

# THAT WAS...



# ...THAT WAS!

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A review of 2020, the 125th anniversary year of  
the Scottish Brass Band Association

This booklet is a diary record of a year which took us all by surprise. 2020 was the year of the COVID-19 pandemic, when life as we all knew it came to a halt.

Brass banding, in particular, was affected in a way which none of us could have imagined. Virtually immediately after we had all enjoyed the Scottish Championships in March – when the cooperation band became the 2020 champions (see cover photo) – the spread of the Coronavirus through the UK brought to an abrupt end the amateur leisure activity we all hold dear.

No more rehearsals together, no more live concerts or banding engagements, no more contests for the (un)foreseeable future. But the banding spirit of 'the show must go on' overcame this adversity. This is a chronicle of how we adapted to the changed – and changing – circumstances we found ourselves in...

2020. It was to be a year of celebration for the brass banding community throughout Scotland. A year in which the Scottish Brass Band Association had prepared a full calendar of events to mark its 125th anniversary, consolidating its role as a significant force in the country's musical heritage.

There were to be special learning roadshows, workshops and information sessions which reached out to brass band musicians with educational support and advice, in addition to the scheduled contests and the Easter and summer courses for the National Youth Brass Band of Scotland (NYBBS).

However, it was not to be. Instead, 2020 turned out to be a year of viral infection, lockdown and social restrictions. It was the year of the Coronavirus, COVID-19.

But, as a result, it also turned out to be a year of creativity, invention and innovation as bands learned to connect with their own members and each other through technology.

We had band chats, quizzes and tutorial sessions via Zoom,

Microsoft Teams, WhatsApp and similar media. There were 'virtual' band recordings of favourite music on YouTube and Facebook.

The traditional NYBBS end-of-course summer concert took place as a virtual event following weeks of online tuition for students.

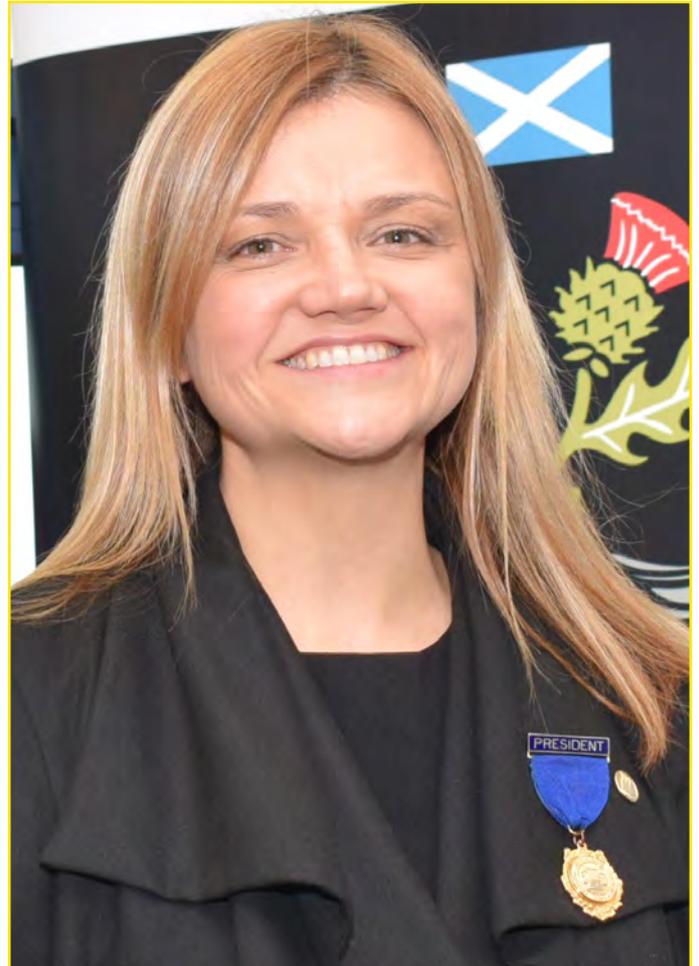
Even the West of Scotland entertainment contest went online with the winning band being selected via a popularity poll.

The SBBA website became a focal point for bands to tell others what they were up to during this extended period of self-isolation through our 'Connecting during the Corona Crisis' feature.

Because of the unusual nature of 2020, we decided to put together a diary record of how bands coped with the strange circumstances we found ourselves in. So read on as we recall the year that was 2020...

**Carrie Boax**

**President of the Scottish Brass Band Association**



The year started out full of hope and optimism for 12 months packed with exciting events to celebrate SBBA's 125th anniversary. At the AGM at Falkirk Stadium, **Carrie Boax** told delegates: "I have been inspired by the stories of new bands starting, brass groups reforming and players returning. It is definitely not easy, but if you care about our movement – and seeing you all here today shows that you do – then please reach out to the resources and experienced, determined people out there and help to make our movement grow. The rewards will be worth it."

Band of the year awards – for accumulating the most contest points in 2019 – were presented to **Newtongrange** (championship), **Kingdom Brass** (first section), **Newmains and District** (second section), **Perthshire Brass** (third section) and **Barrhead Burgh** (fourth section).

As in previous years, the AGM was followed by a Learning Festival, providing SBBA delegates with the opportunity to broaden their knowledge of band-related topics through a series of workshops (photos over the page).

**Nigel Boddice** MBE, lecturer in Instrument Performance at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, led the session on the art of conducting for players, conductors and band training, working on the three main points of technique, musicianship and psychology.

**Alister Cush**, chairman of **Irvine and Dreghorn Brass**, explained how his band had used the Community Asset Transfer process to acquire new rehearsal premises through the development of a business plan and achieving charitable status.

Renowned player, conductor and adjudicator **Anne Crookston** talked about the purpose of adjudicating at contests, what she listens for in a performance and what will make an impact with the adjudicator, and how she scores what she has heard.

Maths/learning support teacher and cub scout leader **Carole Allan's** workshop focused on safeguarding – what it is, who it affects and what are the protocols. She also developed the theme to provide a context for SBBA.

A teacher with the Midlothian Instrumental Music Service, **Barbara-Jane Waddell** led two learning sessions – one on playing techniques for auxiliary instruments in a band’s percussion section and the other on the effects of dyslexia on music and helping dyslexic musicians of all ages.

