

A town without a Band is not a complete entity.

There are many occasions when civic functions of one sort or another take place where the function has no character without the services of a Band and this was realised in Masterton one hundred years ago with the formation of a Municipal Band.

Throughout the years, the Band has had many ups and downs, but today is still in existence and its importance to the town is recognised by the Borough Council which annually makes a monetary contribution towards maintaining the Band.

On behalf of the people of Masterton, I would like to congratulate the Band on reaching its Centenary and wish it well in its celebrations next year and for its continued success in the years ahead.

N. S. TANKERSLEY, Mayor.

A hundred years of almost unremitting endeavour in the cause of band music for Masterton has brought its own reward - a very fine town band, well equipped, uniformed and housed, but most important still, a band that is based deeply on the very heart of the community.

This interesting history brings out more than anything else the fact that our Municipal Band is a grand old Masterton institution with roots going right back to the very beginnings of the town.

The Band has succeeded and succeeded splendidly sometimes against overwhelming odds. Surely this must augur well for the future.

The Masterton Trust Lands Trust with whom the Band has been closely associated over the past century wishes it well in the next century and is pleased to contribute to the publication of this history.

DONALD THOMPSON,

Chairman Masterton Trust Lands Trust.



The first photograph of Ted Braggins Band, the 'Father' of our present Masterton Municipal Silver Band.

THE MASTERTON MUNICIPAL SILVER BAND (INC.)

HISTORY

The Masterton Municipal Band at present is a far cry from the band of the 1870's.

It would appear from research done that the beginning of the Brass band in Masterton as we know it today was around the years 1873-1874.

Mr Ted BRAGGINS ran a band of players of several different types of instruments including at least one flute from a hotel affectionately known as the "Top House" situated where St Brides Convent, Queen Street, stands today.

The band was not a uniformed one, it appears it was brought together apart from practice for the pleasure of the public and players alike.

Mr Henry PEARSON was the next person who took up the task of band work in the town. This worthy gentleman was a tailor in business on a site where the Farmers stands today. He took on the monumental task of making twenty uniforms for the band and so PEARSON'S Private Brass Band was formed.

It is my assumption at this point that the division into two bands began because as records reveal from 1885 or so onward two bands existed; the Central or Kuripuni band, PEARSON'S or the Masterton Municipal Band as it is now.

Because, it is apparent to the writer that a certain amount of feeling existed between the two bands from this time on until the early 1900's.

Mr Henry Von KEISENBERG next appears as the leader of the band and his contribution was nothing short of amazing, because under his conductorship the band rose from a small country town band to a real contest force of good musicians.

Mr Henry Von KEISENBERG was a leading conductor in the town who organised practically all the operas, short plays, conducted both a concert and dance orchestra as well as teaching the pianoforte professionally.

The band secretary of the time one C. H. ALDRIDGE accepted his resignation with regret on the 7 October 1899 and the committee bestowed on him the honour of 'Life Member', probably the first one the band had created. It's of interest to note that his name does not appear on the present Life Members Board.

It was during this year the instruments of incorporation were filed so the band was an incorporated society from 1899.

Mr W. H. CORRIGAN took the band to its first contest in that same year which was held at Palmerston North. It will be seen that the band was now emerging, thanks to the valuable contribution of such dedicated men as Henry KEISENBERG, as a good musical combination.

A report from the Wairarapa Daily Times 1899 is worthy of note:

Masterton has no need to be disappointed with the place their band obtained, as their performance was a most creditable one, and pleasingly commented on by the public and bandsmen alike. Probably on account of Masterton having no uniform the Palmerston papers did not take kindly to them and after the first selection the 'Times' gave them rather a



Pearsons Private Brass Band.



The Bandroom, home for the band for over 60 years, stands in the beautiful Queen Elizabeth Park.

severe slating and stated that their playing was of the 'Draught Horse' nature. Strange to say the judge only placed them four points behind the Wellington Garrison Band in this selection. One of the bandsmen created great amusement by prominarding the streets after the publication of the above wearing a huge bell topper with the words 'Masterton Clydesdale' placarded thereon. (Wairarapa Daily Times) 1889 - H. KEISENBERG reporter?

Very scant record is available of the events of the band around this time although the Wairarapa Star of October 1893 reports a parade led by the local fire brigade holding lighted torches and followed by a combined brass band probably Kuripuni and the Masterton Municipal for a benefit concert for Mr John THOMPSON who was seriously ill at the time.

Mr Von KEISENBERG was responsible for this venture and both newspapers of the town record with great superlatives the success of this venture.

Mr J. J. COSGROVE an outstanding player of the Baritone was a pupil of Mr KEISENBERG and he trained him and indeed accompanied him on the piano in his successful bid at the North Island Contest at Masterton in 1903. Mr COSGROVE won the Baritone solo and was therefore one of the first of many great soloists who have passed through the band.

Before dismissing the Palmerston North contest it is important to note that this was only the second band contest held in N.Z. as far as the writer can make out and our band started for the first time at it, and in just four years the band felt strong enough, and capable enough to stage a major contest in the town.

The band also had a set of uniforms affectionately known as the 'Old Bottle Green'. It was a grand sort of uniform ornate with braid and ribbons and the cap was of the pill box style with a peaked front.

Inquiries reveal that the newly formed Masterton Trust Lands Trust made a grant of £25 or \$50 towards the cost of the band uniforms. This grant was made in the year ended March 1901.

It would be fairly evident that when the grant was made the band must already have purchased the uniforms making the uniform of the band a late 1900 or early 1901 vintage.

The year ended 31st March 1900 saw the Trust's first grant to the band of £114 or \$228, a substantial grant even by today's standards, towards the purchase of a set of instruments, therefore it is fairly safe to assume that the band must have parted finally with the old borrowed, and second hand set, that they must have struggled with through their first 24 to 25 years.

The contribution of the Masterton Trust Lands Trust through the years toward the band and contesting amounts to \$3,772, an effort worthy of the gratitude of all bandsmen and people with a real love of fostering brass band music within our town.

Harmony between the South Band or Kuripuni Band must have been genuine although hearsay has it that rivalry between the two bands was very real. After the Masterton Band had had five years use out of their uniforms they passed them onto the South Band and therefore they did not leave the town.

An old bandsman has told the writer of how the band used to have light for their street parades in those days. He at five or six years of age, along with eleven or twelve other little boys, were given stone beer bottles complete with wick and kerosene and each boy was placed at a strategic spot amid the band and off they set flickering their way musically down Queen Street. The bandsman concerned did this for the South Band so no doubt this was the accepted mode of lighting for the town band also.

The sight of the band approaching, playing, flickering, and smoking, must have been one to behold. It is no wonder uniforms did not last long those days, what a fortune the dry cleaners would have made had they been in business then.

Mr F. W. G. McLEOD who ran a "Stationery and Music Emporium" and was also agent for "Barbers Dye Works" of Queen Street, Masterton was the conductor of the town band when the 6th North Island contest was held in Masterton in 1903.

Mr Chas H. ALDRIDGE was the band secretary and also a member of the Executive of the North Island Brass Bands Association. Mr F. HUNN who was the band's Drum Major, and a very striking fellow from his photographs with slick hair and a 'Kitchener' moustache. These men along with a local committee

which consisted of, amongst others His Worship the Mayor Mr HOLLINGS, Mr D. CASELBERG, and a Rev. P. G. W. EAREE, it is hard to imagine a parson in the band world, but these are the facts of our history.

This committee took on the monumental task of staging a five day contest in our town from the 2nd to the 6th of February 1903. What a contest it was to be, no lesser a personage that the great J. Ord HUME Esq. of Edinburgh was invited to judge at it. He was, and I quote, the 1903 Official Programme, "Chief Adjudicator in the United Kingdom from 1894 to 1901 inclusive, over 200 contests being judged by him during that period."

According to the writer, that makes a total of 28 contests a year at least, or better than one contest every two weeks, some effort you will agree.

The prize list was decided on:

£100 or \$200 plus 25 silver medals with a gold medal for the conductor - 1st prize.

£50 or \$100 2nd prize.

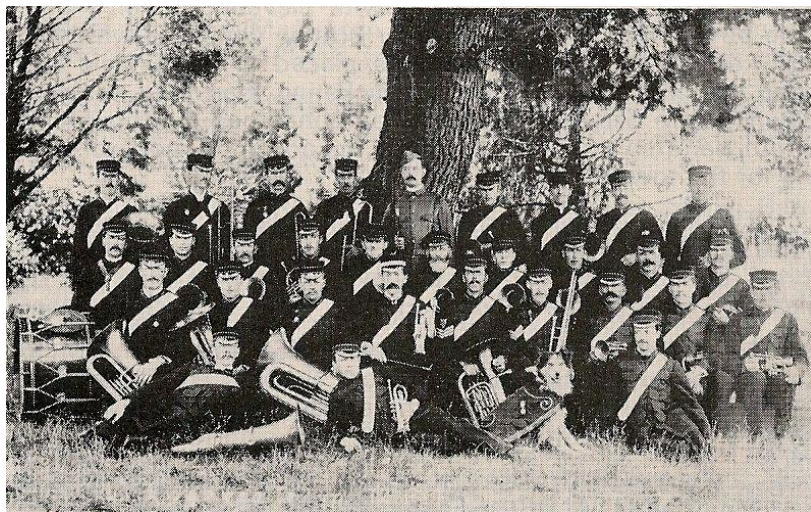
£25 or \$50 - 3rd prize.

£15 or \$30 - 4th prize.

