

PALATIANS

THE NEWSLETTER OF CRYSTAL PALACE BAND



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It is with great sadness that Crystal Palace Band announces the passing away of our much loved chairman, longest-playing member and dear friend, Roger Lewis Clements. He was 57.

Roger, from Mitcham, Surrey, joined the band at the age of 12 after starting his musical career in the local Boys Brigade Drum & Fife Band. Originally on second baritone, he received training from John Hinckley and although at the age of 15 he passed the entrance audition for the Junior Musician's Wing of the Grenadier Guards, he never pursued music professionally. He continued to play with Crystal Palace Band, and graduated to Solo Euphonium in 1982.

Roger was well known throughout the brass band world, having been a member of SCABA's Executive Committee and also SCABA's representative on the British Federation of Brass Band committee. He enjoyed contesting, his most memorable contest being winning the Second Section SCABA contest at Folkestone with "Henry the Fifth" in 1993.

During his 45 years with the band, Roger played under the baton of many musical directors, most notably James Watson and Derek Greenwood, but was much too young to have been in CPB when Denis Wright was the band's conductor. Overleaf, conductor Mike Gray shares a few memories with us.

Roger's funeral was held on Friday 4 March at North East Surrey Crematorium, Morden. In a fitting tribute the band continued with its efforts in the L&S Counties Regional Contest at Stevenage, being placed fourth and winning promotion to the First Section. Roger would have been proud.

A memorial concert is planned for later on in the year – further details will follow. A cheque for £1,225 was given to St Christopher's Hospice in Roger's memory and Janet, his wife, would like to thank all those who generously donated.

Roger Lewis Clements, 57, passed away on 24 February after a brave fight against cancer and is survived by his wife, Janet.



Roger Clements holding a cheque for £1,677 for St Christopher's Hospice, which was raised after the band's gala concert in December 2003

If you wish to contact the editor, please do so via the following ways:

clarelipscombe@hotmail.com or ring Clare Lipscombe on 020 8778 6778. If you have a general band enquiry (e.g. you would like to join the band, or would like to book the band) please contact the Secretary, Rachel Bleach, on 020 8776 2520, or mail@crystalpalaceband.co.uk - or visit the website, www.crystalpalaceband.co.uk The views expressed in this newsletter are the personal views of the Editor and are not necessarily that of Crystal Palace Band. No part of this newsletter may be reproduced in any way, including on websites, without the express permission of the Editor. © January 2005

Fixtures 2005

Saturday April 23rd	St Georges Day Celebration, Penge, Start 12 noon
Monday May 2nd	Sanderstead Lawn Tennis Club Charity Day, Time TBA
Sunday 15th May	Weston-Super-Mare Contest
Sunday 5th June	Canbury Gardens Bandstand, Kingston upon Thames, 3.00 to 5.00 pm
Sunday 12th June	Open Garden, Bickley, 2.00 - 5.00 pm
Saturday 18th June	Homefront Recall, Concert, St Georges Beckenham, 5.30 to 7.30 pm
Sunday 26th June	Southwark Park Bandstand, 2.30 to 5.00 pm
Sunday 3rd July	Concert, St Mary Norton Flower Festival 3.00 to 5.00 pm
Saturday 9th July	Old Coulsdon Village Fair, Grange Park 2.30 to 4.00 pm
Sunday 10th July	Broadstairs Bandstand, Victoria Parade, 2.30 - 4.00 pm
Sunday 17th July	Greenwich Park Bandstand 2.00 - 3.30 & 4.00 - 5.30 pm
Sunday 31st July	Parliament Hill Bandstand, Hampstead Heath, 3.00 - 5.00 pm
Sunday 4th September	Central Bandstand, Herne Bay, 2-30 - 4.30 p.m.

ROGER LEWIS CLEMENTS (1948 - 2005) By Michael Gray, musical director of Crystal Palace Band

For the last 18 years, I have been privileged to count Roger as a close friend and I would like to share and recall some of those times with you.

