



Just a Note
Issue 19
Jan 2020

Andover Town Band

New Premises

For many years since its inception in 2010, Andover Town Band practiced in the Mitutoyo building. This and other support from Mitutoyo was fundamental to ATB's growth into the successful brass band it is today, for which we are immensely grateful. Eventually, circumstances changed and, although Mitutoyo continued (and continues) to be one of our main sponsors, it became necessary to find a new location for our weekly band practice.

At short notice, Andover C of E School stepped in and allowed us to hire their hall and classrooms to practise during 2019, whilst we continued storing our larger items at the Mitutoyo premises. We are indebted to both the school and Mitutoyo for helping us manage during this transition period.

As of this month, we are pleased to report that we are now based at what we hope will be our permanent home: St Michael and All Angels' Church in Colebrook Way, Andover. Once again, we are very thankful to be 'taken on board' by the Andover community. We know just what a 'big ask' it is to host a large, flourishing brass band, with all its space requirements (for group and individual practice, as well as storage) away from residential housing. We hope to fulfil our potential to improve to new heights and continue to do Andover proud in the coming years.



Portugal Tour

In May 2019, around 30 members, family and friends of ATB and the Community Band headed on a very special biennial event: a week-long European tour, in this case to Portugal, taking in many beautiful cities and towns including Lisbon, Porto and Colares.

As well as a lot of fun, great bonding experience and chance to represent Andover in bringing high-quality, British brass band music to another nation (received with standing ovations!), the band members (who paid all flight and tour costs from their own pockets) were able to support the Salvation Army in Portugal.

The main focus was on children's projects, e.g., fundraising for a 5-a-side football pitch and towards the children's summer camp. A highlight was supporting the launch of a brass band in the Salvation Army 'New World' Children's Home by donating 26 instruments (ranging from cornets to basses – just a few of which are pictured), 24 stands and several full sets of music. Many people supported this endeavour, and ATB thanks you all.



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Recent Concerts & Events

After another year packed full of concerts and events, we hope you managed to come and hear us play. Events have ranged from the summer concert and well-attended, post-tour, autumn concert at The Lights, through remembrance services and charity events (e.g., supporting the 'Pedal with Alice' child cancer charity in June, and playing at summer fetes and festivals in Longparish and Weyhill), to regular whole-band busking in Andover High Street's Time Ring.



Christmas wouldn't be Christmas without a brass band. Andover Baptist Church hosted both ATB's Christmas concert and the 'sell-out' Carols by Candlelight service at which the band played. ATB also went carolling in the Chantry Centre and local supermarkets most days in the run up to Christmas.



Each June, Andover Town Band holds its 'Dinner Dance', to which Friends (not just players and their families) are warmly invited and at which internal awards and prizes are given out, such as to the band's most highly performing and most improved players.

How You Can Help

As well as coming to our concerts and events, and spreading the word amongst your family and friends, another way you can help is through shopping online via **easyfundraising** and **Amazon Smile**. These both work by passing a small donation to ATB at no cost to you every time you shop online.



For easyfundraising, register to support Andover Town Band at <https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/> (there are nearly 4000 retailers in the scheme: see <https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/retailers/>).

For Amazon Smile, register to support Andover Town Band at <https://smile.amazon.co.uk/> (remember always to shop from Amazon Smile, not Amazon: products, prices, your membership details and Amazon Prime status are the same on both Amazon and Amazon Smile).

We always welcome new players (both those new to brass playing and returning players) – see 'ATB Community Band and Prospects' section below. Also, if you would like to get involved with the band in a non-musical capacity, we welcome all assistance, so please contact us.

Upcoming Concerts & Events

- [Sunday 1st March, 3pm](#) – concert at St Michael's Church, Andover
- [Saturday 30th May, 7pm](#) – joint fundraising concert for ATB and Andover Salvation Army

Ticket details will follow in due course, but note that the exciting 1st March concert is your chance to hear a sneak preview of the piece ATB will soon after perform at the West of England Contest, as well as being entertained by the Community Band with their pieces from the Downton Contest.

