

# YWO News

## The Newsletter of the YMCA Glasgow Wind Orchestra

Winter 2010

### Band News

#### Congratulations

Congratulations to flautist Helen Caleb on the birth of her first baby. Helen and her husband Alan celebrated the arrival of their son Freddy in October. Although only a few weeks old, Freddy has already attended his first YWO concert when he enjoyed the Christmas concert in Adelaide's on 17th December. Apparently he slept through the whole performance so we're assuming he didn't mind the noise too much! We send best wishes to the whole family.



Helen and Freddy

#### Farewell

We are very sorry to lose the services of several valued members of our band. For various reasons we have to say farewell to Noreen Thomson (clarinet), Peter Woods (trumpet), Amanda Lyon (alto clarinet) and Billy Shaw (saxophone). We thank them all for the valuable contribution they have made to the band and wish them all the best in the future.

#### Welcome Back

We welcome back Julie Donaldson to the clarinet section. Julie was a member of the YWO for many years before her work took her to London for a couple of years. Not only has Julie rejoined the clarinet section but she has also rejoined the committee! It's as if she'd never been away!

#### Congratulations...

...to our Musical Director Michael Philip who got engaged to Liz Sorensen at Christmas. The happy couple plan to marry later this year. We wish them much happiness in the future.



#### ... Liz and Michael

to Julie Burrows who was the winner of our last competition. We hope she enjoys spending her prize.

... to Stuart McNally (trumpet) on his recent professional success. Since graduating from Glasgow University, Stuart has worked pro bono as a Graduate Teaching Assistant in the laboratory of Human Anatomy. Now he has been officially appointed as technician beating off more than 50 applicants. We wish him continuing success in his career.

... to a former member of the saxophone section Sabine Vos who celebrated her 40<sup>th</sup> birthday just before Christmas. We're not sure how she celebrated but we're quite sure it involved lots of eating, drinking and merry making! You can read more about Sabine's latest exploits later in this newsletter.

### A Fond Farewell

We are very sorry to lose the services of one of our longest serving members, clarinettist Noreen Thomson. Noreen has been a stalwart of the YWO for more than twenty years and in that time she not only played in the clarinet section but also served on the committee, three years as chairperson.

Of course there's more to being a valuable band member than playing and serving on the committee and Noreen has so many qualities that made her such an asset to us.

She has imagination. In modern speak she would be called an ideas person. Some of our more interesting concerts were a result of a suggestion put forward by Noreen.

Noreen is generous. When she retired from her work as an Educational Psychologist in 2000 she invited the whole band to join in the celebrations and we enjoyed a lovely evening of playing, dancing, drinking and eating a wonderful buffet all provided by Noreen herself.

She has been a calming influence on the band. On many occasions when I have become slightly aerated by events in the band, she has listened calmly and patiently to my rant before saying, "Yes Lorna. You're right, but does it really matter?" and most times I had to admit that it didn't matter much at all!

Because of her professional qualification Noreen might be tempted to write a book called "The Psychology of the Band Player"! We've certainly given her plenty of material but of course she would never do that because she is one the most non-judgemental people one could meet.

We're pleased to hear that Noreen will continue her clarinet playing as a member of the Helensburgh Orchestra and we were delighted when she agreed to be guest of honour at our Christmas concert when a presentation was made to her.

We thank her for all she has meant to the YWO and wish her all the best in the future.

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## Bob Kelly

We were all devastated to hear about the sudden death in October of our bass clarinet player Bob Kelly. Bob was a member of the YWO for nearly twenty years and during that time he proved to be one of our most loyal and dependable players.

He was a big man with a big personality and a booming voice – our conductor Michael often remarked that Bob was the only member of the band who sounded like his instrument! Everybody has an amusing story to tell about Bob. Dutch saxophone player Sabine Vos recalls that when she first joined the YWO Bob told her that he greatly admired the Dutch Royal Family and that when he was a little boy he wanted to marry Princess Beatrix, now Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands!

Of course that never happened which is just as well otherwise he would never have met the lovely Sheena to whom he was so happily

married for nearly fifty years. Bob and Sheena were a jovial presence at many of our social events and if you could manage to get on to the same table as them on a night out you could guarantee that you would spend the evening helpless with laughter. Bob's commitment to the band also showed in his willingness to take part in all our foreign trips – to Massachusetts in 1998, to Maastricht and Nuremberg in 2000 and to Alpirsbach in 2007 when he was joined by Sheena.

By virtue of the instrument he played, Bob had to be one of the most unselfish players in the band, having to be content with playing a bass accompaniment while other people had the more flashy parts so it was only right that in his last ever performance with us, our summer concert last June, he had two solos, one in "Charivari" and one in the Anton Carlos Jobim medley. At last he was able to enjoy some of the limelight that his playing deserved.

There is no doubt that he has left a big Bob

shaped hole in the middle of the band and he'll be difficult to replace. We'll miss his playing, his dry sense of humour, his hearty laugh and that rumbling volcano of a voice emanating from the depths of the clarinet section!

We extend our deepest sympathy to Sheena, their three sons and their whole family.



