

# The Southport St. John Ambulance Silver Band

Conductor :—Mr. Morris Davison



MEMBERS—W. O'Keefe, M. Pearce, J. Johnson, R. Jones, P. Briscoe, I. Halewood, V. Benoit, R. Barton, R. Lloyd, J. Shortland, F. Leeming, J. Jackson, J. Smith, S. Halewood, W. Briscoe, J. Taylor, E. Lamb, R. Birch, P. Drury, W. Bent, E. Spencer, K. Pearce, G. Ball, M. Marshall, H. Robson, A. Robson.

The band of the Southport Corps of the St. John Ambulance Brigade is one of the few brigade bands in the whole of the country. It has been in existence as such for some fifteen years, but prior to that its history is somewhat evolutionary, arising from a few enthusiastic remnants of the Railway Band forming the Special Constabulary Band early in the war. This band eventually disintegrated but was later revived by these enthusiasts under the title of 'The Tudor Silver Band', but this also ran into difficulties and was finally saved by a 'take-over' offer from the St. John Ambulance Brigade.

Mr. Harold Aspinwall was conductor at the time but later resigned and his father, Mr.

Alf Aspinwall, took his place. Unfortunately this last salvation of the band was only to be short lived, for in 1956 it was dissolved by the St. John Chief Officer at the time and there followed about two years of silence. Yet again two or three enthusiastic and undaunted survivors got to work to reform the band and in 1958 Mr. Morris Davison, the band's present conductor, was invited to take up the musical directorship of this re-formed team.

There followed a very difficult year during which survival was very much in the balance, but eventually a more stable committee was formed and with their hard work and determination in spite of many setbacks and continually changing band membership

they gradually built the band up. The funds increased encouragingly and just over a year ago the committee decided to purchase new uniforms for the band, to replace the second hand police uniforms they had endured for so long. This was done and the bill paid in twelve months entirely from monies earned by the band. During this time also, it was decided to improve the presentation appearance of the band for concert work, so, after discarding the idea of buying bannerettes for the music stands as much too expensive, committee members set to work to design and make them, spreading the manual work of stitching into the hands of many of the bandsmen's willing wives. The very

effective result is quite evident from the above photograph.

Having established themselves by the satisfactory fulfilment of many engagements in and around Southport (many for local charities), the band are now contemplating contesting, having experienced the encouragement of putting up a very creditable performance in the N.W.B.B.A. Entertainment contest at Southport in October 1965.

It is hoped that this band will continue to progress, a difficult task when considering that it is purely voluntary and no member reaps any financial benefit, but never-the-less with the determination of the Bandmaster and committee and co-operation of all members the future looks much brighter.