

B Band - Annual Report - April 2009

This has been a successful year for the B band

Membership has grown to the point where we have an active playing membership of 23 players and have mounted our first concert without outside support. Apart from new younger players we have also attracted a number of more experienced players who all contribute to a well balanced band – albeit still short of solo cornets and a drummer.

We are becoming known locally, having developed a good relationship with Bromley Council parks department and community groups in Penge to the point where we have a full concert programme in 2009 of 8 events and have already earned £ 250 in fees paid on a largely voluntary basis during 2008. The events at Alexandra Park and Sanderstead have been particularly successful in attendance and performance. They are now spreading to the Penge Festival and the Beckenham Croydon Rd Bandstand.

Whilst the band is rapidly developing musically under the musical direction of Ian Whittaker, our competition rankings in the Nationals 4th section and at Folkestone have not reflected this improvement. Regrettably last in the fourth section.

This does not discourage the band from meeting and enjoying the challenges of the future. With a keen committee spreading the work, our top priority is finding a replacement for Ian as Music Director. The enthusiasm and abilities of Ian are going to be hard to replace and we are most grateful for all the work he has put into the B Band. His return to Cornwall in summer 2009 presents us with a major challenge and we are working on creating a list of potential candidates from which the band can appoint a successor with assistance and support of the main Band Committee.

The aspirations of the B band are now outstripping the available practice time and we are examining how we can increase this by either change of day and/or venue. One problem of changing venue is that it would weaken still further the links between the B band and the Main Band. The B Band wishes to be part of, and contribute to, the success of the main band by the development of players who in time can move upwards.

At present the main link is in the provision of the instruments cascaded down to the B Band from the Lottery assisted purchase of new instruments in 199? and the very welcome help at concerts/events from players. Particular encouragement would however come from an ability to play at least occasionally with the main band at a practice, plus participation in the annual gala concert. This is particularly important for our younger players with no tradition of brass band playing.

All in all a good year with considerable enjoyment for the B Band.

David Charlesworth

Conductors Report

I am very pleased with the progress the band has made in the last year. It is now a much more complete unit, and is playing to a much improved standard.

Unfortunately this has not been reflected in contest results. However, I was very pleased that some of the adverse comments from Folkestone were caused by the band following my instructions!

We still have one or two significant gaps in the line up, particularly solo cornets and drums, and we do not have any extra players to cover for absentees at jobs. This can make life difficult at times. Thanks to our name getting known locally, we have a

much greater number of jobs fixed up for this year than we normally have. Consequently can I ask all B band members to let me know as soon as they can if they are not going to be available for any particular job. Additionally we may need help from Main Band players - please.

Thanks are due to Adam for his help opening up the Museum each week and deputising for me from time to time. Thanks also to those main band players who have sat in at rehearsal on occasion and who have assisted at our jobs in the past year.

As you know I am returning home later this year. Therefore this is my last annual report. I would like to thank the B Band members for their hard work and commitment both this year and over all the years since they started to put up with my conducting. I am sure that the band will continue to progress and I wish it all the best for the future.

Ian Whittaker