Sheena and Bob in Alpirsbach, 2007.

## Bernard Wade

Bernard Wade's life was a difficult one. He had various struggles to contend with and he did not find it easy to mix with other people. However, he had one obvious gift – namely the ability to play the clarinet. I first met Bernard at a 'Nut Night'. These were informal musical and social evenings hosted by professional musicians in the West End. Folk brought food and enjoyed a programme of music performed by people of all ages, stages and skill levels. As I recall it, Bernard played a simple tune ('Amazing

Grace' or something similar) as he had just taken up the instrument. Several years later, when I arrived to take up the conductorship of the YWO in autumn 1994, Bernard was in the clarinet section and in due course he earned the right to play in the front row and to perform as a soloist as well. He was very fastidious (even eccentric) in his practice and rehearsal routines, but was an excellent note-getter in our more challenging repertoire. His manner was quiet and apologetic, but it was a great moment when he completed a

performance of Weber's Concertino at the Norman Rockwell Museum during the orchestra's Tour to the USA in 1998, acknowledging the applause with exactly the nods, smiles and 'thumbs-up' gestures I recalled from that early performance years before.

Such was the level of musical challenge and social warmth in our midst that I suspect Bernard's years with the YWO may have been among the happiest of his sadly short life. We remember him with affection.

- Michael Phillip

## Jack Finnegan

We were greatly saddened to hear of the death in December of a former member of the saxophone section, Jack Finnegan. Jack first appeared in the YWO in 1998 when he came along as a guest player on our trip to Massachusetts. Fortunately he enjoyed himself so much that he decided to join as a regular member staying until ill health caused him to give up four years ago. I say fortunately because not only was Jack a lovely player, he was also one of those rare individuals, a true gentleman in every sense of the word.

Not that he was a goody-goody! Far from it! He had a very naughty sense of humour and he was an outrageous flirt with all the ladies in the band but I never heard a nasty word

escaping from his lips.

Although we knew him as saxophonist, Jack was also a gifted violinist, a talent I was quick to take advantage of when I invited him to perform at a Clan MacMillan Society social where he delighted the assembled clansmen with some wonderful Scots fiddle music.

Those band members who attended his funeral were amazed to hear what a fascinating life he had led, something you would never have heard from Jack himself. The current obsession of some people to broadcast every intimate (and usually extremely boring) detail of their lives on Facebook or Twitter would have been incomprehensible to someone like Jack. He was and remained to the end a very private person, more interested in hearing about other

people than talking about himself.

He was quite simply one of the most delightful people it has ever been my privilege to play beside and he will be remembered with great affection by everyone who knew him.



Jack Finnegan

It is always a pleasure and a privilege to play at Erskine Hospital and our visit there on 5<sup>th</sup> November was no exception. The welcome we receive from both residents and staff is so genuinely warm that it makes us want to perform well for them.

We presented a varied programme – as Michael described it "something for everyone". A selection of George Gershwin's music certainly went down well but perhaps some spirited solo playing from Helenor McQueen, John McCann, Jim Baillie and David Welsh may have had something to do with the reception from the audience. The march from "The Great Escape" was also a popular item possibly because it involves some audience participation,

always a popular feature of any concert. We're not sure if the music of Carole King was known to most of the audience but the staff certainly enjoyed it!

As the audience is made up of mostly fairly elderly ex-servicemen and women, they are refreshingly honest. At the end of our rendering of a selection of songs associated with Frank Sinatra when Michael turned to the audience and said, "I expect you all felt like joining in with some of these songs", they all shook their heads. No, they hadn't felt like joining in at all! Later in the programme, however, they did feel like joining in when we played our version of "Loch Lomond". It was rather nice to hear some quiet singing as we played this well known Scottish air. Although some

of us had our doubts about playing "The Teddy Bears' Picnic" as our finale, it proved to be an inspired choice and our rather rollicking version of it provided a jolly, toe tapping ending to a very well received concert.

Another feature of a visit to Erskine is the wonderful buffet they provide for us after the concert. It's also the only venue where we are plied with alcohol, although as most of us are driving we can only gaze longingly at the array of wine, beer and Guinness on offer!

Altogether it was a very pleasant evening. We've been invited back next year and I know we'll be there and some of us will be trying to persuade someone else to do the driving so that we can get stuck into that wine!



## Concert Review

A highlight in our house on the lead up to Santa is the annual Christmas Concert, which once again proved to be an evening of spectacular music in a warm, friendly atmosphere. Where else can you go to escape the commercialised Christmas countdown and enjoy a couple of hours of a wide range of music that was carefully selected by the musical director, Michael Philip. The Wind Orchestra gave an impressive performance of Smith's March "Citation" as a joyous opening number. A favourite of anyone's Christmas music would have to be the Snowman by Blake and arranged by Barnwell gave the audience a chance to reflect on the themes running through the magical piece of music

Shostakovich is another favourite of mine, so having the pleasure of listening to this arrangement gave me the opportunity to be transported to a ball where I was dancing the

spectacular surroundings of Vienna. Finishing off the first half in style the wind band gave the audience a tribute to Gershwin which was an 'Iwai' arrangement, giving an upbeat and fast moving end to a lively half leaving the audience wanting much more in the second half Salute to Ol' Blue Eyes was a great way to start off the second half where you can hear the audience of certain ages singing along to Strangers in the Night, That's Life and The Lady is a Tramp to name a few.

