

The National Youth Brass Band of Great Britain celebrates its Diamond Jubilee

Part 1 John Maines



For over half of its life I have been a tutor, librarian and Councillor. My very first experience of the NYBBGB was in 1963 when I became a playing member; I still have vivid memories of my time as a player and still have friendships from that time.

Not only is the NYBBGB a fantastic musical experience, but it is a 'family' which continues throughout the lives of anyone who is involved, as a player, a staff member, or simply someone interested in seeing and hearing youth music making at its very best. Here then is a history of this great organization.

Early Beginnings

The Wright Legacy

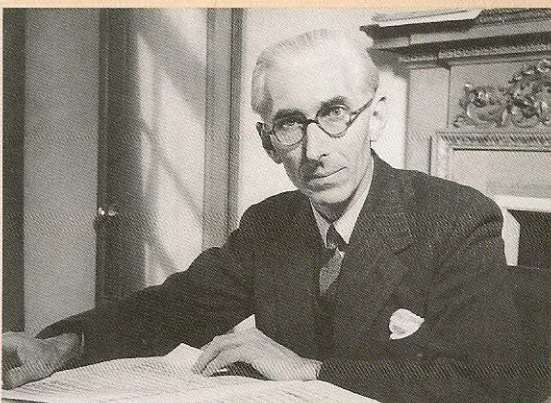
The National Youth Brass Band of Great Britain was founded in 1952 and provides young players with the opportunity to play music to the highest standards. The band meets for two week-long residential courses each year at Easter and Summer and special one off concerts.

But how and why was it founded, and who were the principal architects of this venture?

In the 1940's instrumental teaching in schools had started in some areas and the newly formed Boys Band Association of Yorkshire was making preparations for a massed bands concert to be held on the 25th October 1947 in the Eastbrook Hall in Bradford.

The concert was organized by three local teachers: Elizabeth Lumb of Highfield School, Arthur Atkinson from Bradford Boys and Ralph Nellist from Hall Royd Methodist Juniors. The conductor for the evening was Dr. Denis Wright, a very well known conductor, composer and very respected figure at the BBC.

In the audience that evening was Ruth Railton (later to become Dame Ruth Railton) who was responsible for the founding of The National Youth Orchestra



Dr. Denis Wright.

of Great Britain. Dr. Denis struck up a conversation with Miss Railton and the seeds of the NYBBGB were sown!

It wasn't until the 26th November 1950 that anything came to fruition. On that day, after years of meetings and discussion, a concert was organized by the Association of Brass Band Conductors (of which Dr. Denis Wright was an executive member) to take place in Leeds Town Hall and feature around 100 boys and girls. The idea was to demonstrate to local music advisors the wealth of young brass band talent in this country.

A report of an inaugural meeting held in Manchester on the 27th January 1951 stated:



The National Youth Brass Band of Great Britain, Bradford, 1952. Leader, Maurice Murphy.

'The meeting was attended by a representative cross-section of the brass band movement and Educational Authorities at which it was decided to proceed with the organization of a National Youth Brass Band'

The aim was to give children of school age opportunities to meet together for making music for a week long course to include band rehearsals and group tuition under the finest teachers available. Students would pay fees, but it was hoped that many Education Authorities would provide grants to cover these.

Sir Malcolm Sargent offered his services as President and J. Henry Iles, Harry Mortimer, Herbert Bennett and the famous Welsh composer Dr. R. Maldwyn Price agreed to become Vice-Presidents. Leonard Davies, a well respected musician from Manchester, became secretary, while Dr. Denis Wright was appointed Acting Chairman.

On the 26th May 1951 the original Council was formed comprising of eminent personalities from the brass band movement including Miss Elizabeth Lumb, a Bradford

teacher; conductor and composer John Carr; A.V. Creasey, Chairman of No. 1 Centre NABBC; William Haydock, M.D. of Bickershaw Colliery Band and Wigan Boys Club Band; Bill Hume, Band Manager of Fairey Aviation Works Band; Tommy Morcombe, Band Manager of Morris Motors Band; Maurice Teasdale, Secretary of Cresswell Colliery Band and others representing all the corners of the British Isles.

It was agreed that the aim of the NYBBGB was to enhance the musical training already being received from the youngsters' bands.

Information for the inaugural course was given in 'instalments' in the band press. On the 12th January 1952 the British Bandsman announced that the syllabus for the week had been drafted as well as running an advert inviting applications for membership of the band.

On the 8th March the same publication said: 'We can now announce the names of the tutors who have kindly undertaken to give group instruction under the general supervision of Harry Mortimer O.B.E. These are: Willie Lang and Joe Wood (Black Dyke), Cliff Edmunds (Morris Motors), Tom Atkinson (Bradford Victoria) and George Kaye (Hepworth Silver).

The National Youth Brass Band of Great Britain was now in existence and the inaugural course took place at Thornton Grammar School in Bradford from the 12th to 19th April 1952. The end of course concert was given at Carlton Grammar



Maurice Murphy.

School conducted by Dr. Denis Wright. It was a huge success, with a varied selection of music including *Tancredi*, *War March of the Priests*, *The Londonderry Air*, *Nimrod*, *Espana*, *Zelda*, (played by the first leader of the band, Maurice Murphy), the euphonium solo *Allegro Spiritoso* (played by Norman Burnham) and a quintet with nine year old Michael Blackburn on top cornet!



The National Youth Brass Band of Great Britain, Nottingham, 1955. Leader, John Berryman.

The concert began with a march especially written for the first course, the appropriately named *On Your Way* by Horace Hawley. This march now has pride of place, sitting at Number One in the band's library!

Amongst the 96 players listed in the first programme were: Maurice Murphy, Richard Evans, John Clough, Peter Teal, Robert Mulholland and his wife to be Jennifer Longson, and Colin Monkman who went on to be principal trombone with Black Dyke.

Maurice Murphy, of course, eventually became principal cornet with Black Dyke and went on to the principal trumpet chair at the London Symphony Orchestra.

Other tutors 'came on board' throughout this period such as trombonist Kenneth Dennison, Norman Ashcroft, Harry Farrington, Harry Heyes and, later, Jack Emmott.

In 1956 Alf Jarvis did his first course as cornet tutor and was still tutoring when I became a tutor in 1979!

The band was always run on a financial shoestring and one reminder of this is the 1954 Summer Course which was conducted by members of the music staff because the band couldn't afford a guest conductor!

Everyone connected to the NYBBGB was always trying to find new ways to raise funds and one idea was unique. Mrs. Connie Huntley of Huddersfield had, for several years, collected signatures of players and embroidered them onto a

table cloth. Anyone that signed was asked to give a donation to the NYBBGB and in August 1957 she presented the table cloth, containing 1987 signatures, to the band. Several years later she presented a trophy in memory of her husband, Ernest, to be awarded periodically to a student showing particular excellence in a musical aspect other than playing.

