



Just a Note
Issue 20
May 2020

Andover Town Band

Steve Hands Over The Baton



After 10 successful years, Steve Large, Musical Director and founder of Andover Town Band, has decided the time has come to hand over his baton.

Steve has brought so much to ATB over the years that it is hard to know where to begin. Indeed, without him, there would be no ATB. It was his initiative, supported by Mitutoyo and a handful of dedicated players, that got the enterprise off the ground in the first place.

From absolutely nothing ten years ago, we now comprise a fully-fledged family of bands. The Town Band started contesting in the 4th Section and has now consolidated its position in the 1st Section nationally. Apart from contesting, the band is regularly seen performing in concerts and fundraising events in and around Andover. Steve has also led the band on several music tours abroad. We have a successful Youth & Community Band that continues to do well at the Downton Contest and produce players for the Town Band, while our beginners' group seems to go from strength to strength.

So, what motivated Steve to create ATB from scratch and what are the secrets of his success? Steve says his musical inspiration and role model was primarily his father, a conductor of both Salvation Army and contest bands. Steve has also enjoyed working with and learning from some of the country's top conductors. Steve's motto has always been "the harder you work the better you get", with commitment being the secret ingredient. With this in mind, he felt there was room in Andover for a brass band committed to continuous musical improvement in addition to enjoyment and friendship, whilst developing and encouraging young players of the future.

From this vision, the seeds of Andover Town Band were sown. *See our next issue to recap on what the early days were like and how the organisation has grown and developed over such a short space of time.*

We are all familiar with Steve's compelling, humorous, ad lib and self-effacing audience interaction and engagement. Behind the scenes, he has been hardworking, supportive and proactive in the growth of the organisation. Asked what he does for a living, he was heard to say, "I conduct Andover Town Band, and in my spare time, I work for Parker Steel."

Steve particularly enjoyed his time helping the younger players in the Youth & Community Band and is proud to see so many of them develop a life-long love of making music wherever their futures have taken them.

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He also cites 'family' as a real highlight of banding for him – sharing his musical passion with Alison, Emily and Adam. None of this would have been possible without their support. During his time in Andover, Steve has loved seeing his friends also experience the pleasure of sharing a lifetime hobby with their children.

Steve says he has never had a detailed masterplan for the future – for him, it is too constraining. He has always aimed for continuous improvement and measures success on a full band at rehearsal working hard together and enjoying their playing!

So, what is Steve going to do with all his new-found free time, having retired early from Parker Steel in August last year after 40 years' service? Well, apart from continuing to support the bands where they can, he and Alison intend to travel and see more of the world ... just as soon as it re-opens!

And We Welcome Scott

Steve is a hard act to follow, but we are delighted that Scott Stewart has agreed to take on the challenge, and there can be few better suited. Scott's wife, Philippa, and two children, Findlay and Cameron, are already part of the family of ATB and Scott can often be seen playing with the band. Over the last 8 months, Scott has worked closely with Steve and shares his vision in working hard to be the very best you can.



We are convinced that Scott, Principal Trombone with the Woodfalls Band, will continue Steve's hard work and see the organisation continue to progress.

A Challenging Time – Do You Know Anyone Who Can Help?

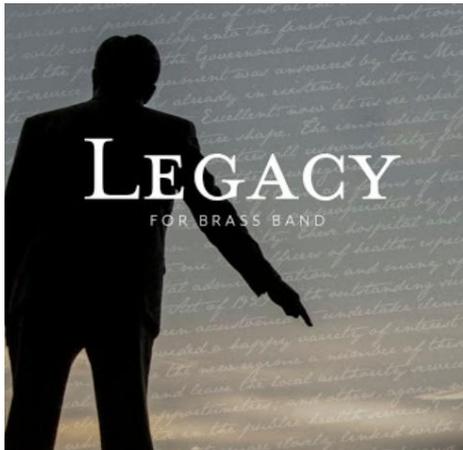
As you can imagine, social distancing and the strict lockdown during COVID-19 has provided many a challenge for ATB, from the inability to rehearse together in our bands and tutor/motivate our youngsters right to the last-minute cancellation of our AGM.

We are coping as best we can through personal practice (top tip: audio lags during Skype and Zoom are not conducive to shared practice sessions!) and online committee meetings, and are looking forward to better times ahead.