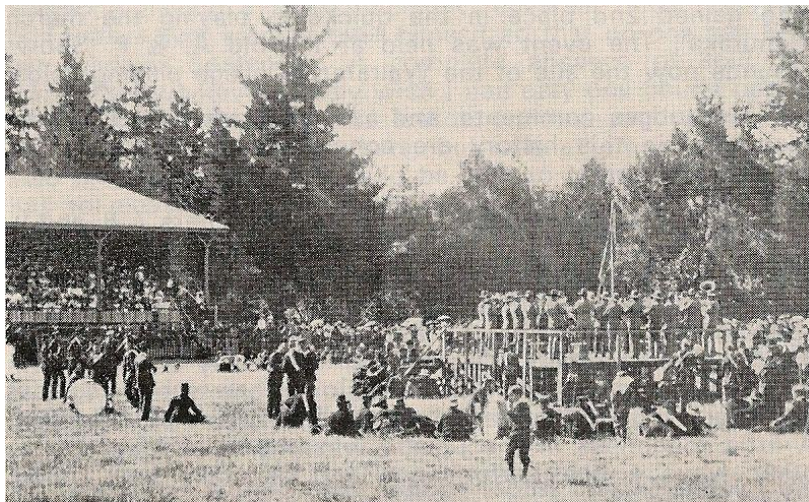
£10 or \$20 - 5th prize.

One B flat cornet presented by Hawke & Sons, London - 6th prize.

The Handsome Besson Challenge Shield valued at £50 or \$100 will be held for the year by the band with the highest aggregate in both selections and for music in the Grand Military Quickstep competitions. The Wanganui Garrison were the current holders at the time. A gold mounted Ebony Baton



F. W. G. McLeod's 1903 band. Note the mascot "Roy" who has a medal too.



The Garden Party, Masterton Park, 1903. Note the fence in front of the grandstand which has long since gone, although the stand is still in use.

valued £5/5/0 or \$10.50 and donated by Chass Begg & Co, Dunedin was to be presented to the Conductor of the band with the Highest points in both test selections. All the above has been quoted from the official list of prizes in the programme, and the selections were:

First Test: "Le Domino Noir" (SWIFT)

Final Test: "Un Ballo in Maschera" (HUME).

It was at this contest that Mr J. J. COSGROVE won the baritone solo and Mr J. Ord HUME was the judge.

J. J. COSGROVE was born in Napier on the 29 February 1872 and joined the band at the age of twelve. The writer was able to speak with his young brother who was in 1971 in his 88th year and he said that there were five COSGROVE boys and they played for a while in the Woodville Brass Band. J. J. left Masterton and became Bandmaster of the Waipawa Brass Band from 1905. Whilst he was in Masterton he worked for Coradine and Whittaker but later became a business partner with a Mr MOLLOY in Waipawa.

Another brother Jim COSGROVE played for the Carterton Band for a number of years and he later went to Napier where he played for the Port Ahuriri Band.

Mr J. COSGROVE of Wanganui who supplied the writer with the above information also played for the band whilst it was the 17th Ruahine Regimental Band and recalls returning to Masterton and playing at ANZAC day services and travelling with the band to Featherston to take part in their ANZAC day parade and then refreshments at the fire station afterwards.

The contest was a great success for the Masterton Band who gained 2nd place in the quickstep playing the march 'Rimutaka'. The event was held at the old A & P Showgrounds now the site of the Wairarapa College playing fields.

The judges comments, and as comments go, as will be seen later in this history are concise, cutting, critical, but constructive, were:

"Opens well, but ragged in the unison at bars 7, 8, and 9.

Soon all right. Steady playing and well tuned. The bass solo plays well, trio opens very well. A good performance here, Soprano is very good. All playing very nicely. Opening is again good, except for the bad unisons, which should be much lighter. Cornets all play well especially the trio with tenors. Trombones are now a trifle overdone in opening, but beautifully together in piano portion. A very fine performance. A little roughness in the unison was the chief fault, but in other ways a fine performance and generally well tuned. Music marks 72."

The winners were as follows:

Wanganui Garrison - 151 points, 1st. Masterton - 143 points, 2nd. Wellington Garrison - 142½ points, 3rd.

All will agree that this performance by our band was nothing short of marvellous when one realizes all the work that they had to do as "hosts" for the contest as well as competing. Just a note in passing, the writer has in his possession the programme of this contest and it is of interest to note that in every party and solo event at the 1903 contest the Masterton Band was represented, a tremendous feat for a small country town band.

The final championship points for the contest were announced and Masterton gained 6th place and with it the B Flat cornet presented by Hawke and Son, London. The writer wonders what has become of this cornet today.

I mentioned the comments of the adjudicator in the band events and I will now present the comment given in one of the solo events. I am led to believe that these are now quite famous although the comments of the player on reception of the report were never recorded. After reading them bandsmen will no doubt realize why. I quote:

"Andantine" - A lack of tone and expression is at once noted. Cadenza - Very moderate especially the second one, which could hardly crawl out of the bell of the instrument at the close. Andantino - Very dead, dead, dead! Cadenza - Tame and quite uninteresting. No tone, no inspiration. Thema - The same fault. No tone. Many parts of the solo are too weak to leave the instrument, and they remain in the tube and spoil the chance of other notes escaping doom. Cadenza - Like an echo only.

Var. 1 - Good tempo, good but very consumptive.

Var. II - No expression at all, and it just sounds to me like someone having a quiet midnight rehearsal underneath the bed

with a wet blanket over himself so that no one can hear him. Adagio Sostenuto: A complete absence of soul: No inspiration whatever. I only wish I had only one hour's opportunity to give this player a lesson on tone production. The talent is most assuredly there, but it is at present latent in solo playing. A soloist should be akin to a great singer who has to please a critical audience as well as a critical judge. Expression in music is like expression in speech! and music, like speech, is nothing without expression.

"We understand that Mr Eli SMITH intends presenting a gold medal to Mr J. Ord HUME, Judge at the band contest in recognition of his able services in that capacity. The medal will be on view in Mr E. DOUGALLS shop window this afternoon, Mr DOUGALL being the maker of the medal". Masterton Daily Times, February 1903.

I wonder if the player whose report appears above endorsed Mr Eli SMITH's sentiments.

Mr J. Ord HUME at the conclusion of the contest assured the bandsmen that a band to visit the "Old Country" would be a great financial and musical success, his predictions proved correct and the "Hinernoa" band as it was called was the first of several New Zealand bands to visit overseas. For the first band to visit England a Masterton player was chosen, a Mr H. DIXON.

The next contest was held in Palmerston North in 1904, Masterton gained 4th place in the test selection which was "Beauties of Wagner". The band that year also gained 4th place in the aggregate. In the quickstep that year the band were placed 3rd, giving them 2nd place for the Besson Challenge Shield.

At the above contest Mr J. DIXON received 109 points and went on to win a solid gold medal and the baritone solo. Mr C. MAHER gained 1 st place in the Monster Bass section as it was then called, mind you, the name sometimes even now, would be quite apt. Mr R. J. YOUNG who was later to become conductor of the band was placed 2nd with 105 points. One point behind the leader Mr G. W. HUTCHINSON who also competed in the trombone section and was in the later years to gain the distinction of being the "Grand Old Man" of the band who held the band together throughout the difficult years of the 2nd World War.

The drum major at the Palmerston North Contest was a Mr BLANE who was complimented on the manner in which the band was turned out.

The writer has discovered that Mr F. W. G. McLEOD a conductor of the band from 1900 to 1911 was in fact a member of the same band that visited Britain in 1903-04 and that whilst the band was in the British Isles, the conductor Lt. HERD, conductor of the Wellington Garrison Band decided to settle there and the members of the "Hinemoa" band elected Mr McLEOD as their conductor for the remainder of the tour. The band then had the distinction of having two members in the first

pioneer National Band. This tradition was to follow unbroken with each successive National Band except the 1970 one when Mr D. CARMEN was nominated 1st reserve.

1905 saw Auckland chosen as the venue for the contest and our band appeared to be well placed at this contest.

In 1906 the band attended the Nelson Carnival celebrations and contest. At this contest the band was one point behind Denniston in the 1st test with 94 points.

Masterton won the quickstep with 148¼ points. In the aggregate our band was placed 1st with 247½ points and Denniston 2nd with 243. A fairly good win by any standard.

A brief note from the daily paper. I quote:

"On the way to the Masterton Railway Station, on Saturday last a lady in Pine Street (now Perry Street) threw an old slipper at the band in a manner to indicate her good wishes, which the band fully reciprocated. Then, when down the valley a neat parcel was handed to conductor Mr McLEOD. Everyone was eager to see its contents, which together with a note from conductor REES, of the Grey town Band, expressing their good wishes, were neatly packed horse-shoes, done up in the band's colours. These kindly actions all help to encourage the boys and they now have the emblem hanging in their practice room".

It is obvious that support for the band was very real in those days and one can sense a note of district pride in the Band as it sallied forth to the South Island Contest.

Some soloists who did well at that contest were:

Tenor Horn: 1st. W. NORMAN

Euphonium: 3rd, A. RUSSELL

Monster Bass: 1 st, MAHER

Trombone: 2nd, R. J. YOUNG

E Flat Bass: 2nd, H. DIXON

Sop. Cornet: 3rd, S. SIMPSON

The band received a civic send off by the Mayor and Councillors of Nelson, the band boys being smothered with bon bons.

It is interesting to note the real keenness for music of the time, a note in the daily paper by "Moderato" who incidentally by his patriotic band leaning was no doubt a member of the band, informs us that an orchestra within the band had been formed comprising no less than 17 members, amongst whom was the name of F. HUNN the Drum Major who played the 'Cello'. The writer finds it hard to imagine any of the drum majors of his era wielding a 'cello' as well as a mace, none the less this was the case.

It was around this time that the band started one of its several name changes. The band were according to the "N.I.

Gazette" sworn in as the regimental band of the 5th Ruahine Rifles Volunteers. "Moderato" again reports that one drill parade is held per week and after the required number of drill parades Surgeon Captain COOK would instruct the men in stretcher drill and ambulance work. He hastens to add "I believe it is not intended to altogether drop the old title of Masterton Municipal, for various local and contesting purposes".

It looks to the writer as though the above move was a very diplomatic one, because as records show uniforms and instruments were getting fairly worn and by this "patriotic" venture the band could look to the government for a little assistance towards the maintenance of the band.

