

BAND NEWS

WELCOME

. . . We are always pleased to see new young players joining our ranks so we extend a warm welcome to Laura Friel of the trombone section. We hope that she has fun playing with the YWO.

BUT FAREWELL

. . . We are very sorry to lose the services of flautist Hazel Finnigan who has decided to return to her native city Inverness. Hazel joined the band five years ago and since then has graced the flute section not only with her lovely playing but with her charm and elegance. She has also been one of our most loyal and dependable members taking time off only twice, once to go on her honeymoon and later to have her baby!

We hope that Hazel, her husband John and Baby Jack are very happy in their new home and wish them all the best but we hope they are true to their word to keep in touch with all their friends in the YWO. They may yet live to regret that suggestion of a band outing to Inverness!



Hazel and family at our 25th anniversary dinner last year



. . . to Jennifer Johnston who was the winner of our competition for the second time running, the first time that has happened as far as we can remember. There were very few entries to this competition but we're putting that down to people being too busy with Christmas preparations. There is a competition in this newsletter, therefore, but it may be the last!! We hope Jennifer enjoys spending her £15 gift voucher.



One former member who was missing from the audience at our Christmas concert was Douglas Craig who has been having some health problems recently. Dougie was the principal horn player in the YWO for many years and although he left several years ago, there are some of us in the horn section who still try to put into practice all that we learned from this superb musician. We send Dougie our best wishes for a speedy recovery and look forward to seeing him back in the audience at a concert later in the year.



Our Christmas concert was held on 14th December and with a capacity audience of family, friends and former members, there was a distinctly festive atmosphere. Our guests of honour for the evening were retiring CEO of YMCA Glasgow, Bill Harte and his wife Usha. As Bill has given the YWO great support for many years, it was fitting that there should be a presentation made to him by our committee chairman David Welsh on behalf of the band members.

You can read more about our concerts later in this newsletter.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

A Tribute	2
Concert Report	2
Spotlight On: The Saxophone Section	2
Desert Island Discs	3
Traveller's Tale	3

A TRIBUTE



Tom during our trip to Massachusetts in 1998

Tom Leitch, whose death was announced recently, was a member of the YWO for many years. A keen musician all his life, he enjoyed the distinction of being our only string player, the Double Bass being a traditional idiosyncrasy within a woodwind-brass-and-percussion Concert Band line-up.

Like his instrument, Tom himself was a one-off. Perhaps it is a measure of his feeling at home in the band, that he occasionally dropped the façade of good manners and ruffled a few feathers. He was not a man to suffer fools gladly and his conversation could on occasion be quite blunt.

Nonetheless, he greatly enjoyed his involvement with us and, after ill-health prevented him from continuing as a player, he returned to visit from time to time. He was instrumental in introducing a number of other players to the band and was a constant mine of interesting information: many times as I arrived at rehearsal on a Friday evening, Tom would eagerly greet me with a question like, "Do you realise that today is the 300th anniversary of such-and-such?"

Tom was an enthusiastic member of the 1998 Tour to Worcester and Boston, USA and was thrilled to bits with the excellent instrument that our hosts had provided for his use. This is the Tom Leitch that I will remember - knowledgeable, widely-read, and with an irrepressible enthusiasm for music.

Our fondest good wishes must go to Noreen, our 1st Clarinet player who was a close friend of Tom's over many years.

Michael Philip

CONCERT REPORT

On 2nd November, we gave the first concert of our 2007-08 season.

The venue was Sherwood Greenlaw Church in Paisley and the programme included several pieces new to our repertoire. The church was well filled and the audience was warm and enthusiastic, generating a really good atmosphere.

One feature of the evening was a 'Desert Island Discs' slot in which members of the audience submitted suggestions of pieces of music they could not bear to be without. As expected, the range of music suggested was vast and, on the whole, vindicated the famous quote (was it Beecham again?) that "No-one ever lost money by underestimating the musical taste of the British public!"

This was a good start to our season, made so by the warm welcome and enthusiasm of the audience.

Two Christmas concerts followed, on 7th and 14th December.