The day ended with a question-and-answer session which raised many valid points about mental health and wellbeing.

**BELOW: Delegates listen attentively to annual reports from the SBBA officers.**



**Young players from Abbey Brass in Jedburgh entertained delegates with a short programme of light music, conducted by Stuart Black.**





Workshops led by (clockwise from top left) Nigel Boddice, Alister Cush, Barbara-Jane Waddell, Anne Crookston and Carole Allan (centre).

Three recipients of the President's Awards were announced by Carrie Boax. The first award was presented to **Whitburn Band** for consistently competing with the best in Britain and Europe and achieving 14th place in the 'band of the decade' listings on 4barsrest.

**Unison Kinneil's** award was for surviving the devastation of its band hall fire in 2019, encouraged and supported by generous offers of help from bands and the local community.

The third award went to **Dalmellington Band** for its innovative Brassma project in which it had worked with the local health centre to offer brass tuition to young asthma sufferers.



## The new SBBA executive committee (below left) was elected as follows:

Danny Harrison	<a href="mailto:harrisond@live.co.uk">harrisond@live.co.uk</a>
Damian Martin	<a href="mailto:brass_monkey@tiscali.co.uk">brass_monkey@tiscali.co.uk</a>
Jim Wishart	<a href="mailto:brasscentralstrathearn@gmail.com">brasscentralstrathearn@gmail.com</a>
Lesley Crumlish	<a href="mailto:lesley.crumlish@ntlworld.com">lesley.crumlish@ntlworld.com</a>
Steven Gray	<a href="mailto:stevengray1956@live.co.uk">stevengray1956@live.co.uk</a>
Grant Brown	<a href="mailto:grant.brown@btinternet.com">grant.brown@btinternet.com</a>
Elaine Roxburgh	<a href="mailto:elaineroxburgh@hotmail.co.uk">elaineroxburgh@hotmail.co.uk</a>
Jim Milligan	<a href="mailto:milligan775@btinternet.com">milligan775@btinternet.com</a>
Murray White	<a href="mailto:murray.white@hotmail.co.uk">murray.white@hotmail.co.uk</a>

## SBBA officers are:

Carrie Boax, president	<a href="mailto:sbbapresident@gmail.com">sbbapresident@gmail.com</a>
Ann Murray, vice president	<a href="mailto:sbbavp@gmail.com">sbbavp@gmail.com</a>
Tom Allan, secretary	<a href="mailto:sbbasecretary@gmail.com">sbbasecretary@gmail.com</a>
Julie Nicoll, treasurer	<a href="mailto:sbbatreasurer@gmail.com">sbbatreasurer@gmail.com</a>
John Boax, education officer	<a href="mailto:sbbaeducation@gmail.com">sbbaeducation@gmail.com</a>
Nigel Martin, PR and publicity officer	<a href="mailto:sbbapr@gmail.com">sbbapr@gmail.com</a>
Caroline Farren, child protection officer	<a href="mailto:sbbacpo@gmail.com">sbbacpo@gmail.com</a>
Peter Fraser, website management	<a href="mailto:fraserp3@virginmedia.com">fraserp3@virginmedia.com</a>
James McGoldrick, social media	<a href="mailto:sbbasocialmedia@gmail.com">sbbasocialmedia@gmail.com</a>

**C**oalburn Brass Band announced that it was now sitting pretty following the introduction of a new set of chairs for rehearsal purposes, purchased through a grant from the Tesco Bags of Help initiative.

Band president **Alan Court** commented: "We are so thankful to Tesco for the financial assistance that made the purchase of new chairs possible. The previous set were bought second hand when the band hall was refurbished in 2009 and were becoming tired and uncomfortable.

"The new chairs have transformed our rehearsal space as they are incredibly comfortable and will undoubtedly make for an enhanced rehearsal experience."



**N**orth-East Scotland's finest young brass talent was on display at the Northern Counties Solos Contest in Forfar on Sunday 19 January. As well as the NCBBA titles, the event also served as the regional qualifier for February's Besson Scottish Solo and Ensemble finals next month.

Adjudicator **Robert Fraser** was effusive in his praise of what he had heard. "I was surprised by the difficulty of the pieces chosen," he said, "but all performers dealt well with the demands of some tricky music, and I was extremely impressed with all of the performances."

The Intermediate (16 and under) section was won by trombonist **Alix Bailey's** energetic rendition of Gareth Wood's *Dance Sequence*, while young cornet star **Gavin Lee** took home the Youth (21 and under) title on Henri Büsser's *Andante and Scherzo*.

The competitors will go on to represent the region in the Besson Scottish Solo and Ensemble Championship finals on Saturday 8 February.



On Sunday 26 January the **Coalburn Brass Band** family once again teamed up with South Lanarkshire Council Instrumental Services to put on a fun-filled day of workshops at the Blackwood and Kirkmuirhill Community Wing.

The workshops and rehearsals were led by **Scott Kerr** and

**Helen Minshall**. “The open day was a fantastic way to begin another busy year in 2020,” said a spokesperson. “It was an extremely enjoyable and educational day for everyone.

“The workshops with Helen and Scott were really engaging, and the joint performance at the end of the concert was a fantastic way to round off the day.”

The Scottish Youth Solo and Ensemble Championship was held at the Howden Park Centre in Livingstone on Saturday 8 February. Despite the best efforts of Storm Ciara, a healthy field of intrepid competitors and their families nonetheless made it to West Lothian, as the best of young Scottish brass players assembled in their bid to become national champions.

Each of the performers had booked their place in the finals through their local association qualifying contests, and with three different age categories to be settled (Junior, Intermediate and Youth), there was plenty to keep both audience and the adjudicator for the day, **Owen Farr**, entertained.

The high quality of music on offer from every finalist underlined perfectly both the strength in depth of young brass talent across Scotland, and the selfless hard work put in by countless instructors, bands and parents behind the scenes.

“It’s been a pleasure and an honour to sit and listen to the wonderful young talent produced here in Scotland,”

## FEBRUARY

concluded Owen Farr. “I was delighted to see the performers smiling on stage – it was clear that they enjoyed their day! I thought there was a real buzz about the whole event, and a brilliant atmosphere outside the hall with the youngsters getting the chance to meet up with friends from other bands. It’s been a success from beginning to end.”