During the year under consideration a report is given of the band's fortnightly concerts held in the band rotunda. The selection played at one such payout was the grand selection "William Tell" - Rossini, the march "Marine Artillery" - W. RIMMER, "Australasian" - W. RIMMER and the trombone solo "Death of Nelson" - BRAHAM. The present bands experience of payouts in the 'concrete ediface' in the park makes one wonder at the calibre of our forebearers, how they survived wind and cold twice a fortnight in this Coronation monument.

1907 was the year of the great Christchurch Exhibition the forerunner of many such events and the father of our present day trade fair and such like exhibits.

An exciting feature of this exhibition besides the band contest was "West's Moving Pictures". I quote: "West's moving pictures have been on exhibition at half hour intervals daily since the exhibition opened, in the small hall known as the Castle Theatre, were shown for the 1,107th consecutive time this evening. Mr WEST has now put through one and a half million feet of films, or over 285 miles, and some twenty four million photographs have, he states, been projected on the screen. He claims that this is a world's record, and likely to stand for some time" unquote. Poor Mr WEST, little did he know that within 25 years the marathon movies such as 'Gone with the Wind', 'The Ten Commandments' etc would be here in all their long record breaking glory.

Twenty six bands entered for the exhibition contest including Newcastle City (N.S.W.). The winning band was Kaikorai, Dunedin, with 363 total points. The Masterton band gained 7th place at this great contest and included in this was 2nd place in the Quickstep.

The reception at the Masterton Railway Station was nothing short of heroic.

As the train drew into the station the Masterton South Band played "See the conquering hero comes" after which the South Band played the band to the Post Office where a large crowd was waiting.

Mr F. W. G. McLEOD spoke and thanked everyone for their welcome and called three cheers for the South Band. Mr

A. W. HOGG, M.H.R., the member for Masterton spoke in eulogistic terms about the band's performance then called three cheers for the boys.

The South Band had by now obtained a degree of musical ability and had been fitted out in uniforms, these being the old bottle green of the town band. This transaction took place around 1905. The fact that the Trust Lands Trust had put up the money for the old uniforms made it a wise decision that the South Band should have them, thus keeping the uniforms within the town.

As far as the writer can ascertain it was after the Exhibition Contest that the Borough Council saw fit to provide the band with its present band room.

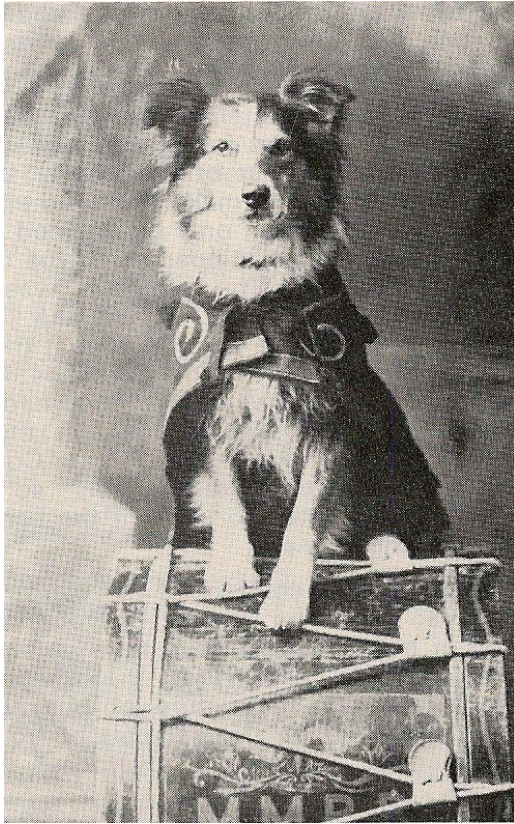
At a function to mark an annual band reunion Councillors McEWEN, EWINGTON, MORRIS and HOAR, all referred to the good services the band rendered the public. The sacrifices the bandsmen made and concluded by saying that it was only right that the ratepayers should supplement their efforts with a suitable bandroom.

This contest was to mark the peak for the band for a while and as can be seen all the efforts of the Conductor and bandsmen had been well worthwhile.

The band had not only built up to a first class contest band but had also gained tremendous public support.



Flanked by the Life Members Board are those who served their country from the band and several who made the supreme sacrifice.



"Roy" Official Mascot of the Band.

The writer still meets old people who speak with great awe and reverence about the "F. W. G. McLEOD band".

A band mascot around the era was a crossbred Collie named Roy who in 1903 was seen in a uniform of Bottle Green and gold, and this dog appears to have gained pride of place in at least several of the old bandsmen's hearts as they saw fit to have a photographic study made of Roy and his picture still has a place of pride in the present bandroom.

The dog is standing with forepaws on the old rope tension drum with the Masterton Band initials painted on it.

The writer has discovered a rather amusing incident regarding the gift of the present band room. It appears that when the band was given the Old Tea Kiosk as it was originally, the Council of the day either didn't know or didn't tell the band that the mortgage was not cleared and it was not until 1925 when the band ran a most successful carnival which included the use of lighted Gondolas on the park lake from which the band played, that they were able to clear the indebtedness on the building.

The Masterton Trust Lands Trust to whom great credit should be due, assisted financially each year with the cost of running the band and indeed at the time, the South band, and an interesting fact now appears, the grants were more to the South Band than to the town band in the period under review 1907 to 1913.

In the year 1912, a most irate secretary wrote to the Trust and pointed out amongst other things: "It is the aim and object of every member to make the band efficient and a credit to the town, and this can only be attained by engaging a conductor at a salary that is impossible for us to pay under the present circumstances". The secretary was Mr W. R. ANDREWS, and the plea was not in vain, the Trust saw fit to reply with a letter asking the band just what they had done in the year under review. There follows a series of interesting letters setting out when and where the band had played and as good bandsmen they tossed in the fact that they had played in Hall Street for the Masterton Picture Company. This of course "put the cat amongst the pigeons" so to speak as the Trust immediately wanted to know if the band had been paid for the Picture engagement.

Mr HATHAWAY the secretary of the band replacing Mr ANDREWS states: "I am in receipt of yours of the 23rd Sept. 1913 and in reply have to state that we were not paid for the performances you mentioned". It looks as though the band hoped to get paid for the picture job but missed out so hoped to reap the benefit or at least part of from the Trust coffers. Sounds familiar tactics even by today's standards.

I am sure you would agree.

On Friday 5 January 1907, the Masterton band moved into its present bandroom, therefore the band has been in their rooms some 65 years, a very good effort indeed.

Bandmaster HUTCHINSON proposed that the committee write to the Borough Council offering to sell the old band shed for the princely sum of £15 or \$30. This building was situated where ZD stands today and once housed the fire brigade.

On April the 26th of the same year besides the presentation of a marble clock to a bandsman who was to marry. Conductor McLEOD and Drum Major HUNN were both presented with walking sticks for their efforts in the contest just past. Today such a gift would be made rather tongue in cheek.

The following month Bandmaster HUTCHINSON moved that the Kuripuni band be allowed to have the old band shed at the rate of 10/- per week or \$1 to be paid in advance and that they also pay for their own gas. Carried.

In June 1907 a meeting of bandsmen interested in the formation of an orchestra within the band was held and the new orchestra decided to practice on Monday evenings, then break and reform for band practice.

Amongst the names of foundation members were men who were to later give of their musical abilities not only within this

band but to the Amateur Theatricals and musical lovers of the town.

The band committee of the day had started negotiations to secure a Borough Council grant and letters were dispatched and replies received from bands at Napier, Wanganui, Wellington and Port Chalmers, regarding their respective Borough Council grants.

Secretary MAHER a bass player and Sergeant of the band had a great scheme to uplift the appreciation of the arts by proposing a competition which consisted of Essays, original letters, original stories and original poems. The scheme also included speeches, elocution, spelling contests, music, singing to suit all voices and a grand choral contest with one test selection and one own choice. What a programme, I can't imagine today's bandsmen even entertaining such an idyllic suggestion let alone putting it into action, with the exception of course the Original stories section which present day bandsmen easily qualify for.

As a final comment a whistling contest was also decided on and contestants were asked to submit names.

On July the 17th of the same year, under the chairmanship of His Worship the Mayor, Mr J. M. CORADINE, a citizens committee was formed. This committee was to assist the band at all times with the raising of finances and relieve the band of this problem. The Committee so formed had such names amongst their members as Mr T. WAGG, Rev. BUTTLE, G. GROOMBRIDGE, J. C. EWINGTON, R. J. YOUNG, Dr COOK and several bandsmen of the day.

Bob WARD a bandsman of note and to whom the writer owes a debt of gratitude for the notes he kept of the early days, presented the new bandroom with a set of chairs apparently made by him. These had the usual legal strings attached to them but the gift was a good one and much appreciated by the boys. The same gentleman also saw fit to donate a set of blinds to the new bandroom and so according to the wins or losses of the band the blinds could be placed accordingly, up or down. Until a short while ago the blind clips still remained on the architrave of the bandroom.

Bandsman B. ELDER moved at that time that hotel accommodation be booked for New Plymouth contest at the Imperial Hotel, the charge to be 6/6d or 65 cents per man per day. On today's standard the hotel would almost ask that amount to book the band on its register.

Although by today's standards the events and action of the bandsmen of that era to say the least appeared quaint. yet their hearts were in the right place.

An incident worthy of note is recorded for our benefit. Apparently a family, Woodward by name, were in dire straits so the bakers and butchers of Masterton played a fancy costume football match as a benefit for them at which the band played. The following Sunday the bandsmen arranged a benefit

concert in the park and were able to hand over £3/12/6 or \$7.25 to this unfortunate family.

A motion of 11 January 1918 is well worth noting it was decided that each man put up £1 or \$2 towards the New Plymouth contest expenses then if the band won the prize money half the money would be refunded to the men talk about dangling the carrot before the donkey's nose! The 'band in fact won £20 or \$40 at the contest. I wonder if the refunds were duly paid to the men concerned.

