



Brass Notes

Hathern Band's Newsletter

Number 44

Spring 2026

Celebrating 170 Years



**Centre - William Widdowson,
a founder member.
Bandmaster in 1879**

1856 - the Crimea War had just ended, The Victoria Cross was introduced, the first boat race was held between Oxford and Cambridge Universities and the UK went to war against Persia (now Iran)!

That year, Hathern's population was around 1200 and the main industry was framework knitting producing hosiery. It was a group of framework knitters and framesmiths who decided to form a brass band.

To celebrate the anniversary, we had the idea of producing a special newsletter to include memories from current and past players and congratulatory messages from them plus supporters and well-wishers. The response was amazing and we had to rethink the idea of a newsletter and go for something much larger. We have some great memories, stories and anecdotes plus photos from the past. A big thank you to everyone who has contributed. The plan is that we will produce it in booklet form as well as sending it out electronically.

Coming Soon!



Midlands Area Contest



The First Section contest took place at Bedworth Civic Hall on 7 March. This was our first appearance after two years in the Second Section.

The test piece was Variations on Was Lebet composed by Andrew Wainwright in 2017. It is based on a German chorale work and contains five contrasting variations. We came 10th. One of the adjudicators described our performance as “a mixed performance with some fine sounds heard. Very stylish in places.”

Onwards and upwards as they say and we look forward to next year's contest.

Thank you!!

It is remarkable what Hathern Band has achieved over the years. The band does not have a sponsor so all the income comes from concerts, donations and fundraising. Important contributions are made by the band's patrons and the 200 Club.

The cost of being a patron is a minimum of £25 per annum and patrons have their own annual concert which combines good music with an excellent buffet. The 200 Club pays out cash prizes and costs £1 per number monthly by standing order.

If you're not already a patron or a 200 Club member, please consider joining. As a well known supermarket says - Every Little Helps!

Contact Lesley for the patrons scheme and Sam Peak for the 200 Club. Sam's email is (sambigfootg@hotmail.com).

200 Club Results

March	April	May
£30 John Baum	£30 Sam Hambleton	£30 Sean Hale
£24 Lucy Ruddy	£24 Gemma Olweany	£24 Dru Sparks
£15 Charlene Freeman	£15 Sue and Ted Rea	£15 Sam Bradbeer
£12 Mike Hale	£12 Louise Haworth	£12 Lesley Bentley
£5 Steve and Lynne Plant	£5 Vanessa Harvey	£5 Dean Onyon

National Youth Championships

Our brilliant young cornet players, Seb, Charlie and George continue to play with the Grimethorpe North of England Youth Band which is conducted by former Hathern Band member, Jim Fletcher. On 28 March, the band played at the National Youth Championships held at King Edward's School in Birmingham. This year 42 bands with 1400 youngsters took part.

The Grimethorpe set was:

You Can't Stop the Beat from the musical Hairspray, Share My Yoke by Major Joy Webb, Living Power by Tom Davoren and Neverland by Christopher Bond which was the set piece.



Grimethorpe were awarded a silver medal.
Well done!



Hathern Band Contact Details

Secretary Lesley Bentley Tel 01509 672029

lesley.bentley@btinternet.com

Website www.hathernband.co.uk

All past editions of the newsletter can be viewed on the website
If you do not wish to receive this newsletter, please contact the secretary

George at the National Youth Brass Band

It's been an exciting and rewarding few weeks for George, our Soprano Cornet player, following his recent performances with the National Youth Brass Band of Great Britain. The course was held in the stunning surroundings of the Garden Rooms at Tennants in Leyburn, bringing together talented young musicians from across the country. This was followed by a concert at the Royal Northern College of Music the week after, providing a fantastic platform to showcase their work.

The band was conducted by Professor Nicholas Childs, Musical Director of the renowned Black Dyke Band, with guest soloist Mike Cavanagh, Solo Baritone of Black Dyke. The programme featured a variety of exciting pieces, including the world premiere of A Laugh Less Ordinary by Andrea Price, a heartfelt tribute to the life and work of comedian Victoria Wood.



The finale, The Age of Kings by Edward Gregson—who was in the audience—was a memorable conclusion. George's personal highlight was Mill Town Revival, which he particularly enjoyed for its energetic jungle swing style.

A fantastic achievement and experience for George, and one he'll remember for years to come.

Youth and Concert Brass at the Bluebell Service

Youth and Concert Brass again took part in the Swithland Wood Bluebell service on 26 April.

