**Pilling Band News Summary 2015**

**December 2015**

During December the band has been busy attending the usual Christmas engagements. As well as lighting up the Christmas trees in Knott End and Pilling, we played in Garstang for their Victorian shopping nights. Our concert in Goosnargh church was on the Saturday night of the dreadful floods and there was some doubt as to whether it would go ahead. In the event, it did and some of the players experienced difficulty getting there, indeed, one unfortunate member damaged his diesel car whilst negotiating a flood near Garstang. One or two from further afield didn't make it at all.

It was wet again for our carols at Trinity Hospice (Pilling Band attracts rain, if you hadn't noticed) but this event is always well appreciated and worthwhile. Finally we went almost straight from there to the carol service at Stalmine church where an almost full band played to the congregation.

Our own annual Christmas concert was held in Pilling St John's church this year when the proceeds were shared with the church, we played to a full house (church?) and were supported by the Hambleton Choral Group. At this event it is customary to present two annual awards, this year the Player's Award went to Jen Ormerod for her help in organising deputies, while the Conductor's Award went to Gary McGowan for being judged the most improved player of the year.

After carolling in Knott End and visiting the local Rest Homes on Saturday morning 19th, we ended a frantic series of engagements by playing at two carol services in Out Rawcliffe and Hambleton on the Sunday.

The band would like to wish a Merry Christmas and a happy New Year to all as we look forwards to a fresh year of banding.

**November 2015**

On Sunday 25th October the band travelled to Rochdale to take part in the annual contest there. We were entered in the third section competing against 10 other bands. Our choice of music was Tryptch by Philip Sparke and we were drawn to play next to last. Rochdale Town Hall is a magnificent building with a wonderfully resonant acoustic and, having won here last year, we were hoping for a good result. Alas it was not to be, despite much hard work by MD Len Charnock and the players in rehearsal, nerves must have taken charge on stage and our performance on the day left something to be desired. I think that most of us were pleasantly surprised to find that we had been placed sixth out of the 11 bands. Congratulations go to Blackpool Brass for their third place.

On Saturday 7th November we were at Pilling Chapel where we played a concert to an audience which had turned out on a rather bad night. Andy Hall played an arrangement of the Last Post set to the hymn tune Eventide whilst other solos were given by Jen Ormrod and Emily Hallett.

The following day was, of course, Remembrance Sunday and I'm sure that no-one needs reminding about the weather on that day. We led the parade at Garstang in the morning and, whilst it was raining at the outset, it was fine for the second march from the church to the Cenotaph. Nevertheless, we did get wet. Which brings us to Preesall in the afternoon when the weather was truly atrocious. The parade Marshall decided that, because of the inclement weather, the fact that our music was getting wet and that there were children in the parade, the procession would not stop at the Cenotaph but would proceed straight to church, only the wreath layers pausing to lay their wreaths. In the event, the message must not have got through, because when we arrived at church only the Standard Bearer had followed us, the rest of the procession having stopped at the Cenotaph. To those watching, it must have looked like a scene from Dad's Army!

December will be a very busy month, as well as helping light the Christmas tree lights in Knott End and Pilling, we have a concert in Goosnargh church at 7pm on 5th Dec, the Garstang Victorian shopping nights on 7th and 8th Dec, a carol service at St James' church Stalmine on 13th Dec, and carol services at Out Rawcliffe and Hambleton churches on Sunday 20th December. These engagements are in addition to several private ones in the same period.

Our own Christmas Concert will be held at St John's church Pilling on Friday 18th Dec starting at 7:30pm. Tickets priced £6:00 inc refreshments are available from TIC Redmans and Knott End Post Office. This promises to be a great occasion with festive music in a wonderful building.

**August 2015**

Things are beginning to quieten down a bit now that the main Gala season has come to an end, with only one to report on this month. Pilling Coffee Feast, whose origins go back into antiquity, was held near the end of July and this time the weather did us proud. The day was sunny and breezy, ideal for marching without us becoming overheated. Those older members amongst us commented on the fact that the route is much shorter today than was the case many years ago. I'm sure that some of you readers will remember when the route embraced Fisher's Row and even Garstang Road, as well as Stake Pool. However, the day went well and I'm sure that a good time was had by all the children.

The following day saw us at Shireshead for what should have been their open-air Songs of Praise. Guess what.....it rained all afternoon, necessitating moving the service to the Parish Church, although by the start time it had actually become fine.

Another Songs of Praise followed on 9th August, this time at Stella Maris on Garstang Road Pilling, where a charity event was hosted by Mrs Ethyl Davies in aid of the Trinity Hospice, who were presented with a cheque for £1000. We fielded a good turnout for this worthy job and were pleased to be joined by Ted Sykes, a previous long time member and Secretary of Pilling Band.