The first of these was at Avendale Parish Church in Strathaven and it was an event in which I had no small personal interest. The concert was organised by the Dyer family in aid of the Spartanburg Orphanage Appeal, Ghana. This appeal was initiated by the Dyers after a visit to Ghana in 2006 and has brought enormous and immediate benefit to many in the local community in the town of Donkorkrom in the Afram Plains. I had the privilege of visiting Ghana with my daughter Heather in July of this year and witnessing the progress being made in providing good quality accommodation, care and education for local children in Donkorkrom.

Our programme in Strathaven mixed our new repertoire with some seasonal music and we understand the appeal benefited to the tune of £500. Congratulations all round (not least to the 42 YWO musicians who turned out to this relatively remote venue) and renewed thanks to our hosts for the wonderful hospitality.

Our own Christmas concert was remarkable in a number of ways. One of these was the presentation of gifts to the recently-retired CEO of YMCA Glasgow, Bill Harte. Bill, in his 20 years in charge of the YMCA in Glasgow, has achieved a great deal and his unstinting support of the Orchestra has been key to our continuing success. Bill and his wife Usha will retain an involvement in the YMCA's international dimension and we look forward to maintaining our relationship with them in the years ahead.

I spontaneously took one serious professional risk in the concert: I invited the orchestra to play one item uncondacted. The risk was not that the music would fall apart: quite the reverse! It was played so well that there were immediately questions as to why the conductor is so important in the first place!

Discuss . . .

Michael Philip (Musical Director)



The Saxophone Section

Iain Colquhoun had his first taste of music making when at the age of ten he learned to play the bagpipes, an instrument in which he became so proficient that later he became the piping instructor for Glasgow Corporation Education Department. He later moved on to the Bb clarinet but his musical life was interrupted when he was called up to do his National Service. On his release, he re-enlisted with the 11th Hussars Band where he played clarinet in the Concert Band and Eb alto and baritone in the Dance Band. After 6 years he left and joined the 3rd Royal Highland Fusiliers TA band and remained with them for 31 years. He was also a member of the Maryhill Wind Band and on its demise he joined the YWO.

Iain thinks that one of the highlights of his playing career was when he was Pipe Major of the pipe band which led the Pope-mobile around Murrayfield Stadium during Pope John Paul's visit to Scotland in 1982.

He has also played for royalty on a few occasions, one such event being the launching of an oil platform at Greenock after which Her Majesty had dinner in Clydebank Town Hall with the 3rd RHF Band in attendance.

A devoted family man, Iain has been married to Maria for 34 years. Their elder daughter Janet is a Chartered Librarian while her sister Marian is a set and costume designer who recently worked on the Christmas pantomime at the RSAMD. Iain also enjoys working with his computer, reading and listening to old jazz records.

John McCann was a relatively late starter as a musician as he first learned to play the flute at the age of 18 and it was on this instrument he played with the Helensburgh Amateur Orchestra. Taking up the tenor saxophone a few years later gave him the opportunity to play semi professionally, first of all in a 4 piece band playing weddings and dinner dances, then a rock group and later several jazz groups. This culminated in him joining a modern jazz group called Crazeology, the resident band in both the Bon Accord and Nico's in Glasgow.

Work took him away first of all to Fife then London where he rehearsed and did demo recordings with two small groups playing original music by his friend James Bryce. On returning to Scotland, he joined two local bands before successfully auditioning for Brass Impact, a band which gave him extensive experience in both section work and improvised solos in a wide variety of venues.

John thinks that accompanying well known artists have provided some of the highlights of his musical career – playing the flute on a television recording for the well known folk group The Islanders and supporting jazz singer Carol Kidd at the Third Eye Centre. He was also pleased to be given the chance to play several solos on a CD commissioned by Brass Impact, one track of which was played recently on the BBC Radio Scotland jazz programme, "The Jazz House".

John is also a family man. He and his wife Linda have a son, Tony, who is a computer programmer and a daughter Kathleen, an engineering student at University. John studied Chemistry at University but now works as a tax inspector in Glasgow dealing with the corporation tax of large companies.

He enjoys gardening and cycling and loves touring the Highlands and Islands of Scotland.



