

### **Musical Director's Report.**

Firstly, I would like to express my thanks for your support in re-confirming my appointment (in absentia) last April; I will always do my best for you. There is very little I have to add to my thanks and congratulations to you all during the busy and eventful twelve months (plus thirteen days!) since the last meeting. However, just an outline of the year as I see it.

We made some new friends who have since departed (not for bad reasons, it should be said!); Nigel and Markus who have returned to their respective countries and Adrienne whose personal circumstances have necessitated a return to Fulham. They helped us enormously, including some sterling work in contests. Incidentally, I will never forget the sight of the soprano pad filling with water as Nigel battled with the elements, playing Demelza at Broadstairs!

Even more people have joined than left! Congratulations firstly to Steve Cowlin for his splendid transition to Soprano cornet; a very creditable step into Nigel's shoes - now dry! We have welcomed, in "score-order" (and forgive me if I have forgotten anyone) Elspeth, Veronica, Maggie, Joan, Catherine, Steve H., Charlie, Lucy, Mike W and Judith. My personal thanks go to all these for bringing their talents and commitment to the band.

All the engagements (for the most part in glorious weather!) were well attended and there was fine playing in all departments. However, I should single out two highlights of the year which exemplify the team spirit and hard work you have all put in to the life of the band.

Last Christmas, the Gala Concert at St Bart's was a great success in every department and I cannot praise you all enough. The guests and other soloists were superb and it was particularly lovely to have "Lucy's Children" taking part in such lusty voice! All of you did an astounding job but I would like to mention just a few: Rachel in the general administration, Clare and helpers in the publicity department, Lucy in training the children (she led me to believe that I would have to resort to a chair and whip on the night - what an anticlimax!) And last but certainly not least, Janet Clements and Jean Morton for improvising so brilliantly in the (lack of) kitchen department!

This March, in Stevenage, you all exceeded my hopes by coming a well-deserved 4th (our placing, for about 7 bands into the session was 1st!) and we beat BAe, who came nowhere! Well done for the hard work and concentration. The band really has come of age; the slips and slight hiccups no longer faze you - you just get on with it. Great stuff!

The "B" Band. Ian will have supplied his own report but I thank him here for his dedication. I will try and work more closely with him in the coming year and apologise to him and the B Band if I have not been as accessible as I might have been in the past. The band is improving all the time; please do "sit in" on the occasions when you are early! It helps them enormously and it has the bonus of being a good way to warm up!

As their "non-elected" guest, I give my thanks to the committee who apply themselves diligently on your behalf. Finally, my thanks go to my good friend Roger C, both for his work as your Chairman and your representative at SCABA and National level. I am sure you will all want me to extend to him our good wishes as he enters the final stages of his treatments and hopes for his full recovery.

Thank you all.

Mike Gray  
17.iv.2004.