

The Mirrlees Works Band



THE MIRRLEES WORKS BAND

President: C. F. Barnard, C.B.E.; Musical Director: N. Ashcroft; Bandmaster & Secretary: E. S. Pinkerton; Assistant Secretary: R. Mattocks; Treasurer: D. Gibson; Social Secretary: A. Wallace; Managerial Advisor: Maj. M. Jones. Personnel: A. James, L. Wood, H. Howard, J. Lee, H. H. Howarth, B. Large, B. Wynnpenney, E. S. Pinkerton, A. Dawson, A. Wallace, R. Howarth, J. Healey, G. Hutchinson, D. Crutcher, J. Shallcross, E. Bowker, G. Fahey, A. Fletcher, A. Taylor, S. Wynn, F. Matthews (Librarian).

The Mirrlees Works Band was formed in August 1949 by Mirrlees Bickerton & Day Ltd. — now Mirrlees National Ltd., at their Hazel Grove Works, where they have produced the world's finest Diesel Engines since 1908.

Our President Mr. C. F. Barnard, C.B.E., is the Vice-Chairman and Managing Director of Mirrlees National Ltd., and our Managerial Advisor Major M. Jones is the Personnel Officer of the Company.

From 1949 to 1955 the Band had many teething troubles and progress was indeed slow, but there was in the ranks a Euphonium player of no mean repute, Mr. Arthur Gibson and that at the request of the Management he undertook the enormous task of getting the band on to a firm footing. In a few months he had made much progress to this end with the assistance of the Bandmaster Mr. Pinkerton and the Assistant Bandmaster Mr. R. Mattocks, and it looked as if this team were going to be able to continue for some time but, unfortunately we were to receive a setback in the untimely death of Mr. Gibson, in the Bandroom one Tuesday evening as rehearsal was about to commence.

This was the scene then, when Mr. Norman Ashcroft was approached to take over the duties as conductor—a full band—regular attendance at rehearsal—musically about a good Section 4 standard, and a tremendous desire to improve all round.

Mr. Ashcroft conducted a concert at the Pavilion, Buxton ten days or so after first rehearsing the band, on May

11th, 1958, and the season's work was undertaken by Mr. Ashcroft and the Bandmaster. Some really hard and intense rehearsals were taking place throughout 1958.

By August we had a much improved band and the band remained more or less the same for five years, and much musical progress was made due to this. They won 19 prizes in that time, the first being the Manchester District Contest on 22nd March, 1959, when they were awarded Selection and Hymn tune firsts, and a trophy for the overall winners of the event.

In 1960, the band management was re-organised, and the team that heads this article was appointed by the Company, new instruments were purchased, and uniforms, and the band has gone from strength to strength, winning altogether no less than 33 prizes. During 1965, the band have won six first prizes, two thirds and a second out of ten contests. The band won the Darwen contest in February, one first and one second prize being international awards at Heerenveen (Holland) June, 1965. A 3rd prize was won for the second year in succession at the Belle Vue May Contest (Grand shield) and the premier 2nd Section award being won at Kensington Town Hall on Saturday, 16th October, 1965.

Our success is due to the good and concentrated playing of our many good players, to the precise attention to detail of our Musical Director Norman Ashcroft and to the diligence of the Bandmaster and Secretary, Eric Pinkerton who conducts the band in the absence of Mr. Ashcroft as he did in London in October last.