

EALING FIRE SERVICES SILVER BAND

During the early months of the present war, when members of the Ealing Fire Brigade and Auxiliary Fire Service were having difficulty in finding ways and means of spending the long hours of inactivity after the completion of their normal day's work, the suggestion of forming a brass band was made by Fireman J. Smith, a bandsman in the Salvation Army, and who is therefore responsible for the band coming into being.

He immediately obtained the opinion of various members. Some ridiculed the idea, as there were only four members who had had any previous experience.

The majority, however, were in favour, and an early interview was given Mr. Smith by the Chief Officer of the Brigade, Mr. H. Blakey, M.I., Fire E., who became interested at once, and offered any support and advice within his power.

A committee was formed, and weeks of hard work followed, the Chief Officer guiding them around many an obstacle, and assisting in obtaining the services of Mr. J. C. Dyson, the popular and well-known conductor, under whose direction the Hanwell Silver Band have had numerous successes.

At last, six months ago, the great day arrived when each man who had forwarded his name as a prospective bandsman, was asked by Mr. Dyson to try and blow one of the different instruments that were arranged on a table. Members of the Ealing Fire Services Silver Band were being chosen.

Still much hard work was being carried out by the committee, but now it also had the help of the keen bandsmen.

Dances, whist-drives, and social events, were organised in aid of the band funds and always in personal support were the Chief Officer and Second Officer and Mrs. Steel.

With unbounded patience and encouragement Mr. Dyson coaxed each man on his way, and soon they were able to play a few scales, and eventually a tune.

So practice was held twice a week. From scales grew hymn tunes and from hymn tunes an easy march, whilst to-day this same band is practising selections, marches, etc., some of which have been heard over the air. On the first Sunday in September, Mr. Blakey, now chairman of the band, Fireman Smith, now bandmaster, the committee and those members and friends of the Ealing Fire Services who have given their generous support, saw and heard the result of their labours, when the band, under the direction of its tutor, Mr. Dyson, gave its first public performance in an Ealing Park in aid of the Red Cross fund.

The band have already been accepted to membership by the London and Home Counties Bands' Association, and hope to commence contesting in the 4th Section during the coming winter, if a contest can be arranged.

YOUTH AND AGE

At a concert given recently by the Tredegar Silver Band at the Six Bells Park, the performers included Tommy Thomas, a 12-years-old cornettist, and Mr. John Huggins, aged 76 years, a life member of the band, who has given 30 years' service to a forces band, and very many years to Tredegar. Tommy Thomas has served a year's apprenticeship under Bandmaster Sam Mounfield, Blaina. Tommy's father has been a member of the Tredegar Band for 30 years. A brother, W. Thomas, is a solo cornet player at Melingriffith.

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Besses o' th' Barn Band were in great form at Warrington, where, under the baton of Mr. W. Wood, a very fine programme of music was rendered in aid of the Mayor's Spitfire Fund. The playing of the great "Rossini" and "Tchaikovsky" selections was reminiscent of the greatest days of Besses. Miss Gracie Cole, the girl cornettist, of Manvers Main Band, made a great hit with her rendering of the solo, "Hailstorm," and a duet in which she was partnered by Harry Oakes. Miss Cole was celebrating her sixteenth birthday by this performance with Besses, and the Mayor of Warrington made her a suitable presentation.



Ealing Fire Services' Band.

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