

BRASS BAND NEWS

THIS YEAR THE BRITISH OPEN WAS HELD FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THE NEW BRIDGEWATER HALL, Manchester. Sadly, the exhibition, which normally accompanies the event and has become such a colourful part of it, was cancelled. However, there are hopes that it will be reinstated somehow next year.

The test piece was the Severn Suite, Op. 87 by Elgar. It was originally commissioned for the 1930 National Contest at Crystal Palace by John Henry Iles, a late Pastmaster of the Company. In those days he payed £150 for the work!

Liveryman Bram Gay was responsible for this latest edition. He remembers playing the original piece with Foden's, the band which won the 1930 contest at Crystal Palace. On this occasion, renamed the Britannia Building Society Band, they came fifth with Marple, the last band to play, taking the honours.

Following this year's contest, three of the Company's Silver Medals were presented by Pastmaster John Iles, Chairman of the Brass Band Committee. The Mortimer Medal was awarded to Leighton Rich. He founded the Tewit Youth Band in Harrogate and since 1987 has been Director of the Hampshire County Youth Band which currently has five members in the national Youth Brass Band. This year he commissioned John Harle – a former Maisie Lewis Young Artist recitalist – to write a work for them (for saxophone and brass band, the remarkable Golden Demon).

The Iles Medal was awarded to James Watson, principal conductor of Black Dyke Mills. Last year they won 'the triple' – the Open, the National and the European Championships. Following a distinguished career which included the Philip Jones Brass Ensemble, he is now Professor of trumpet at both the RAM and RCM and in 1989 was honoured by the Academy with a Fellowship. He has also been appointed Artistic Director and Principal Conductor of the National Youth Brass Band of Wales.

Following these presentations, John Iles made a short speech announcing that as a surprise and for the first time, he wished to present a Special Iles Medal to Margaret Mortimer. The award was in recognition of her dedication and hard work organising the 'Open' for so many years. She



Margaret Mortimer. Photo: Ron Massey

had also achieved the successful transfer of this famous contest – first held in 1853 – from King's Hall, Belle Vue to the Free Trade Hall and now this great new venue, the Bridgewater Hall.

Other Liveryman who were present were Peter Wilson for the British Bandsman and Frank Renton introducing the evening concert for the BBC.

THE COMPANY DIARY to 30th April 1997

9	Oct	Court and Dinner.
17	Oct	Phyllis Barrett Lunch.
6	Nov	Installation Dinner.
9	Nov	Lord Mayor's Show.
12	Nov	GSMD Opera.
14	Nov	St. Cecilia Service, St. Paul's.
20	Nov	St. Cecilia Festival Service, Westminster Cathedral and Royal Concert.
8	Dec	Jazz Finals, Pizza on the Park.
11	Dec	Carol Service at St. Michael's Cornhill.
1997		
16	Jan	Court.
10	Feb	Joint Concert with Stationers' Company.
17	Mar	Musicians Company Maisie Lewis Concert and supper.
21	Mar	United Guilds' Service.
TBA	Mar	Guildhall School of Music.
TBA	Mar	Phyllis Barrett Lunch.
16	Apr	Court and Dinner

Donations and Awards

In 1989, the GSMD established a community base in the crypt of St. George-in-the-East Church in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets, one of the poorest local authorities in the country. In 1994, a dedicated Arts and Community Development project was launched and in 1995 a band called 'The Neighbourhood' became the heart of the Project. This group operates both as a quartet, featuring four GSMD musicians, and as a band including parents, local school pupils, teachers, school governors and youth club members. We have donated £2,500 to this project renewable for two further years subject to review.

Donations have also been made to Kneller Hall, the Young Concert Artists Trust (YCAT), the Westerly Trust, a charity set up to assist young artists and musicians from Lithuania the London String Quartet Foundation (Peter Schidlöf Quartet Sponsorship) which is embarking upon a national education tour and the Ironbridge Gorge Museum to assist towards the renovation of the John Rose Building at Coalport.

New regulations are being prepared for the Allcard Awards for which approximately two hundred applications were received this year. From next year there will be three major scholarships rather than several small disbursements currently being made.

W T Best Memorial Scholarship

This has been awarded for one year to Matthew Owens, sub-organist at Manchester Cathedral and to Neil Cockburn for the ensuing year currently researching the organ works of Jeanne Demessieux in Boston.

Kenn Golightley Memorial Award

The concert at St. Sepulchre's church given by the New London String Ensemble was organised by Liveryman Laurie Goodwin, conducted by Frederick Applewhite, founder of the original Ensemble of which Kenn had been Administrator, and the address was delivered by Assistant Dr. John Hosier. The funds raised will provide an annual award for a young musician.

The John Christie Award

This has been awarded to Lisa Milne, soprano. Amongst her future engagements are the Welsh National Opera and Scottish Opera during 1997.

The award is given to those who have the ability to reach the highest rank in their profession to provide adequate assistance for travel or further educational opportunities.

The Carnwath Scholarship

This year, the Carnwath Fund has been significantly enhanced by a donation from the estate of the late Pastmaster Sir Andrew Carnwath. The scholarship has been awarded to Alexander Taylor at the RCM.