The West of England piece is 'Legacy for Brass Band' by Tom Davoren. This piece was specially commissioned by Tredegar Band (birthplace of NHS architect, Aneurin Bevan) to celebrate 70 years of the NHS. It symbolises the need for and eventual creation of the NHS, those touched by its existence and the march of progress as the NHS strives to meet today's demands. What a marvellous opportunity to enjoy a top-class, original brass band composition!

Contests – What Are They All About?

Andover Town Band and the Community Band take part in 3 contests each year as an enjoyable way to make sure we continually challenge ourselves, pay attention to the finer points of our playing and track our overall performance. It helps enhance the quality of our playing in concerts too! Here is an explanation of the three contests and how we are doing in each.



The **Wessex Contest** is held each **November** in Bournemouth or Poole, and attended by Andover Town Band (our most experienced band).

Each competing brass band chooses its own 'test piece' to play, so it is a great contest for spectators – more like a concert, with the added buzz of a competitive edge.

In 2019, ATB chose to perform *Tallis Variations*, a particularly stretching piece. With an unusually high turnout of bands, ATB was judged squarely in the middle of the field, but the added challenge of such a difficult piece was crucial in bringing the band on and 'upping' its overall standard.

The **West of England Brass Band Regional Championships** are held in **mid-March** each year in Torquay. Andover Town Band attends, and it is a real focus and highlight of the banding year.

Entrants come from a wide geographical area (Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Somerset, Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and some of Hampshire), so it may be considered the next level of contest up from Wessex.



Bands compete within 'sections' (going up, these are 4th, 3rd, 2nd, 1st and Championship) and it is where promotions and relegations up and down the sections are determined. In addition, the top 2-3 bands in each section proceed to the Finals of the National Brass Band Championships of Great Britain. These are held in September at The Centaur, Cheltenham Racecourse for sections 4-1, and in October at the Royal Albert Hall in London for the Championship section.

At the West of England contest, all bands within a section play the same test piece. In the higher sections, with so many top-quality players, the winning bands are often determined by minute intricacies in how the piece is interpreted and how the players unite in their performance.

In 2018, ATB's cumulative performance over previous years resulted in promotion to the West of England 1st section. Despite competing at a higher level than ever before, ATB returned a highly creditable performance, which they then built on in 2019 to finish 6th out of 16 contestants in the 1st section! It was hugely satisfying for the band to put Andover so firmly on the brass banding map.

The **Wessex Youth and Training Band Contest** is held each **January** in Downton, near Salisbury, and attended by ATB Community Band.



This can be described as an entertainment contest, where each band chooses a small number of pieces to entertain the adjudicator and audience for 20 minutes – in effect, each band performs a mini-concert.

In 2019, ATB Community Band won prizes for the Best Cornet Section and Best Bass Section. Breaking news for the 25th January 2020 contest is that we won prizes for the Best Cornet Section and Best Soloist (awarded to Findlay on cornet) and came 2nd overall!

ATB Community Band and Prospects

As you may know, Andover Town Band comprises a 'family' of bands with a clear progression path. At the top level of ability is Andover Town Band itself. But we also have ATB Community Band (our training band) and Prospects (our entry-level band).

Children and the occasional adult beginning to learn a brass instrument for the very first time start in Prospects. If you were lucky enough to attend our recent Christmas concert, you'll have heard their emerging talents showcased during the concert – no mean feat when you consider that many of these youngsters only recently got their first notes out of their instruments.

As their technique and confidence builds, they progress to the Community Band to further develop their skills and repertoire alongside others who've already progressed and those returning to brass banding after a break (sometimes of many years).

Highly talented Community Band players may go on to join Andover Town Band. For others, the Community Band remains an enjoyable level to play at, still requiring dedication and practice.

