



Newsletter – April 2007

National Championships

The band has been busy since starting back in mid January with preparations for its first performance at the Australian National Championships since 1996. The band will be performing Martin Ellerby's test piece 'Terra Australis' which was commissioned for the YBS Band and their tour of Australia in 2006. This is the set piece for all of the 17 bands performing in the 'A'



grade section of the competition. MD Gareth Jones has chosen the Eric Ball classic "Journey into Freedom" as the own choice piece to be performed. Also to be included in MBB's performance is the hymn tune 'Crimond' arranged by Peter Graham (which also features snippets of another Eric Ball classic 'Resurgum') and the stage march 'Viva Birkinshaw' by William Rimmer. As part of the championships the band will also have to perform in the 'Parade of Bands' march through the streets of Ivanhoe (just north of Melbourne). For this the band has chosen to play another march by William Rimmer 'Punchinello' and will provide Principal Cornet Ben Noonan an opportunity to act as Drum Major for the first time. A travel party of 42 will be making their way to Melbourne in the early hours of Wednesday 4 April for the competition which is held over the Easter weekend and will also include solo performances by a number of the bands' players as they pit their skills against players from both Australia and New Zealand. President Allan Conroy has been hard at it again with his usual efficiency in organising all the travel arrangements to ensure the trip runs smoothly and that when the band takes the stage on Saturday that all the band will be there.

New Faces

With the departure of a few of the the bands players over the summer period and long service leave by cornet player Rob Prestwidge a number of new recruits were required to enable the band to perform at the National Championships. Glyn McDonald joined the band on principal trombone filling the position left by Matthew Walker who is to study in Germany later this year. John Clark joins the solo cornet rank and is joined by Anniken Odegard who returns for the national and state competitions. Another player to return after an eleven year break is Tim Simpson, whilst sitting out of the national competition due to a limitation on the number of players who can perform, Tim hopes to be part of the band for the State Championships in June. Finally, joining the percussion section is David Hardie formally of the Kew Band (Melbourne) & a former conductor of the Mandurah Concert Band.

Forthcoming Events

4 -10 April	- National Championships, Ivanhoe, Melbourne	
25 April	- ANZAC Day Parade, Perth	9.00 am
2 June	- WA State Band Championships, Churchlands SHS, Lucca St	TBA

News form 'Old Blighty'

Former MD Paul De Cinque is keeping the band up to date with his activities in England. His regular & entertaining tales have included news of his exploits both at work & at play. He is currently working for the Royal Mail as a 'Business Customer Service Advisor' not as Postman Pat as was unkindly suggested. On the playing front he had been preparing with his band 'Bactiguard' Wire Brass for the North West of England Regional Championships where they came 10th from a field of 11. Work continues with the band as the look towards a number of other competitions.

Congratulations

Congratulations are due to a number of the bands younger members who have completed their university courses & moved into their chosen careers. Alexia Horton (2nd Cornet) completed her Law degree & is now working for Kott Gunning Lawyers. Meantime sister Kym Reeves (percussion) completed her studies in Music Education at UWA & is teaching music at Woodlands Senior High School & a number of other schools in her role for the School of Instrumental Music. Another to complete her degree in Music Performance is Flugel Horn player Julia Conroy who is currently teaching music at a number of Perth's private girls schools including St Hilda's & Penrhos. Also completing her Degree in Music Education is 2nd Cornet player Amy Twinning. Amy will be leaving the band shortly as she heads off to Canada & North America for a 2 year sabbatical. Our best wishes for a safe trip Amy.

Judith lends a helping hand again!



Tenor horn player and former band secretary Judith Findlay headed off to India with a number of Perth's medical fraternity in early February 2007, working for 2 weeks doing voluntary work with a group called Equal Health. The organisation was started by Paul Clarke, an optometrist, who she first met while playing with Town of Victoria Park Brass Band – then Southern Districts. The team consisted of optometrists, optical dispensers, eye specialists, dentists, dental nurses, doctors and nurses – 80 in all. Judith describes her experience below
“ We arrived in Chennai, old Madras, in the early hours of the morning and were immediately confronted with the “hurry up and wait” principle.