What keeps the departed souls of loved ones alive for us is enduring memory. I am sure that Roger would not want me to be downbeat; he would want me to recall some memories of him and of the Crystal Palace Band since I took the stick to them all those years ago!

He was a wonderfully natural musician. Gifted with a lovely tone on the euphonium, he was always able to turn a musical phrase beautifully. I frequently wondered what a player he would have developed into if he had been allowed to join the Guards. However, if he had gone down that road, he might not have become the Roger we all knew.

He had an impish sense of humour; I sometimes cringed at the tricks he would play. And of course sometimes the practical jokes were at my expense. I'll never forget my first trip with the band to Germany, for many reasons. My initiation was a simple one. Halfway through my first concert, the band, previously briefed by Roger, treated me to a wonderfully spirited performance of the march "Simoraine" - trouble was I was expecting Roger himself to play the gentle ballad "Endearing Young Charms". As I brought the baton down, my face must have been a picture - Roger's grin, standing next to me, ready to play his "solo" said it all - "Gotcha"!

I particularly remember, from another trip to Germany, one of his famous linguistic walkabouts. In the bar one evening, he had had just about enough of being ignored by a surly waitress, busy talking to her boyfriend in the corner. "OI! Mademoiselle! Zwei dry white wine por favor!" We all know that he had a unique and refreshing brand of tact! We went on several reconnaissance journeys to fix up the band tours. Suffering as I do, from a terminally diplomatic nature, it sometimes troubled me to imagine what he might say in a delicate situation! He was quite often forthright in his opinions and expected others to speak their minds.

If, at the start of a rehearsal, I was ever at a loss for a choice of a warm-up hymn tune, I would invariably hear from the euphonium section "Number Eighty Two - SAINT Clement"! Of course, we are not here to say he was flawless; who is? Like many of us, he could be cantankerous. My good friend, Roger Clements, is the only person (so far!) with whom I have had an angry exchange during rehearsal. Although quite different people, we each saw the other's point of view and patched things up very quickly.

In more recent times (and along with me and a few others) Roger became an enthusiastic member of the Extraordinary and Distinguished League of Grumpy Old Gentlemen! But, joking aside, this trait more often than not revealed his absolute belief in standards, both in our behaviour and our music making. He was a stickler for form and the best traditions of banding. He was, from first to last, a passionate and dedicated brass bandsman. The many tributes that both Janet and the band have received testify to this far more eloquently than I ever could.

During the 2001 band weekend in Rudesheim he agreed to have his trademark lock of scalp hair trimmed off. Janet wasn't too sure about this but he agreed to it as long as we would all pay into the St Christopher's Hospice charity collection which we were gathering for presentation at the Gala Concert that Autumn. Clare had a hand in it somewhere but one of the group that year was a professional hairdresser; her name - Crystal! As the locks of hair fell to the ground in the hotel forecourt, the doleful tones of the Last Post sounded, played by big Paul Smith. Roger's sacrifice yielded, I think, about £200. He subsequently decided to keep his new look, considering it an improvement.

Whatever our creed may be; whether we believe in life after death or as little Tommy, Roger's great-nephew said recently, pointing to a lone star in the sky, "That's Uncle Roger", memory is what keeps those we have lost close to us. They cheat death by living on in our

own minds. He isn't here any more to gee the band up when they need it, to encourage me when I feel that things are not progressing well enough or to remind Adam, before a concert, to tighten the nuts on his drum kit! He had many great qualities; humour, kindness, generosity and compassion. The gap left in our lives is a big one; Roger was no lightweight, either physically or as a personality. I am grateful that I was able to share a part of what was to be the first day of his last six days alive. Not only have we lost our chairman and an excellent musician, but we have also lost a dearly-loved friend. His dedication and enthusiasm for the band will never be matched and Crystal Palace Band will not be the same without him.