Adam Riddiough, whose performance of *Carnival of Venice* won him the Junior soloist title.

Scottish Open champions **Whitburn Band** put on a concert at the Zetland Parish Church in Grangemouth on Friday 21 February.

During the show, the audience were treated to a wide variety of music including *Suite Gothique*, solos from **Chris**

**Bradley** (cornet) and **Caroline Farren** (flugel), and pieces from the pens of Elgar Howarth, Torstein Aagaard-Nilsen, Eric Whitacre and David Bowie.

Whitburn Band celebrates its 150th anniversary this year.



**S** BBA has awarded **Robert Laidlaw** (Bob) a certificate of recognition for his 65 years of continuous service with **Langholm Town Band**.

The presentation was made by the band's MD **Chris Shanks** at a rehearsal. Band stalwart **David Calvert** – who is now in his 67th year with Langholm Town – told a few funny stories from Bob's many years with the band before handing him a canvas from his fellow musicians as a keepsake (pictured below).



**MARCH**

**S**ome 1500 brass musicians from 54 bands descended on the Concert Hall in Perth over the weekend of 7/8 March to not only compete for the honour of representing Scotland at the National Brass Band Championships, but also to celebrate a milestone of music making – the 125th anniversary of SBBA.

SBBA president **Carrie Boax** urged all bandspeople to make the weekend one to remember. "Get involved and share what's happening as part of your Scottish Championships 2020 journey!" she says. As it turned out, the weekend was to become one to remember, as it was the last time in the year that bands would be able to get together in the spirit of competition and friendly rivalry.

After a long weekend of contesting, the winners emerged as **the cooperation band** (pictured right, championship section), **Kingdom Brass** (first section) – incidentally, both taking the honours from the dreaded no.1 draw – **Annan Town** (second section), **Croy Silver** (third section) and **Newland Concert** (fourth section).





Section winners (clockwise from top left) were Kingdom Brass (first), Annan Town (second), Newland Concert (fourth) and Croy Silver (third).





Photos courtesy of Jim Doyle

Joining the winning bands at the Royal Albert Hall were runners-up Bon-Accord (above) in the championship section (together with Whitburn who qualified for the national finals by winning the Scottish Open in November). Going to Cheltenham were Bathgate (top right), runners-up in the first section, St Ronan's Silver (right) in the second section, Langholm Town (top, over the page) in the third section and Kilmarnock Concert Brass (bottom, over the page) in the fourth section.





The Coronavirus had already started to invade life in the UK with the first cases and hospitalisations being announced.

And as a full nationwide lockdown was being considered by the UK Government, the inevitable cancellations of planned band events started to ensue.

The first of these was the AGM for West of Scotland Brass Band Association originally planned for Thursday 12 March, quickly followed by the Fife Brass Band Festival on 25 April.

“We’ve taken the decision to cancel the FBBF this year due to the escalating Coronavirus cases, restrictions on events and the need for self isolations,” the organisers said. “The health of the banding and wider community has to be our priority, and we hope everyone will understand.”

Following the Scottish Championships, the new band contesting grading tables for 2021 were announced by SBBA (right).

<b>BAND - Champ Section</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>Total</b>		Qualification
the cooperation band	1	1	2		RAH
Whitburn	2	4	6		RAH
Kirkintilloch Kelvin	7	3	10		
Bon Accord Silver	8	2	10		RAH
Unison Kinneil	5.5*	5	10.5		
Newtongrange Silver	3	8	11		
Dalmellington	4	7	11		
Kirkintilloch	5.5*	6	11.5		
Dunaskin Doon	5	9	14	Relegated	
Bo'ness & Carriden Silver	6	10	16	Relegated	
<b>1<sup>st</sup> Section</b>					
Kingdom Brass	3	1	4	Promoted	Cheltenham
Bathgate	5.5*	2	7.5	Promoted	Cheltenham
Johnstone	5.5*	3	8.5		
Newmilns & Galston	5	4	9		
Granite City Brass	4	6	10		
Dalkeith & Monktonhall	6	5	11		
Coalburn Silver	5.5*	7	12.5		
Newmains	5.5*	9	14.4		
Campbeltown Brass	7	8	15	Relegated	
Tullis Russell	8	10	18	Relegated	
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Section</b>					
Lochgelly	3	3	6	Promoted	
Annan Town	6*	1	7	Promoted	Cheltenham
Clackmannan	4	6	10		
Jedforest Instrumental	5	5	10		
Irvine & Dregghorn	6*	4	10		
St. Ronan's Silver	9	2	11		Cheltenham
Broxburn	6	8	14		
St. David's Brass	7	7	14		
Perthshire	6*	10	16		
Arbroath Instrumental	6*	11	17	Relegated	
Selkirk Silver	8	9	17	Relegated	

<b>Band - 3<sup>rd</sup> Section</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>Total</b>		
Renfrew Burgh	3	3	6	Promoted	
Croy	5.5	1	6.5	Promoted	Cheltenham
Langholm Town	5	2	7		Cheltenham
Whitburn Heartlands	4	5	9		
Shotts	5.5	6	11.5		
Dysart Colliery	8	4	12		
Barrhead Burgh	5.5*	7	12.5		
Penicuik Silver	5.5*	8	13.5		
Highland Brass	7	9	16	Relegated	
Buckhaven & Methil	6	10	16	Relegated	
<b>4<sup>th</sup> Section</b>					
Newland Concert	2	1	3	Promoted	Cheltenham
Kilmarnock Concert	3	2	5	Promoted	Cheltenham
Peebles Burgh	4	3	7		
Dundee Instrumental	5	5	10		
Stranraer Brass	8	4	12		
Brass Sounds Inverclyde	7.5*	7	14.5		
MacTaggart Scott	7	9	16		
Callander Brass	12	6	18		
Hawick Saxhorn	10	8	18		
Coalburn Intermediate	7.5*	11	18.5		
Bon Accord Silver 'B'	9	10	19		
Dunfermline	7.5*	13	20.5		
Forfar Instrumental	11	12	23		
Queensferry	13	14	27		

Over the weekend of 14/15 March SBBA issued its first guidance for bands in line with the advice that was coming from the UK and Scottish Governments regarding the measures to be taken during the COVID-19 outbreak.

