



The Fairey Band – A History

Founded in 1937 by a group of employees at the Fairey Aviation Works in Stockport, the Band achieved many musical successes under the brilliant direction of Harry Mortimer, their Musical Director for over thirty years.

Since those early days, the Band has been 16 times British Open Champions and National Champions of Great Britain on 9 occasions. Winners of the BBC 'Best of Brass' and Granada 'Band of the Year' titles add further touches of distinction to this famous Band.

The early-mid 1990's saw probably the most successful period in the Band's history, winning both the British Open and National titles in 1993, before going on to complete a unique 'treble' when they were crowned European Champions in 1994.

The Band is also extremely proud of its successes at the annual Whit Friday marches – most notably in 1997 when they achieved 10 first prizes, 2 second prizes and a third prize of the 13 contests that they attended!

With such contesting successes Faireys is in constant demand for concerts, both at home and abroad. Overseas tours have included performances in Canada, Hong Kong, Switzerland, Sweden, Germany, Holland, Belgium and Luxembourg. All this and more makes up the pedigree of what is, undoubtedly, one of the World's leading brass bands.

Since its formation the band has seen an illustrious line-up of conductors including Harry Mortimer, Leonard Lamb, Kenneth Dennison, Richard Evans, Walter Hargreaves, Geoffrey Brand, Major Peter Parkes, Roy Newsome, James Gourlay, Howard Snell and Allan Withington.

It is also proud to boast a rather star-studded line up of players who have 'cut their teeth' at Faireys and gone on to further individual greatness. A non-exhaustive list through the decades could include the likes of Norman Ashcroft, Maurice Murphy, Phillip McCann, Alan Wycherley, Shaun Crowther, Steve Walkley, Simon Johnson, David Thornton, Brett Baker, Owen Farr and Stuart Lingard. There are equally distinguished lists for those who remained at Faireys to achieve great things, and those who had already achieved them before joining the band.

In more recent years, the Band has enjoyed further recognition outside the confines of the Brass Band movement, with its involvement in the 'Acid Brass' project. Under this banner, the Band has been able to display its flexibility in adapting to a totally different musical concept and consequently, has performed in rock/pop festivals in the UK and overseas.

The Band has always maintained its association with the 'Fairey' company, now known simply as WFEL, which provided sponsorship until 2002. The band still rehearses at the factory in Heaton Chapel. Having survived various name changes, as the company changed hands over the years – Williams Fairey and Williams Holdings among others – these days the Band is proud to revert to its roots and be known as The Fairey Band – or, as is more commonly used in banding circles – 'Faireys'.

Previous Aliases:

Fairey Aviation Band (1937-1977)
Fairey Engineering Band (1977-1986)
Williams Fairey Engineering (1986-2000)
Williams Fairey (2000-2003)
Fairey FP(Music) (2003-2004)
The Fairey Band (2004-present)

Honours:

National Champions of Great Britain

1945, 1952, 1954, 1956, 1965, 1986, 1993, 2002, 2003

British Open Champions

1941, 1942, 1944, 1945, 1947, 1949, 1950, 1956, 1961, 1962, 1963, 1965, 1979, 1987, 1993, 1998

All England Masters Champions

1996, 1997

European Champions

1994

Brass In Concert Champions

1996

BBC Television Champion Brass

1976, 1977, 1979

BBC Best Of Brass

1978

Granada Television Band Of The Year

1979, 1980

BBC Radio Band Of The Year

1987, 1988