Nothing seems to happen very fast in India and it took a couple of hours to negotiate customs and passport control. It was hot and humid even in the middle of the night. On the drive to the hotel on the outskirts of the city, we noticed all the shanty towns beside the road and noticed what looked like rolled up carpets lying in groups along the street – people asleep! Throughout the trip, we were struck by the extremes of poverty and affluence.

After one night in a hotel, the group was divided into smaller teams of about 15 and boarded buses to go to our first places of work. My team had a 12 hour overnight train journey to reach a place in the southern part of India called Tirunelveli. Fortunately, we had sleepers booked. Unfortunately, I got on to the wrong top bunk! About an hour into the trip I was confronted by the ticket inspector and an Indian gentleman looking for his bunk. After much sign language and nodding of heads, he agreed to take the other top bunk and the problem was solved.

The group arrived at a tiny station at about 5.30am and were driven to the Crest girls orphanage. After the official reception, during which we all received garlands of fresh flowers, we found our rooms. Each had a camp bed with a webbing base and a 10mm thick mattress, together with individual mosquito nets. They even had power and ceiling fans – luxury! First we had to get the mosquitos out from inside the mossy nets having patched up the holes in the nets. The showers and toilet facilities were outside. I quite enjoyed looking up at the stars having a cold shower after a long, hot day.

We worked at a different village each day. The main medical complaints seemed to be cough, knee pain and total body pain. There also seemed to be a lot of people with heart burn but that may be because they soon realised that those symptoms got the most medication! The optical and dental teams work seemed clearer – people either needed glasses or they didn't and they either needed a dental extraction or not. For the medical teams the work was infinite. Even where the villages initially seemed quiet as we arrived, people seemed to come from everywhere and it was hard to turn people away at the end of each day when we had run out of medicines.

The journeys were an event in themselves. Driving through villages, it was hard to decide which side of the road they drove on as everyone/everything seems to go down the middle of the street – cows, goats, buses, trucks, bicycles – we seemed to plot a course right through the middle. The roads are narrow and bumpy, with lots of pot holes and even the main roads seem to be in a constant state of disrepair.

On our day off, we travelled to the southern most point of India, where the Indian Ocean meets the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal. About 10,000 people lost their lives here in the 2004 tsunami. The wave came up over the 133 foot high Thiruvalluvar statue which was erected on an island off the coast and dedicated in 1 January 2000. The statue survived but has been repaired. We also visited a memorial to Gandhi. We stopped to photograph a large wind farm on the way back to the orphanage and also had time for ice-cream and/or a beer.



Half way through the trip we took the 12 hour overnight trip back to Chennai to swap with one of the other teams. On the train, I decided it was time to bring out the freeze-dried cheese cake and mocha pie just to make a change from curry. We just had to add water!

We had our brush with the local wild life while staying at Orakadu. In the middle of one night, there was a blood curdling scream – a rat had tiptoed across one of the girls faces! The security guys were very helpful, if a little amused. They moved the beds and bedding of the girls next door into our cottage in the middle of the night. The next morning, Ailsa came

back from breakfast and yelled for Lisa and I to get out of the room – she had seen a snake slither across my backpack! The boys and the wardens had a great time rushing in armed with beating sticks to try to flush out the snake. It got away, but we photographed another dead one they had caught earlier probably over a metre in length. The little family of 4 frogs left our cottage after that.

Final impressions, it was very hard work from a medical aspect, but we saw parts of India and a way of life from which other visitors to India might be shielded”.

Keen Listeners

Keen listeners amongst you would have heard the band performing on ABC's Classic FM a few weeks ago. The band could be heard playing 'Pastime With Good Company' composed by Henry VIII & arranged for brass band by Stephen Roberts. This item features on the CD 'Strike Up the Band' produced by the ABC.

To receive further information about the band contact the Secretary, Midland Brick Brass, P.O. Box 2165, Dog Swamp, WA , 6060 or e-mail on [secretary @wabass.com](mailto:secretary@wabass.com) or visit the band website on www.wabass.com