



## **Musical Directors Report 2020/2021**

What a year this has been or should I say a year of two halves. In September everything started fine, we had plenty of event bookings and then in March 2020 Covid-19 arrived.

### **August 2019 to February 2020**

In the first seven months the band played at seven events:

- 1. 11<sup>th</sup> August 2019      The Trout Inn (Lechlade)**  
This is the 1<sup>st</sup> visit to The Trout for a very long time and it was good afternoon. The only thing that spoiled it was the bad weather which broke from glorious sunshine to pouring rain on the Saturday, however the marquee sides were up and we didn't get wet, just a shame the audience numbers were low.
- 2. 18<sup>th</sup> August 2019      Swindon Town Gardens in The Bowl**  
Another 1<sup>st</sup> for the band this time in Town Gardens Bowl and after a week of rain it stopped an hour before we were due to start playing. Many of the audience brought picnics and drinks. The only concern was when a band member fell off the stage with his instrument; during the interval. Luckily he was not hurt too badly and manage to play in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the concert.
- 3. 20<sup>th</sup> September 2019   Haydon Wick Sunshine Club**  
Once again a great afternoon with a large audience and even a Bass Trombone solo which I believe is a first for the band.
- 4. 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2019      Sainsbury's Retirement Group**  
This was a chance for the band to try out new Christmas music and also new arrangements of "Witchcraft/Switch In Time"(Nestico) and "Zoot Suit Riot"(Murtha). The feedback was excellent except for one person who asked why we had to play so loud as not everyone was deaf!
- 5. 11<sup>th</sup> December 2019      U3A Christmas Dance**  
It was time for the band to return to Waltz, Foxtrot, Rhumba and Cha Cha Cha for an afternoon of strict Ballroom and Latin dance tempo numbers. Everyone attending was very impressed and we were going to be asked to play again in December 2020.
- 6. 27<sup>th</sup> January 2020      Celebrating Age (Wootton Bassett)**  
This was the bands second outing playing at this event which again had amazing support. It was a chance to try out more new instrumental numbers, "Soul Bossa Nova"(Quincy Jones), "I Left My Heart In San Francisco"(Bryers), "The Creeper"(Hefti) and "Moonlight Serenade" with Karen on lead Clarinet.
- 7. 29<sup>th</sup> February 2020      Penhill Church Hall**  
It was great to return to Penhill; however the band now has too many players to fit on the stage, therefore the band relocated to the floor of the hall. I personally think the audience has more connection with the band as they can see everyone playing. It was also the first time the band has used wireless instrument microphones for all the soloists, I even managed to provide Ken with microphone and soloist information.  
Thanks again to Ken who has continued to provide a PA system for the band for every event.



## **March to July 2020**

Covid struck and sadly all the remaining events for 2020 were cancelled, which included return visits to Cirencester Court, The Trout Inn, Swindon Town Gardens, Celebrating Age and Haydon Wick.

We all needed to do something and “Zoom Quiz Night” was born, in fact the band held five quizzes in total (April to June) and even a “Zoom Bingo” evening which raised a staggering £141 for NHS Charities Together. Thanks to everyone who took part and made them all very enjoyable and successful.

In May I also decided the band needed to somehow play again, therefore I invited everyone to record a video of themselves at home playing Green Onions (to a backing track). All the recordings were then sent to me for compiling into a Virtual Video. I had lots of feedback and this is probably one of the hardest musical tasks members of the band have ever tried. We all did so well that in July we all recorded our parts for Dr No-EI for our 2<sup>nd</sup> Virtual Video.

At the beginning of August I thought larger groups were going to be allowed to start getting back together again in Covid-19 secure locations, unfortunately the government has recently announced that everyone in the England can only meet again in groups of no more than six people.

It is important that during this difficult period, when there does not appear to be an end in sight, and with the winter months fast approaching, the band try to keep playing. To this end I will be asking for everyone to take part in another Virtual Video hopefully with Ken Jell singing.

When we do get back together again we must continue to get a much cleaner and crisp sound, start using the wireless instrument microphones at all rehearsals to gain the experience using them ready for our future concerts.

I would also like to take the opportunity to thank David Dale for his work as librarian digitising some of the older music. This will be on-going as soon as he has access to player’s large music boxes.

Band music can also now be accessed from the “**Band Member**” tab of the website.  
([www.northswindonbigband.co.uk](http://www.northswindonbigband.co.uk))

Many thanks to everyone for their help and attendance at rehearsals without you all there would not be a band.

David Baker  
Musical Director