

Border Concert Band Review 2011/12

Well my my, what a busy 12 months it has been in the life of "Carlisle's premier concert band"! (Hmmm, well maybe Brook Street's at least!) We've had a healthy number of bandstand bookings along with our regular agricultural shows and Christmas gigs, and a pleasing smattering of new engagements to keep us occupied. One such incidence of us treading new ground was our trip to the lovely Theatre By The Lake in Keswick last July, where we accompanied our increasingly regular companions the Carlisle Musical Society for their British Heart Foundation Fundraiser. A lovely venue to



which we are privileged to be returning later this year. Pre-concert sustenance was partaken by some band members at the superior Horse and Farrier public house in Threlkeld, where we debated such musical topics as "what exactly is a lamb henry?" and whether the chips were up to Roy's exacting standards!

Once again this year we have been a tad unlucky with the great British weather for several of our al fresco appearances, one such notable example being the distinctly soggy Cumberland Show. However, perhaps spurred on by our more prestigious pitch this year, and access to the band bar (!) we battled on through the driving rain, under the leadership of guest conductor Andy Tugwell, and put on a stirring performance (well there were a few appreciative baaaahs at least!) For future reference a top tip for arriving at damp events in style is to make sure that you get soaked to the skin by an inconsiderate passing vehicle, throw your music into the middle of the road, and then simply await your chauffer driven jeep escort (a bit of eye lash fluttering probably helps as well). Isn't that right Jane!



We also learnt that a Kia estate does not do a very convincing impression of a 4x4. Although if the upshot of attempting to drive an unsuitable small family vehicle across water logged Cumbrian fields is a dramatic rescue by a group of heroic rugged farmers I might give it a try next year!

Sadly the weather has managed to thwart us completely on two occasions this past year, one of these being the Gilsland Show. However, there is one lonesome flautist who can lay testament to the fact that, unless we have some band scuba gear scuttled away somewhere, the Gilsland pull out was a more than justified decision. That'll teach me not to mislay my mobile!

Collin's Comedy Corner.

A few morsels to get your laughing gear around from the band's resident comedian!



What's the range of a set of bagpipes?
About 20 metres if you've got a good throw!

How do you fix a broken tuba?
With a tuba glue!

How many musicians in a big band?
15 + the drummer!

What's the difference between the Border Concert Band and the London Philharmonic
Not much really - all the right notes but not necessarily in the right order!

And one from his apprentice Audrey!

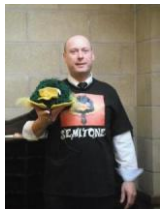
A bloke goes to the doctor "doctor I feel like I have been hit over the head with a pair of maracas" "don't worry" says the doctor "it's only mild percussion!"

The month of August brought with it our annual appearance at the always entertaining Dalston Show, and it's now legendary "band versus tractor" battle! I didn't actually manage to attend myself this year (having been tempted by sunnier climbs) but I think I can guess who won!

And so we come to our second collaboration of the year with the musical society. This time we were at The Sands Centre, celebrating "musicals through the ages", an eclectic programme drawn from musical theatre from the first world war to present day. The inevitable hanging around aside, another successful gig. Well they keep asking us back so we must be doing something right-I bet it's because a few of us have been known to join in with the dancing!

Later that November weekend a hardy few of us braved the wind tunnel that is Gretna Gateway Shopping Village to belt out some seasonal tunes for the early Christmas shoppers. Armed with our trusty pegs we gallantly battled the force 9 gales, shuffling up and down the main shopping thoroughfare at various intervals to ensure that no shopper or shopkeeper was deprived of our dulcet tones and proffered Christmas cheer! One thing that seemed strangely immune to the wind was Audrey's Santa hat, which acquired a suspiciously perky nature part way through the afternoon, and remained impressively erect for the remainder! Our Christmas

engagements continued throughout December with a small band serenading the lucky residents of The Inn on the Lake in Glenridding, accompanying the local primary school choirs at Morton Manor (thankfully inside this year!), and another quick jaunt to the bandstand. Our final festive flourish was supposed to be the carol service at St Johns Church. Hmmmm! Our performance was definitely less "Ding Dong Merrily on High" and more "In the Bleak Mid-Winter" than we would have perhaps liked! Oh well, at least we had our Christmas



party at which to drown our sorrows afterwards. Some delicious Marks and Sparks goodies and plenty of bubbles went down a treat. Mr Colin Atkinson was crowned the winner of our fiercely contested name "Name the Mascot" competition, and seemed delighted with his achingly fashionable reward (they're due to hit London Fashion Week next year by the way!) Long live Mr Semitone!! Who was, incidentally, delighted with his new moniker.

The fact that many of us were driving somewhat limited



the quantity of "Christmas spirit" that could be legally indulged in at the party, but there was no such problem in February when we descended upon the Village of Dufton again for our band weekend away! A much healthier number of you attended this year (obviously hearing what you were missing out on) and helped in making 2012's trip an even bigger success than the last. This year we managed to bully other players from the area into joining us for the weekend, many of whom were from the Kendal Concert Band. This added another lovely dimension to proceedings, and they don't seem to have been too damaged by their experience (!), going so far as to invite us to join them on their trip to Germany in the summer. Kicking things



off in The Stag again for dinner on the Friday evening, we then staggered back to the hostel for some good wholesome board game related fun. Well, We only actually managed one round of trivial pursuits but, despite playing to slightly unconventional rules, the best team most definitely won. No hard feelings guys! After a relaxed Saturday of rehearsing we were ready to bestow on the villagers the fruits of our labour. Managing to attract a small (maybe they were upset not to have been invited to play trivial pursuits!) but appreciative audience to our concert in the village hall,

we equipped ourselves very well. One unexpected bonus was the band acquiring its very own set of backing dancers! This talented quintet, who currently go by the name of "The Paulettes", really got the "crowd" going, and we are currently in talks to book them for future events!



After the gig a few of us hit The Stag again for a celebratory tippie. However, we had obviously left the others un-chaperoned for a little too long as on our return to the hostel the kids had gone wild! Someone had left Jane and Colin unsupervised with a variety of cocktail making accoutrements and basically chaos ensued! A hilarious end to a wonderful couple of days.

Rounding the year off was the Carlisle Festival of Music and Drama. A close but fully justified result this year, and we should be delighted with our runners up position after doing Gershwin proud. Although, there will be a small reward for any cunning plans as to how we can take out our arch nemesis the William Howard lot prior to next year, but perhaps with mercy shown to Alan to avoid somewhat shooting ourselves in the foot!

So with a dramatic rall.....pause.....and swooping schwartzando I shall bid you a fond farewell (that flute won't practice itself!) Here's to another tuneful 12 months!!



Jovial Jane's Recipe for a Good Night/ Disaster (Delete as Required)



Resident mixologist Jane imparts some Dufton inspired words of wisdom!

Before starting please check that (a) Audrey has not packed the Resolve, (b) you are at least half cut.

Take one large container and add half a bottle of Pimm's No 1.

Add what whatever you can find in the kitchen (cucumber should be sliced before adding – whole cucumbers cause problems with the mixing (cheese should be avoided)

Pour in as much champagne as you can find (raiding people's secret stores is allowed).

Taste this – actually as this is revolting give it to someone else to try for you first.

Pour in about half a pint of mango juice (taking care not to spill the mixture – it gets everywhere does Pimm's!)

Add more cucumber and if you can find any other fruit (not bananas) then these should be added at this point as well

Serve without spilling or swaying (you are however allowed to slur your words a little and be really loud).

General Health Warning – Please Drink Responsibly and on No Account Should this Cocktail be Mixed with Green Icing.