Iain (right) and John at our Christmas concert

DESERT ISLAND DISCS

As you have read in our concert report, one of the new pieces in our repertoire is "By the Sleepy Lagoon" by Eric Coates, a melody better known as the introductory music to the long running radio programme "Desert Island Discs".

It is unlikely that any of us will be invited on to this programme, but it never hurts to be prepared, so we've decided to find out what would be the choice of some of our members. We're starting with one of our longest serving members, flautist Helenor McQueen. Now as Helenor is a classical musician through and through, her choice might be expected to reflect that, but as you can see, her musical tastes are much more wide ranging. Here is Helenor's selection.

- 1) Feel the Spirit – a cycle of spirituals arranged by John Rutter.
- 2) "Andantino" from Concerto for Flute and Harp by W A Mozart
- 3) Marche Slave by Tchaikovsky
- 4) Dark Island sung by Calum Kennedy
- 5) Jazz Suite No 2 by Shostakovich
- 6) Fernando sung by ABBA
- 7) Sheep May Safely Graze by J S Bach
- 8) Symphony no 7 by Beethoven



Helenor at our Christmas concert



The orchestra tour to Germany this summer provided the perfect opportunity for my husband Iain and I to fulfil two separate ambitions: Iain to visit the Gebr. Alexander instrument factory in Mainz and me to visit the Steiff Bear factory in Giengen.

Flying out a few days ahead of the rest of the band, we drove to Mainz and were given a guided tour of the Alexander factory and showroom, seeing the instruments starting off as straight lengths of tubing through to the completed instrument being lacquered. Iain was able to try out all the instruments and here he is trying out a Wagner tuba.

NEWS FROM AUSTRALIA



Then it was on to Giengen to the Steiff Bear Festival (that's 'bear' not 'beer!'). To those who know that I am in fact an arctophile (a collector of teddy bears to the uninitiated) the first question asked by band members when they arrived off the coach at Alpirsbach was 'How many bears did you buy?' The answer was three plus two smaller ones, so I suppose technically speaking it was actually 5.

Here I am with one I didn't buy (much to Iain's relief).



The remainder of the week was filled with music and friendship and even the wet weather didn't dampen our spirits! All in all it was a very memorable trip.

Alison Glen (clarinet)

Some of you may not realize that our newsletter finds its way to many other countries. We have recently heard from Colin Cochran in Australia. Colin tells us that he and his wife Ann love reading our newsletter and they're wondering when we're going to visit Oz! Colin's little granddaughter Bonnie also enjoys hearing about the band. Although she's only three, on a recent visit to the zoo Bonnie was able to correct some know it all adults who had mistaken crocodiles for alligators. Look out for next year's block buster movie "Crocodile Bonnie Dundee"! As Bonnie is a McMillan, the editor is especially proud of her!



If any of our other overseas readers would like to send us greetings, we'd love to hear from you.

COMPETITION

This competition has been inspired by the rather bizarre news that there is now a Hollywood Walk of Fame for animal stars! The following clues are the names of famous animals, some from literature, some from films and some that really did exist. We want you to tell us the name of the owner or the person most associated with them. When you have worked out the answers, send them by post to L. McMillan, 56 Lounsdale Drive Paisley PA2 9ED or by email to lornamc@tinyworld.co.uk by 11th April. The usual prize is on offer and remember only lots of entries will ensure the continuation of our competitions!

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|-------------------------|----------------|----------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Black Bess | a horse | 11. Lama | a cat |
| 2. Dinah | a cat | 12. Captain Flint | a parrot |
| 3. Toto | a dog | 13. Flush | a spaniel |
| 4. Bullesye | a bull terrier | 14. Kes | a kestrel |
| 5. Tarka | an otter | 15. Nana | a St. Bernard's dog |
| 6. Elsa | a lioness | 16. Incitatus | a horse |
| 7. Hedwig | an owl | 17. Santa's Little Helper | a greyhound |
| 8. Grip | a raven | 18. Silver | a horse |
| 9. Fly & Rex | sheepdogs | 19. Stuart | a mouse |
| 10. Copenhagen | a horse | 20. Trigger | a horse |

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GOOD LUCK!