



August 2010

This is the first newsletter in a little while, as not a great deal has been happening with the band apart from the regular Wednesday night rehearsals. This is in contrast to the usual agenda for this time of year, with the band's decision to focus on preparing concert items rather than working towards the Ballarat competitions (which was held last weekend).

It seems the other local brass bands had a similar idea, so unfortunately Bendigo wasn't represented at South Street this year. The results for C grade were as follows:

- Darebin City Brass - Northern
1st place. 229 points.
- Boroondara Harmony Brass
2nd place. 228 points.
- Frankston City Band
3rd place. 220 points.

In other news (relatively old news as it's such a long time since the last newsletter), big congratulations to Michael Dobson and Kat Wall on their recent wedding! A number of band members performed at their ceremony, and it was fantastic that the band could be involved in such a momentous occasion. Michael puts a lot into the band, as Secretary as well as a player and general stalwart, so it was terrific opportunity for the band to give something back and show their support!

Cheers!

Brendan

THE BAND LOSES AN ICON

Robert McKenzie (Bob) McCaskill
13/7/1922 - 17/6/2010

Since the last newsletter, the band has mourned the passing of Bob McCaskill, their long time cornet player and conductor. Bob devoted much of his life to the City of Bendigo Brass Band, starting when his father (Bob McCaskill Snr.) was bandmaster back in the 1930's.

The band, joined with a number of other players, performed two items as part of Bob's funeral on June 22nd. The sound of the band in St. Andrews Uniting Church was magnificent, truly a fitting tribute to such a loyal and devoted bandsman.

Below is an excerpt from the published historical text that Bob himself wrote more than ten years ago. This was the chapter that modestly described his contribution to the band...

Born in 1922, Robert McKenzie McCaskill (Bob) began his musical education at the age of 10 years, when as a member of the Bendigo Boys Band, conducted by his father, R.J. McCaskill, he soon became a lover of brass band music.

At 18 years, when the bandmaster R.J. McCaskill joined the armed services, Bob was given the task of Bandmaster of the Bendigo Boys Band, after which he also joined the army and became solo cornet in the Royal Park Military band. In 1942, he transferred to Wagga in New South Wales, into the Royal Australian Engineers Regimental band, and played under noted bandmasters, "Scottie Armour", and "Albert Baile" (who was conductor of the Commonwealth band in 1924).

After 4½ years service, Bob returned to Bendigo, but didn't take up banding seriously until 1958, when he joined the Eaglehawk Citizens' Band for 12 months. He then returned to the Bendigo Municipal Band. He was elected Bandmaster in 1960-61, after which he was transferred to Frankston in his employment as a teacher, until 1968.

On his return to Bendigo, Bob again played with the Bendigo Municipal Band and in 1969 he was again elected Bandmaster, the position he held until he retired in 1980. He still plays cornet with the band.

During his years as bandmaster, Bob's aim was to make the organisation socially sound, to entertain the public at concerts with music that appealed, while gradually building the band to "contest" standard. Bob started many learners' classes and his capabilities as a teacher were evident by the numbers who advanced to the senior band.

Bob has given much of his life to the love of music and especially to the City of Bendigo Brass Band.



MUSICAL DIRECTORS REPORT

The past two months have certainly been a little more laid back than the May/June period. It has given us some breathing space to work on a broader concert program, which I certainly hope we will get the opportunity to perform in the next few months.

In past years, with July/August typically being a hectic contest period, we have been unable to work on "strong" concert items. This year has been refreshingly different. We have worked on items that are decidedly more difficult than our usual concert offerings. Whilst this has allowed us to stretch our entertaining abilities, we have not yet mastered any of them. We therefore must all get that instrument out at home and work through these items, particularly looking at the bars that you are struggling. Please do this! It doesn't take much effort and even ten minutes a day can make a difference.

At this stage, we are booked in for the afternoon of Sunday, 19th December to perform at the annual Neale Street Concert, with their choir. This will certainly have a Christmas flavour, but I will be taking the opportunity to play some of the concert items we are now working on.

Between then and now we will also be participating at the Bendigo Bands Group Contest/Concert. I will certainly be using a few of the current items then. I'm yet to confirm the annual Inglewood concert. More info to follow.

Anyway, in closing I'll stress once again the importance of practicing away from the Bandroom. This is where the improvements are made...

Andrew Trewartha
Musical Director.

BAND FEES

Please note that band fees are now due. Please see David or Alan to pay these if you haven't already done so. Current fees are as follows.

- Single adult \$70 per year or \$20 per quarter,
- Junior players \$50 per year or \$15 per quarter,
- Families \$100 per year or \$30 per quarter.

It was decided at a recent committee meeting that invoices for fees will be sent out in the coming months. We do our best to keep these fees to a minimum, but it is an unfortunate reality that we have to somewhat rely on these fees to keep the band ticking along. Your contribution is kindly appreciated!

DIARY DATES

- **Sat Sept 18th** - Dance Catering.
- **Sun Oct 24th** - Bendigo Bands Group Contest / Concert. Gravel Hill Salvation Army Hall, Mundy St. More info to follow.
- **Sat Nov 6th** - Dance Catering.
- **Sun Dec 5th** - Brass in the Park, Rosiland Park.
- **Sun Dec 19th** - Neale Street Christmas Concert