The 10th anniversary was celebrated in 1962 with a TV programme introduced by the famous jazz trombonist George Chislm and the second appearance of Sir Adrian Boult who, on both occasions, refused a fee for his services. There was also support from Jimmy Edwards, a famous comedian and well-known for his playing of the trombone and euphonium. He appeared in a number of massed band concerts organised on behalf of the NYBBGB, performing free of charge and generally persuading the bands to do likewise. This brought both publicity and much-needed cash.

More changes in staff saw Derek Garside, James Shepherd and Denis Carr join the NYBBGB 'family'.

Leonard Davies continued as secretary and to assist Dr. Denis in musical duties until his retirement through ill health in 1964. He was succeeded as secretary by Stan Reakes who was also secretary of the Birmingham & District Brass Band Association and someone who had helped with the organization of the 1963 Birmingham course.

Because of the huge influence Dr. Denis had in musical circles he would go on to secure the services of some of the greatest musicians to appear as guest conductors. The list of conductors during Dr. Denis' tenure reads like a 'Who's Who' of post war music and includes Sir Adrian Boult, Eric Ball, Captain CH Jaeger (Irish Guards), Harry Mortimer, Leonard Davies, TJ Powell and Harold Gray.

During his time as M.D. Dr. Denis and his wife Maud saw the band experience

many musical highs, but there were also the funny happenings that make up the history of the NYBBGB.

The NYBBGB's 25th course took place at Easter 1964 in Gloucester and another milestone was reached with the recording of the NYBBGB's first record, a 10" LP on the Keepnote label called *Youth Makes Music*.

As well as the luminaries already mentioned, Dr. Denis, along with his wife Maud, saw some great future personalities pass through the NYBBGB. Names such as David James, John Berryman, Brian Evans, John Clay, Phillip McCann, Peter Christian, Nigel Boddice, John Wallace, Robert Morgan, Roger Payne, David Seville (later to become an Director in the Yamaha-Kemble organization and a great supporter of the NYBBGB), Tony Parsons, Kevin Wadsworth, Roy Roe, Brian Rankine, Peter Skellern (who went on to score a number one UK Chart hit with *You're a Lady!*), James Watson, Ian Wilkinson, Keith Wilkinson, Ian Richards and Ian Copland to name just a few. In 1963 I remember Jim Watson sat on top third cornet and his legs didn't even reach the floor!

At the band's AGM in March 1967 Dr. Denis made a shock announcement. As from Easter he would be relinquishing his post as Music Advisor as he was finding it increasingly difficult to balance his many overseas commitments with that of the NYBBGB.



The National Youth Brass Band of Great Britain, Huddersfield, 1965. Leader, Phillip McCann.



Geoffrey Brand.

For his final course at Easter 1967 Dr. Denis composed a Trio Concerto; it was to be his last composition. Its première was given in Camden Town Hall and the soloists were Phillip McCann (cornet), Eoin McCallum (trombone) and Russell Booker (euphonium).

More staff changes happened at this time, most notably that of newly elected member of the Council Bill England, who was eventually to replace Stan Reakes as Secretary.

Dr. Denis was Music Director throughout the 1950's and through to his untimely death in 1967.

The Geoffrey Brand Years

Dr. Denis gave a lot of thought to his successor and chose a man who was making a great name for himself in the band world, Geoffrey Brand. Brand had a wide experience, starting as a cornet player with the Salvation Army and going on to become a professional trumpeter playing in the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden. He was well in touch with the world of bands through his work at the BBC where he was responsible for all band broadcasts. At that time he was also professional conductor of the Black Dyke Mills Band.

On the 20th April 1967 Dr. Denis Wright passed away. The NYBBGB had lost its founder and the whole band world mourned his passing

Just as Dr. Denis would have wanted, the band was now going from strength to strength, although finances were still extremely tight. Membership was open to boys and girls of a high standard within the age range of 12 to 18, but

entry still relied on vacancies, The size of the band was generally about 100, but would sometimes reach 120. The house staff had also grown into a full team.

Geoffrey brought his own enthusiasm and new ideas to the band, but was always mindful of the traditions and practices put in place by Dr. Denis. He was always ready to share his thoughts and ideas with the music staff and endeared himself to players and staff alike. Geoffrey enjoyed his eight years as Music Adviser in what was to become some of the most innovative times in the history of the NYBBGB.

One of his ideas was to form the NYBBGB Choir to help develop aural awareness. Peter Room, who was then a Housemaster, was invited to take charge of the choir, which took part in every concert, and, as well as being musically beneficial to its members, added a nice touch to the event. When Peter became less involved with courses the choir sadly went by the wayside. Geoffrey was always a great advocate of new music and was instrumental in commissioning works from the likes of Paul Patterson and Wilfred Josephs and these became important additions to the brass band repertoire. Studying new works for brass band was, and still is, a highly important part of the NYBBGB's policy.

Also introduced were sessions to study the rudiments of music and the chance for the final year students to study conducting. Nowadays many of the names which grace our brass band scene can boast that their first experience on the rostrum was probably with the NYBBGB.

Throughout his years as Music Advisor, Geoffrey felt the enormous responsibility of being entrusted with the development of so many fine, musically gifted young people and now, as Trustee, Vice-President and Councillor, witnessing the continuity of the NYBBGB's development brings him immense satisfaction.

During Geoffrey's tenure the band undertook its first overseas tour

to Denmark. The Danish conductor Herbert Moller was the co-ordinator for that visit and proved a great hit with the staff and players - so much so that he was invited to England to be guest conductor. Another overseas visit was to the Channel Islands. Remarkable achievements given the financial restrictions.

Other notable guest conductors were invited to the band including Gibert Vinter, Sir Vivien Dunn, Eric Ball, Vilem Tausky (who enjoyed games of football as goalkeeper with some of the boys!), Marcus Dods, Bernard Keefe, Harry Mortimer and Arthur Butterworth.

It was also in Geoffrey's time that the PYE Award was instigated. With support from the recording company of the same name this was a solo competition held during the week and was to become hotly contested!

During Geoffrey's time with the band, as in Dr. Denis' time, many of the players in the NYBBGB were to figure prominently in future years such as Robert Childs (who incidentally was to meet his future wife Lorraine Hartley in the band!), Lynda Nicholson, Nicholas Thompson, Alan Wycherley and many more. Robert Childs went on to become the first Euphonium tutor, Guest Soloist, Guest Conductor, Councillor and Chairman!

Here's what former Leader at that time, Alan Morrison has to say of his time with the NYBBGB:

"I auditioned for the NYBB on 27th November 1971 in the Bradford Victoria bandroom and was auditioned by the late Tom F. Atkinson. For some reason this date has stood out in my mind since, although a visit to Valley Parade to see Bradford City lose 3-2 to Notts County may also have had something to do with it!