Community Band opportunities have been enhanced in recent years. As well as our annual contest and accompanying ATB at some concerts and events (e.g., mass busking in the Time Ring and carolling), the Community Band now has its own summer programme of events by way of playing at selected school fetes.



Many Andover Town Band and Community Band youngsters (under 19s in full-time education) are also members of Hampshire County Youth Band (HCYB) or their Training Band (middle level) or Junior Band (entry level for competent players). With a complementary raft of opportunities, teachers and music open to them, this really brings on our pool of ATB young talent to mutual benefit.

Last September, at the kind invitation of Test Valley Brass, some adults and children from ATB Community Band joined TVB at a one-day masterclass with renowned brass teacher, conductor and arranger, Chris Wormald. We were made very welcome and learnt new skills and tips.

For over two years, the Community Band has been lucky enough to be led and conducted by both Dave Wilds (ATB tuba player) and Paul Kennett (ATB euphonium player). Sadly, Paul needs to step down from next month owing to time pressure in his new job. We thank him for all his enthusiasm, effort, advice and encouragement, and are glad that we will still see him as he continues to play euphonium in ATB.



If you know of any children interested in learning a brass instrument in a friendly, supportive environment (or, indeed, would like to learn yourself – some of us adults have done just that with no prior musical experience!), then Prospects and the Community Band meet at St Michael's Church, Andover, at 6:30pm on Thursdays during term time. Please get in touch!

Keep In Touch (and Get In Touch)

Our website is at www.andovertownband.com and we are also on [Facebook](#) with all our latest news, photos and upcoming events. You can contact us through either of these channels.

Meet The Player



BRAD, aged 16
Tuba player in ATB

When and why did you start playing?

I started on cornet 5 years ago. We weren't a musical family, but I was obsessed with learning an instrument. Mum worked for the company supplying uniforms to ATB, so got in touch with them and took me to a small tutor session. I loved it!

Your brass banding journey to date?

After 18 months on cornet in Prospects, it became clear that tuba would be a better fit. I changed instrument, improved quickly and went into ATB's Community Band.

I soon found myself the only tuba player in the Community Band. This 'exposed' position meant lots of responsibility to play well. I practised hard and went to all rehearsals. I was awarded *Most Improved Player* at ATB's 2018 Dinner Dance.

Steve Large suggested HCYB for its good progression opportunities and different music styles, so I joined that too. The more practice the better! I went almost immediately into

their Training Band for 2 years, and was promoted to their top band last September for 2 years.

Last March, I was understudy on tuba for the Torquay contest. The intended player left the band just before Torquay, so I was on! We played well, and it secured my place in Andover Town Band.

Family links in the band?

Just me as a player, but Mum and Dad have always been so supportive. They are forever running me around and helping out. Dad did ATB's instrument loans and music library for several years.

Best thing about brass banding?

I've had so many positive experiences! It's how I first went abroad – on a band tour to Prague – and I got to play in the Royal Albert Hall at a concert organised by HCYB. Banding has been an opportunity to show off skills people might not assume I'd have. It makes me very happy!

And the challenges?

Oh, definitely sight reading when you first see a piece, especially if it's fast, with unusual rhythms, tempo changes and lots of style markings!

Your favourite brass band and music?

Woodfalls Band is incredible. My favourite piece? I have many! Paul Lovatt-Cooper's *Fire in the Blood* and *When Thunder Calls*, and *Bohemian Rhapsody*, which we played on the Prague tour, ...

Life outside the band?

I'm in my first year at Andover College, studying for A-levels in Film Making, Business Studies and Law. Previously, I was at John Hanson School. For hobbies, I'm into computer gaming and delving into vinyl albums. Vinyls are amazing to look at and it's nice to own music you can actually touch.

Future banding aspirations?

I hope to continue playing at university – and in Andover with ATB during the holidays, of course!