While SBBA was not in a position to make decisions on behalf of individual bands within its membership, it said it had a responsibility to advise members in the way it felt was in their best interests as a whole.

“All of our bands have a presence of some form in our local communities and that places an element of responsibility on us all to act in a responsible manner and set a good example to other groups and societies,” SBBA said.

“The guidance published by the Scottish Government and the UK Government states that everyone in the UK is now being advised to avoid ‘non-essential’ contact with others and ‘unnecessary’ travel. People are also being asked to work from home ‘where they possibly can’, and avoid pubs, clubs, theatres and social venues.

“People are now being advised to stay at home for 14 days if they, or anyone in their household, has either a high temperature or a ‘new and continuous cough’. People in at-risk groups will be asked within days to be ‘largely shielded from social contact’ for 12 weeks.

To that end, SBBA added, it recommends that all band hall rehearsals and other band events should cease and/or be cancelled until such times as the recommendations published by the Government are relaxed.

The lockdown had begun and it rapidly started to take its toll...

The first real casualty from SBBA’s point of view was the cancellation of the **NYBBS** (National Youth Brass Band of Scotland) Easter course at Strathallan in Perthshire “due to the rapidly developing situation with the COVID-19 outbreak.”



“We take the health and wellbeing of all our students, staff, and conductors as our top priority and, with this in mind, we do not wish to put any of our NYBBS family at risk,” SBBA said. “We will continue to monitor the situation over the coming weeks and will look to the advice given by the Scottish Government and NHS.”

However, plans for the moment were continuing for the NYBBS 2020 summer course and updates would be provided as and when available.

It was at the end of March that SBBA launched its popular ‘Connecting during the Corona Crisis’ feature on its website in a bid to keep bands connected with their members and each other during the COVID-19 lockdown.

Bands responded admirably to the call to send in a write-up and photographs for inclusion on the website and the feature ran well into the summer.

At the final count, 22 bands took part, paving the way for a fairly busy few months of website activity.

It was with great sadness that SBBA announced the passing of **Willie J Ross**, a player, teacher and conductor, who celebrated his 100th birthday in the previous September.

Well known in Fife and beyond, he inspired so many people and gave so many a love of music for life. He was involved for a number of years with the Fife Charities Association and was also a member of the SBBA Executive.



Alison Hall with Willie Ross on his 100th birthday.

The first band to submit its profile and photos for the 'Connecting during the Corona Crisis' feature was **Newland Concert Brass**, the current Scottish fourth section champions, having put in a winning performance of *Neverland* in Perth under the baton of musical director **Simon Railton**.

The band was formed in 1987 after taking its name from

the venue where the first rehearsal took place, Newland Academy in Bathgate.

Newland value youth development and have both a junior band (below) and a training section. The band plays at concerts, contests, charity events, gala days and the Bathgate Procession and John Newland Festival.



**B**rass-playing Scottish NHS workers formed a virtual band to raise spirits during the Coronavirus outbreak. The online rendition of The Proclaimers' song *I'm Gonna Be (500 Miles)* was the brainchild of **Eilidh Houston** who was inspired after seeing a similar web-based performance of *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* by the Welsh Cory Band.

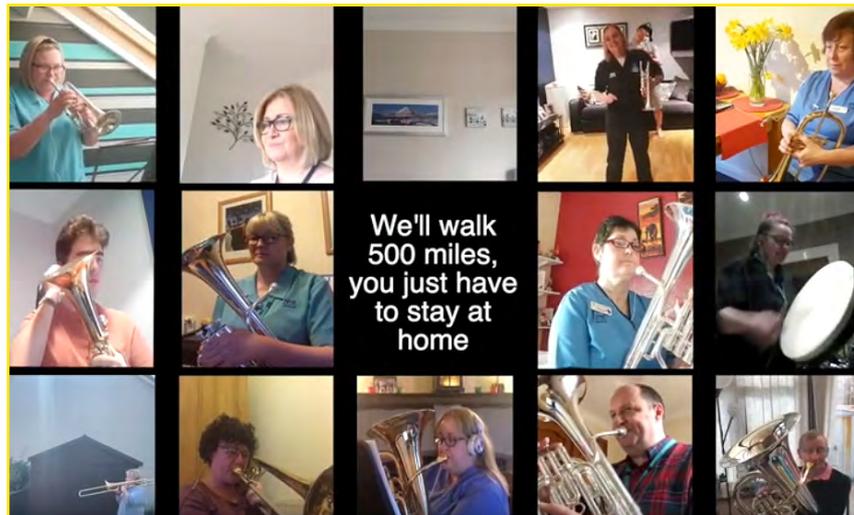
Eilidh, who is a student nurse in Ayrshire & Arran and plays trombone with **Johnstone Band**, said: "We wanted to show our banding colleagues that the NHS is loud and proud during these trying times. We are all missing playing with our respective bands and, for many of us, going to rehearsals was a release from the pressure jobs we do on a daily basis."

After receiving their music and a recording of the tune, the volunteer players video'd themselves playing their parts and then sent them back to Eilidh who used her technical know-how to 'knit' a multi-image screen picture together.

Colleagues from NHS Ayrshire & Arran, Greater Glasgow & Clyde and Dumfries & Galloway took part in the online performance.

"We chose *500 Miles* because it represented the lengths everyone in the NHS is going to beat this evil virus," added Eilidh.

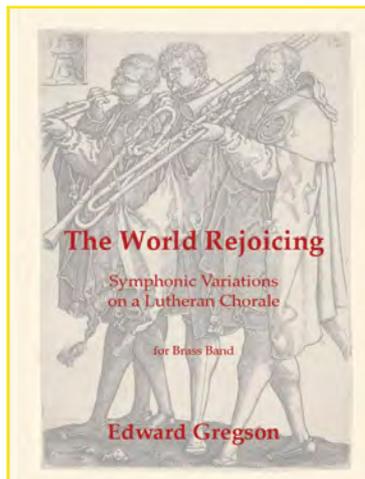
You can see and hear the online NHS band on YouTube at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x1zZUtu\\_2lc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x1zZUtu_2lc)



Nobody expected the Coronavirus to last too long so planning for future brass band events towards the end of the year continued.