To those of us not so older bandsmen it was around this time that the band saw fit to persuade the Solway Showgrounds Committee to erect a band-rotunda. This was duly done and as a boy the writer remembers clearly playing from the rostrum situated at the north end of the grandstand and thinking as boys do, what would happen if the structure built of wood incidentally, collapsed especially during the execution of a band number. Bandsmen would also have vivid memories of the effect a brass band had on the animals in the grand parade who hadn't been indoctrinated to band music as the watching public.

Of local interest the band agreed to charge £10 or \$20 for an engagement at the Maori Pa at Papawai out of Greytown and further decided to split the fee amongst the band. I presume this was not paid on the day of the play out because such a course would have been fatal with so many "convivial establishments" to pass on the return trip to Masterton.

The loyalty to the crown was indeed without peer and I have been entrusted with a copy of the memorial service held on the showgrounds on Friday the 20 May 1910 at 2.30 p.m. the day appointed for the funeral of His late Majesty King Edward VII.

The massed bands of Masterton Municipal and the Kuripuru or South Band were to march immediately behind the Masterton Rifles and proceed to the Showgrounds playing the Dead March from Saul. Upon arrival they formed up and let the rest of the procession pass through their ranks as they continued to play the Dead March.

Amongst the Hymns of the day were "Rock of Ages", "Nearer my God to Thee" and "Abide with Me". The ceremony concluded with the playing of the Funeral March. Quite a moving sort of service and I would imagine that such a service would be unlikely ever to be repeated again.

The new Conductor permanent? was Mr MAYO ex bass player of the band and his fee for his services was £6/13/4 or \$7.35. This change was to bring about a tremendous turnover of conductors until the time of R. YOUNG who was to remain in this position for some years.

A smoko held in the Forresters Hall on Monday 18 March 1922 marked the resignation of Mr G. W. HUTCHINSON. He was presented with a silver tea and coffee service by His Worship the Mayor, Mr CORADINE.

This event of course was not to mark the end of band work for this remarkable man and he was to continue on for many years.

The writer who was trained under this man still retains a vivid memory of this short little old white haired gentleman walking towards the "bandshed" as he always called the Bandroom with his cornet case held in one hand swinging his other arm freely. He used to look at the boys as they turned up for their first time and then and there decide what instruments they were best suited for. I've often wondered if he decided on mentality, and maybe that's the reason I finished up a bass player.

The Annual Meeting in the same month of March saw the Conductor's salary raised to £50 or \$100 per annum, a sum that was almost impossible for the band to pay at the time or so it seemed. At the present time the salary of the conductor is not much greater so inflation can hardly be said to have hit the conductors world at least.

A name at this meeting that appears, is that of Corporal Ben RICKARDS, a name that was to be synonymous with the band history throughout the next sixty odd years as his son Ben was to follow in his father's footsteps as both custodian and bass player like his father.

The writer can recall Ben RICKARDS Senior a tall thinnish man rather frugal with words sitting in the bass ranks when he, the writer, first graduated into the big band from the learners.

Another old bandsman at the time was one S. BURNIP or Steve as he was known who spent the later years of his life as a gardener in the grounds of "Purnell" now the Wairarapa College Girls Hostel.

That same year saw the end of Mr MAYOS reign and the introduction of Bandmaster ELDER as conductor. It also saw the retirement of one of the old bandsmen of the day Mr BRIDEN who was presented with a suitably inscribed silver teapot.

A notable event for the band that year of 1912 was the purchase of a piano for £12 or \$24, many and varied have been the experiences of the present band piano. The writer can recall on at least one occasion a jug of beer being poured down amongst the hammers to give it more tone. On another occasion it spent Saturday night out on its own in the centre of the Park oval in the rain. Another time it was whisked away on the back of a certain bandsman's truck, used and then returned by the now slightly merrier men, one of whom was trying to play it as it sped through the streets, finally to be returned without the knowledge of the Conductor of the time Stan PEARSON. It is little wonder that present soloists have certain difficulties tuning themselves to this battle scarred veteran.

On the more serious side of things the year under review also brought about the band's decision to withdraw from the North Island Brass Band Association. This was a sad move and shows how within the space of nine years the band had slipped from being a foremost member of the association to the position of resignation. It has been said on more than one occasion that contesting is the life blood of any band and such is the case we find here.

The band had ceased to contest and therefore interest and numbers soon fell off.

The name of SAYER appears around this time and this name was to continue for a number of years throughout the history.

In conjunction with Mrs GRAHAM who was in her 90's at the time, the writer was able to ascertain that two young ladies Miss OXENHAM by name came to New Zealand following a plague in France, the one, after an unsuccessful first marriage wed Mr Ted BRAGGINS who settled in the "Top House" Hotel and Mrs GRAHAM was one of their children, the other sister married a Mr SAYRE, notice the spelling, they moved to Masterton where through either bad spelling or deliberate intent the name changed to SAYER.

The SAYERS contributions to band work in the town was also a most remarkable one. 1912 saw the commencement of Conductor WOODLEYS reign with the baton.

The committee must have grown cagey of Conductors by now and decided to pay the conductor on a monthly basis of £3 or \$6 per month, a total of £36 or \$72 per annum.

At the Annual Meeting in March 1913 the newly elected Treasurer, Mr W. NICOL who was to become one of the educational administrators in the town, strongly recommended that the band seek Battalion status again.

This year saw the selling of the old green and gold uniform to the Martinborough Band for the princely sum of £1 each.

October saw the proposed arrangements for amalgamation of the South Band under way, by November a joint committee had been set up and Mr Wilfred ANDREWS appointed secretary. He arranged that the Borough Council and Trust Lands Trust appoint a committee and assist with the new band's formation. In a letter to the Trust Lands Trust, Charles EDYVANE the secretary of the new band stated, I quote: "The Band was formed at a meeting on December 9th at the Council Chambers in the presence of the Mayor and several councillors. The names of 26 playing members were handed in and officers were elected. The Band has taken over the liability of £74 on the South Masterton Band instruments and with the assistance of the Trust and the Borough Council wish to release these instruments as soon as possible. An inventory of all the band

property will be made as soon as we can go through with it, and will be forwarded to you." unquote.

The Trust replied with a note that contained a "sting in its tail". It was prepared to vote £50 or \$100 towards the debt if the Borough Council put up the remaining £24 or \$48. Fair enough you will agree. The Borough Council also decided to set an annual grant towards the band and a figure of £100 or \$200 was decided on.

The minutes of the amalgamated band of 12 December 1913 reported that after a secret ballot a Mr A. RUSSELL was elected temporary conductor. It was also moved that the band carol on New Year's Eve from 8 p.m. till 9 p.m. then 11 p.m. until midnight, a practise that was kept up for many years and the writer can recall as a boy a Reveller pouring half a bottle of beer down his bass and the Conductor saying "steady lad, don't touch the valves tip it towards you and suck back!!"

The band started the policy of two nights a week practice, Mondays and Fridays from 8 p.m. until 10 p.m.

In February 1914 the Trust Lands Trust sent an official delegation to check and report on the property and progress of the band. They were satisfied, and so the band moved into the sad year of the 1st World War oblivious of all that was to take place. Mr W. S. McLEOD ex conductor of the band and now Bandmaster of the Ipswich City Vice Regal Band, Queensland, wrote for the loan of the march 'Rimutaka'. This the band agreed to, and I might add waved goodbye to the music forever.

A small but amusing point that I must mention Messrs R. GRAY and SAYER moved and seconded that the secretary ask members to refrain from using bad language in the bandroom 29/5/14! July the 15th of that year saw the fitting out in uniforms (military) of the entire band and also the appointment of Mr WILLIAMS as their permanent Conductor.

An interesting situation arose during the year under review, at the request of the Borough Council an advisory committee was set up and as a result the band was called on to turn out at least twice a month in the summer and once a month in the winter and on special occasions, at the direction of the Mayor. It was from this meeting that it was decided to pay the conductor a fixed salary. The official recognition of the band as the Band of the 17th Ruahine Regiment took place on the 9th November of that year.

March 1915 saw the departure of yet another secretary, this one Mr ANDREWS being helped on his way with a gift of a portmanteau with a suitably engraved plate.

During the Annual Meeting the following men were appointed to well deserved Life Membership.

Messrs: C. GRAY
G. HUTCHINSON
A. RUSSELL
H. DIXON
S. BURNIP
A. P. FIELDING
W. S. JAGO
W. ANDREWS

Mr Geo. BLAIN who had already had an association with the town band was appointed Drum Major that year, a duty that was well deserved following his faithful service with the band. The band now possessed two uniforms, one khaki and the other scarlet, complete with brown belts, puttees, white belts and pouches, and peaked caps.

On Friday the 16th April 1915 the band left by train for camp which the camp was held at Opaki, and I believe from one or two of the surviving members it rained as the band entered the camp and never stopped until they left a week later. One can almost picture the bandsmen set for a great week sloshing through the mud to ceremonial playouts and sitting it out in damp canvass tents. An interesting sidelight occurs around this time, Messrs E. FRANKS and B. RICKARDS were leaving to join the army at Trentham and it was decided by the committee to present each man with a silver cigarette case suitably inscribed.

It is sad to see that the next important duty the band was called on to do was to march the departing troops to the station to board the train, little did either bandsmen or troopers realize that some of them would never meet again.

The finances of the band suffered during these war years, as well the membership, and it reflects in the fact that on several occasions the conductor asks the band for part of his salary, only to be told that the funds were not sufficient to meet even a small part of his dues.

It was decided in July of the year under review, to march the first of the wounded soldiers from the 'Public School' Old Central, to the Club Hotel - later the Midland and now the site of the shopping complex. The writer well recalls doing the same job but on a more happier note, meeting the N.Z.R. buses at the conclusion of the 2nd World War and marching the boys home from hostilities down Queen Street to the Post Office playing "See the Conquering Hero come" the band at the time under the baton of Mr G. W. HUTCHINSON.

