

Cranbrook Town Band

David Newsom gives a potted history of the Cranbrook Town Band

THE ORIGINAL Cranbrook Town Band was formed by Mr H. Hinkley in 1924. A cornet player, Mr Hinkley had previously conducted Goudhurst Band. The competition side of the brass band world is, rather like the Football League, divided into sections with promotion and demotion being obtained as a result of contest success or failure. The band's first competition success was at the Tunbridge Wells Musical Festival in 1926.

Sadly, the band's membership declined over time and it eventually folded. It reformed under the baton of Nick Carter in the mid 1950s with an inauguration concert in the Vestry Hall on 27 May 1955. Nick continued to conduct the band and teach local youngsters to play brass instruments until his retirement in early 1986. After a brief period where several conductors were tried out, the band appointed its current musical director, Ian Lanceley, in November 1986.

Since that time the band has re-emerged onto the contesting scene, winning many prizes and being promoted several times over the years. While contesting is an important part of the band's life,



TOP RIGHT: **The Town Band in 2018**
ABOVE: **Photo of the Town Band taken in 1924**

it is also in continual demand to perform its well-received concerts throughout Kent and East Sussex. Recent events have included performing with the Wurlitzer Organ at Rye College and concerts at the Big Cat Sanctuary, local bandstands and various churches throughout the area.

The band's chosen charity is Demelza Children's Hospice and it has raised in excess of £5,000 for the organisation over the past few years. The main fundraising concert for this support takes place at St. Dunstan's Church in late September or early October each year (this year it is on 5



October). Last year's concert featured Owen Farr, the most outstanding tenor horn player in the world today.

As a friendly, sociable organisation, band members like to spend time together and regularly go on concert tours to the continent. The last one was in May 2018 where the band performed to thousands of people in both Leiden and at Oosterpark in Amsterdam.

The band has also formed a Youth Section where, under the guidance of Robin Traves, young people are taught how to play a brass instrument. Robin's work also extends into local schools and many of his pupils have made their way into the Senior Band.

The band rehearses at Hawkhurst Primary School from 7.45pm to 10pm every Thursday with the Youth Section rehearsing prior to the main rehearsal from 6.30pm to 7.30pm. Some of the younger players who have reached the necessary standard stay on after their rehearsal and join in with the Senior Band until 9pm.

more info

Visit www.cranbrooktownband.org.uk for articles, concert and contact details. Also check out the band pages on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Soundcloud and Flickr.