The test piece for the British Open in September was announced as *The World Rejoicing* by Edward Gregson.

Jointly commissioned by the British Open Brass Band Championship and the National Brass Band Championships of Belgium, The Netherlands, Norway and Switzerland, it was intended to be used as the test piece for each competition.



Morthanveld Publishing Ltd was appointed as sole distributor of the performing materials (individual parts or full sets of scores and parts) would be available to purchase exclusively from [morthanveld.com](http://morthanveld.com) from 1 June.

APRIL

Keen that brass lovers were not missing out on those rich, sonorous tones of a brass band during the Coronavirus outbreak, the SBBA website gave details of an internet radio station that specialises in round-the-clock brass band music.

Brass Band Radio is a 24-hour radio station which features regular programme slots to reflect the time of day and different themes, eg test pieces, vinyl revival, lunchtime brass, classical collection, through the night, etc.

The radio station is owned and run by **David Beal**, who is keen for bands who have made CDs to send them in for inclusion on his playlists. “Our radio station is not just about the top flight bands,” he said. “We would also like to give the lower section bands some air time.”

If you would like to hear your band featured on the air waves, just send your CD to Brass Band Radio, Unit 2, 16 The Village, Haxby, York YO32 3HT.

You can tune in to the radio station at <https://www.brassbandradio.co.uk/>. Happy listening!

In an extensive Easter message, **Carrie Boax** told the SBBA banding community that we were all facing challenges which we had never experienced before, but it was important we continued to follow UK and Scottish Government and NHS guidelines.

“We will continue to monitor the situation over the coming weeks and adhere to the Government and NHS advice,” she said. “I would like to give a special word of thanks to all those in our banding family who are on the frontline in this battle against the Coronavirus – the NHS and care workers, and also those who are carrying out essential work in maintaining services to us all during this time.

“I would also just like to mention that the SBBA sub-committees and officers are continuing to work behind the scenes, especially in Education and in meetings with Creative Scotland. We look forward to the brighter days when our face-to-face work can resume. There’s no substitute for live music, although our bands and players are doing a fab job in the virtual world!”

Carrie continued: “It has been heartening to read on our SBBA website how our bands are remaining in contact with their members, using the latest technology from Facebook, Zoom, WhatsApp and other amazing apps to stay connected.

“It’s also interesting to learn a bit more about the bands themselves, where and when they were formed, and some of the successes they have enjoyed. These articles are something I’ve been looking forward to every day!

“This has not been the start we would have liked to our 125th anniversary year and several planned events may not now take place, but the most important thing is that we all stay safe.”

She concluded on a more upbeat note: “The Christian message at Easter is one of hope, joy and resurrection. It’s a perfect sentiment as the world battles its way through this Coronavirus pandemic. We will come out of this and, as the Queen said in her televised broadcast, we will meet again.”

The COVID-19 pandemic shows no sign of abating any time soon, so it was with regret that the Northern Counties BBA committee announced the cancellation of this year's NCBBA contest, due to be held in Kinross on Sunday 31 May.



“Unfortunately, it will come as no surprise that, due to current events,

there is no realistic prospect of being able to hold our event this year,” commented **Damian Martin**, NCBBA president.

“We hope that you will keep us in mind for your 2021 calendar, when the event will return in a similar timeslot, likely to be Sunday 6 June.”

He added: “It’s been great seeing what bands have been doing to stay in touch and preserve the banding spirit during lockdown. Stay in touch with each other, stay safe, keep practising (!) and we hope to see you next year.”



During the Coronavirus lockdown, **Whitburn Band** members have been having a little fun in their homes with some virtual banding – and the very serious request to ‘Stay at home, Stay safe’.

Their online performance of the Sousa march *The Stars and Stripes Forever* is interspersed with personal messages of support for everyone to follow the Government and NHS rules for staying at home.

You can see their recording on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/whitburnband/videos/339897210300683/> or on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=35n3fBeQzjl&feature=youtu.be>

In the current Coronavirus emergency, SBBA has been advised by Volunteer Scotland and Disclosure Scotland that they will be prioritising applications with regards to key workers and those assisting with the frontline against COVID-19.

“To this end, we will not be processing or accepting PVG applications at this time,” SBBA child protection officer **Caroline Farren** explained. “Please bear in mind that child protection is still – and in fact more than ever – a high priority and, from a SBBA perspective, something we should all continually be monitoring.

“Given the fact that we could all be using online resources such as Zoom, Skype etc, please make sure you have parental permission before publishing any images or videos and take care around using personal information such as names.”

If you have any queries regarding child protection, please email [sbbacpo@gmail.com](mailto:sbbacpo@gmail.com) and Caroline will get back to you as soon as possible.

Former **Newland Concert Brass** players **Fraser West** and **Alec Dalglish** – now members of the Scottish band Skerryvore – have recorded a hit new single individually from isolation with 20 other musicians from across the country in tribute to NHS workers.

Newland’s Eb bass player **Peter West** also features in the video performance of *Everyday Heroes* which was written by piper **Martin Gillespie** who, along with his brother **Daniel**, is a founder member of Skerryvore.

The track pays tribute to the hundreds of thousands of NHS staff, volunteers and key workers who are risking so much to fight Coronavirus and all of the proceeds from the single will go to the NHS Charities COVID-19 Urgent Appeal.



Following on from the release of the single, Skerryvore invited musicians (of any instrument) to join in playing *Everyday Heroes* during Thursday’s Clap For Carers. Hundreds of musicians

took up the challenge including players from Newland Concert Brass. The band's Eb bass players **Alan Brough** and Peter West are pictured (below) taking part.

The track reached No.1 in the Scottish singles chart and it can be downloaded at <https://skerryvore.com/heroes/>.



**S**BAA's executive committee held its first meeting since the Coronavirus took hold in the UK. This time, though, all visual and vocal communication was via Zoom.

The three-hour online get-together considered an agenda which covered finance, communications, education, membership & registration, events and association updates.

But the dominant topic was the effect COVID-19 was having on planned and future activities. It was agreed that nothing could be decided about holding any further events until it was known what UK and Scottish Governments' advice on social distancing would be forthcoming in the next couple of weeks.

