

# SPLIT=NOTES

## The Harrogate Band Newsletter

August 1992

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Issue # 11

### Well Done!

Congratulations to Neil Cole, who has recently passed his Grade IV examination for Cornet. Neil has only been playing with the Band for a few months and has settled well into his position on 3rd Cornet. We wish him luck with his future studies.

We would also like to offer congratulations to Mark Sidwell, a former Principal Cornet player, for gaining his LRCM (Licentiate of the Royal College of Music).

### Membership

We are pleased to officially welcome Roy Fletcher (cornet) and Anna Wilby (percussion) as Full Members of the Band. We have also been joined by Anna's father, Philip, who has played percussion and tenor horn with us on recent engagements.

Stephan Märki, a student from Switzerland, is attending a summer course in the area and has joined the Band during his stay in this country. He is a very welcome addition, if temporary, to our solo cornet line.

### National Championships

The National Brass Band Championship Final in London on Saturday 3rd October is drawing near. The test piece is *Amaranth* by Ray Steadman-Allan, and the Band will be preparing the piece in parallel with its own-choice test piece for the Hardraw Scar contest.

The trip to London will be shorter this (fourth) year than previous years, due partially to the splitting of the whole Championships over two weekends. We will be travelling to London on the Saturday morning for the contest at Wembley in the afternoon/evening, staying in a hotel overnight and returning on the Sunday.

Family, friends and guests are invited to travel with the Band to London, as a number of seats on the coach will be available. Anyone who is interested should contact Les Mackown, our Secretary (tel: 562580). Les will shortly be issuing further details of the trip, including costs, to all players.



## Band Attendance

A reminder to all players of the importance of regular attendance at rehearsals prior to the forthcoming contests. Full rehearsals with 100% attendance are crucial to ensure that the overall sound of the Band is right, and these have rarely been achieved in the past.

Remember that your absence from rehearsals, engagements or contests affects all the other players in the Band. Lack of commitment and loyalty reduce the enjoyment that the Band overall gains from its activities, and the range of music that we are able to play is severely constrained, which frustrates the players and affects the quality of our engagements.

We have worked hard to reach the 3rd Section and achieve the standard of performance that we are now capable of and which allows us to tackle more interesting and challenging music. Players *are* missed - so please make every effort to attend.

## Future Engagements

	Saturday 8 August	Ripley Show
	Sunday 9 August	Valley Gardens, Harrogate
	Sunday 6 September	Hardraw Scar contest
	Saturday 3 October	National Finals, Wembley
	Saturday 24 October	Hartlepool contest
	Sunday 15 November	Malton Brass '92 contest, Malton
	Thursday 3 December	Harrogate Town Centre
	Thursday 10 December	Harrogate Town Centre
	Saturday 12 December	St John's Church, Bilton
	Thursday 17 December	Harrogate Town Centre
1993	Saturday 10 July	Burton Leonard Feast
	Saturday 10 July	RAOB Grove House

## Uniform

The Committee has decided that the Band uniform will change from 1st February 1993 - to **black** trousers for men and **black** skirt or trousers for ladies.

Over recent years it has become increasingly difficult to ensure that similar, if not the same, shades of grey are worn, and the turn-out of the Band has been affected as a result.

Members will be expected to provide their own trousers/skirt. Lady players will be consulted regarding the nature of their apparel.

Please remember that Full Uniform is normally worn to all engagements and that you should make every effort to ensure that you are dressed smartly and in accordance with the official uniform.



## Band Officials Course

This course, organised by the Yorkshire & Humberside Brass Band Association, will be held in York on Saturday 26 September. It is open to *anyone* and will cover many aspects of band administration.

