

GREAT SCOT – WHEN CWS (GLASGOW) MADE HISTORY

AROUND THIS TIME OF THE YEAR, BANDHALLS ACROSS THE UK WOULD NORMALLY BE RINGING WITH THE SOUND OF FERVENT MUSIC MAKING AS QUALIFIERS ADD THE FINISHING TOUCHES TO THEIR TEST-PIECE AHEAD OF A PILGRIMAGE TO LONDON'S ROYAL ALBERT HALL FOR THE NATIONAL BRASS BAND CHAMPIONSHIP.

THREE DECADES AGO, HISTORY WAS MADE AS THE ICONIC TROPHY WAS WON BY CWS (GLASGOW) BAND, THE FIRST TIME A SCOTTISH BAND WAS VICTORIOUS. BB EDITOR MARK GOOD REFLECTS ON A MAJOR MILESTONE IN THE HISTORY OF ONE OF THE COUNTRY'S FINEST BANDS.

While the worlds of brass bands and elite football are poles apart, there are some striking parallels: the 'sporting' element, the system of leagues and tables and the tribal nature of it all. Another common thread lies in the perception of Scottish bands (or teams) as the plucky underdog, occasionally lacking the subtlety and refinement of rivals while never afraid to grind out a result.

Rewind three decades to 1990 and much the same opinion was in existence. Three bands from Scotland journeyed south in a bid to challenge that perception, ready to do battle against fellow qualifiers on the sprawling stage of London's Royal Albert Hall. Steven Craig (pictured left) was a cornet player and band treasurer with what was then the CWS (Glasgow) Band. He recalls a confident outfit which was well-prepared for the task in hand – but acknowledged the doubt remained. "We were in good form, for sure, and had worked really hard in the build-up. It was a band that played as a band; not a bunch of superstars, though there were some very fine players like Allan Ramsay (principal cornet) and Gavin Lindsay (soprano) but it was the strength of the group that really pushed us along. In spite of that, we felt that it was an uphill task for a Scottish band to get a result in London."

The late 1980s and early 1990s were heady days for CWS (Glasgow) Band. It rehearsed in dedicated facilities within Co-op buildings



Members of CWS (Glasgow) Band stand outside London's Royal Albert Hall in October 1990.

on Glasgow's Morrison Street, a stone's throw from the Kingston Bridge, where the M8 motorway crosses the River Clyde. The sponsorship agreement was generous and enabled the band to undertake a busy schedule, with regular concert appearances and journeys on the road helping foster a formidable team spirit. The togetherness spilled over on to the contest stage, with victories at the Scottish Championship (1988 and 1989), the Grand Shield (1988) a second place at the European Championship in Bergen (1989) and success in a host of other domestic competitions.

Guiding the band musically was a sterling conducting team, led by

Howard Snell, with John Hudson as resident and principal Eb bass player Raymond Tennant also taking the baton when required. John, who had been principal cornet player with Britannia Building Society Band, would catch a train from Preston to Glasgow twice a week, returning south immediately after the rehearsal. In a previous feature in *British Bandsman* celebrating the band's 100th anniversary, John explained: "My appointment came through the then musical director, Mr Snell. He was also the conductor of Britannia, where I was principal cornet, and when CWS was looking for a resident conductor, it wanted someone who worked closely with Howard to follow his style and give continuity in the music and training of the band."

The quality of the musical direction undoubtedly played its part in the band's consistency – though 1990 started with a wobble.

CWS scraped through to the finals in third place with Howard Snell, qualifying behind champion Kirkintilloch (Frank Renton) and Murray International Whitburn, led by Major Peter Parkes on *The Beacons*, by Ray Steadman-Allen. With Howard electing to conduct Britannia Building Society at the finals, it was eventually decided that John would step up to lead the band in London. From the first rehearsal on the piece – George Lloyd's *English Heritage* – there was an air of positivity.