**S**cottish brass players are being encouraged to join fellow instrumentalists across the country in a musical tribute to the NHS, care staff and key workers throughout the UK.

The **Music Education Partnership Group**, Scotland, is organising a mass performance of the now-iconic *Over the*

*Rainbow* to coincide with the weekly Clap for Carers on Thursday at 8pm.

"MEPG is proud to support our NHS and all key workers across the UK and further afield," says the organisation's **Mae Murray**. "Join us to say our thank you by bringing a Musical Rainbow to all our heroes."

Young Scottish musicians who were disappointed that their Easter residential brass course had to be cancelled because of the Coronavirus outbreak have managed to play together as a band after all.

Abandonment of the planned **National Youth Brass Band of Scotland** (NYBBS) Easter course at Strathallan School in Perthshire as a result of the current lockdown left the hopeful attendees feeling bewildered and at a loss.

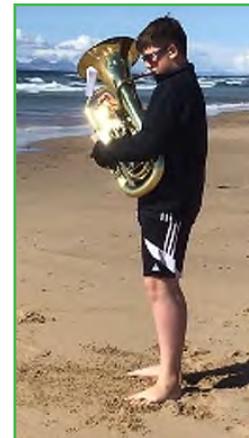
“We were all gutted to hear the news that the NYBBS Easter course had to be cancelled due to the current



circumstances,” said **Carole Ednie**, baritone player with Glasgow-based **the cooperation band**, who worked with solo horn player **Amy Paterson**, a member of **Black Dyke Band**, and friends from across the country and further afield in organising a virtual NYBBS band so that they could continue making music together.

The result is an online performance of a piece of music called *Freakin’ Awesome* which can be seen on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/carole.ednie/videos/2972086196181620/>

Young **Flint-Pheonix Barrett** of **Campbeltown Brass** paid his own musical tribute to the NHS by performing *Over the Rainbow* on the picturesque Machrihanish Beach: <https://www.facebook.com/leanne.thomson.376/videos/10156838830686631/>





The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

**Ruth Maguire MSP**

*Member of the Scottish Parliament for Cunninghame South*

#### **NHS Virtual Band Spreads Joy**

That the Parliament congratulates Eilidh Houston, who is from Irvine, for conducting a virtual brass band of NHS workers that performed the Proclaimers' song, *500 Miles*; understands that Eilidh, who is a second year nursing student and played trombone in the video, wanted to bring some happiness amid the negativity and anxiety over COVID-19; notes that the performance, which was shown through Facebook, was a resounding success with around 100,000 views in one day; congratulates Eilidh for her innovative idea, and wishes her and everyone involved with this all the best for the future.

**Date Lodged: 22/04/2020**

The NHS workers who banded together to play a virtual version of The Proclaimers' song *I'm Gonna Be (500 Miles)* have been praised in the Scottish Parliament for their performance.

Cunninghame South MSP Ruth Maguire lodged a Parliamentary motion congratulating the brass musicians for bringing "some happiness amid the negativity and anxiety over COVID-19".

The ensemble was led by **Eilidh Houston**, trombonist with **Johnstone Band** and a student nurse with NHS Ayrshire & Arran.

Ms Maguire wrote to Eilidh to let her know of the motion and to enclose a congratulatory certificate which recorded the event in Parliament.

The document notes that "the performance was a resounding success with around 100,000 views on one day". It adds that Parliament "congratulates Eilidh for her innovative idea and wishes everyone involved with this all the best for the future".

**P**erthshire Brass have been beating the lockdown blues over the last few weeks by playing music together from their living rooms and bedrooms across Scotland.

With a large membership of over 70 members, the band usually converges from all over the region to play together in Craigie each week. But with physical rehearsals out of the question, they've pushed the boat out in order to get a tune together.

Despite members currently spread as far apart as Aberdeenshire and Midlothian, the band has recorded a version of Mark Ronson's *Uptown Funk* in order to stave off boredom and keep their lips in shape. This version of the track, arranged by band members **Jason Blyth** and edited by **Kate** and **Ewan**

**Walker**, is certainly one way to make music when you can't get a band in the same room – and you can tell they've had great fun making it!

View the video at

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g3SfbEXH-5U&feature=emb\\_logo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g3SfbEXH-5U&feature=emb_logo)



Virtual bands performing on the internet have become all the rage during the Coronavirus lockdown. Now, **Carnoustie High School** band have joined in the fun with their rendition of the Galop from *Little Suite for Brass* by Malcolm Arnold in support of the NHS:

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1s67utGAO0DgPBDB\\_Jo4l3eEjosj-TaQf/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1s67utGAO0DgPBDB_Jo4l3eEjosj-TaQf/view?usp=sharing)



MAY



A moving tribute to all the brave servicemen and women of World War II as Britain and Europe celebrate the 75th anniversary of VE Day came from **Lochgelly Band** in their virtual performance of Elgar's *Nimrod* which can be viewed on YouTube: <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=wpEur8HP9EY&feature=youtu.be>

Like all other music groups in the UK, **Langholm Town Band** has been unable to meet up to rehearse and play in public due to the COVID-19 lockdown.

Friday 8 May was due to be the night when Langholmites would elect their Cornet for 2020 and the town band would normally have set off from the town hall playing *Jeannie's Black E'e*, one of the Common Riding marches, to the Buccleuch Centre where the crucial voting would take place.

But neither the town nor the band were to be beaten. Langholm secretary **Christine Calvert** suggested that a social distancing video could be recorded of *Jeannie's Black E'e* and it was released on the Friday at 7pm as it would have happened in normal times.

The performance can be viewed on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gbZPfxeWotM>

Musical director **Chris Shanks** and cornet player **Josh Calvert** worked on pulling the individual tracks and videos together over several days.



Due to the continuing Coronavirus outbreak, SBBA is sad to announce the cancellation of the three National Youth Brass Band of Scotland (NYBBS) summer courses and concerts that were scheduled to take place at Strathallan School in Perthshire on 2-8 August.

“Everyone at SBBA agrees that the health and wellbeing of all members of our NYBBS family is our top priority,” explained Carrie Boax.