For a while now, there has been ingress of rainwater affecting part of the bandroom roof, so thanks go to members Jamie French and Ben Croston, who came equipped with ladder and sealant one day, to effect a repair (rain seems to be a recurring theme of these newsletters).

The reinstatement of our access road is making good progress, the drains are in and a base course of material has been laid so that, by the end of the month, the tarmac should be down and the job finished.

The band is now rehearsing some new music to be included in a concert to be held in Barton Parish Church on Saturday evening 18th September, following which we shall be preparing for the Rochdale Contest which is held in October.

One final word, if any of you computer/ tablet/smartphone users were to search YouTube for "Pilling Band", you will find there a number of videos of the band performing locally, have a look and listen, some are quite good!

**July 2015**

The band's recent activities started with the Fleetwood Carnival on 20th June when, perhaps as an omen as to what follows, we got wet. Not heavy rain, but the kind of drizzle which wets you sneakily. Needless to say, as soon as we finished it cleared up.

The following day marked the Kirkby Lonsdale annual entertainment contest which is held each year in the village square. We were taken there once again in style by Mike of Avalon Coaches and reached Kirkby Lonsdale early on a rather dull threatening morning. There were seven competing bands and we were drawn to play number six in order of play, so it was well into the afternoon before we commenced our march along the main street (where the man in the blue cap marks bands for deportment) and took our place in the tent. The performance went well enough and the crowd certainly seemed to approve, so perhaps we were a little disappointed to learn that we had been placed third. However, we were really surprised to find that we had won the first prize for deportment! Pilling have only ever won that once before and we always thought that was a fluke. It did just about manage to keep fine, so overall not a bad day out.

Stalmine and Eagland Hill galas followed, after which we were due to make our annual appearance at Happy Mount Park in Morecambe. Last year we were unable to play at all because of high winds which had blown a tree down, however, this year the day started out really well, warm, sunny, lots of people......but don't be fooled, 40 minutes into our concert the clouds had gathered, there was one clap of thunder and the heavens opened, emptying the park in three minutes, whilst we had to rescue our music (some of which needed ironing later), put our music stands away and carry 26 chairs to the storage hut. All this took 10 minutes, by which time everyone was well and truly soaked. The Happy Mount had lived up to it's name again.

The following weekend saw us at Preesall Gala which is something of a marathon, one or two players who had not done it before were suitably impressed by the length of the march. Many of the band were refreshed later at a barbecue kindly put on by Solo Horn player Jen Ormrod where, guess what, it rained. Never mind, a good time was had by all as we got wet inside as well as out.

One week after that and we were in Heysham where we were joined by a choir from Kidderminster in a concert at the Wesleyan Church there. The band accompanied the choir in two items which was quite pleasing.

Finally, to bring you up to date, the band attended an open air "Songs of Praise" service at Whitechapel where the most gorgeous cakes were served afterwards.

This brief account shows how busy the band is at this time of year and, when some players are unavailable for various reasons, how difficult it can be to find deputies, so I would like to take this opportunity to thank those who have helped us out at our recent engagements.

On another subject, the work of making good the road leading to the bandroom is about to start, it marks another achievement made possible by the huge fund raising efforts of Jim Redman and the generosity of you, our public supporters. We all appreciate this and hope to play our part in the local community for many years to come.

**June 2015**

Those who have been following the fortunes of the band will be aware of the massive fund raising effort, organised by Jim Redman, which will enable us to convert the cart track leading to our bandroom into a properly surfaced and drained road. Whilst we owe a great debt to Jim and his helpers, this has presented the band with quite a challenge in preparing and presenting a number of events featuring a widely varied programme of music, culminating on 4th May with a concert to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the founding of the present band. Whilst all of these events have been well supported, the last one was outstanding, featuring two concerts in one day.

At the same time as all this has been going on, the band has carried on with it's usual engagements including Galas at Scorton, Garstang and Catterall plus a “Songs of Praise” at Cockerham church and a “Last Night of the Proms” concert at Goosnargh church where a magnificent buffet was provided. Unfortunately, the band was unable to field enough players to take part in the annual Whit Friday march competitions which are held around Tameside and Saddleworth.

As I write, the band is preparing for the Kirkby Lonsdale entertainment contest which takes place on 21st June and a report on this will appear next month.

Finally, we are pleased to welcome young Cameron Munro to the band. Some of you may have seen him on percussion at the anniversary concert, he also plays Tenor Horn and it is good to see a keen young player join in with us.

The band can be contacted via Secretary Emily Hallett on 07710983916