My first course was Easter 1972 at Alsager College in Cheshire. I was 13



Robert and Lorraine Childs.

years old by now and my first seating position was 5th 2nd Cornet. At the next course in Ogmere, South Wales I was disappointed to drop to 3rd Cornet (No.2) but was determined to improve after that and the next course I was a solo cornet player, eventually ending up as Principal Cornet for the two 1977 courses, which were my last.

I completed 11 courses altogether, missing one Easter course in 1976 because my band played at the Pontins Contest, which clashed.

My early memories of the Alsager course in 1972 were travelling on a train and meeting up with Lorraine Childs (then Hartley). We both had our white badges on so knew where each other was going. Eric Ball was the Guest Conductor and I had an image of him in my mind. A tall rounded man with a long black beard and short temper that ate young kids like me for breakfast. Sure enough, as we gathered for the Opening Assembly in walked the very figure from my imagination, looking around the band members with obvious disdain and licking his lips. To my astonishment, when introduced to the assembly, it wasn't Eric Ball but a certain Peter Kitson, whose temperament was exactly



Alan Morrison.

opposite to my vision. A quietly spoken, gentle man who was the baritone tutor. We later became very good friends and worked together with several bands. I was even more surprised the following day when a little, frail old man was introduced to us as Eric Ball. How the young mind can be so wrong.

The biggest disappointment I had with the NYBB was undoubtedly in 1973 when the Easter Course was all set for Canada. However due to a British Airways strike it was cancelled about three weeks prior to leaving and hastily rearranged for Corby. Not quite the same as Canada you will agree, but still a very enjoyable course.

I have great memories of courses conducted by Harry Mortimer, Roy Newsome and Eric Ball, not to mention other names less associated with brass bands like Marcus Dodds, Bernard Keefe and Arthur Butterworth. All the courses I attended were enjoyable and I left the NYBBGB with a superb grounding and knowledge of the repertoire that set me up for the demands of top-class banding in the future. Perhaps more importantly lifelong friendships were forged that are valued still today and memories, some of which seem just like yesterday."

Geoffrey Brand's final course as Music Advisor was at Swaylands Residential School, Penshurst, Tonbridge at Easter 1974.

Today Geoffrey Brand continues his support for the NYBBGB with service as a Vice-President and a valued member of the Council.

To be continued.....

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Arthur Butterworth MBE

1975 saw the appointment of the NYBBGB's third Music Adviser, Arthur Butterworth. Like his predecessor Geoffrey Brand, he had wide musical experience. Although starting his musical journey as a choirboy, it was his love of the brass band sound that influenced his early musical life. In 1939, he was awarded the prestigious Alexander Owen Memorial Fund scholarship which set him on his path towards becoming a professional musician. He became a member of the famous Besses o' th' Barn Band, but it was his love for the orchestral world that saw him progress into playing trumpet with the Scottish National Orchestra and the Hallé, and go on to conduct several leading orchestras. Arthur is also a highly respected composer and had been involved in education at the highest levels.

One of the first tasks undertaken by Arthur at the NYBBGB was to 'slim down' the band as he thought a band in excess of 100 players was unwieldy, as well as the fact that more and more County Youth bands were appearing, causing at times date clashes with courses.

In Arthur's time the band's repertoire underwent significant change. Some of the older, traditional brass band music was replaced by more contemporary styles. Baroque music also featured heavily in programmes as Arthur saw this 'as a way of widening and refining the taste of the younger generation of players'. Musical policy led to slightly different directions and auditions became more rigorous because of the increased technical demands of the new music. ABRSM grades were looked at more keenly and auditions for entry into the band were still taking place at the beginning of the week's residential course. This was not ideal as the prospective candidates had to travel to course venues and it was thought this could be deterring some parents and teachers because of travel. As with previous ventures, the financial fragility of the organization meant that for the time being the audition system would have to remain as it was.



Arthur Butterworth.

Members of staff at this time included Alf Jarvis, Sandy Blair, Brian Lingley and John Maines on the music staff. Peter Room was Senior Housemaster, along with Ray Armor, Tim Room, Diana Butterworth and Jean Room among the house staff. Bill England was the hard working secretary and Mrs. Maud Wright acted as treasurer.

Repertoire was expanded and enriched to encompass Arthur's own arrangements of Elgar's *Introduction and Allegro* and Sibelius' *The Tempest*. Although a very forward thinking musician; Arthur always saw the importance of including the great classic works of the brass band repertoire such as Elgar's *A Severn Suite*, Holst's *A Moorside Suite* and John Ireland's *A Downland Suite* on his programmes. But alongside these works he included more contemporary works such as Paul Patterson's *Cataclysm*.

Arthur Butterworth was also responsible for commissioning major contemporary pieces such as Richard Steinitz's *Tableaux of the Heraldic Animals*. This commission brought about the NYBBGB's first appearance at the prestigious Harrogate Festival.

As in previous years, guest conductors were invited to direct courses, with

John Maines Part 2

the likes of Sir Vivian Dunn, James Langley, Roy Newsome, Kenneth Alwyn and Edward Gregson proving popular choices amongst both players and staff.

It was still, however, a frustrating time as a few innovative ideas had to be put on a back burner due to the continuing financial state of the band, Course fees were deliberately pegged back to enable accessibility to the NYBBGB by as many players as possible, although grants from the Arts Council of Great Britain abated this on a temporary basis.

During Arthur's time as Music Advisor some radical changes took place: he introduced baroque brass music for smaller groups and persuaded Peter Room, who by now was Senior Housemaster, to reform the choir as another aspect of the courses. Anyone not attending the choir practice had to attend Arthur's theory and harmony classes; needless to say the choir had a very full membership!

Arthur Butterworth left the post of Music Advisor in 1984 following the Summer course at Alsager, but his close relationship with the NYBBGB carries on with his duties on the Council and as one of the band's valued Vice-Presidents.

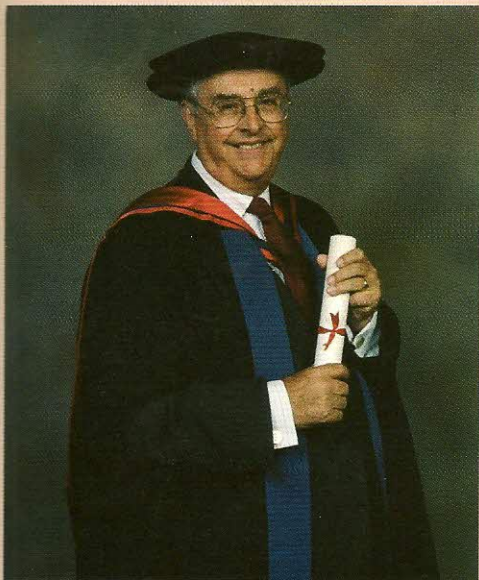
The Newsome Years

Roy Newsome started what was to become the longest tenure as Music Director in 1984. The title Music Director was now preferred to that of Music Advisor. Miss Betty Anderson became Chairperson of the NYBBGB at this time.