*In these times of lockdown, isolation and separation, here is a personal reflection of grit and determination from **Bon-Accord Silver Band** that the show must go on...*

Anyone who plays in a brass band will tell you, yes, it's about the music. But it's more than that. For thousands across the country, their band is their family. However, with bandroom doors likely to remain shut for the foreseeable future, what happens when the music stops?

For the Bon-Accord Silver Band – which numbers some 60 players across two bands – the challenge of staying connected during lockdown has been enthusiastically met. It had looked set to be an exciting year for the Aberdeen outfit, with an historic second place at the Scottish Championships in March seemingly securing them a dream appearance at the National Final at London's Royal Albert Hall in October.

But even as the chances of fulfilling that dream gradually disappear into the (social) distance, the band are determined not to let any forthcoming disappointment dampen team morale.

The band saw a bumper turnout at their first ever virtual

AGM at which 36 members and their families got together online to celebrate the joys of spreadsheet accounting! As if to underline the inclusive nature of banding, attendees ranged from pensioner to the newest member of the band family, one-month old Finlay.

The AGM also saw the bands' annual Players' Player awards, voted for by the bandsfolk themselves. The winner of the Silver Band award was principal euphonium **Richard Kidd**, with the B Band award going to **Christopher Wylie** for his own principal euph efforts, as well as his sterling work in revamping the band's website.

Both bands have been keeping busy during the lockdown and embracing the 'new normal', putting out Meet the Player features via the band website and Facebook page, as well as organising a well-attended weekly Zoom quiz night with the winner staying on to host the following week's edition.

In addition to staying connected with each other, the band is also making an effort to stay in touch with their local community in and around Aberdeen.

Keep up to date at [www.bonaccordband.org.uk](http://www.bonaccordband.org.uk)

Former member of **Lochgelly Band**, **Jimmy Sinclair** passed away peacefully at home on 27 May at the grand age of 107. Due to the current COVID-19

situation, the funeral service was a private family occasion.

Jimmy played with the band when it was twice the winner of the Scottish Brass Band Championships in 1955 and 1958.



He was the last surviving Desert Rat who fought against Field Marshal Rommel in the North African campaign during the Second World War, receiving numerous medals for his service, and later serving for two years with the Allied Control Commission in Berlin before returning to Scotland to work as a slater.

Jimmy moved back to Germany in 1981 following the passing of his wife and then returned to Kirkcaldy at the tender age of 92.

JUNE

The **Mactaggart Scott Loanhead** banding family certainly haven't let the Coronavirus lockdown put a brake on their latest activities.

The senior band recorded the march *True and Trusty* to take part in the virtual Whit Friday contest which was organised online while the players in **Loanhead Brass Roots** have performed two pieces which were released on their Facebook page. The younger Rootlets (below) were put through their paces with **Alan Fernie's** *Cheesy Feet Rock*, which can be viewed at

<https://www.facebook.com/310432228597/videos/242256803743069/>



Since the cancellation of the NYBBS (National Youth Brass Band of Scotland)

summer residential course because of the COVID-19 lockdown, work has been going on behind the

scenes to create an exciting project over the next couple of months which will involve as many NYBBS students as possible to ensure that a grand finale on 8 August will still be feasible, albeit in a virtual environment.

Course organisers from SBBA have been collaborating with tutors and conductors to engage the students in the preparation of an online concert to bring to an end what would have been a week of learning at Strathallan School in Perthshire.

To replace the traditional face-to-face tuition, a series of videos has been prepared by the NYBBS conducting team for the SBBA YouTube channel, offering their encouragement, advice and musical expertise.



The latest innovation is a multi-video SBBA YouTube programme featuring Scottish conductor, adjudicator and composer **Alan Fernie** who has been commissioned to write a special piece of music for the concert.



Alan explains his creative process for writing the score for the opening piece to the 2020 NYBBS Virtual Performance. In a series of clips, he talks about ‘Choosing a Name’ for his new composition. The one-word title of Ceòl (Gaelic for music), he says, reflects the fact that the piece is a “short and snappy starter” to the concert.

Alan’s composition tutorial is planned to be a six-part programme leading up to the music’s inclusion in the NYBBS final concert. The videos can be seen on the SBBA YouTube channel at

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HCaZ-y2mx\\_E](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HCaZ-y2mx_E)

**J**im Stewart, a long time stalwart of the Scottish Brass Band Association, who sadly passed away on 17 June at the age of 89, had been involved in the banding movement for over eight decades.

Right up to the time he died, he was still actively involved as a SBBA Honorary Vice President, as well as Honorary President of the West of Scotland Brass Band Association. He will be truly missed by many people.

Jim started playing the soprano cornet with **Kilbirnie** in North Ayrshire when he was seven. He was also a member of



the **Salvation Army Band** and, during his National Service, served in the RAF where he played in that band too.

He joined the **Galston Burgh Band** in 1949 and played soprano with them until the amalgamation with

**Newmilns** in 1990. Both bands had had a long and successful existence before becoming the current **Newmilns & Galston Band**.

Even after his retirement Jim, whose son **Ian** also played in the Galston band, continued to take part in a variety of engagements and was still marching well into his 80s. When he stopped playing full time he continued to serve the brass band movement on the administration side.

A long-serving member of the West of Scotland Brass Band Association, he was presented with its Award of Merit medal in 1979.

With his wife **Mary**, Jim was a constant fixture at band contests, most recently the Scottish Championships at Perth where we saw him for what sadly turned out to be the last time.

Jim's funeral took place at Holmsford Bridge Crematorium at Dreghorn on 30 June. Newmilns & Galston Band was represented at the ceremony by **Gary Kelly**.

**B**roxburn and Livingston have given virtual banding a try with this performance of *Crimond, the Lord is my Shepherd*.

Recorded in isolation during June, the video had a very poignant significance.

“It is one of our favourite hymns and is dedicated to two of our former players,” the band announced. “Our thoughts are with their families, and everyone else who has suffered a loss during this difficult time. We hope this video provides a moment of peace and tranquillity to all.”

Watch the performance at  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=HDKRMuHT2lg&feature=emb\\_logo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HDKRMuHT2lg&feature=emb_logo)



**P**lans were announced by the West of Scotland Brass Band Association to



replace the August WoS Entertainment Contest with a virtual competition in light of the current Government guidelines regarding COVID-19.