Raymond Tennant led that particular rehearsal and recalled: "When *English Heritage* came out for the first time, it seemed to suit the band straight away. 'Wouldn't it be ironic if a Scottish band won on this piece?' I joked. The rest, as they say, is history."

Raymond would assume his place in the bass section for the contest itself but brother Ronnie, then band manager and a Bb bass player, was forced to take a temporary step back from playing as his wife Ann was due to give birth. It did not stop him from planning every twist and turn of the band's trip, for which he described himself as "in the dugout, instead of taking to the pitch".

"I decided to fly the entire band to London," Ronnie explained. "At Heathrow, they were met by a coach, which took them straight to the hotel – everything was laid on for them."

Rehearsing the night before, the band was in imperious form and it continued the following morning. Receiving a late draw – number 20 – there was time to kill. Some players wandered into the hall to hear Britannia Building Society with Mr Snell and while they were impressed, they were not deflated. Ronnie continued: "I was sitting with a friend of mine and we turned to each other – we knew we could compete with what we had heard."

When CWS (Glasgow) took to the stage, Ronnie was proven right.

He continued: "The sound was unreal; it just took off. I still have goosebumps thinking about it. From the soloists to the big picture, everything clicked."

Principal players played their part, Allan Ramsay revelling in the high Eb while other principal cornet players on the day shirked responsibility, passing off to sop players instead. Raymond Tennant, meanwhile, delivered a performance of such quality in

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C.W.S. supreme in Scotland's historic 'double'

BRASS band history was made at the Royal Albert Hall last Saturday.

For the very first time, the title Champion Band of Great Britain; the glistening silver Challenge Trophy and a cash prize of £2,000 went to Scottish heroes CWS (Glasgow), directed by resident conductor John Hudson (right).

To hammer home Scotland's supremacy, on the following day, at Wembley Conference Centre, another Scottish band, West Lothian Schools Brass, under Nigel Boddice, won the Youth title – not to mention the third prizes gained in senior Sections 3 and 4 by South Side Brass and Kelty and Blairadam, and the fifth place won by Murray International in the championship section.

In view of this triumph for Scottish banding, the choice of the lament *Flowers of the Forest* for the Gala Concert seemed singularly inappropriate!

In the top section, hard on the heels of CWS (Glasgow) came John Hudson's former band, the magnificent Britannia Building Society, conducted by Howard Snell.

Comparative newcomers Sellers Engineering, conducted by (Scotsman) Phillip McCann, crowned their meteoric rise to the top (achieved from scratch within five years) by storming into a well deserved third place – a terrific result for this young band.

The CWS (Glasgow) band's feisty performance of George Lloyd's *English Heritage* – a popular test which, oddly enough, sounded rather more Scottish (or Russian) than English – had sufficient quality, commitment and character about it to earn that one vital extra point which consigned Howard Snell and BBS to the runner-up position for another year.

But what a performance BBS gave! Drawn number four, the band played with incredible precision and accuracy – as clean a bit of work as was heard all day – and the solo playing was at an outstanding level. The judges liked it but thought some of it a bit loud.

There might be some head scratching in the Leyland-DAF camp, though their exciting play-



TABLE OF PRIZE-WINNERS CHAMPIONSHIP

Result Band	Points	Draw
1. CWS (Glasgow) (John Hudson)	196	20
2. Britannia Building Society (Howard Snell)	195	4
3. Sellers Engineering (Phillip McCann)	194	14
4. Leyland-DAF (Richard Evans)	193	19
5. Murray International Whitburn (James Scott)	188	13
6. Williams Fairey Engineering (Peter Parkes)	187	2

Adjudicators: Trevor Green, David Read and William Reiton.

