made that from December 20th we were to be in the most severely restricted Tier Four. Basically this is a Stay At Home order where you must not leave your home unless you had a reasonable excuse for essential activities. Any public performance would have gone against this advice with the significant risks and safety concerns meaning our public liability insurance would almost certainly have been invalidated.

There was an alternative plan for members of the Wilson family to carry on the tradition of performing on Christmas morning. Unfortunately on Christmas Eve one of the household developed symptoms that required a test for Coronavirus and with the other members having to self isolate as a precaution until the results were known. So it looked like for the first time since being formed in 1901 there would be no sound of the Bradwell Silver Band in the local streets to welcome Christmas morning. However several unexpected and remarkable events took place which meant that despite the wretched events of the year local people spirits were to be lifted by the unexpected sound of brass playing around New Bradwell and Bradville.

The first of these amazing feats was Luke Wilson completing the entire traditional route around the streets playing on his own. Luke plays Eb Bass which is one of the largest instruments in the band that normally provides the oomph and is rarely heard playing the melody line. Luke's solo efforts captured the hearts of those who heard him, many of whom were reportedly in tears - but I am sure that his playing wasn't that bad! Social media was soon buzzing with Luke's performances and there were many wonderful comments praising him for his playing and bravery in playing. I am sure that all members of the Band will join me in thanking Luke for this wonderful effort. We also thank his partner Chey for her support in accompanying him around the streets.

Luke posted the following comment to the people of New Bradwell and Bradville...

"I just wanted to say thank you so much for all you did this morning. It was supposed to be me and my whole family but due to one of my brothers developing a temperature overnight on Christmas Eve that could not happen. As the only one outside that house I decided to go out on my own, I was terrified and you made the whole experience that much easier. It wasn't the same without the whole band but at least the bikes brought the full band not too far behind, keeping the tradition going! Merry Christmas!"



Christmas Day 2020

The second event Luke referred to was a marvellous couple of locals who donned Santa outfits and peddled around the streets playing recorded band music. Gareth Bell had for over thirty years woken up on Christmas morning to hear the band playing carols in his street. When he heard we wouldn't be able to make it this year he decided something had to be done. Setting his alarm for 5:30 p.m. he and his wife set off on the traditional route bringing much needed cheer to the many residents who heard them.



Elsewhere in Spencer Street one of the fabulous residents opened his door to play a recording of the Band playing "Sweet Chiming Christmas Bells" through loudspeakers. This was also very well received.

And so thanks to the efforts of Luke and Gareth and the resident in Spencer Street, the long standing tradition was able to be continued, even if it was in a most unusual and unexpected way. Let's all hope that this time next year the newsletter will once again be full of reports on the Band playing around the streets.

Some videos of Luke's progress around the streets can be viewed on Facebook and here is just a small selection of some of the marvellous comments made...

"What a lovely start to a special day, thank you however you are!"

"Was a lovely surprise to be woken up by this Thank you whoever you are!"

"That's actually made me a bit teary. This will mean so much to a lot of people!"

"Brilliant, brought tears to my eyes and lifted spirits, thank you!"

"I honestly thought I was hearing things this morning, as I knew that they weren't playing, was lovely!"

"It definitely made a wonderful start to the day thank you LUKE!"

"How lovely!"

"How poignant but fantastic all at the same time."

"The star of the day, he saved Christmas!"

"Wonderful thing to do, keeping the marvellous tradition alive!"

More Christmas Memories

By Brian Keech

I really enjoyed reading Keith's Christmas Past in the last newsletter and always look forward to his reports in the January newsletter. That got me thinking about Christmas engagements the Band use to do, so here are some more Christmas Tales.

When I first joined the band as a youngster in 1976, we use to play at the Old Folks homes in Newport Pagnell, Renny Lodge (now a housing estate,) The Green and Pagnell Grange. As we still tell our youngsters today I was told to wrap up warm, so with T Shirt, Shirt, Jumper, big outdoor coat and 2 pairs of socks off I went to only find we would be playing indoors around the wards. If you have ever visited these places you know the heating is always on full blast so you can imagine the state I was in by the end of the evening.

As I'm sure is still the case today, if you ask young players their favourite engagements it is when food is normally on offer. I was no different and enjoyed playing at the Christmas parties for Keith's firm and the MCorquodales print factory in Wolverton (now Car show rooms and houses). Another engagement that was always full of food was the Bradwell WI concert. Band members now know more recently this was held in St James but for many years it took place in the Methodist chapel. The chapel wasn't large so a group of 13 normally played and this event always took place on the first Monday in December. It was so popular that each WI in Milton Keynes was issued with 2 tickets each and could have been sold out many times over. I was regularly asked for tickets but sadly no luck. The back room of the chapel was where the band left kit and where Mince pies and drinks were served in the interval. Every imaginable surface possible had trays and plates of Mince pies, at the end there were always loads left and they asked Band members to eat them or take home. One year Nick Davy and my youngest son Adam just ate so many it was unbelievable they weren't sick! I think it actually put Adam off mince pies as haven't seen him eat one since.



(Not a Christmas concert, but this photograph taken in 1989 shows how compact the Methodist Church was –the door in the background led to the mince pies!)

Newport Pagnell Christmas lights switch on was also a regular engagement firstly playing outside the Swan Revived and then in later years leading a parade up the High Street which saw Santa Claus riding in an open top Aston Martin. Sadly there was no crowd control and the band was pushed and shoved as people wanted to get closer and for the reason of band safety we stopped playing at that event. It was though an event where the band supporters club ran a stall from early morning to late afternoon selling jams, pickles and many other items. Liz, Lisa, my Dad and many others raised lots of money for the band doing this.