The highlight of 1916 was of course the presentation to each individual bandsman of a silver plated instrument and so the band was now a silver band.

On the evening of the 24th September Messrs LAMB and POINTON both from the citizens committee performed this task and also on that evening the records tell us that several of the lads who turned up to receive their new instruments were taken

into the committee room and stirred up for lack of attendance. Not a bad idea as far as the committee was concerned!

In November of that year Messrs SIMONSON and ASTWOOD left to join up and the band held a social for them, the following is a list of items: 5 gallons of ale, 2 dozen cordials and a jar of ginger beer. It must have been quite a send off!

In 1917 a really amusing item appears which I know will appeal to all bandmen.

Quote:

BBFlat bass	15 dents
E Flat bass	1 dent
E Flat bass	1 dent
BBFlat bass	4 dents
E Flat bass	3 dents
Cornet	small dents

I can only assume that the poor players concerned were duly hauled over the coals and severely chastised for such wanton destruction.

In June of 1917 it was decided that an urgent call would go out for learners as bandmen were now leaving for the war and it was also decided to play all troopers to the station. 30 boys applied to join the band following the appeal.

Mr F. J. HUNN was farewelled from the band in November of 1917 having served the band as Drum Major and bandman for a great number of years. He was presented with a handsome Oak Silver mounted engraved tea tray. The meeting concluded with the singing of "For he's a jolly good fellow".

1918 saw the establishment of the Central Band and now started a great deal of feeling between bandmen. The writer has been able to ascertain that these feelings ran really deep but at the same time there was also the amusing side. Imagine players checking to see which band had the best attendance at their halls before deciding to go to the best attended practice, but such was the actual case. The Central Band had the audacity to ask for the band's torches and the minutes tells us that only one man voted for their loan, poor fellow!

At this point it might be worth mentioning that the Central Band started in 1918 with Mr Don HAGARTY as its secretary, he being an ex member of the town band, and closed on the 23 October 1923. The writer has probably the only photograph ever taken of this band at a playout and received this from Mr R. CLIMO the bass drummer now living in retirement in Taradale, Hawke's Bay.

The two bands tried a trial amalgamation under the baton of Mr C. MILLS, this at the request of the Mayor, but this was not successful, and finally after disbanding, the "renegades" were welcomed back to the fold.

May 1918 saw the resignation of Mr WILLIAMS from the position of conductor. Eight applicants vied for the position and Mr DENNE received the necessary votes and was duly appointed.

During 1919 the band decided to ask Mr ESTELL of Woolston Brass Band to be conductor, an offer he graciously declined. Mr MITCHELL a cornet player was appointed meantime and his salary was set at £25 or \$50 per annum, and so the band went forward into the roaring 20's very poor both financially, and musically, but full of hope.

Mr GREENFIELD took over conductorship of the band and held the job for only a short while resigning in July of 1921. Mr WYKE was next in line as permanent conductor and he appears to have been responsible for a number of Sunday playouts. November of that year saw the appointment of Mr R. J. YOUNG as secretary, another bandsman who was to leave a lasting impression both in musical ability and length of service with the band.

In February 1922 a major event in the life of the band took place when it entered and took part in the Wellington North Island Brass Band Contest, and so an era of contesting was once again in sight? Someone once said the life blood of any brass band was contesting and how true this has proved itself throughout the life of this band?

In 1924 the band sold off its spare set of uniforms to Martinborough for their band at a price to be negotiated and also it appointed Mr J. LEETE as Steward of the now very active boys band.

Mr LEETE who was later to be made a life member for his service filled the role of both chairman, secretary and drum major during his stay with the band.

1925 saw the resignation of Mr WYKE and the replacement was Mr R. J. YOUNG this being in only a temporary capacity. The Borough Council took over the selection of the next conductor, Mr NOBLE being the successful one selected from eight. Rumour has it that Mr K. G. L. SMITH, conductor of the world famous New Zealand National Band was one of the names rejected, but I said this is hearsay!

The band secretary at this time was Mr F. HARRINGTON, a man whom had the band really at heart. I can well recall this fine old gentleman returning to playing, in order to hold the ranks together through the years of the 2nd World War.

In 1926 Mr HARRINGTON was appointed chairman but had to relinquish the position in May of that year due to ill health.

June the 27th of that year saw the sale of the BB Flat bass to the Grey town Band for the princely sum of £35 or \$70, today that amount would barely purchase the case to carry the bass in.

Also that year saw the introduction of what seemed to me as a lad, a quaint custom. Each evening at half time a roll call was taken, the names duly ticked, or not in the register. The band has in its possession one such book.

Practices were extended in September of that year to Sundays, Mondays and Thursdays, obviously a contest was in the wind, and this contest was to be held in Wellington on the 21-26 February 1927. Unfortunately the band was not able to attend, but were represented by Messrs A. Pearson, H. Sayer and F. Osborne in the solo and party events.

An interesting sidelight appeared at the year's Annual Meeting, it was decided to pay the leading cornet player £25 or \$50 per annum, the selection to be left to the conductor. At the annual social of the band held on April 9th that year, following a reasonably long list of toasts, the crowd were entertained by several soloists including Master S. PEARSON who played the cornet. Here was the first record of a man who was to leave a lasting mark in the band in the immediate post 2nd World War years.

This particular social developed into a slight slanging match between councillors and band and one councillor Mr W. KEMP (Later to become Mayor and a good supporter of the band) made it quite clear that £200 or \$400 was all the band could expect as a council grant.

The Featherston War Memorial Committee wrote to the band in 1927 and asked them to play at the ANZAC parade, a task that the band carried out right through unbroken until the new format of morning observance took over.

Many and varied are the memories of bandsmen battling the Featherston wind to lead the parade to ANZAC hall, then to be treated after the ceremony to a sumptuous afternoon tea, followed by a visit to the local Fire Station to "check the equipment" etc.

A small crisis occurred that year when Mr NOBLE tended his resignation, but following a well attended public meeting decided to carry on. One can almost commend the committee for their foresight in getting right across to the public their own apathy re band matters.

1927 saw the decision to light the park with electric light, the modern age of great advancement had arrived, and little did members of the time realize it.

There was around this time great harmony between other bands in the district and on several occasions exchange visits were arranged between Greytown, Carterton, Martinborough and Eketahuna, bands.

1928 saw the resignation of Mr NOBLE as conductor and the appointment in a permanent capacity of Mr R. J. YOUNG. It needs to be mentioned that the town was now just beginning to experience the effects of the great depression of the "thirties" and the band had great difficulty in keeping bandsmen as they sought work in the district, for example of the 38 on the roll in

1926, 29 had resigned that year. 17 of them to seek work in Wellington.

The first of Mr YOUNG's Sunday night concerts was held in July of that year. Mr J. HERD a cornet player of great repute tells many an amusing tale about Mr YOUNG and these Sunday evening hand concerts.

In the year 1929 the band began to forge ahead both musically, and in popularity. Mr YOUNG was the motivating force that the men needed, as he was a well respected business man and also a very capable organiser.

1929 saw the election of Mr G. W. HUTCHINSON as deputy conductor whilst Mr R. J. YOUNG sort six weeks leave of absence. I suppose the band can take pride in the fact that all the father and son relationships that were now manifesting themselves. Mr Lou PEARSON and his two sons, one of whom was to become conductor, the COSGROVES and in the later years the RICKARDS, PARIS'S, CARMENS, HENDERSONS, FAIRBROTHERS, BILLINGTONS, KNOTTS, CHRISTIANSENS, PEARSONS and DAVIES.

Brass Bands had really reached their zenith in the district that year because the Wairarapa Brass Bands Association was formed, and the first combined concert was scheduled for Martinborough. The writer has in his possession the minute book of this association which functioned until 1932 or thereabouts.

Mr LEETE who was now the band's Drum Major reported that year (1930) that the park had been lit with electric light for £588/2/3 or \$1176.22. £108 or \$216 which had been paid, the remainder was to be found with a series of Reveille concerts extending over seven nights.



The Central Band. Mr. R. Climo Bass Drummer supplied this photograph.



The 1927 Boys Band. D. Wyke conductor, T. Leete steward.

At the Annual Meeting of June 1930 it was reported that the band room had been painted, more comfortable seating purchased. (I hope more comfortable than at present), picture rail fitted and Life Members Board hung. It was further decided to write to the Park Committee for a heater for the band. (This was to be a coke fired heater which the writer recalls as a boy absolutely cooking sitting next to it, as the basses sat at the rear, whilst the cornets, tromps and conductor froze because of their distance from the heater.)

In this year a momentous decision took place, the two associations North and South decided to amalgamate and so the New Zealand Brass Bands Association was born.

Now with the country in the grips of the depression the contest that the boys had looked forward for so long had to be postponed until 1932. In part the blame could be laid at the fact of the 1931 Napier earthquake and some of the bands got a little heated about the N.Z.B.B.A. decision but of course this was their right.

1931 was a great year for the band, it was now well settled with its new conductor, it had a learners class taken by the chairman and Bandmaster Mr G. W. HUTCHINSON.

It had an effective ladies and citizens committee and it still had the Borough grant of £200 or \$400, although it was pointed out at this meeting that this might have to be cut in the light of current financial conditions. (How that sounds so familiar). The committee reported that despite the depression the finances stood at £763/17/5 or \$1,527.75. A man whom the band was to owe a great deal through the ensuing years was thanked that night, Mr A. D. LOW, the auditor.

That year also the band was forced to seek the assistance of the Borough Council in order to find work for some of the men. In August that year Mr George GUY passed away and the band lead the cortage playing "Garland of Flowers", they also played at the graveside.

The band attended the 1932 contest in Wellington and as this was the first for years you will imagine the enthusiasm. The local press gave them a morning editorial (Wairarapa Age 6 May 1932) the Mayor and councillors praised them and all seemed set for a great future.