The service, dedicated to the wild flower, is held every Spring in the pit which is a natural amphitheatre deep within Swithland Wood.

It is organised by Swithland Church and has been taking place since 1928.



Banding and Football

Being a keen follower of both football and brass bands, I am struck by the similarities between the two activities. Bill Shankly, the legendary manager of Liverpool FC once said that football wasn't a matter of life and death, it was much more important than that. I'm sure there are many who would express a similar sentiment about banding. Both activities require much practice and dedication, each with a fair amount of dribbling involved.

There are similarities between the way the two activities are organised. Football has its Premier League, then Championship, League One and League Two. Brass banding has five sections – Championship, First, Second, Third and Fourth also with promotion and relegation between the sections. Football teams have a full season of fixtures to establish league positions. For brass bands there is one “fixture” – the annual area contest held in the Spring.

It would be unfair to decide promotion and relegation on one performance, so banding has a neat system of a three-year rolling points count to decide positions. Promoted and relegated teams are awarded average points for the years they were out of the section. There are similarities between the football match and the brass band contest. Such as questioning the competence of the referee or adjudicators, and the comment “We wus robbed” can often be heard at both events. Top level football has introduced VAR to supposedly make decision making fairer. Perhaps banding needs AAA – Audio Assistant Adjudicators?

The first horse drawn mail coach ran between Bristol and London in 1782, taking 16 hours. A post horn was used by coachmen on horse-drawn mail coaches to announce the arrival of the mail. Often these coaches would travel at speed, meaning that the post-horn would act as a siren to encourage bystanders and road users to clear the way.

The post-horn is a brass or copper straight or coil shaped instrument without valves. In 1844, German cornet player Hermann Koenig composed the Post-horn Galop as a solo with orchestral accompaniment. In the 20th century it became a popular piece for brass bands.



Although now considered to be only a Leicester City tradition, in fact playing the Post-horn Galop used to be relatively common across the English football landscape in the first part of the 20th century. The first game on record where it was played was at Highbury when Arsenal hosted none other than Leicester Fosse in 1913. It was played at Filbert Street for the first time in 1941 and has been played at home games ever since. In recent years, it has been played by Paul Hing.



When Hathern Band visits schools, Dave Newman starts by playing the Post-horn Galop on a long post-horn. The youngsters recognise it as Leicester City's signature tune and are immediately engaged. Perhaps there are brass musicians today who have been inspired to play by hearing the Post-horn Galop.

Trombone Past and Present

A brass band contains many brass instruments, but all of them have in common that the notes are produced by depressing valves - except for the trombone. The first valved instruments appeared in the 1840s, however the trombone's history goes back much further.

Its forerunner was the strangely named sackbut which dates to the 15th century. The name comes from the old French, saque meaning pull and bouté meaning push. Compared to a modern trombone, the sackbut features a telescoping slide, a narrower bell and thinner tubing producing a softer more mellow tone compared to its modern counterpart.

The sackbut was commonly used in church music, chamber music and with wind bands.



A brass band normally has three trombones, two tenor and one bass trombone. Over the years Hathern has had many fine players, but it appears that trombonists have a comedic streak. The photo below was taken at a patrons evening a few years back. You will probably not be able to watch The Sound of Music again. The sisters are Joe, John ,Tom and Simon.



, Joe, Simon and John at a Christmas Concert



At the 2024 patrons evening, principal trombonist Dave Tooth played an old trombone. Dave explained, "It's an Olds Standard, manufactured in 1912 by F.E.Olds in Los Angeles. It was one of the most popular models of the period and I bought it in an auction of a New York house clearance. It has a smaller bore and bell diameter than modern instruments, giving it a more compact sound. It has an in-slide (hand slide) tuning mechanism that adds weight and also at that time they did not chromium plate inner slide tubes so hand-slide is a bit sluggish."



Senior Band Engagements

June 2026

Hathern Proms Concert

Saturday 6 June, 7:30p.m.

Pasture Lane, Hathern LE12 5LJ

Band BBQ

Saturday 20 June, 6:00p.m.

Band room, Pasture Lane, Hathern

August 2026

Oakham Bandstand

Sunday 9 August, 2:30p.m.

Cutts Close, Oakham

Summer Concert

Sunday 16 August, 3:00p.m.

Stafford Orchard, Quorn

September 2026

Stage & Screen Concert TAKE 2

Saturday 26 September, 7:30p.m.

Iveshead Theatre, Shepshed