

Crystal Place Band Annual General Meeting, 4th April 2007

Reports and minutes of the last meeting would be made available on the band website. Comments recorded below were made in addition to the written reports.

Apologies for absence had been received from:

James Gordon
Jeff Keir
David Maher
Nicci Maher
Basil Preuveneers
Maggie Stallybrass
Pat Youd

Minutes of last meeting:

The minutes of the previous AGM were noted and approved, with thanks to Sue Williams.

Property Master's Report:

The recording equipment utilised at recent rehearsals was purchased this year. No instruments were purchased or repaired. The band owns 34 jackets although 2 were currently 'missing'. More jackets will be acquired during the course of the year (measurements had been taken). At a cost of £218 per jacket band members were reminded of the importance of taking care and responsibility for their jackets and making them available for use by others when required.

Librarian's Report:

Roger Bleach read the Librarian's report provided by Maggie Stallybrass. It was suggested that an inventory of available music would be useful, although the band noted that the new library contained over 1500 pieces, with some 800 in the old. A database of the new library was believed to be available. Filing cabinets were required for better storage (and access) to the music; Mike Weiler had kindly agreed to donate two.

Suggestions for new additions to the library would be welcomed and should be made to Maggie. In particular it was agreed that music written specifically for brass bands would be a useful addition, rather than arrangements.

Treasurer's Report:

The Treasurer thanked the band for attendance at summer jobs which had resulted in a good year. He reported that all subs had been paid for the year. It was proposed that subs remain at the standard rate of £80; the proposal was seconded. Major outgoings for the year included registration of the main band and B band for contesting and rental of the rehearsal room (around £312 per quarter). New jackets would need to be paid for in the coming year.

In summary the financial position of the band was considered comfortable but there was no room for complacency; instruments are 10 years old and would need replacing at some point and another lottery grant could not be relied upon.

Secretary's Report:

The Secretary reported 14 paid jobs in the year, 4 charity concerts and 2 contests.

Publicity Officer's Report:

Clare Lipscombe drew the band's attention to publicity highlights which included performing on GMTV and local newspaper coverage linked to the gala concert. She thanked Carol Maher for her help with Palatians and sandwich board advertising. Ideas on potential future publicity would be welcomed. Suggestions for features in the 'Palace' local magazine and 'Virtual Norwood' website were made; contact with both organisations had already been made.

B Band Report:

Margaret reported that the B band was going from strength to strength.

B Band MD:

The band expressed its thanks to Ian Whittaker for all that he has done for the B Band and noted the achievement of the B Band in contesting recently at Stevenage. There was a lengthy debate regarding the role of the B Band and what, if anything, members of the main band could do to help. The following issues needed to be taken into account when considering any development of the B Band:

- There was a perception from some that the B Band would benefit from support and assistance with music 'practice', blowing exercises etc. in addition to the rehearsals of parts led by Ian.
- Many members of the main band would be happy to assist with this either through regular one-to-one teaching, longer workshop sessions on an ad hoc basis or by sitting in on rehearsals as some members do now.
- There is a wide range of backgrounds and abilities in the B Band and whilst some would benefit from the above approach others would be put off.
- There may be some benefit in treating the children in the band differently from the older players. It was noted however that many of the children already benefit from music lessons through school etc.
- Any change in approach is likely to require more time commitment - and room availability - than at present.
- A 'big name' leader for an annual workshop involving both bands may be beneficial and members have experienced success through this approach in other bands.
- The issue of whether the B Band is supposed to be a feeder for the main band needs to be addressed. If this is the case then there may be merit in rehearsing together regularly and using B Band members as depts when required rather than 'outsiders'.

- A trial period of rehearsing for longer on a Wednesday evening at Penge (with the main band remaining at the museum) was suggested to see whether this was helpful. The downside of losing main band players from B Band rehearsals, weakening the connection between the bands and Ian and Joan not making the first half of main rehearsal were all noted.