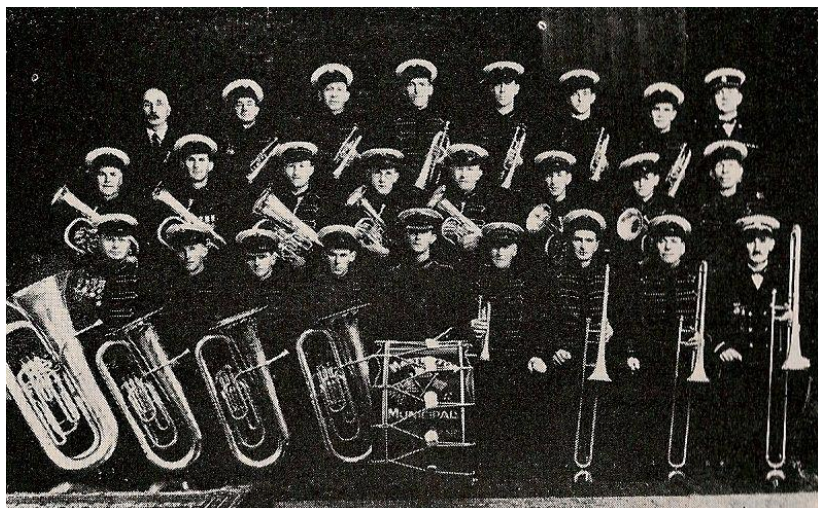
A ladies committee was formed, and they were to be responsible for raising money, taking tickets at the doors of the Sunday night concerts and generally helping the band.

The blow fell on the night of July 11, the council cut the band grant by 20 per cent, and so the conductors and secretary's salaries were cut by this amount also. It's sad to report that in the same year several of the out of work bandmen were allocated sums of money, these from band funds, thus showing the great comradeship amongst them, and indeed the same willingness to assist each other is apparent in the band today. One can well see how shocking were the state of the country's finances.

In October of that year the band decided to enter for the Napier contest, this showed real courage because as can be seen, the security of the very bandsmen was in doubt, yet they were prepared to set to the task of preparing the band to contest standard once again.

[illegible]

The Band Register, 1930.



R.I. Youngs Band around early 1930s.

Saturday November 19th 1932 was a red letter day in the life of the band as on that day the first Wairarapa District Brass Band contest was held in Masterton. In the Quickstep event the Carterton Municipal Band was first in the B Grade and Masterton 2nd.

The judge for this contest was Mr R. J. ESTELL and he conducted the massed bands on the park oval through to quote the paper "The well known march 'Colonel Bogey'."

In the B grade test selection the local band was placed 3rd behind Wellington Artillery and Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve Band. The band chose for its test "Il Bravo". The test was held in the Opera House, Lincoln Road, now the headquarters of the New Zealand Road Services local branch.

The band was unable through circumstances to compete at the Dunedin contest but the Conductor of the day, Mr R. J. YOUNG, was granted leave of absence to attend.

The Chairman of the band at the time, Mr J. V. HERD, has told the writer that although the band was up to contest standard at the time it was due to lack of finance and the fact that the great depression was still on that the band did not contest at Dunedin in 1932.

At the Annual Meeting of the band held in 1933, Mr YOUNG applauded the work of Mr TOZER and Mr G. W. HUTCHINSON with the Junior Band and presented a solid gold medal for the boys' solo competition. In the same year more of the bands old uniforms were sold, this time to Morrinsville Brass Band for the trifling sum of £52/5/0 or \$104.50.

November of that year saw the band once again entering for a contest, this one to be held at Wellington in February of the following year 1934. An interesting little sidelight is the fact

that the conductor asked the committee to write to three of the junior members to explain their absence from the band. Two of these men were later to make great contributions to the life and work of the band. One Mr S. PEARSON who was to revive the band after the 2nd World War and to set it on its feet and encourage it as we know it today. Mr M. PARIS the other bandsman was to serve for years as band chairman. Later President.

A brief view of the activities of the band in 1934 will serve to show just what a contribution the band was now making. They held that year 106 practices, 41 public playouts. The Junior Band played out on twelve occasions. The band that year competed in Wellington winning the first test and gaining 2nd place in the aggregate.

Mr H. GUTHRIE won the euphonium championship, Mr A. PEARSON 3rd in the trombone section, Mr S. PEARSON 4th in the tenor horn section, and the band also entered a quartet. All this was achieved at a time when the economically, the band had its backs to the wall.

The closing remarks of the conductor Mr YOUNG bear repeating, I quote: "It is team work and loyalty to each other that speaks success. We have the public behind us so let us take the tide at the full and climb ever upwards. There IS plenty of room at the top". Brave words but even today how true are his comments. It was at this meeting that Mr R. V. WAKELIN later to be Mayor of Carterton for a number of years was presented with two books as token of appreciation for his work as Drum Major.

June 1934 saw the final title of the band decided. The motion read "That the registered name of the Municipal Brass



G. W. Hutchinson with his Junior Band outside the Band Rotunda

Band Inc. to the Masterton Municipal Brass Band Inc., be changed when funds permit." Carried.

January of the next year commenced with a farewell to Mr J. HERD who was leaving for Wanganui. He was a most valuable committee member and also an outstanding cornetist.

1935 passed almost without further comment except this little gem: "The conduct of a bandsman - at a recent military ball was discussed. Owing to the offenders youth and evident sincere repentance, it was decided that a rebuke would be sufficient punishment."

The incident concerned was one where a very junior bandsman had been egged on to drink far more than his capacity and in due course 'sold' out into his uniform cap in full view of the public at the Masterton Town Hall.

I have spoken to the bandsman concerned and both have laughed heartily about the above incident and its outcome. It was during this year that a set of rules governing the running and behaviour of the band were laid down. An amended copy of these rules still hangs in the bandroom and to the writer's knowledge have not been referred to except lightly throughout the last 27 years, thus showing the ability of bandsmen to co-operate with each other.

A great storm in the tea cup erupted during September of 1935 the then town clerk Mr DENBEE wrote and requested the return of the key to the ladies lavatory attached to the band room as the Croquet club wanted use of the same exclusively.

The writer wonders what was the situation prior to this, did the bandsmen and ladies of the croquet share joint use of the same toilet? Well things really came to a head that year, and in October the whole committee decided to meet the Borough Council and place before them the position regarding the band lavatory. The above matter was finally settled to everybody's satisfaction by 1936.

A note in the minutes of 1936 states the total price of a set of 17 instruments (not a complete set) was £606 or \$1212 so it can be seen that even as far back in the thirties prices had begun to escalate.

Mr Ron DAVIES took over as chairman at this time and it would be an injustice both to his memory and to the band not to mention his pride and joy the G Trombone. No instrument was ever cared for as that one of Ron's was. I can well recall him carefully placing it between two chairs then opening the case and lovingly unwrap it from its cocoon of muslin cloth and wobetide anyone who ventured as near as two feet from the trom. Ron was really trained in the old school as far as instrument care was concerned. It could be too, that during Ron's term the new set of instruments arrived and as one reads the minutes one realizes all the work that went into their purchase.



G. W. Hutchinsons Band. Late 1930s.

In the following year 1937 a fine old bandsman was honoured at the Annual Meeting. He was Mr F. OSBORNE, a tinsmith who had a little business about where Waggs and Harcombes main workshop stands today on Dixon Street. This bandsman was a drummer and at the annual meeting of that year was elected as a Life Member.

September of 1937 saw the resignation due to ill health of Mr R. J. YOUNG thus ending an era in the history of the band that can only be described as marvellous.

At a special meeting of the band the bandsmen presented Mr R. J. YOUNG with a folding camera, suitably inscribed and elected him unanimously a Life Member. Following Mr YOUNG's retirement an elaborate set of rules were set up governing the position of future conductors.

Mr G. W. HUTCHINSON was elected conductor in November of that year and served until well into the early 1940's.

In July 1938 it was decided to take part in a B grade contest to be held at Feilding. The band competed at this one day event and it appears that they did a good job.

An interesting raffle was run that year. The prize 1 dozen of ale, 1 bottle of port wine, 1 bottle of whisky. The cost of these tickets 3d or 3 cents today. Such prizes today are illegal I'm informed!

1939 opened quietly with the band assisting the Interhouse Association with their marching teams. What happy memories the writer has of team after team of brightly but lightly clad young girls marching to the music of the band. On at least one occasion the band played "Invercargill" 180 times non stop as the teams took part in the final serpentine.

Hitler's Iron boot seemed far removed from such happy scenes yet by September the clouds of war had once more rolled over the band and bandsmen. Again a new generation laid down their instruments of peace and took on those of war.

September the 7th that year recorded the death of Mr R. J. YOUNG.

A sad note here is recorded. "On November 2nd the Secretary was instructed to send a letter of sympathy to the band's treasurer Mr W. G. LAMB whose son had been killed in the war".

A pair of band trousers that year were 35/- or \$3.50 stock or 37/6d or \$3.75 if tailored.

The band now started the task it had done once before, that of marching troops to the station, at least three men remained who had done it before - Messrs B. RICKARDS, F. HARRINGTON and G. W. HUTCHINSON. One can't help but wonder what their- thoughts were as they played these troops away.

1940 ushered the Centennial year of New Zealand. Mr M. PARIS was the band's chairman and Mr HUTCHINSON reported that he was to advertise for 'suitable' boys to join the band, also that year David SNELGROVE was admitted full membership. What an impact he was to make in the short stay he was to have with the band.

As the bandsmen entered camp they were presented with suitably inscribed cigarette cases.

1941 saw the Queen Carnivals launched for the War Effort and that year the band played for the Army, Navy, and Air Force Queen Efforts.