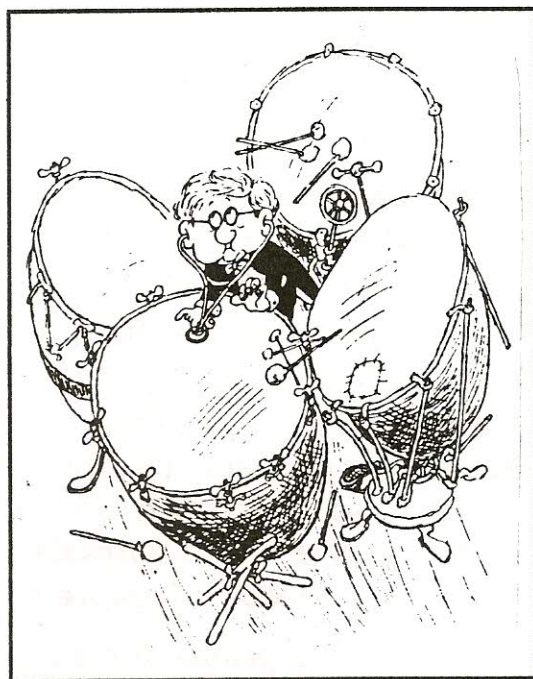
So, if you are interested in learning more about how bands are and should be run, want to refresh your existing knowledge, then why not go along - contact Les Mackown for details.

Don't worry - you won't be automatically co-opted onto the Committee if you attend this course!

## Percussion Pleasure

Over the last couple of months, during the height of our summer season, we have enjoyed several solo items from individuals in the Band as part of our concert programmes. This year however, as well as the virtuoso performances in brass, we have had the pleasure of *Drummers Delight*, a simple little piece for band which gives Steve Morland on percussion the opportunity to display his expertise with the various pieces of equipment in an ad lib cadenza.

Steve's improvisation in the cadenza seems to get more complex each time it is played and the Band has fun trying to guess when he is finishing so that they can resume playing! It is thoroughly enjoyed by the audiences and Band (especially as they get a few minutes rest!).



## The Golden Age of Bands

There were an estimated 40,000 amateur bands in the British Isles in 1889 - one musical instrument maker had 10,000 bands on his books. By 1900 there were well over 200 contests running every year.

In the North of England brass band music had immediately caught on as a workmen's hobby. Indeed many bands were formed from factory employees. Many bands naturally had working-class sympathies and supported campaigns for political reform. As early as 1819 Stalybridge Old Band was engaged to play at a reform meeting on St Peter's Field, Manchester, an occasion which won infamy as the Peterloo Massacre.

But brass bands played at all manner of events. They were a popular



choice for railway openings - Yarm Band played at the opening of the Stockton to Darlington line in 1829. Bands were in demand to perform in public parks and seaside resorts. When the Victorian working classes discovered the seaside, they did not go for their health, as did fashionable society, but for entertainment, and they liked nothing better than to stroll along the promenade to the sound of brass bands. A lucrative summer season at a popular resort was much prized by bands and gay tuneful overtures proved the most popular with the audiences and were ideally suited to the blustery proms. This popularity continued into the 20th century - a band contest in Skegness in 1937 attracted the largest crowds ever seen so early in the season with 33 trains and a fleet of motor coaches pouring into the resort!

## Brief notes

An invitation has been sent to the Bad Hersfeld Stadt-Musik-Verein Band, with whom we have exchanged visits over the years, to visit us in Harrogate in 1993. A reply has not yet been received.

The Committee will be looking at possible options for our next overseas (or inland?) visit in the near future, any ideas and suggestions - or preferably contacts with individuals or organisations - would be welcome.

At the AGM in April, it was agreed that the Band should investigate making a recording on cassette. The Committee has gathered some information on the options available and will be making recommendations to the Band in due course. However, we must emphasise that such an undertaking requires the full commitment of every player in rehearsals and the recording itself, and we would not want to proceed unless we felt we had that.

Band subscriptions for Full Members will be increased to £56 and £28 from 1 February 1993. Those Members who are still in arrears with this year's subscriptions are asked to pay Ian Bristow as soon as possible.

The award for the Most Improved Young Player, given by the Musical Director, Peter Wells, at the AGM, went jointly to Sarah Leng (solo cornet) and Michael Dawes (soprano cornet) - well done both!

Venues for concert engagements are still being sought for the winter season and summer 1993. Anyone who has any suggestions of events, organisations or venues (however tentative) please inform the Committee.

Over the last 17 years (1976-92) - for which we have readily accessible records - the Band has undertaken over 500 engagements (including contests, but excluding Christmas pub busking!). Totals range from 14 in 1978 to 40 in 1981 & 1982. Top of the table for frequency is the Valley Gardens in Harrogate, where we have played 36 times! A copy of the full list is available from Gavin Holman.