It was agreed that the issues raised above and associated practicalities would be taken to the Committee.

Ex-Officios' Reports:

It was pointed out that one or two jobs had been a struggle due to lack of players last summer. The band discussed achieving a balance between players meeting other commitments and ensuring band jobs were supported by a decent, balanced band. It was suggested that:

- Players let Andrew Lipscombe know as much in advance as possible when they are not going to be able to make a job.
- Sections should take responsibility for ensuring coverage of the parts within the section wherever possible.
- When difficulties are encountered, players unable to attend should assist with finding deps.
- Deps would be paid when required - but the presumption should be that we can field a satisfactory band ourselves in the vast majority of cases.
- Mike Gray would give advance warning of jobs which could be managed with less than a full band.

MD's Report:

The MD congratulated both bands for their performances and progress over the last year. The recent contest had brought some issues into focus and Mike suggested that the band may wish to engage another conductor as well as deciding what they wanted the focus of the band to be. He was happy to stay on until Christmas and give the band the chance to engage a new conductor, and to participate in conversations about this and other key issues to the future of the band. Mike reiterated the need for the band to operate - when playing and when taking decisions - as a team. This had always been the strength of the band and should continue to be valued if we are to carry on improving. 3 main options were seen to be on the table:

1. Engage a brass trainer, specifically for contests (possibly in a paid position)
2. If appropriate take that person on as full conductor
3. Retain Mike as conductor - which was not currently his preferred option.

Roger Bleach thanked Mike on behalf of the band and noted with reluctance the position he had outlined. In discussion the following opinions were expressed:

- The band had always been a contesting band and needed encouragement in this area; the MD's feelings regarding contesting (and lack of nerves) were not always an asset in this area.

- If the band is committed to contesting seriously then extra rehearsals and dedication from every individual player would be required.
- Many members were prepared to rehearse more often for contests but would need a good period of notice.
- Sectionals were felt to be beneficial.
- Many members were happy with the current approach to contesting and rehearsing; the concept of the silent majority was alluded to.
- The quality of contest rehearsals is important and some members felt the band is capable of doing better than it recently has.
- Not everyone was convinced of the need for a trainer and some were concerned that this may alienate/put off some players.
- Matthew Hackett was suggested as a potential 'trainer'. Some thought that his approach would be beneficial although it was noted that he is not a brass specialist either.
- Many members did not want to lose Mike and saw Matthew as an enhancement not a replacement.
- An e-mail from James Gordon was read out supporting the current balance and emphasis of the band - many members expressed their support for this.

It was agreed that the Committee would provide a paper for discussion at the EGM.

Chairman's Report:

The Chairman thanked the Committee for all of their hard work 'behind the scenes', and particularly noted the work of :

- Chris - organising uniforms
- Maggie (with support from Richard) - organising music
- Roger Morton - finance and much work on the website
- Adam - setting up kit and providing refreshments
- Andrew- organising the gig list
- Claire - general organisational skills and PR
- Rachel - the vast amount of organisation that she does.

Roger noted that the band had made good progress in the last year and reminded the band of some of the practical issues addressed - such as change of rehearsal venue. He also thanked Sarah Smith for all of her hard work during her time with the band.

Committee:

There were no resignations or nominations so the Committee remained as last year. The reappointment of Roger Bleach as Chairman was also nominated and seconded. Sue Williams volunteered and was elected to assist Rachel with the increasing burden of responsibilities as Band Secretary.

AOB:

- There was a suggestion that the B Band should elect its own committee - this was being handled outside of the AGM process.

- The Summer Band Trip was being organised and deposits were required.
- The band confirmed that they would attend the Whit Friday Marches this year.
- The issue of instrument maintenance was raised and it was agreed that instruments should not be allowed to reach a state of disrepair. Helen Stallybrass was happy to help with and a professional repairer in Beckenham was recommended. The band would provide supplies.
- It was agreed that the band should adopt a child protection policy.