The Royal New Zealand Air Force Band under Flight Lt GLADSTONE-HILL visited that year and he had a front rank of side drummers complete with white gauntlets. What an impact that had on the community. Later the Trentham Military Band under Captain PIKE was also to visit the town and in the band was Mr S. PEARSON, later to be conductor. In that year alone the following men were welcomed: Messrs A. FAIRBROTHER, R. COTTLE, C. McARLEY, H. HOPLEY, M. BUTLER, G. STANTON and L. GRONN. Messrs Hopley Fairbrother and Gronn to be bass players of no mean calibre whilst R. COTTLE was to join the cornet ranks. Athol FAIRBROTHER won the respect and admiration of the band quickly and I suppose the highlight of practice night was Athol's arrival in the bass rank, that usually ended with at least one bass, stand or chair being knocked to the floor. Athol was later to fill the role of band secretary through the years of the war.

1942 saw the Salvation Army band being asked to assist with the bigger parades such as ANZAC etc and this led to a very amiable arrangement being held between both bands. The late Brigadier PERRY being their bandmaster, who in his own right was an outstanding musician and on many occasions he was to help the band out, not only at playouts but also with the

difficult job of tuning the band prior to a contest. This year was to prove the most heartbreaking for the conductor because one by one all the good bandsmen were being called up for service, the writer clearly recalls Mr HUTCHINSON with tears down his cheeks as he realizes that most of the cornet rank had been called for service at once.

The next year 1943 saw a dramatic meeting when the Conductor was called before the committee to decide to place the band into recess for the duration of hostilities. It was agreed after much debate to hold the matter over. It was a brave decision this proved to be, as so many bands who took this same line never reformed again.

The band was asked to play at the Solway Camp that year to the troops, namely the 3rd Division United States Marine Corp. A lot of these men were later to give their lives in the attack on Tarawa in the Pacific Islands.

The Annual Meeting of the band in 1943 saw Mr Ben RICKARDS elected to Life Membership, a position richly deserved for in the lifetime of this bandsman he had filled many roles in the administration within the band and was a great source of encouragement to new members.

August of that year saw the appointment of Mr NUTTALL ("Punch") as he was affectionately known, as Drum Major of the band and with his military background the boys were very quickly knocked back into shape again.

Mr L. GIBBS now a leading gunner in the Royal New Zealand Navy sent home that year from Australia two pieces of music. These were much appreciated, such was, and still IS the bond between bandsmen and band.

A decision by the committee of that year to send a Christmas parcel to all the serving bandsmen in the three forces reflected not only a patriotic, but also affectionate feeling for these temporarily absent musicians. As petrol was severely rationed and required ration cards the band reluctantly decided to play all the carol programmes in the park throughout December. An interesting little item appears; the secretary was asked to order for the Annual Meeting 1 dozen beer, 2 dozen saveloys, 1 lb of cheese, 2 lb of biscuits, 1 dozen cordials - hardly what one would call a riotous feast for an Annual Meeting and a far cry from our own cakes and sponges as at present, still it was sufficient and the boys no doubt did themselves proud at the end of the meeting.

Messrs T. GORDON and W. WHITE were elected Life Members. Mr JORDON as Mayor of the town was a great band supporter and did more in his own quiet way to implement the band firmly within the town than most people realize.

1944 saw the introduction of a Junior attendance trophy and this cup is still in use today. The motive behind the cup is obvious, no longer was the draw of the band sufficient but now because of the advent of other attractions, radio, movies, the

art of entertaining oneself had been taken and was now a commercial proposition for the business world to exploit.

Overseas parcels of food were that year sent to bandsmen in the forces and a special parcel was sent to Mr Len SAYER then a prisoner of war in Germany. Len was later to serve for some time in the post war band.

Around this time the band entered on a scheme with the Interhouse Association that although they little realized it, was to result in the boys very quickly building themselves back into a good musical combination, it was agreed to play out two evenings a week namely Tuesday and Thursday in order that the marching girls may get extra practice and so the band played for anything up to 15 minutes at a spell while the girls went through their paces. This coupled with their normal weekly practice was to pay long lasting dividends.

A new tenor horn was purchased and that year it was decided to entrust it to B. RICKARDS Junior, provided a better bandsman didn't come forward, and if he did, Bandsman RICKARDS was to forfeit it! Today Bandsman RICKARDS is the custodian of the band and has the vital care and concern of all instruments and uniforms belonging to the band but the then committee were not to know this.

A slow melody contest was held that year, the judge being Mr GUTHRIE. This was a great success and the band decided to enquire re a duet contest.

So the war was over and everyone was glad no more would the band be struggling for players, no more would finance be a problem, how short lived were their hopes.



Mr. S. Pearsons Band. A Championship combination. The first for many years.

In 1946 the band held a successful concert, this was unusual because after this one all succeeding concerts were almost dismal failures.

In September of that year the band decided to attend the Palmerston North contest. This was to be the first real post war contest for the band.

On the 21st October that year the resignation of conductor of the band was received from Mr G. W. HUTCHINSON, thus ending a connection with the band one of 40 years, such a service must rank as one of the longest in the band, and indeed in the band world in New Zealand. He had seen the band through two world wars, through good and bad times, and be lived to see a great many of his Protigee take up positions within the ranks.

Mr Stan PEARSON was elected to act as conductor, and now commenced a period of conductorship that had a dedication about it that only those who had served under his baton could fully realize. His standards were high, his sights were set equally high, and the band progressed very favourably under his leadership.

Many of the present playing members have memories of "Stan" and at least two of his "boys" Messrs R. McGAVIN and L. MOONEY were to go on to make real names for themselves in the National band world.

The contest in Palmerston North was the first under Mr PEARSON and it was to be the forerunner of many more successful ones. The band was billeted at a hotel called the Cafe de Paris, now pulled down and after the contest the high jinks of the boys had to be seen to be believed but above it all a combination was emerging that was to go on almost unbroken through to the "seventies".

1947 saw the final settling of funds of the long defunct Wairarapa Brass Bands Association when the final monies were uplifted and shared equally with the Upper Hutt Municipal band and our own.

An interesting point regarding family in the band arises again during the year under review. The PRICE family were in the band, Messrs Eric, Ron, Gordon and Noel, these boys were later to be matched by the BAIN boys who were Messrs Stuart, Richard, Keith, Frank and Stephen.

In 1948 the band were presented with a set of Timpany from the CANDY Estate, these to be in the charge of the band but available to local societies. Those "Timps" are still in use at Amateur Theatrical Shows.

The band received that year a new set of uniforms, these were purchased and the players told to watch the buttons as they cost 3/4d or 35 cents each plus tax. Also the band went to Auckland the following year and did remarkably well. Their new Drum Major Mr Les PETERS was to make his mark on the field

after successfully being chairman of the band committee for some time.

At the Annual Meeting of the band in 1949 an "Arbans" tutor was presented to Mr D. CARMAN as the most improved player for that year. At that time no one realized that in the ranks of the band were three of its future conductors: Messrs D. SNELGROVE, L. MOONEY and D. CARMEN. David SNELGROVE was to become the youngest conductor, 20 years of age, to win at a National Contest. Les MOONEY was to go on and conduct the Official Army Band and David CARMEN to lead the band to more successes and indeed to remain to this day its Conductor.

The band as always was keen to foster the wider work of contesting and therefore contributed voice in the National field of the N.Z.B.B.A. Messrs R. SHEPHERD and A. FAIRBROTHER being acknowledged that year for their efforts in this direction.

In the June minutes the committee ordered a new set of instruments. A trite little comment is contained in the minutes. "The Secretary was the only person to arrive on time. Mr R. PRICE was runnerup arriving 6 minutes later". So committee meetings of the band as far as punctuality is concerned has not changed.

Eltham Brass Band purchased the old set of uniforms for the sum of £54 or \$108 and good riddance to the old "neck chaffers", mind you that comment is personal.

Mr PETERS started card evenings and there were very successful and netted a good sum for funds for contesting.

The matter of charges for playouts reared its hoary head again and Mr PETERS reported entering into an agreement with the pipe bands over this matter, and as usual the ink was hardly dry before the efforts of the band in this direction were being undermined.

A district contest was held in Masterton that year, and the band arranged and also played in this event as well as going on and raising funds for its own use.

As can be seen new life had been given to the boys and a new era was being entered. Next year 1950 was to see the band off to Christchurch as a C grade band and to make the mark that was to be an outstanding one both for themselves and for the town.

Mr MARCHBANKS who was later to become Mayor of the town was a great supporter of the band and did much to foster its work amongst the business people. A "fight" developed around this time over payments for bands playing at race meetings. The writer clearly recalls great heat being generated between racing people and the bands and clearly this has never been completely resolved if one checks the records carefully, the band wanted travelling expenses, meal tickets plus £15 or \$30 a day. Not much of a sum when one considers today's mammoth turnovers at the country's race meetings.

Following the return of the boys from Christchurch contest keenness ran at a fever pitch. The band had the bit between its teeth and was determined to succeed.

In the years 1950 and 51 concerts, fund raising efforts, solos and duets were held, to ensure the effort of the band at the contests. Messrs C. Nicholls and Councillor Boustridge were the main driving force in this venture.

This was all good but the conductor, on whom most of the responsibility fell, went down under the load and felt through reasons of ill health compelled to resign. This was a bitter blow as Stan PEARSON had almost achieved his ambition to see the band into the B grade. Mr CROSLY took over the band at this stage whilst Mr PEARSON returned to the playing ranks.

In all fairness the new conductor did not enjoy the best of support and consequently on the 15 January 1951 Mr CROSLY resigned.

Mr D. SNELGROVE was appointed to the post. This was to be a happy decision because Mr Eric BALL, adjudicator at the Dunedin contest, was to remark I quote: "It was this band (Masterton) which gave the judge what he described as the greatest surprise he had ever received. He said he had listened to an interpretation which was an exact replica of himself conducting one of his own bands in England". The band won 1st place in the B grade test and came out B grade champion. David SNELGROVE was 20 years old at the time.

