



LISTEN TO THE BAND

The Story of Wotton-under-Edge District Band

Introduction

This book about the history of the Wotton Silver Band was conceived by Pat Goulding who played the tenor horn, baritone and second corner in the Band from 1933 at the age of eleven to 1989 when he retired from active membership and became an Honorary Life Member in recognition of his services to the Band.

He had to leave Gloucestershire for the armed forces during the war and then worked in London for nineteen years. He returned to this area in 1966 and played in the Band again. His experiences as a musician and the camaraderie with his musical colleagues had become a major part of his life, and this impelled him in retirement to do the research for the publication of the story of the band's history.

This undertaking involved Pat in several years of painstaking and thorough enquiry, sifting through the documentary evidence of newspaper reports and photographs, the minute records of committee meeting and discussions with colleagues to make sure he could 'report it the way it was.'

The result of these activities was the production of a lovingly prepared manuscript, replete with interesting material, that is now in the archive of the Wotton Historical Society. At a later date, Pat produced an abbreviated version of the larger document.

Bandboy Pat Goulding circa 1934



Pat Goulding and Elinor Fowler with "The People" Challenge Trophy in 1988 after winning the West of England Brass Band Championship.



In practice, however, both manuscripts were too large for publication, so a decision was taken to write a short book on the Band's history based upon Pat's material, with the exception of the chapters on the current band and Jack Southwood. Towards the end of 2001, Norah Barnes, Ruth Blake and Syd Harris took on this task. We decided that the best way to proceed was for each of us to write separate parts of the book and this arrangement has worked well.

The Wotton Silver Band was founded as the Abbey Band in 1894. It has continued for one hundred and eight years. It soon became obvious that the story of the Band is also the story of these years. The Band and the local and national society in which it is located reflect one another. The Band's activities are conditioned by factors outside itself. Some of the latter are local like playing at a wedding or a funeral, some are of national origin like Armistice Day parades. The Band serves the community. It welcomed Stanley Tubbs who was Managing Director of Tubbs Lewis & Co. when he became a member of parliament for the Stroud constituency after his election in 1922. It also gave concerts at gatherings of various political parties in the district.

In addition, the Band has been active in supporting religious functions and aiding the war effort in military conflicts. It has always participated in church and military parades in Wotton and in church fetes. The large number of hymns in the Band's repertoire is evidence of the Band's relationship with the church and religion.