Roy was to completely restructure the sectional rehearsal format. Up to 1984 only four tutors were used, with the occasional addition. Again, tight finances necessitated this. Front row cornets and repianos had one tutor, sopranos, back row cornets, horns and flugels another; there was a tutor for trombones and baritones, with another for basses and euphoniums. The Music Director always looked after percussion, meaning that he had very little spare time between rehearsals. With changes in repertoire over the years these combinations proved



The National Youth Brass Band of Great Britain, 1975.



Dr Roy Newsome.

difficult. I know from my own experience that coaching trombones and baritones together always proved difficult with baritone parts being more akin to the euphonium desk, which led to one or another having instruments on laps for periods of time during sectional rehearsals. Roy also decided that the cornets should have two tutors, one for the front row and sopranos and one for the back row and reps. The horns and flugels would carry on as a section whilst the trombones would have their own dedicated tutor. The basses and euphoniums would be separated, with the latter being joined by the baritones. A percussion tutor was also added a little time later.

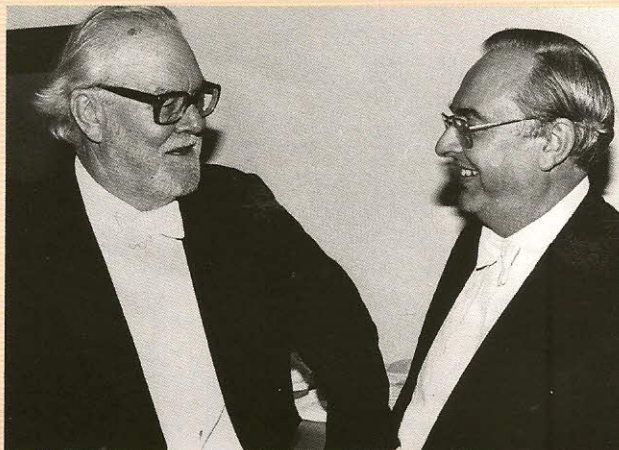
The tutorial staff was expanded even more in later years with the inclusion of 'specialist' instrumental tutors such as soprano, flugel and baritone experts. Some of the tutors during Roy's time included Robert Childs (the first dedicated euphonium tutor) and his younger brother Nicholas, Peter Christian, Ian Porthouse, Lynda Nicholson, Sandy Smith, Melvin Bathgate, Ian Bousefield, Jim Shepherd, David James, John Gillam,

John Maines and Lyndon Baglin. House staff included Ray Armor (who by now is Senior Housemaster), Muriel Newsome, David Edwards, David Birch, Lorraine Childs, Jean Brownbill, Malcolm Brownbill and, of course, the ever present matriarch of the NYBBGB, Maud Wright.

During Roy's tenure guest conductors included Major Peter Parkes, James Watson, Bramwell Tovey, James Gourlay, Arthur Butterworth, Frank Renton, James Scott, Derek Bourgeois, Richard Evans, David King, Sir Charles Groves, Harry Mortimer and Eric Ball.

In October 1985 the NYBBGB gave a concert in Coventry Cathedral along with the Besses o' th' Barn Band conducted by Roy Newsome and former Prime Minister Sir Edward Heath.

This was the first time the band had appeared outside of its normal week's residential course and it would be almost ten years later that these events would become part of the NYBBGB year.



Sir Charles Groves and Roy Newsome.

Another event that was to become a popular addition to the courses was the 'informal concert'. These did happen throughout the 1960's but had declined into the 1970's. Albeit a light hearted affair, it often produces some inventive and entertaining moments with sections keenly competing to be the best - and not necessarily on their chosen instruments!

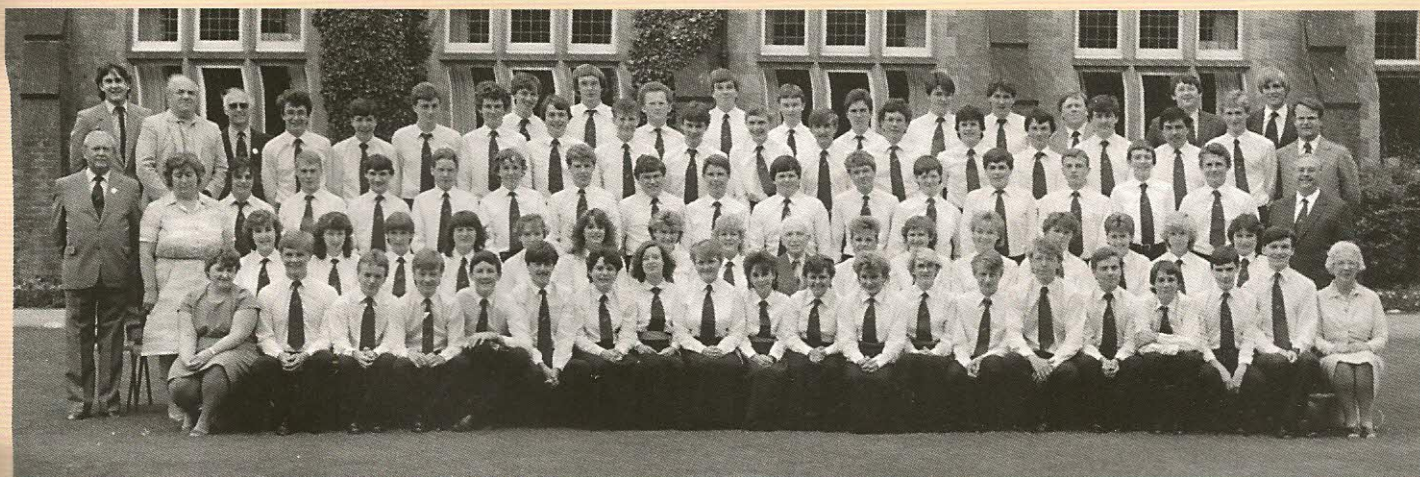
As always, some soon to be famous names went through the ranks of the band at that time including Martin Winter, Ian Porthouse, Brian Winter, Brett Baker, Simon Johnson, David Thornton, David Childs and Philip Harper.

Here's what long serving principal cornet of the Foden's Band, Mark Wilkinson says about his time with the NYBBGB: "I was Principal cornet with the NYBBGB for two courses in Easter 1989 and Summer 1989. My final concert in the Summer of 1989 was the most memorable during my eight courses due to it being part of the BBC proms. I remember the concert well, it was in the Royal Albert Hall and the guest soloist was Alan Morrison, who performed Denis Wright's *Cornet Concerto*. The concert included *Salute to Youth, Blitz* and a new commission by Richard Rodney Bennett *The Flowers of the Forest*. An ambition of mine was to become Principal Cornet of the NYBBGB due to its history as well as the famous names who had previously occupied this

prestigious seat. During my time in the NYBBGB I made some great friends who I am still in contact with on the banding circuit and a number of friends who are now in high profile positions in orchestras, jazz and military. As well as this friendship, I was fortunate to play under the baton of a number of inspirational conductors including James Watson, Roy Newsome, Arthur Butterworth and Elgar Howarth, as well as improving as a player due to the expert tuition we received in sectional rehearsals (Alan Morrison, David James) and the wide variety of pieces worked

on during each course. At this time I was a member of Besses Boys Band.