The children are on the edge of their seat now when Michael says the magical words "I'm looking for some volunteers" and the hands of six children immediately go up higher than Santa's sleigh on Christmas Eve. The time has come to grab their bells, tambourines and head to the stage behind the wind orchestra with their eyes fixed on Michael ready for the nod. The Christmas

concert just wouldn't be the same without the children joining in.

This now leads me to my favourite part of this year's performance – selections from 'Les Misérables' which has become one of my much loved musicals. The music is so powerful and especially listening to it live gives me shivers down my back. A well rehearsed arrangement by Barker.

The penultimate piece was O Come, O Come, Emmanuel which gives reflection to the meaning of Christmas while being elegant and beautiful.

The last performance by the wind orchestra was Music for a Festival which ended the night on a high. What a wonderful evening of music. Thank you to everyone involved in making the Christmas Concert a wonderful experience for young and old and all the best for 2011.

- Karen Welsh

Dear music friends,

As explained in my last article, we've decided to stay in Switzerland for (hopefully!) at least the next 10 years, so we bought a house in a wee village between Basel and Zürich, called Herznach. Buying a house is a big thing in Switzerland: you buy a house to live in for the rest of your life, and the way they build here reflects this philosophy. Our house is built with lots of concrete, has very solid walls, windows, doors and is well built throughout (when I close a window or a door it is really closed, no drafts are discovered anywhere).



The house was ready on September 1. in 2010 and our move went smoothly (we've had some practise!). We were welcomed by the very friendly locals who spontaneously started conversations when strolling through the streets of Herznach. And in one of these conversations I've probably said that I'm an amateur musician, because after a few weeks somebody stood at our door asking if I would like to join the local band. While I was still unpacking boxes and trying to get the boys organised at school and clubs, I was flattered and decided to visit one of their practises on Tuesday night. No probs, the person who came to my door lived in the same street and she would come and pick me up to go to the community house, which is 500

meters away!

When arriving at the band night it was soon clear that this was a brass band, a group which is normally playing without saxophones, but not this band. I was welcomed by the conductor who explained that everybody was welcome to join, even a saxophone player. I didn't know if this was an insult or not, so I simply sat down and played.

It is sometimes difficult to play soprano cornet parts on an alto saxophone but at one of our recent meetings, the director had an idea: he's always wanted to play saxophone, so what if I taught him to play sax and he would then teach me cornet or trumpet? First I thought this is a crazy suggestion, but now I've decided to put my saxophone pride aside, have an open mind and go ahead and learn something new in 2011. I'll keep you updated on my progress!

My first concert was a Christmas concert in the church in Herznach. It started at 6pm on a snowy night, the (initially cold) church was fully packed. We played for an hour and the people in the public (many kids) seemed to like it. We even had a piece with a Swiss alphorn solo (you know, that long wooden pipe they play on in the Swiss mountains), wonderful! Afterwards everybody was invited to have a glass of "glühwein" (a sort of hot red wine). This was served outside the church and we drank this standing next to a big open fire while it was slightly snowing. How romantic! My husband, the boys and I were all in a Christmas mood when walking home.

Hope you had a lovely festive season and I wish you all a healthy 2011 filled with music.

- Sabine Vos

As so many of you seemed to enjoy the last competition, this one is the same. Just like last time, the first column shows the titles of songs, the second column the musical in which they appear. Of course we used up most of the well known ones last time so some of these are a little more obscure but we know you like a challenge! Once you've worked out the answers send them either by post to L. McMillan 56 Lounsdale Drive Paisley PA2 9ED or by email to mcmillan2008@btinternet.com by Friday the 25th February 2010.

<b>1</b>	<b>WIDFL</b>	<b>ACL</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>DITD</b>	<b>TBW</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>IGAKOOY</b>	<b>AG</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>ILP</b>	<b>C-C</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>TID</b>	<b>MOLM</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>WOL</b>	<b>SB</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>SST</b>	<b>TMM</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>OMR</b>	<b>SB</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>HT</b>	<b>TPG</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>TCTWM</b>	<b>PYW</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>ICBHWY</b>	<b>TBF</b>
<b>12</b>	<b>SGG</b>	<b>DLL</b>
<b>13</b>	<b>IOHWIDWY</b>	<b>EP</b>
<b>14</b>	<b>TTS</b>	<b>MMISL</b>
<b>15</b>	<b>DROMP</b>	<b>FG</b>
<b>16</b>	<b>SDYRTB</b>	<b>GAD</b>
<b>17</b>	<b>YWMFM</b>	<b>SITR</b>
<b>18</b>	<b>ISITS</b>	<b>SD</b>
<b>19</b>	<b>BBAB</b>	<b>PJ</b>
<b>20</b>	<b>COL</b>	<b>TLK</b>

We're on the web :

[www.ywoglasgow.org.uk](http://www.ywoglasgow.org.uk)