Unfortunately, the band has also been financially hit by COVID-19 as it prevents us from fundraising via our concerts and events. We are very grateful to Mitutoyo for the last 10 years of sponsorship (and hope it may long continue!) but always welcome additional business sponsors, individual donations and legacy gifting, however large or small. If you or anyone you know would wish to help in this area, or perhaps you know of grant funding opportunities that we might not be aware of, we would love to hear from you. Please e-mail us at atb_mail@andovertownband.com or use our contact page at <https://andovertownband.com/Contact-US>.

Many of us are turning to online shopping during this lockdown and a straightforward way to support ATB at no extra cost to yourself is through easyfundraising and Amazon Smile (as detailed in the last newsletter). And, of course, we look forward to welcoming everyone to our concerts again as soon as we are able to perform.

Recent Concerts & Events



Thankfully, we were able to fit in our last concert in early March, shortly before the lockdown, to bring you a sneak preview of Tom Devoran's 'Legacy for Brass Band', the Town Band's test piece for the West of England Contest, as well as the Youth & Community Band's pieces from January's Downton Contest.

A piece entitled 'Legacy' was always going to have particular significance for Steve at the culmination of his leadership of the band, reflecting the musical legacy he would leave behind, and he relished working with the band to get their interpretation and delivery of this particularly challenging test piece to be the very best it could.

Contests at the higher levels are always nerve-racking affairs, with unpredictable results highly dependent on a particular adjudicator's analysis on the day. This year, an added complexity was whether the contest would even go ahead, given the rapidly developing COVID-19 situation. Ultimately, the contest was held the weekend immediately before social distancing measures were introduced (a week before the formal lockdown), and ATB came 8th out of 18 bands in the 1st Section, a highly creditable and well-deserved result and a fitting tribute to Steve's leadership.

The 'Legacy' piece, being a celebration of 70 years of the NHS, now has even greater resonance.

ATB Youth & Community Band and Prospects

This spring, we also say goodbye to Dave Wilds, the Youth & Community Band's (YCB's) Musical Director and joint conductor for the last two years. During his tenure, we have benefited enormously from Dave's vision, calm approach, organisation, encouragement and enthusiasm, and we wish him well as he steps away from banding to make time for other things.

Going forwards, we've set up a small management team to take some of the administrative burden from the shoulders of our new YCB Musical Director, once in place.

Amongst all the changes at the top, we are pleased to have the stability of Marie Wilds still leading Prospects, and Dave & Marie's daughter, Maddie, continuing to play in the YCB ... and it seems apt to feature Maddie in our 'Meet The Player' article overleaf!



Did You Know?

Most of the instruments in a British brass band are 'conical bore' (diameter of tube increases as you go along its length) rather than 'cylindrical bore' (diameter remains the same along its length). This is what gives the British brass band its distinctively bright, mellow timbre.

Meet The Player



MADDIE, aged 12
Tenor horn player in YCB

When and why did you start playing?

My mum, dad and brother, Dom, played with Andover Town Band, so I've been to all their concerts ever since I was little. I was keen to try playing, so started on cornet when I was 5. But it was difficult as I was so young and I hated it, so I stopped again within a year.

Aged 9, I tried on cornet again, but still couldn't get the high notes and didn't like the tiny mouthpiece on cornet. I wanted to be like my mum, who plays tenor horn, so I switched to that instrument 18 months ago. It has been so much better!

Your brass banding journey to date?

Once I started playing tenor horn, I improved more quickly, so was able to move up from ATB's Prospects to the Youth & Community Band, where I still play. At the same time (i.e., about 18 months ago), I joined Hampshire County Junior Band too.

Family links in the band?

My mum, dad and Dom, of course, but it's great getting to know all the people in the band. It's just like one big family with both adults and children of all ages.

Best thing about brass banding?

As well as getting to know everyone generally, it's really nice to do overseas tours and trips with the band. I like combining music with a holiday, and there's a wide group of people and always plenty of children to play games with. The other thing I like is when you've been practising a piece for a long time and you finally 'get it'.

And the challenges?

Trying to learn a new piece, especially when it's really fast and I can't understand the notation.

Your favourite brass player and music?

I really like Owen Farr, who's a well-known tenor horn player. He's inspirational and very good at what he does. I saw him at the Hampshire Festival of Brass in March this year. My favourite piece of music is 'Hey, Jude', which features tenor horn – we all came and stood at the front to play it.

Life outside the band?

I'm in Year 7 at Winton School in Andover and my favourite subjects are Art, Science and English. I like drawing and writing stories, and our Science teacher gives us really interesting experiments. Outside school and band, I go to church. I enjoy the church services and the fun children's games and activities and time with our youth leader.

Future banding aspirations?

I want to be in the Town Band and go to lots of contests and tours. But, most of all, I want to play to my absolute best.