

PALATIANS



THE NEWSLETTER OF CRYSTAL PALACE BAND

Issue: 14 (January 2006)

Well here we are in 2006. What a good year the band has had. We played many concerts, some old favourites and some new venues and we had the privilege of meeting some old friends and making some new ones.

Looking back...

Looking Back...

The Celebration concert in October will be a concert that the band will be very proud to record in its history. We were joined by a number of old friends for the evening. Some joined us playing in the band and some were happy to sit and listen. All were very welcome and we were pleased to see them all. The evening was, of course, to celebrate the life of Roger Clements who played with the band for so many years. We played many pieces that Roger used to enjoy as well as some that he would have liked to be played. Roger would have enjoyed not just the music but also the atmosphere, camaraderie, the reunions and not least the fact that Mike (our musical director) introduced and conducted the first piece with his flies undone! To all those who joined us that evening a big thank you; it was because of your support that it was such a success.

The Gala concert in December was also successful both musically and financially. We were joined by the Gwalia Male Voice Choir and I believe the partnership worked well as the concert was generally well received. We are proud to say that over the two concerts we managed to raise over £2,000 for St Christopher's Hospice.

A fortnight later we had a very busy weekend. Carols in Penge High Street, Carols in Sydenham at the Wesley hall and then Carols in Horniman Gardens. This was a bitterly cold evening but the crowd was enormous.

It was only a couple of days later that we found ourselves in a rather impressive church in Marylebone playing a carol concert for the Parkinson's Disease Society. A new venue and not an easy one. We had problems with travelling and equipment transportation but the audience were appreciative and that made it all worthwhile.

Looking forward...

We are now looking forward in fear and trepidation to our first contest as a first section band. We will be playing "Voyage of Discovery" by Goff Richards. It is an enjoyable but very challenging piece. Work has now begun in earnest and all is going well at the moment. As you can see from our forthcoming events the summer is already looking quite busy

Forthcoming Events

Sunday 19th March

L&SC Regional Championships, Arts and Leisure Centre,
Stevenage

Saturday March 25th	Sydenham Scouts, 60th Anniversary Concert. 7.30 pm
Sunday 23rd April	SCABA Spring Contest, Hove Town Hall
Monday 8th May	B Band - Croydon Music Festival, Start 6.00 pm
Sunday May 14th	Broadstairs Bandstand, Victoria Parade
Saturday June 10th	Crystal Palace Park, CPB Corner Opening Ceremony
Sunday June 11th	Kingston, Canbury Gardens Banstand, 3.00 to 5.00 pm
Sunday June 18th	Southwark Park Bandstand
Saturday June 24th	B Band - Sanderstead Horticultural Society, Purley Oaks Rd. 2.00 pm
Sunday July 2nd	Danson Park, Bexley
Saturday 8th July	Old Coulsdon Village Fair, Grange Park, 2.00 to 4.15 pm
Saturday 8th July	Concert with Beckenham Junior Choir, Beckenham Baptist Church
Sunday 3rd September	Hall Place Bexley, Antique & Gardening Roadshow
Friday 15th September	Cadet Parade, High Wood Barracks, Dulwich (evening)
Sunday 15th October	SCABA Autumn Contest, Folkstone
Sunday November 12th	Belmont Remembrance Parade, 10.00 am
Sunday 17th December	Carols/Christmas Music, Bromley Conservative Club, 7.45 pm

Some of you may remember back in the autumn of 2004 (Palatians issue 9) we published one of the "Notes from a small bandstand" entitled "Weather or not to play". Here is another; hope you enjoy it.

Notes from a Small Bandstand

The weather among other things has been the cause of many laughs, triumphs, hiccups and downright disasters, not all of them ours. It occurred to me that perhaps some of our stories might make interesting reading. It is certainly enjoyable for us to recall them and muse over their entertainment value. Hence, *Notes from a Small Bandstand* came into existence. My apologies to Bill Bryson and the late Alistair Cooke for pinching the general idea though not their impeccable style.

On Playing for the Soldiers

I've always admired the patience and discipline of the massed bands on parade on big occasions. They play, but there is a lot of standing around and waiting. We occasionally play for things where we are required to do more sitting around than playing. I remember particularly one September night whiling away the time...

I watched as a man struggled up a ladder and along a flat roof carrying a brace of what looked like large elongated silver rugby balls on sticks. He took time arranging them in a row, all standing upright in a rack. On reading our order of play I noticed that we were to finish with music from the Royal Fireworks. I, like many of the band was familiar with this piece but had never before played it to accompany real fireworks and as the light began to fade I found the prospect of doing so helped to ward off the cold and boredom that were both creeping in, but not unfortunately, the gnats which were biting with some vigour.

We had been seated for an hour and a half and had played for what couldn't have been more than a total of about 10 minutes. The evening had turned to dusk and eventually total darkness and the gnats had had their fill and gone home. We were reading music by the light of one orange floodlight hung on the chain link fence directly behind the band.

The parade ground had cleared and looking across towards the barrack building I could only make out a few figures moving within the light of a doorway and the vague outline of the building and no other details as there was a bright light on top of the building that was shining directly into my eyes. Our conductor too, it seemed was having the same kind of problems as he was getting agitated about when we were going to play next.

Now, we were at the back of the building and our last piece was to accompany the cutting of a ceremonial ribbon at the front of the building. How will we know when to play? we enquired. "Don't worry, we'll hear clapping and cheering and the fireworks will go up, no problem" came the confident reply which was belied by the agitated hopping from one foot to the other and the craning of the neck to try and see all the way across the parade ground, through the bright doorway and all the way through to the front of the building. We waited. We waited for what seemed like ages.

Suddenly a moving pinpoint of light appeared on the rooftop, the taper for lighting the fireworks was bobbing around in the darkness. A cheer and the sound of enthusiastic applause wafted through the building and across the parade ground. Cold instruments were whipped into readiness and the baton came down, we played with gusto...but no fireworks. The bobbing light had disappeared along, apparently with our audience and all was eerily quiet. What now? In hindsight we should have just waited to see what would happen next but our conductor jogged away across the parade ground to make enquiries. You know as well as we did then what is going to happen next.

With a swoosh and a whistle the first rocket took to the sky and we knew we should be playing. Glistening golden sparks littered the sky above us and rocket number two whooshed into the dark night air. The chances of twenty five people starting to play at the same time without a conductor are pretty low but in the dark when you can't see each other the chances plummet to absolute zero so we couldn't start playing. Looking anxiously into the orange light the scene resembled a WW1 battlefield. Loud explosions shook the ground and sparks filled the air. Smaller detonations echoed between the buildings like machine gun fire and smoke drifted across the parade ground obliterating the outline of the barracks. Out of this pall of smoke and at some distance appeared a figure. A silhouette against a swirling orange, misty background, arms raised and running like mad he hurtled towards us. He covered the ground with the athleticism of an Olympic runner coupled with the grace of a startled camel and narrowly avoided colliding with the music stand as he simultaneously skidded to a halt and gave the down beat to begin playing.

I can now look back and say proudly that I have played Handel's music for the Royal Fireworks to accompany the firing of a firework. Yes, just the one.

If you wish to contact the editor, please do so in one of the following ways:

e-mail Carol Maher at woal@btinternet.com **OR phone** 020 8699 7850 **OR write** 42, Winsford Road, Catford, London, SE6 4LX

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 our website www.crystalpalaceband.co.uk

The views expressed in this newsletter are the personal views of the Editor and are not necessarily those of the 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 2006.