SECTION 2

1. British Steels Stainless Dodsworth (G. O'Connor)	190	25
2. Nottingham City Transport (Colin Toghill)	189	13
3. Regent Brass (Paul Fensom)	188	17
4. Traiford (Jeff Norris)	187	2
5. Drighlington (Colin Hardy)	186	27
6. St Dennis (Derek Greenwood)	185	15

Adjudicators: James Langley and Bram Gay

SECTION 3

1. Blidworth Welfare (David Newman)	188	23
2. Sovereign Brass (Harold McNeil)	187	24
3. South Side Brass (Glasgow) (Anthony Swainson)	186	2
4. Flixton (Peter Lockett)	184	14
5. Cobden Chadwick (Douglas Blackledge)	183	7
6. McMillan's Eagley (Christopher Wormald)	181	1

Adjudicators: Derek Broadbent and David Evans

SECTION 4

1. Gorton Silver (Ben Ashby)	189	6
2. Aceprint Gawthorpe Victoria (Alan Morrison)	188	17
3. Kelty & Blairadam Brass (George Bennett)	186	10
4. Marple 'B' (Garry Cutt)	185	7
5. Warburton's Bolton (Alan Marsh)	184	28
6. City of Hull (Robert Childs)	183	14

Adjudicators: Brian Buckley and Bruce Fraser

ing, under Richard Evans, was flawed by rather too many tiny indiscretions. Their resulting fourth place was the price they paid. It's tough at the top!

At this point in the results table, a gaping five-point chasm separated the front runners from the rest of the field. Adding their weight to the Scottish challenge, Murray International Whitburn and James Scott, placed 5th, managed to hold off a strong Williams Fairey performance which, at number two, had provided judges Trevor Green, David Read and William Reiton with an early benchmark.

And what of John Foster Black Dyke Mills, the band that probably pulled the greatest applause of the day? Playing last, Dyke may have pleased its loyal fans but narrowly failed to reach the frame, ending up in 7th place.

The test-piece, George Lloyd's *English Heritage*, was a winner. Instantly accessible, cheerfully tuneful and crammed with gorgeous sounds and effects, it presented more than enough technical demands for most of the bands. It also tested the conductors, many of whom decided that the composer didn't know what he wanted when he set the tempo indications, as he lamented to B.B. after the contest.

"A lot of the conductors played some of the tempi far too quickly." (cid. on page 16, col. 3)

CWS (Glasgow) Band's historic result was front page news in the next *British Bandsman*.

his Eb bass solo that his contribution is thought to have played a major part in helping the band win the contest – yet the build-up hadn't been without its bumps in the road.

Raymond recalled: "I had been struggling a bit with a couple of things in the build-up to the contest and it just wasn't gelling. Then I spoke to Willie Young, sitting beside me, and I tweaked my breathing. It seemed to make all the difference. I just remember those around me tapping me on the knee afterwards – and great relief."

Sitting in the cornet section, Steven Craig shared the confidence which was permeating around the stand. He said: "Raymond was exceptional on stage, it was top-drawer. I remember looking



Enjoying a busy schedule, members of CWS (Glasgow) Band pose with the iconic National Championship trophy outside the Caird Hall, Dundee.

to John Hudson standing in the middle and he was just smiling throughout the performance. He was an understated conductor and everything was quite concise; on that occasion, he didn't have to force the issue, the band simply rose to the occasion."

A delighted band retreated to the nearby Queen's Mews for refreshments – but they were aware that a big gun was still to follow, with Black Dyke and David King drawn 23rd. When the results came, some filtered into the hall while other stayed in the pub. As is customary, the top six places were announced in reverse order – then it got to second place, announced as Britannia Building Society.

Steven said: "The first placed band was announced as band number... 20" – and we were waiting for the 'three', expecting it to be Black Dyke – but it never came."

For an ecstatic Ronnie, who was on stage, there was unbridled joy. It was a moment made all the sweeter because among the first to congratulate him was his father Willie, who had been representing Kirkintilloch. He was able to enjoy the celebrations too; daughter Stephanie would give him ample time to return to Scotland, born safely a couple of weeks later.

It was clearly a performance which found favour with the adjudicators. Summarising, Trevor Green wrote: "Beautiful and well-executed finale – rhythmic and superbly structured. Speechless – quite outstanding playing – MAGNIFICENT!"