In 2000 I was asked to become a cornet tutor with the NYBB as well as an auditioner (auditioning players to see if they meet the minimum standard to be placed on the waiting list for the band). It was another ambition of mine to become a tutor on the NYBB, which gives me the



The National Youth Brass Band of Great Britain, 1984.



Former Principal Cornet players of The National Youth Brass Band of Great Britain at the 40th year anniversary celebration concert at the Barbican, London in 1992.

chance to give something back to the organisation that I was very proud to be part of. Being a tutor also gives me the chance to work with great musicians and conductors within the music staff as well as listening to and working with the tremendous amount of talent in the ranks of the NYBB.”

The various solo competitions throughout the years continued, but Roy expanded the event to include preliminary rounds for each instrument with the final being held during the Summer course. A brass band supporter from Oldham, Mr. Stanley Ogden, donated a sum of money to the NYBBGB to perpetuate the memory of his granddaughter Katie, who died at a very young age. The solo competition at the Easter course became the Katie Ogden Award and the Summer final the Harry Mortimer Award. There was also the Denis Wright scholarship which was instituted in the band's 40th year. It was worth £500 and was awarded by the music staff to the member who proposed the most useful way to use the award. This scholarship ran for three years.

1987 was a momentous year for the NYBBGB with its first appearance at the Royal Albert Hall. The band was invited by the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain to celebrate the orchestra's 40th Anniversary.

The band's next appearance at the RAH was in the Summer of 1989 with a Henry Wood Promenade concert conducted by Sir Charles Groves (who also directed the course at Oxford). It was fitting that on that occasion the band's first of a long line of guest soloists was former Leader of the NYBBGB, Alan Morrison.

After Alan's appearance guest soloists became a regular feature and in 1992 former principal euphonium and now Chairman Robert Childs became the second virtuoso to play with the NYBBGB in a concert given at Salisbury City Hall and the Queen Elizabeth Hall on the South Bank which was recorded for BBC Radio 3.

As well as giving opportunities to great players of the future, the NYBBGB has also nurtured other musical talents such as composition. One such member

is composer Philip Harper who recalls: "I was in the NYBBGB between 1989 and 1992, completing seven courses. There were many, many highlights, one of the best musical experiences being a concert in the Queen Elizabeth Hall in London at which we gave the first performance of Philip Wilby's *The New Jerusalem* which had been commissioned (with visionary forethought) by Roy Newsome. I can still remember the hairs on the back of my neck standing up when we got to the final, triumphant section with the xylophone pounding away and some truly 'full-blooded' playing going on - particularly from the bass trombones I seem to recall! I can also vividly remember the first course I did with Bramwell Tovey - what a communicator. He convinced Wilfred Heaton to attend a rehearsal of his *Toccata: Oh the Blessed Lord* which was very humbling. Tchaikovsky's *March Slav*, on the other hand, was terrifying!

Another percussionist, Max Beasley, went on to star as a member of The Style Council and then on to a glittering career in TV and film. Many of us still remember Max's rendition of the full vocal score of *The Pirates of Penzance* delivered from the back seat of the coach from Devizes to London!"



The Founder's wife, Maud Wright with members of the NYBBGB.

The 40th Anniversary of the band was celebrated in 1992 with a fine concert conducted by Roy at the Barbican in London. One of the 'stand out' concerts in the history of the NYBBGB, it featured world renowned percussion star Evelyn Glennie and Phillip McCann. Also appearing en masse were 17 former or current Leaders. An appearance on BBC TV's Blue Peter saw the players and staff each receive a famous Blue Peter Badge!

The anniversary was also marked with the release of the band's first CD, 40 Years Young (the title was the brainchild of Mrs. Maud Wright, who was still a vibrant member of staff). The actual recording was made the previous year and featured former Leader Maurice Murphy and was conducted by both Roy and the President of the NYBBGB, Harry Mortimer CBE. The recording session was to be the last time that HM was to conduct the NYBBGB. The sad news of his passing on the 23rd January 1992 came less than three months before the 40th anniversary course.

The 1993 Summer course held at the Harrogate Ladies College introduced the band to someone who was to become a future Artistic Director of the NYBBGB, Bramwell Tovey. After a week's course where he endeared himself both to students and staff, two superb concerts were given at Huddersfield Town Hall and the Sir Jack Lyons Concert Hall in York University. The Guest Soloist was another former principal euphonium of the NYBBGB, Nicholas Childs.

Another innovation happened in the early 1990's when Roy and his staff introduced the idea of band representatives. These were to be elected by the band itself and would act as a voice for opinions from the players to the staff. Many useful suggestions were acted upon, where possible. One suggestion was to have a

concert or event during the Winter months between the Summer course and the following Easter. The first of these 'extra-curriculum' events was at the Free Trade Hall in Manchester with Black Dyke and Britannia Building Society Bands.

There were ground-breaking commissions under Roy's direction, a full list appears later but two of these stand out as particularly interesting. The first was a unique piece for brass band and live electronic instruments. *Dance Before The Lord* by Philip Wilby received its world première in Gloucester Cathedral in 1994. The second, a year later, was a ballet, *Dancing in the Park* by Peter Graham. This was performed for the first time in the Opera Theatre of the Royal Northern College of Music by the full NYBBGB and dancers from the Northern Ballet School.



The National Youth Brass Band of Great Britain, 2000.

In 1995 the centenary of the birth of the band's founder, Dr. Denis Wright was marked by a concert given in the Royal Academy of Music. A fitting venue as Dr. Denis had served the Academy with distinction as professor. The programme was made up of music by Dr. Denis and was conducted by former Music Directors Arthur Butterworth, Geoffrey Brand and the incumbent at the time, Roy Newsome. A performance of the *Trio Concerto* was given featuring three former principals of Black Dyke and the NYBBGB, Phillip McCann, John Clough and John Maines.

The band made a return trip to the Barbican in 1996 as guests of the London Symphony Orchestra. Members of the orchestra's brass section (which included the NYBBGB's first Leader Maurice Murphy) paid visits to the Easter course to give recitals and master-classes which were greatly enjoyed by all concerned. They performed in the concert as a group and included in the NYBBGB's programme was Elgar Howarth's *Fireworks* conducted by Roy Newsome with narration by Lady Valerie Solti. For the finale LSO Brass and the NYBBGB combined forces to play the full original version of Richard Strauss' *Fest Musik Der Stadt Wien* under the direction of the LSO's then Principal Guest Conductor, Michael Tilson Thomas.