The band had arrived at a pinnacle, it was to be a peak not attainable again and the contest truly closed a golden era of modern history for the brass bandsmen of the town.



Mr. D. Snelgroves Band. 1951 B Grade Champions.

A Queen Carnival was held and this was a financial success, but it's sad to relate that the band lost sight of its citizen committee and so a valuable source of finance was cut off.

Mr Ron PRICE took over as Secretary in 1952 and must have set a new record because the chairman at the time was his brother Mr Gordon PRICE, whilst the President was Mr HENDERSON.

Mr Charlie NICHOLLS served for years as band secretary up to this time and had been a driving force behind the band in all its fund raising aspects. Charlie's sense of humour saved many a ticklish situation.

A rather unique trombone player joined the band around this time in the person of Mr Jim HAMILTON. He actually went onto the contest stage and played a test solo after only looking at it once before because he didn't like the choice of music. Of course he was unplaced, but went on record as saying he was the 18th best trombone player in the country and none would doubt him.

1954 saw the band contesting at Christchurch with Stan PEARSON back on the rostrum. They did very well and in fact on their return were accorded a Mayoral morning tea, the then Mayor Mr CODDINGTON speaking highly of the efforts of the band.

Mr Les MOONEY left New Zealand that year as our representative in the National Band.

The band was now beginning to branch out in a field that was new to them, but certainly not to their predecessors, that of regaining the confidence of the town folk.

Les MOONEY did much to foster this, his efforts as soloist at concerts, gala days, fetes, all helped to lift the sagging moral support of the people towards the band.

Another secretary who did a notable job for the band was Mr Jack GREY, he served a number of years in this capacity and it was during his term of office that amongst other notable things a complete set of band rules were formulated and in fact are still in use today.

A concert was held in August of the year under review in conjunction with a notable amateur entertainer Mr Geo. BUSH. This netted the sum of £1/14/0 or \$3.40. George was a most amiable character and played the role of the Dame in a Mother Goose pantomime, performed in the town hall.

Committee meetings must have been quite light affairs as it is recorded that Mr BOUSTRIDGES story "Dead Horses and the Father-In-Law" was well received. It's a pity the writer who was a member of that committee could not recall the tale and share it with the readers.

1955 was to prove the most dynamic in the post war life of the band as it saw the band contest at Auckland and the resignation of Stan PEARSON from conductor.

The election of Mr Les MOONEY in his place and the appointment of Mr D. CARMEN as his deputy. Les MOONEY was later to go on to a distinguished career with the New Zealand Army Band.

1956 saw the appointment of Mr W. L. MARCHBANKS as Mayor of Masterton, thus setting seal on a long career of local body service. Notable in his appointment was the fact that he had served as council representative for years on the band committee and his valuable advice had been much appreciated by the members.

The R.S.A. in that year started what was to become almost the official recognition of ANZAC day, the dawn parade.

Bandsmen will all agree that the crunch of marching feet on gravel in the dark hour before dawn, the ascending notes of the Last Post and Reveille, seem to epitomise the true remembrance of the day.

The break-fast that follows when rum and coffee is dispensed and the band plays such air as "Pack up your troubles" and "We're going to hang out our washing on the Siegfried line".

June of that year saw the resignation of yet another conductor, Mr L. MOONEY. Attempts were made by the committee to obtain a man from Britain to fulfill the post as around that time Mr Elgar CLAYTON later to be conductor of the 1970 National Band had come to Napier and lifted that band out of the doldrums.

Mr D. CARMAN was elected deputy conductor and agreed to conduct the band until the position was filled. He also took over the task of band secretary (acting) as Mr R. PRICE was studying at the time. He was appointed Conductor of the band in March of the same year.

1957 saw the formation of another Band's citizen committee, Messrs N. HENDERSON now band President, and C. NICOLLS were notable names on the committee. Mr A. A. FAIRBROTHER was responsible for arranging tickets for honorary membership of the band, these were not to prove very lucrative and by 1958 concern was being expressed as to their value.

The band committee decided in October of the year to seek the resignation of Mr CARMAN and this was duly done. Little did the band realise that the failure of its conductors was due entirely to its members not being willing to fulfill all their obligations as true bandsmen.



The Bass Quartette. Conductor Mr. L. Mooney.

On no less than three occasions the efforts of conductors to get the boys away to contests had been thwarted, is it any wonder these men felt the job just wasn't worth the effort.

The writer was in the unenviable position of seeking the resignation of Mr D. CARMAN. It is to David's lasting credit that on the following band practice night he was back in the ranks as a playing member, such an example has not been forgotten by many of the older players who have served under his baton.

Stan PEARSON was again asked to take over the band and he immediately set about arranging for the boys to attend the National Contest in 1960.

Unfortunately once again the band was unable to attend but from it emerged a factor that was to influence the band to contest once again in the manner it had been used to, this was the advent of quartet and solo competition.

In Christchurch that year two groups contested, one conventional and one bass quartet, the latter was to gain 2nd place and silver medals.

The judge at the time Mr SHUGG of Australia, admitted he would have placed the basses first but as this was the only time he had heard a bass quartet he was reluctant to take such a step and therefore placed a conventional quartet ahead of them. The writer had at that time no knowledge of any other bass quartet having been placed in winning positions at previous National Contests.

Ross McGAVIN was making a significant mark as were also K. PARIS, E. PARIS, L. MOONEY and D. CHRISTIANSEN. Les MOONEY actually conducted the bass quartet at that contest.

Stan PEARSON due to ill health was forced once again to resign and so the band was faced with a position that had become all too common. Mr Les Mooney was elected Conductor in August of 1960. Mr W. GIBBS was made a suitable presentation at that annual meeting in recognition of long years of service to the band.

1961 saw the band attending more and more local functions and so regaining some of its lost prestige.

1962 saw the bass drummer Mr John EVERITT in a National Band. Mr W. BURNS who was later to be Chairman arranged that the band play at the newly formed "Golden Shears". His move was to prove a really brilliant one because as the "Shears" have grown so have also the popularity, and indeed I must say, the finances of the band.

In September of that year Mr L. MOONEY was forced through his acceptance of an Army post to resign and Mr David CARMAN was elected in his stead.

1963 saw the "Golden Games" and all it entailed for the band. Mr Len BERGMAN the P.R.O. for Masterton was also a keen bandsman and did much to assist the boys although his time was limited. One amusing highlight arose from the games, the band was committed to sell Golden Games badges and through some error, double the quantity arrived from the manufacturers, consequently several homes including the writers had badges buried in their back yards.

1964 saw the purchase of a Tenor Cor, this instrument to be used both in the band and in the orchestra of the Masterton Amateur Theatricals.

In September of that same year the committee set about arranging for the design and purchase of the band's present uniforms. The Secretary reported that based on present day prices (1964) the cost of 28 uniforms would be £842/10/0 or \$1,685. What a contrast against all previous uniforms purchased.

Kelvin PARIS that year was selected for the National Band, again demonstrating the fact that the bandsmen of New Zealand, recognised the importance of where the strength of the movement really lay, that is within the ranks of all the bands.

1965 saw the Mystery Envelope competition. This was nation wide and was an appeal for funds for the National Band. Our boys arranged for a concrete mixer to mix up the envelopes (without concrete) and so ensuring that all was fair and above board. 12,000 tickets were sold and all of these within one day. The mind boggles as one looks back at all the effort, but as events proved it was well worth while.

At the close of 1965 the band sent and obtained relegation to "D" grade this was felt necessary as the boys had not competed for some years and further, the ranks were being filled with learners.

1966 saw the band contesting once again, the contest was a district one held at Levin and the results were most encouraging.

2nd in the Test selection; 1st in the hymn test; 5th in the march; 8th In the street march.

The judge's comments on the hymn Tynmouth were amongst others "good tone and balance, well controlled dynamics, lovely basses."

In 1967 the band record was most impressive. They in February entered the National Contest, in March the band entered the Wellington District contest and gained 3rd place in the hymn and 4th in the selection, and this was against all comers. In May they attended the National Contest, at Wellington gaining 1st equal in the hymn, 3rd place in both the 1st and 2nd test, and 2nd in the quickstep. Mr Alan CLARK was the Drum Major and his efforts with the band really brought the public to their feet.

At the National Contest at Christchurch in 1968 the band was placed 1st in the hymn, 2nd in the 1st test selection and 1st In the aggregate. I have before me the judge's comments what a far cry they are from the remarks of the late Mr Ord HUME, still times have changed.

1969 saw the band competing at Rotorua there they won the special section for C & D grade bands. I quote from a newspaper report of the Quickstep: "Heroes of the day yesterday were members of the Masterton Municipal Band, a lowly D grade unit. The bandsmen were the first band on the park yesterday morning, but their performance left the few present spectators and Judges agog. The display was so impressive the championship's chief supervisor Mr M. BLACKIE recalled the band for a special performance after the A grade bands had been put through their paces" unquote. The band won the D grade Championship.



Mr. D. Carmans successful D. Grade Champion Band.

So keen were the boys to attend the contest in Dunedin that a levy was set on each man and 1970 saw them competing in the C grade.

1971 saw the band at a Wellington District Contest.

It is of interest to note that the local band staged the Wellington District Contest in Masterton during 1969 so it can be seen the band is happiest when busy.

1972 saw the band back at Christchurch determined to do their best. This contest was a little disappointing as rain washed out the Quickstep for the lower grade, but all in all the band upheld their standard of contesting ability.

The band history for the first 100 years is complete, or is it, for it doesn't tell the thrill of success, the tension of waiting on stage for the judges bell to ring, the inability of the judge to appreciate the fact that your band is the best, the fun of sharing experiences with other bandsmen, the riotous laughter of bandsmen on buses, the agony of the morning after!

All this is the life of bandsmen. Masterton Municipal has had its great moments of success, its troughs of disappointments, but bandsmen will all agree that no band was ever as good as the one that they were in whilst members of our silver band.

G. GROOMBRIDGE,

Masterton, 1972.