Fellow judge William Relton was similarly enthused, writing: "A fine rich tone throughout the band. First rate music making throughout; well done indeed."

If the band was delighted after its performance, the level of elation following the result was almost indescribable – so much so that it took some time to sink in. Steven continued: "We went for a curry later in the evening and for a little while, there was silence as we took time to process and reflect on what had just happened. Then we returned to the hotel and the party really started – it was an incredible night."

'The immediate aftermath of the National Finals may have been a bit hazy but the legacy of that momentous result endured far beyond the cries of joy and ensuing woolly heads'

Reporting on the result, issue 4561 of *British Bandsman* read: "Brass band history was made at the Royal Albert Hall last Saturday. For the very first time, the title champion band of Great Britain; the glistening silver Challenge Trophy and a cash prize of £2,000 went to Scottish heroes CWS (Glasgow), directed by resident conductor John Hudson.

Co-operative Wholesale Society Ltd.
 congratulates the
C.W.S. Glasgow Band and Conductor
 on winning the
 National Brass Band Championship of Great Britain
 at the Royal Albert Hall on Saturday 6th October 1990

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| Principal Cornet
Allan Ramsay | Conductor
John Hudson | Band Administrator
Iain McDonald |
| Solo Cornets
Ewan Millar
David Mcleod
Barry Doherty | Euphoniums
John Powell
Karen McGrath | Flugel Horn
Craig Anderson |
| Soprano Cornet
Gavin Lindsay | Baritones
Anne Murphy
Gillian Kerr | Horns
Ronnie Wotherspoon
Karen Waugh
Gordon Renfrew |
| Back Row Cornets
Alistair Roulston
Robin Basu
Robin Thompson
Steven Craig
Tom Chapple | Trombones
Brian Deans
Murray Stenhouse
Duncan Platt | Basses
Raymond Tennant
Willie Young
Andrew Burnley
Douglas Thomson |
| | Backroom Staff
Ronnie Tennant (Band manager)
Bert Masson
Jim Carruthers
Paul Dornan
Sven Simonsen | Percussion
Debbie Garden
Alan Emslie
Richard Buckley |

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 Gordon Bell (Cowdenbeath Band)
 Alistair Young Associates, P.R.
 Boosey & Hawkes Band Festivals
 Scottish Amateur Brass Band Association
 British Airways
 Band Supplies

Special wishes to Alex Wilson who was greatly missed at the Royal Albert Hall
 Thank you to all the Bandspeople at home and abroad who have sent messages of
 congratulations and good wishes



'Those were very special memories and I will never forget that Nationals victory. I think it's one of the biggest things Scottish banding has ever done; that win put the country on the map'

"To hammer home Scotland's supremacy, on the following day, at Wembley Conference Centre, another Scottish band, West Lothian Schools Brass, under Nigel Boddice, won the Youth title - not to mention the third prizes gained in senior Sections Three and Four by South Side Brass and Kelty and Blairadam, and the fifth place won by Murray International in the Championship Section."

The immediate aftermath of the National Finals

ENGLISH HERITAGE George Lloyd

Con brio $\text{♩} = 128$

The image shows a handwritten musical score for the piece 'English Heritage' by George Lloyd. The score is written for a brass band and includes parts for Eb Soprano Cornet, Solo Eb Cornet, Rep. Bb Cornet, 2nd Bb Cornet, 3rd Bb Cornet, Eb Flugel, Solo Eb Horn, 1st Eb Horn, 2nd Eb Horn, 1st Bb Baritone, 2nd Bb Baritone, 1st Bb Trombone, 2nd Bb Trombone, Bass Trombone, Bb Euphonium, Eb Bass, and Bb Bass. The score is heavily annotated with handwritten signatures and notes, including 'Gavin Watt', 'John Hudson', 'Tom Chapple', 'James Cameron', 'Douglas Thomson', and 'Craig Anderson'. The title 'ENGLISH HERITAGE' is written in large, bold letters at the top, with 'George Lloyd' written below it. The tempo is marked 'Con brio' with a metronome marking of 128. The score is written on ten staves, each corresponding to a different instrument part.