For its Summer course the same year the NYBBGB visited the USA. The course took place at the Western Carolina University in Cullowhee, North Carolina. Although the course was enjoyed by all, the concerts were poorly attended and didn't provide the greatest of musical experiences. Recreational activities on the course included a trip on the Great Smoky Mountain Railroad and a outdoor theatre production in Cherokee called *Unto These Hills* which told the story of the migration of the Cherokee people.

1996 also saw the retirement of Bill England as secretary. Bill had become an institution in the organization and we were all sorry to see him go. As one of his leaving presents the trombone section

recorded a video of his favourite hymn-tune, *Onward Christian Soldiers!*

Taking over from Bill was a man who came with a great reputation as an organizer and entrepreneur, Philip Biggs. His new title was Administrator and Philip proved to be, and still is, a tireless worker on behalf of the band. Philip had served his apprenticeship with the NYBBGB by arranging and promoting NYBBGB concerts at the Royal Academy of Music, London in 1995 and The Barbican, London in 1996. He is a highly respected figure as a contest promoter and controller with his work previously with the British Open and now The All England International Masters Championships as well as his other activities such as the director of The Great Northern Brass Arts Festival and the Regent Hall Festival. He is, of course, the Editor of *The Brass Herald*. His appointment proved to be a catalyst in the history of the NYBBGB.

Under Philip's administration the band's finances took an upward turn with successful applications to various bodies such as The Arts Council and Youth Music.

Auditions for entry into the Band saw a radical change in 1999. As mentioned earlier, in Arthur Butterworth's time tight finances prevented any real change to the audition system but now, with generous support from The Arts Council, Yamaha and Youth Music, regional audition sessions were set up around the country from Sunderland in the North East, Leeds in Yorkshire, Salford in North West England, Leicestershire, London and Cornwall. This move proved to be a massive success, with players coming forward who would otherwise have slipped through the net. The audition sessions also included a master-class/talk by the visiting auditioner, so everyone, successful or otherwise gained something from the experience. There was another radical change. Up to this time entry into the band was very much a 'dead man's shoes' affair so it was decided that the

players with the highest marks from the auditions would be placed at the top of the list ready for the next vacancy. Being accepted into the band wasn't a guarantee that you were 'there for life'. If any player's standard was thought to have slipped then section tutors could nominate the said player for re-audition. The result of this system was a huge improvement in the standard of players in depth and therefore a huge improvement overall.

The Easter 2000 course was tinged with great sadness. On the 22nd April, the final Saturday, it was announced that Dr. Denis Wright's widow, Mrs. Maud Wright had passed away. The NYBBGB had lost one of its dearest friends and another chapter on the band's illustrious history was closed.

A week following the Easter course the band gathered once again to play the second half of the Gala Concert of the European Brass Band Championships held at Birmingham's magnificent Symphony Hall. Following this the band took part in the Proms Millennium Youth Day at the Royal Albert Hall along with nine national youth or children's music organizations, playing as individual groups and as a combined ensemble. An event that brought together the nation's best musical talent all under one roof for the first time.

Roy Newsome's last course as Music Director was at Haileybury School, Hertford in the Summer of 2000 after an unprecedented tenure of 17 years..

Roy continued his great support of the NYBBGB in his capacity as Councillor and as secretary of the resurrected Friends of the NYBBGB.

As with previous and present Music Directors, The National Youth Brass Band of Great Britain owes an enormous debt of gratitude to Dr. Newsome who oversaw some of the most radical changes to take place during its 60 year history.

Sadly Dr. Roy wasn't destined to see the 60th Birthday celebrations as he passed away on the 10th October 2011.

To be continued.....

The National Youth Brass Band of Great Britain celebrates its Diamond Jubilee

John Maines



Part 3

was conducted by former Music Directors Geoffrey Brand, Arthur Butterworth, Roy Newsome and the then Artistic Director, Elgar Howarth. Also conducting were the two Associate Conductors Nicholas Childs and Garry Cutt. The Guest Soloists were Ian

Bousfield on trombone and Martin Winter on cornet. Ian went from the principal trombone chair of the NYBBGB and the Yorkshire Imperial Band to the position of principal trombone of the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, via the Hallé and LSO, whilst Martin, a former Leader who distinguished himself as 'end chair' with a host of top bands, also pursued the orchestral route, becoming principal trumpet of the Bergen Symphony Orchestra. Ian and Martin proved to be a great hit with the band and also gave some fine master-classes during the course of the week.

The Summer course of the 50th year was held at Bromsgrove School with concerts at Cheltenham Town Hall and Worcester Cathedral. The course and concerts were conducted by Elgar Howarth and the band was delighted to welcome French horn virtuoso Frank Lloyd as Guest Soloist.

Up to now the guest soloists had all been brass or percussion players, but Elgar Howarth changed that tradition at the Summer course of 2003. One of his initiatives was to introduce band members to the wider aspect of music, not just brass playing. To this end he invited a vocalist as guest soloist - Irish soprano Mary Hegarty, the highly acclaimed opera star. Howarth's innovation was to prove a huge hit with the band and other performers were to follow including Swiss pianist Aglaia Graf and opera singer D'Arcy Bleiker. The brass connection also continued, of

Elgar Howarth takes the Helm

Who was to take over from Dr. Roy Newsome? Who would have the knowledge and experience to replace one of the fathers of the brass band movement? Well, the Council had decided to go outside the mainstream band scene and, like Arthur Butterworth, appoint a man who was a highly respected orchestral musician. They didn't stray too far however, as the man in question had his roots in the brass bands of the North West of England - Elgar Howarth.

After playing cornet in his father's band, Barton Hall Works Band in Manchester, and after studying at the Manchester College of Music (now the RNCM) Elgar Howarth pursued a great orchestral career, first as a trumpeter playing with all the major symphony orchestras and with the Philip Jones Brass Ensemble.

In the 1970's Howarth became involved with the Grimethorpe Colliery Band, both as conductor and as composer/arranger, lifting the band's repertoire to new heights. A string of high profile concerts and overseas tours gave him true legend status at the South Yorkshire band and propelled the band to fame well beyond the world of brass bands. It was with this experience and respect that Elgar Howarth came to the NYBBGB at the Easter course in 2001. It was held at Harrogate Ladies' College, with concerts at Durham Cathedral and Sheffield City Hall. The guest soloist on Elgar Howarth's first course was Robert Childs, making his second appearance as soloist. Robert was no stranger to Howarth, having played under him at Grimethorpe and the two have always had a special musical relationship.

The title Music Director had been replaced with the preferred Artistic Director. Elgar Howarth also initiated the post of Associate Conductor and for

this he chose two highly experienced musicians in the form of Nicholas Childs and Garry Cutt. Both men had worked extensively with Mr. Howarth previously so he knew what they could bring to the band. This initiative was to prove extremely popular with the band members.



Elgar Howarth.