We also took part in the Buckingham Christmas parade which took place on a Saturday morning and we marched playing carols. Due to the large crowds parking was always difficult so I aimed to get there early, only to find one year that I had left the Carol books in Bradwell. As this was the days before mobile phones I drove like an idiot to get back to Bradwell to pick up the music and then to Buckingham just in time for the Parade to begin.

More Christmas Memories

Our Christmas schedule is busy now but one year not too long ago we undertook 9 concerts as well as Carolling. These were Wolverton Methodist Church, New Bradwell Cricket club, Potterspurty Village Hall, Lillingstone Lovell Church, Old Bradwell sports club as well as the normal Two Mile Ash school, WI, St James and side club. I was asked at the Wolverton concert if the young man at the back of the band wearing a waist coat and bow tie was serving the refreshments at the interval. I never did tell our percussionist (oops sorry Steve!).

The concert at Lillingstone Lovell church also stuck in the memory, it was a cold frosty evening bitterly cold in the church with very poor light. The band had to sit where light was possible so nothing like a normal band formation so needless to say wasn't one of our best performances.

The band's most well known engagement is of course is the Christmas morning we had the year Police called due to the noise! I was band secretary in those days so that was fun to sort. We have also had very cold mornings with one year valves freezing on Basses, Euphs and slides not moving on Trombones.

To me though this is why being in a Band at Christmas is so special and I'm sure we all have many stories.

In Other News...

Adam Hird's Grade Success

Bradwell Silver Band is always immensely proud to watch their younger players progress with their playing. We have been delighted to hear how despite nearly a year of not being able to play in the Band, front row cornet player Adam Hird managed to take his Grade 8 trumpet exam in December. After nine months of online lessons with Phil Devine and a lot of arduous sessions with Adrian Boynton, Adam was awarded a merit grade.

He has completed his applications for music conservatoires and has guaranteed conditional offers of two A levels from Royal Birmingham for cornet and Trinity Laban for trumpet. At this stage it is not known which one he will choose but he has already visited Birmingham and impressed by their facilities and attitude.

For his exam Adam worked on the classic cornet solo "Zelda" so if there's any live playing for Bradwell this year he's pretty much ready with that!

Well done Adam.



Area Contest To Be Held In 2021?

With acknowledgements to the 4BarsRest website

You will no doubt recall that the 2020 area contest which was to have been at Stevenage in March was cancelled the week before it was due to take place due to the Coronavirus outbreak. The London & Southern Counties Regional Committee has recently written to its member bands to inform them that they are to look at the possibility of potentially running a form of the area contest in 2021. The correspondence has been sent by Regional Committee Secretary, Kevin Williams, who said that whilst it may seem 'incongruous' given current lockdown restrictions, the possibility of a late Spring early Summer return to some kind of 'normality' has led them to look at the idea.

Kevin told 4BR: "It may seem incongruous to some that the committee are even considering the possibility of running a contest in 2021. However, with the promise of a vaccine at some time in the New Year and the desire that we may be returning to some kind of normality, bands will hopefully be starting to think of resuming activity.

It is anticipated that the National Finals will go ahead in 2021 and we are keen to have representation from our region. We've had initial discussions with Kapitol Promotions Limited who have expressed a similar desire."

4BR understands that despite the usual event location at Stevenage not being available this year, the Regional Committee has been able to source a smaller venue with a potential date of the weekend of the 26th/27th June.

It is proposed that the 2020 regional test pieces will be utilised. Kevin added: "We realise that many bands may have been severely compromised by the pandemic, so we propose to take a sympathetic view to the grading of bands that are simply unable to attend the contest. We will also take a much more inclusive approach to our decision making and would welcome any suggestions from our bands."

As for the immediate future, Kevin emphasised that the news was very much a possibility only and that the Regional Committee hopes to make a final decision early in February 2021. "It is dependent on what the situation is — and we would stress that everyone concerned follows the requirements set out by the Department for Culture, Media & Sport as regards non-professional music making. We are grateful to Brass Bands England for their clear and precise interpretation of those requirements as they relate specifically to brass bands and we insist that these instructions are followed to the letter. If we decide it is not possible to run the contest we will be making representations to Kapitol Promotions as to the bands they may wish to invite to the National Finals."



A Bit Of Humour

We could all do with a bit of a laugh during these difficult times. The following questions and answers were apparently collated a few years ago from actual GCSE exams...

Q: Name the four seasons.

A: Salt, pepper, mustard and vinegar.

Q: Explain one of the processes by which water can be made safe to drink.

A: Flirtation makes water safe to drink because it removes large pollutants like grit, sand, dead sheep and canoeists.

Q: What is a planet?

A: A body of earth surrounded by sky.

Q: What guarantees may a mortgage company insist on?

A: If you are buying a house, they will insist you are well endowed.

Q: What are steroids?

A: Things for keeping carpets still on the stairs.

Q: What happens to your body as you age?

A: When you get old, so do your bowels and you get intercontinental.

Q: How can you delay milk turning sour?

A: Keep it in the cow.

Q: What is the Fibula?

A: A small lie.

Q: What does "varicose" mean?

A: Nearby.

Q: Give the meaning of the term "Caesarean Section."

A: The caesarean section is a district in Rome.

Q: What is a seizure?

A: A Roman emperor.

Q: What does the word "benign" mean?

A: Benign is what you will be after you be eight.

Q: What is a turbine?

A: Something an Arab wears on his head.

Gravity was invented by Isaac Walton. It is chiefly noticeable in the autumn when the apples are falling off the trees.