Players' signatures adorn the front page of an *English Heritage* score by George Lloyd, a piece which has played a pivotal role in the band's history.



Following CWS (Glasgow) Band's success, the Co-op organised a special presentation dinner to acknowledge the achievements of the Glasgow band.

may have been a bit hazy but the legacy of that momentous result endured far beyond the cries of joy and ensuing woolly heads.

Naturally, the Co-op was delighted and ensured the band was front and centre at a series of performances over the coming year.

A major tour of Australia and New Zealand followed in 1993 as CWS (Glasgow) represented Scotland with pride on the other side of the world.

Steven performed with the band from 1988 until 1994 but returned to the organisation's management team a couple of years ago. He reckons he holds the record of being the only home-based Fifer ever to win at the Royal Albert Hall and concluded: "Those were very special memories and I will never forget that Nationals victory. I think it's one of the biggest things Scottish banding has ever done; that win put the country on the map."

Any scepticism over the ability of a Scottish band to repeat the feat was firmly put to bed when CWS reclaimed the title six years later, with Howard Snell leading the Glasgow band to victory on *Isaiah 40*. Though there have been some close encounters, the famous trophy hasn't journeyed north of the border since, instead bouncing back and forth between the banding titans of England and Wales.

Having retained its Scottish Championship title earlier in the year, the cooperation band, as it is now known, would have hoped to venture south in a bid to reclaim the National title; alas, the ongoing pandemic has but paid to those hopes for at least another year, the very notion of brass band contesting in the traditional form feeling a world away in the current climate of social distancing and self-isolation.

For the players and supporters who were present in October 1990,

however, this weekend will offer an opportunity to raise a glass and reflect upon a contest result which caused a seismic shift in the perception of the Scottish brass band scene; the plucky Scots had conquered all in their path en route to lifting one of banding's most prestigious crowns.

National Brass Band Championship of Great Britain

Date: October 6, 1990

Test-piece: *English Heritage*

Adjudicators: David Read, William Relton, Trevor Green

- 1) CWS (Glasgow) – John Hudson, 20, 196
- 2) Britannia Building Society – Howard Snell, 4, 195
- 3) Sellers Engineering – Phillip McCann, 14, 194
- 4) Leyland DAF – Richard Evans, 19, 193
- 5) Murray International Whitburn – James Scott, 13, 188
- 6) Williams Fairey Engineering – Peter Parkes, 2, 187
- 7) John Foster Black Dyke Mills – David King, 23, 186
- 8) Camborne Town – Steve Sykes, 1, 185
- 9) Jaguar Cars (City of Coventry) – Barry Pope, 15, 184
- 10) Stocksbridge Engineering Steels – Hugh Megarrell, 16, 183
- 11) William Davis Construction Group – Keith Wilkinson, 8, 182
- 12) Bedwas Trethomas & Machen – Melvin White, 9, 181
- 13) Rigid Containers Group – Robert Watson, 21, 180
- 14) Ever Ready – Roy Newsome, 7, 179
- 15) John Laing (Hendon) – Melvin White, 12, 178
- 16) Thoresby Colliery Welfare (DOSCO) – Stan Lippeatt, 3, 177
- 17) Tredegar Town – Nigel Weeks, 17, 176
- 18) London Electricity Redbridge Brass – Graham Chambers, 10, 175
- 19) Kirkintilloch – Frank Renton, 6, 174
- 20) Rhodian Brass – Murray Slater, 5, 173
- 21) Aveley – Martin Heartfield, 22, 172
- 22) Bodmin Town – Leonard Adams, 11, 171
- 23) North Skelton BSC Teesside – David Hirst, 18, 170