

## WHEN I HEAR THAT SOUND (Musings of Charles Corroyer former player with the Harwich & Grange bands)

That sound to me must be the sound of music in all its various and wondrous forms from the top symphony orchestras of the world to the top echelons of brass bands. My friend tells me that if the brass band does not come within twenty miles of Barnsley you can forget about them. Then you would expect such a comment from Irwin who is a Yorkshire man and played in the Yorkshire Copper Works Band who first changed their name to Imperial Metals, then dropping the Metals from its title to become the Imperial Band and recently won the National Championship at the Royal Albert Hall. For good measure I include Black Dyke Mills, Brighouse and Rastrick and Grimethorpe Colliery. I have on cassette and CD many great Orchestras and brass bands, but my greatest collection is that of Welsh Male Voice Choirs.

Coming away from the Premiership of music and down several leagues, at the age of 13 I was taught the trumpet. I must have inflicted unknown torture on my parents and sisters but no one complained. In the fifth year at school I became one of six playing for school dances. Neither the playing or dancing was particularly brilliant.

Much, much later, after the war actually, I joined the Harwich Band, later called the Grange Band, now the Harwich British Legion Band- It gave concerts, contested and practiced in the school where I taught. Although I loved teaching and the young people I taught never suffered from the pressures one hears so much about these days. Meeting so many people from all walks of life, if there was even the slightest stress, playing in the Band was an absolute therapy. The Harwich Band was a great mixture of folk.

Coming across the Stour estuary from Shotley (HMS Ganges) were three members of the Band of Her Majesty's Royal Marines. Then there were two old sweats, ex-regulars who had given years of service in regimental bands. They were a couple of comedians. Then, not always present because of their calling, two policemen. Another pair, this time Salvationists - backsliders I thought to use a Salvation Army term, but no, just juggling, playing in both the Harwich Band and that of the Salvation Army. I do not know how they did it.

Then there were the youngsters coming through the schools. One such was Denise, 16 years old and sharing with me the solo horn section. Always calling me "sir". I said "sir" was not necessary now. "What shall I call you?" Denise said. "Nothing" I said, "no titles are needed". Within two years it was I that was doing the calling. Calling to her father, also in the Band, calling for help. "Come and tell your daughter to stop flirting!" Such happy, happy days - flirt on my dear 18 year old of those days. Les (Henniker), the father, headed a musical family. In addition to being lead cornet in the band, he conducted and trained his own band of youngsters in the town.

I am compelled to write of another of Leslie's daughters, also a Lesley. She joined the WRAF and was soon playing in the Central Band of the RAF. When this was closed down, Lesley joined the WRAC (Women Royal Army Corps) and was almost immediately playing in their Central Band. One day in one of our National tabloids the whole of the centre pages were given over to this Band, showing Lesley inset as the lead trombonist. Les is a very proud father. Then there was Clive Easter. He came through the School Band, joined the Army and played for many years in the Band of the Royal Anglian Regiment. I wonder with what anticipation and eagerness such members of the top brass bands turn up for practice, concerts and recordings almost now at a professional level, escaping from mine and mill if they ever have to go there these days.

Then to Wales. I remember many years ago coming down from the mountains through low cloud and seeing the mean streets of Treorchy below. In the few days I was staying there I had hopes of seeing and hearing the Treorchy Male Voice Choir in practice or concert. It was not to be, I had to wait much later when they visited Clacton-on-Sea. Again, what a background of mine and chapel these men represented. Not that you have to come from the bowels of the earth or factory to play in a band. At the other end of the scale there is the Vienna State Orchestra. I would not miss their concert on TV each New Year's Day with the beautiful music of Strauss. Equally enjoyed are the wonderful programmes from the Proms.

Writing of Vienna, I go back to the war years when I was in the Holy Land. I was stationed for a month or two at the growing small town called Rehoveth. It had a fine new Concert Hall, wherein played the Israeli Symphony Orchestra. I am wondering if the name is correct, somewhere in my archives I have several programmes. What I am most sure of is the great musicians, many Jewish, who had fled the great orchestras of Europe like the Berlin and Vienna, enjoying their freedom and wonderful music.

So much I have left unsaid if we are talking of glorious sounds. I love opera, the three tenors and others. Plus I must mention firm favourites such as Angela Georgiou and Lesley Garrett as my CDs prove. Going back to the choirboy singing of Aled Jones. Now a great tenor.

With what mixed feeling I write of the humble bugle, from both ends of the spectrum. To be rudely awoken by Reveille, since I love sleep too, I could make an argument against the simple instrument. Yet it is the same bugle that brings us the "Last Post" with poignant memories of national occasions.

Finally, and on a less serious level, I must introduce my wife Barbara who suffers my musical enthusiasm. I sing to her in the car!! I have a loud awful voice! There is no escape, you cannot jump from a moving vehicle. With the advent of the safety belt in recent years you could say it has given real meaning to the phrase - "having a captive audience". To her abiding credit Barbara along with other members of the local WI has persuaded the group to continue to sing Jerusalem at the commencement of their meetings. In an age when custom and tradition are falling by the way it is heartening that they continue to sing. What do they say - "Make a joyful noise unto the Lord"