The half century of the band was reached at Easter in 2002 when the band went back to its roots in Bradford, this time at the Woodhouse Grove School. This was a momentous time and a great course followed. Even the criminal antics of a couple of local thieves didn't dampen the atmosphere of the week-long celebration. A reunion band was formed with over 80 former players conducted by Roy Newsome, Arthur Butterworth, Geoffrey Brand, Elgar Howarth and two of the tutors on the course, Lynda Nicholson and John Maines.

The end of course concert in St. George's Hall, Bradford was a stunning affair. It



The National Youth Brass Band of Great Britain 2002. Guest Conductor, Sian Edwards.

course, with the likes of two former principals of the NYBBGB, trombonist Simon Johnson, who by now was principal trombone of the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, and trumpeter Martin Winter making his second appearance as soloist. Also making an appearance as guest soloist, at Easter 2005, was tenor horn virtuosi Leslie Howie. During Howarth's tenure visiting guest conductors included Paul McGrath, Howard Snell, Sian Edwards and Paul Daniel.

2005 was Elgar Howarth's final year as Artistic Director and saw the Easter course held at Harrogate, with concerts at Harrogate International Centre, University of York and Manchester Cathedral. The course and concerts were directed by Howarth's Associate Conductors Nicholas Childs and Garry Cutt. The Summer course of 2005 was held at Framlingham School in the beautiful Suffolk countryside, with guest soloist being the aforementioned D'Arcy Bleiker. The course was a fitting farewell to the band's Artistic Director with two fine concerts, first at the historic St. Edmundsbury Cathedral and the finale at the home of the Aldeburgh Festival, Snape Maltings.

After his time as Artistic Director Elgar Howarth continued as a council member before being elevated to the position of President of the NYBBGB.

Bramwell Tovey

Carrying on from Elgar Howarth was one of the world's finest orchestral conductors, Bramwell Tovey. Bramwell wasn't a complete stranger to the band having been Guest Conductor on the Summer course of 1991 at Harrogate Ladies' College. Once again a man had been chosen with an impeccable reputation and one also with a brass



Bramwell Tovey.

background, initially as a Salvation Army musician and later as an orchestral tuba player. His experience with top brass bands saw him winning the British Open Championship with the Rigid Containers Band (formerly GUS Footwear Band). As an orchestral conductor Bramwell is in great demand worldwide and conducts some of the greatest symphony orchestras such as Vancouver, Los Angeles, Seattle, Winnipeg, London and features regularly as guest conductor with the New York and Los Angeles Philharmonics.

Bramwell Tovey's first course as Artistic Director was at Easter 2006. It was held at Taunton School in Somerset. Elgar Howarth's shoes were going to be difficult to fill, but Bramwell Tovey was an instant hit with the NYBBGB and staff alike. Joining the band for the course was Joe Alessi, principal trombone with The New York Philharmonic Orchestra. The students were bowled over by him, both as a player and as a gentleman. The end of course concerts at The Octagon, Yeovil and Winter Gardens, Weston super Mare were a great success. These concerts were the first to be sponsored by the trustees of the defunct Sun Life (Stanshawe) Band.

The Summer Course of 2006 was held in the familiar surroundings of Bromsgrove School and the NYBBGB was delighted to welcome a former principal euphonium with the band, Robert Childs, to be guest conductor. What made this course even more special was that the guest soloist was another former principal euphonium of the band, none other than Robert's son David. (David was to be guest soloist again in 2010, this time conducted by his uncle Nicholas!) Concerts were held at

the The Artrix in Bromsgrove and at Victoria Hall, Stoke on Trent

Always an exciting time at the NYBBGB is the recording of a CD and such an event took place over the two courses of 2007. At Easter the band recorded solo items by the guest soloist, the legendary trumpet virtuoso Jens Lindemann and then in the Summer with the principal trombone of the Vienna Philharmonic, Ian Bousfield. The critically acclaimed CD, *Masters of Space and Time*, was released in 2008.

The music staff around this time included Martin Armstrong, Philip Goodwin, Phillip McCann, John Maines, Christopher Stearn, Glyn Williams and Mark Wilkinson. There was also a group of visiting brass specialists such as Alan Wycherley, Michelle Ibbotson and Helen Williams. Amongst the house staff headed by Ray Armor and Lorraine Childs were Lisa Fitzgerald-Lombard, David Edwards, Danny Stenhouse and Bill and Jill Scott.

Guest conductors invited by Bramwell Tovey include Christopher Adey, Robert and Nicholas Childs and Allan Withington. The list of guest soloists once again reads like a who's who of world renowned brass players - Joe Alessi, Ian Bousfield, David Childs, Jens Lindemann, Leslie Neish, Richard Marshall, Katrina Marzella, Glyn Williams and Philip Cobb who, as a former leader, had followed in the footsteps of the band's very first leader Maurice Murphy to become principal trumpet of the London Symphony Orchestra.

Bramwell Tovey was also to take on the role of guest soloist in 2009, performing as concert pianist in his own composition *Pictures in the Smoke*, with concerts at The Royal Northern College of Music, Manchester and The Royal Hall, Harrogate.

The final concert of the Summer 2009 course was at St. Andrew's Hall in Norwich and a remarkable thing happened just prior to the afternoon rehearsal. The adjacent venue, Blackfriars Hall is used for wedding services and the pianist engaged to play at a wedding that afternoon became stuck in traffic and was not going to arrive in time for the ceremony. A very distressed bride and groom were the most relieved couple in Britain when Bram Tovey offered to play for the service. Dressed in shorts and tee shirt, Bramwell played all the music requested from memory and this almost unbelievable story made it to local, national and international newspapers and radio!

Philip Cobb, the newly appointed principal trumpet of the LSO, made a



Philip Cobb.



The National Youth Brass Band of Great Britain 2012. Artistic Director, Bramwell Tovey.

welcome return to the NYBBGB as guest soloist at Easter 2011 and was a great inspiration to the members, proving just what can be achieved with the right amount of dedication and hard work. Philip's solos, Percy Code's *Zelda* and Edward Gregson's *Prelude and Capriccio* were dedicated to the memory of Maurice Murphy and James Watson, who sadly passed away in the months leading up to the course. Both were former members of the band and both had appeared as guest soloist and guest conductor respectively.

January 2011 saw a change of Chairman of the NYBBGB: the dedicated service of John Gillam ended when he decided to stand down. The Council unanimously elected Dr. Robert Childs as the new Chairman of the NYBBGB. This completed a 'full house' for Robert, being a NYBBGB player, tutor, guest soloist, guest conductor, councillor and now Chairman! 2011 also saw a change in the administration when long serving treasurer Stephen Plant handed over the financial reins to former band member Alison Tinsley.

