

Musical Directors Report - Downton Band AGM 2011

I would firstly like to give my personal thanks again this year, to the committee for their confidence, commitment and full support during 2010.

As I approach the start of my 14th year with the band, I look back with an amount of pride and satisfaction at what we have achieved again this year. We have a very stable and hardworking band with a good reputation, excellent officers, organisation and a committed hard working committee, we've experienced, regional and national contest success again this year, enjoyable concerts and an ever increasing village involvement along with a very healthy training band all of this the envy of many other local bands. Much to be justifiably proud of.

So I would like to thank all the members of the bands families and supporters for their full support over the last 12 months. This has been much in evidence during 2010, which has proved to be as per usual, another busy year for Downton Band.

The year has seen as usual some personnel comings and goings.

Our outgoings have seen the departure of Chris on eupho, Will, temporarily off to University; although I am sure we will see plenty of Will over the next couple of years and Rachel, hanging up her Tenor Horn, hopefully only temporally, thanks to all.

But, of course as with all negatives there are positives and we have welcomed players to the band on a full time basis, Dave Smart joining the cornet section after much persuading, Trevor also on cornet and Ben on eupho all bringing much needed experience and talent to the band. This year has also seen changes around the cornet line up, Richard has resumed his seat as principal cornet after his sabbatical and I am pleased to see his enthusiasm for the task. But I must use this opportunity to thank Gary, firstly for his willingness to move seats and instruments for the development of the band and for his expertise in occupying the principal chair with such responsibility over his time there and very much contributing to the bands success and progress, thank you very much Gary.

So, the band is still looking really good for 2011 – I'm disappointed players have moved on but good to see new members joining, enthusiastic and eager to commit.

Our contest results/activities in 2010 have been widely reported. And our 3 year plan to gain promotion back to the 3rd section was well achieved. So thanks to all who have contributed to this success and performances a truly excellent team effort.

Well, 2010 started with preparation for Torquay as per usual, but with a little more pressure to carry on the successes made in 2009 with the test piece 'Saint Sean Variations' – an enjoyable piece of music one which we enjoyed rehearsing and performing and this showed on the day with a satisfying 3rd position, promotion and a further trip to Harrogate for the band again.

Then followed the build up and excitement for the trip to Yorkshire to represent the region and the village again, what an honour. It proved to be a great weekend, great organisation and commitment from the band and an honour on my part and one of my personal banding highs to conduct the band on stage and pull off a very creditable 5th place, much thanks to all the band and to the soloists who performed with great pride and confidence, mention especially to Trevor and Ben on the day for there particular performances.

Our performance levels have increased during 2010, due as much to your commitment to rehearsals on a very regular basis and your enthusiasm to advance, the challenge now is to continue this progress further thank you.

Our regular concerts and engagements/bandstands during the year were as usually, well attended and entertaining. Mention must be made of the Cuckoo Fair weekend and concert, the playing and fund raising went well and a well attended and enthusiastic audience. The New Forest Show, enjoyed by all, and my thanks especially to Peter/Liz for organising the dep players throughout the year, things would not run without them. We also enjoyed excellent Moot and School firework concerts and the new experience of a joint concert with Shrewton in Salisbury in the autumn good experience and I feel we more than held our own on the night. All these were excellent concerts/engagement from our point of view, the playing of a consistent nature and well received everywhere and good fund raising opportunities. Again, thank you to all the members and deps for their support and hard work through all the engagements, all very important to the continued success of the band.

Lastly, but not least, I would like to note the assistance and expertise Steven Mead has given to me and the band during 2010. Bringing in a top quality band teacher here had long been an ambition of mine, so you can all experience the training and expertise such a person can offer. Steven's willingness to accept our invitations to visit again was testament to his enjoyment and your hard work, progress and commitment, this can only be beneficial to us all, as long as we remain committed and open minded. So let's make the most of any further opportunities that may appear this coming year.

So let us move on in 2011 lets put in the hard work to establish our position at a higher level, it's not beyond us so long as we commit to achieving this. We have a group of talented and loyal band members now collectively better than at anytime in my tenure, so let's work together in taking Downton Band as far forward as we can and of course enjoy ourselves on the way.

Roland Wright MD
11th March 2011