Allan Withington, trumpet player with the Bergen Symphony Orchestra and conductor of many of our finest bands, made his first appearance as guest conductor at the Summer course of 2011. The guest soloist was the baritone virtuoso, Katrina Marzella. Allen picked a very interesting and innovative programme which was to challenge the young players both musically and 'theatrically'! The full opus of Elgar's *Savern Suite* in the fine Eric Ball transcription, along with Martin Ellerby's *Concerto for Baritone*, followed by the encore *My Mountain Top*, complete with the reading of a poem and a difficult piece by Maurice Hamers, *Power of the Soul*, made up the first half of the programme, whilst after the interval an

intriguing piece by Jostein Stalheim, *Edvard Meets Edward at an Exhibition* provided the entire second half. This piece portrayed what might have happened if Elgar had met Grieg at an art gallery.

As well as respecting the great music from the past repertoire Bramwell Tovey continues to champion new works for the NYBBGB. Since the early 1970's the band has been at the forefront of commissioning major new music for brass band. A list of some of these appears below.

Celebrations for the Diamond Jubilee of the NYBBGB started as soon as the band and staff assembled at Taunton School in Somerset for the 2012 Easter course. Bramwell Tovey had once again

brought together a formidable team. John Berryman, David Childs, David Daws, Nick Etheridge, Owen Farr, Mark Landon, John Maines, Richard Marshall and Chris Thomas comprised the music staff and Ray Armor, Mark Boyd, Sean Chandler, Lorraine Childs, Lisa Fitzgerald-Lombard and Bill and Jill Scott the housestaff,

At the end of a most memorable week, once again organized by the tireless Philip Biggs, everyone connected with the Diamond Jubilee course was presented with a certificate, a lapel badge and a medal - items which will provide treasured memories for all concerned. Two fantastic end of course concerts were given at the Winter Gardens in Weston-Super-Mare and Cadogan Hall in London conducted by Bramwell Tovey and Geoffrey Brand, and featuring an array of past principal cornet players, such as Richard Evans, Philip Cobb, Nick Thompson, Alan Morrison, Marilyn Woolf and Nick Walkley, as well as a team of former euphonium players which included David Childs and Matthew White.

A great touch was added to the Weston event in the form of a reunion band consisting of former members of the NYBBGB and included a founder member John Clough, along with a good selection of alumni such as Brett Baker, John Berryman, David Childs, Lorraine Childs, John Clay, Hannah Drage, John Gillam, Ben Godfrey, Philip Goodwin, Philip Harper, Paul Jenkins, Robert Jose, Neil Jowett, Lisa Fitzgerald-Lombard, John Maines, Philip Randall, Richard Robinson, Mike Smith, Brian Winter and Matthew White.

The short concert was introduced and conducted by the NYBBGB Chairman and



Bramwell Tovey conducting the NYBBGB Alumni Band at Weston-super-Mare.

a former principal euphonium with the band, Dr. Robert Childs. The programme included some old favourites from the band's past repertoire such as *The Padstow Lifeboat* which was conducted by the NYBBGB Artistic Director Bramwell Tovey, *The Impresario, All in the April Evening, Shepherds Hey, Crimond and Fantasy on British Sea Songs*.

Dr. Childs also conducted one or two on stage interviews with a number of players about their experiences during their time with the NYBBGB. Wonderful stuff!

Dr. Denis Wright would have indeed been proud knowing that with his vision and forethought the NYBBGB had arrived with distinction at this momentous anniversary. The thousands of players who have gone through the ranks of this great institution have seen many changes over the years, some for better and some for worse, but the underlying tie that binds these people is the friendships and camaraderie of the 'family' known as The National Youth Brass Band of Great Britain.

Composers who have written for the NYBBGB

Wilfred Josephs
Paul Patterson
Richard Steinitz
Michael Ball
Richard Rodney Bennett
Philip Wilby
John Golland
Philip Sparke
Goff Richards
Arthur Butterworth
Gary Carpenter
Howard Snell
Peter Graham
Philip Harper
Martin Ellerby
Errollyn Wallen
David Bedford
Elgar Howarth
Martin Butler
Dominic Muldowney
Bramwell Tovey
Edward Gregson

Guest Soloists throughout the years

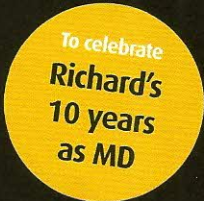
1989 Alan Morrison
1990 Robert Childs
1990 Sandy Blair
1991 Maurice Murphy
1991 Don Lusher
1992 Evelyn Glennie
1992 Maurice Murphy
1992 Phillip McCann
1993 Nicholas Childs
1995 Phillip McCann, John Maines and John Clough
1995 Robert and Nicholas Childs
1997 Simone Rebello
1997 Martin Winter
1998 David Thornton
1998 Nicholas Hudson
1999 James Gourlay
2000 Steven Mead

2000 Phillip McCann
2001 Roger Webster
2001 Robert Childs
2002 Ian Bousfield and Martin Winter
2002 Frank Lloyd
2003 Simon Johnson
2003 Mary Hegarty
2004 Martin Winter
2004 Aglaia Graf
2005 Lesley Howie
2005 D'Arcy Bleiker
2006 Joseph Alessi
2006 David Childs
2007 Jens Lindemann
2007 Ian Bousfield
2008 Richard Marshall
2008 Leslie Neish
2009 Bramwell Tovey
2009 Glyn Willaims
2010 David Childs
2010 No Guest Soloist
2011 Philip Cobb
2011 Katrina Marzella

Leaders

Maurice Murphy 4 1952-54
Richard Evans 1 1952
John Berryman 9 1954-58
David James 4 1959-60
John Clay 4 1961-62
Jennifer Gillingham 1 1963
Phillip McCann 8 1963-67
Elizabeth Heyes 1 1967
Nigel Boddice 6 1967-68 & 1970-71
Neil Jowett 2 1969
David Lord 1 1971

Nicholas Thompson 3 1972 & 1974
Lynda Nicholson 6 1973-76
Stephen Howard 1 1976
Mark Mosley 1 1976
Alan Morrison 2 1977
David Pearce 2 1978
Elaine Wolffe 4 1979-80
Christopher Wood 1 1980
Beverley Gray 1 1981
Richard Grantham 3 1981-82
Martin Winter 2 1983
Helen Quayle 1 1984
Ian Porthouse 5 1984-87
Brian Winter 1 1985
Peter Hadfield 3 1987-88
Nicola Schofield 1 1989
Mark Wilkinson 2 1989-90
Richard Wood 1 1990
Jason Moore 1 1991
Neil Fulton 3 1991-92
James Knight 5 1993-94-96
Gavin Bowyer 3 1994-95
Samantha Harrison 1 1995
David Geoghegan 8 1997-2001
Paula Russell 4 1997-98
Thomas Osborne 4 1999-2001
David Geoghegan 2 2001-2002
Laura Hirst 1 2002
Philip Cobb 6 2002-2006
Tom Hutchinson 2 2005 & 2006
Tom Poulson 1 2006
Paul Duffy 2 2007
Joe Murray 1 2008
Ben Hiron 1 2008
James Fountain 6 2008-2012
Michael (Jamie) Smith 1 2011



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