The area committee has decided to ask bands to submit recordings of a film/TV theme and a march which could then be judged by a public vote on social media.

Organiser **Lesley Crumlish** commented: “As a few individuals and bands have already recorded pieces and uploaded to YouTube, we thought this would be a good way of keeping the contest date in the diary.”

- The WoS committee had already made plans to move the Area Youth Solos and Ensembles Contest from October to the beginning of next year prior to COVID-19 becoming a pandemic. It is now planned to take place on Saturday 6 February 2021 at the Salvation Army in Paisley.

**M**ake Music Day on 21 June is the UK's largest single-day music event and the world's biggest celebration of music, taking place in 125 countries annually. It is a DIY festival encouraging people to organise live music events for their communities.

Back in 2018, **Bathgate Youth Band** answered SBBA's call for a band to attend a Make Music Day UK event being

hosted in Edinburgh. The band made their debut performance on the roof terrace of Waverley Mall, in its prestigious location on Edinburgh's Princes Street (pictured).

The next year the band made the bold step to hold their own Make Music Day performance outside Bathgate Partnership Centre in what is believed to be the first-ever Make Music Day event to be held in Bathgate.



Sadly 2020 sees the band in lockdown, just like every other band throughout the UK. However, members decided this could not prevent them from marking the day in their own special way.

As a result, the band's team have been working behind the scenes to prepare a compilation of some of their performances over the last two years. The result can be viewed at <https://youtu.be/lhkqkM07hRg>

In this, SBBA's 125th anniversary year, a little piece of banding history has come to light. It's the cover of a book containing the adjudicators' remarks for the first-ever Scottish Championships, held in Edinburgh on 19 October 1895.

The whereabouts of the rest of the book, however, remains a mystery.

SBBA secretary **Tom Allan** recalls being contacted about

the book by someone from **Kilmarnock Concert Brass** several years ago. On receipt of the photograph, he enquired if the book could go into SBBA's archives but nothing further happened.

"There was a rumour that **Bo'ness** had been



given the book as they were the first winners, but the band knew nothing about it," he added.

Has anyone seen this book? Do you know where it can be located? If so, please get in touch with Tom at [sbbasecretary@gmail.com](mailto:sbbasecretary@gmail.com)

Another interesting picture to come SBBA's way is this one of the Edinburgh Charities Band Association's first contest programme from 18 April 1931.



Scottish youth solo champion **Holly Bennett** has signed for **Whitburn Band** on second baritone – and her debut performance was during the band’s virtual charity concert featuring featuring trumpet player **Mike Lovatt** on Saturday 27 June.

Introduced by musical director **Nicholas Childs**, the band played eight pieces of music – including two with Mike – during the concert which was broadcast for free on Whitburn’s YouTube channel.

Eighteen-year-old Holly joins from **Arbroath Instrumental Band** and is a current member of the **National Youth Brass Band of Scotland**.

She has been the Scottish solo champion in three different age groups, winning the under-12 section in 2014 and the intermediate title in 2017 before her victory in the under-21s earlier this year.

Holly said: “Brass banding has always been a significant part of my life, as my grandad and my mum both played as well. My memories of performing with them will always

remain very special to me.

“I feel very privileged to be invited to join Whitburn, which is such a prestigious band. I am excited and really looking forward to the challenge and learning with fantastic musicians.”

The virtual concert was the centrepiece of Whitburn Band’s 150th anniversary year and is raising money for the West Lothian Foodbank, who are providing much needed help to people in and around Whitburn during the Coronavirus pandemic.

The band later announced it had raised more than double its fundraising target by achieving a grand total of £1262. The concert can be viewed here

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CRcg\\_A\\_8pEQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CRcg_A_8pEQ)



**F**orfar Instrumental  
members **Danielle  
Campbell** and **Mark**

**Buchanan** couldn't wait until the end of lockdown to get married so they went ahead with the ceremony with only the minister in attendance while the rest of the guests looked in on Zoom.

Sadly, as originally planned, the whole band weren't able to play them down the aisle. That is having to wait until the

Coronavirus restrictions have been wholly lifted when the happy couple are hoping to have a marriage blessing and a large celebration for friends and family.

Eb bass player Danielle has been with the band for two years and front row cornet Mark joined four years ago.



"The band wishes them both our very best congratulations," said secretary **Tori Chamberlain**. "We are all delighted for them!

"It's lovely that our band has had seven lots of families playing together and now Danni and Mark make that eight!"

**Dunfermline Town Band** would like to pay its deepest respects and affections for long-standing band member and euphonium player **Jim McNally** who sadly passed away on 21 June.

Popular and well known to many within the brass banding community, Jim started playing with his school band in Town Hill before joining the Dunfermline Town Band where he was a playing member for over 60 years, 40 of which saw him providing great insight and support as vice-chairman and being involved in wider banding matters, including the Fife Charities Band Association, for a number of years.

A committed and selfless player, Jim always put the needs of the music first, understanding that in a musical performance



the whole was greater than the sum of the parts. He also underestimated his own ability as a player where he often produced sublime moments of the highest quality.

A real enthusiast for the craft of playing brass instrumental music, Jim recognised the need for continuity in the furtherance of his own Dunfermline Town Band and the brass band movement as a whole. In understanding that the key to this was in youth development, he took a participative and mentoring role in the band's youth and junior sections, producing a number of successful players (as many ex-Dunfermline players will testify). His support was invaluable to many over the years.

Above all, Jim was a real gentleman who added warmth, character, support and friendship to everyone who knew him. He was also, at times, excruciatingly honest and forthright with his feelings and thoughts and was not slow in making these known. In a modern world of conflict, deceit, insincerity and disingenuity, Jim was known by all to be 'a breath of fresh air'.

Lockdown may have brought face-to-face music making to a temporary halt but members of Port Glasgow-based **Riverside Youth Band** have been busier than ever after taking the band online for a host of fun activities.

The four-time Scottish youth champions have traditionally held a glitzy, end-of-term awards night. This year, the celebrations took place via Zoom, with members shining their shoes and donning their dresses for the special occasion, which included virtual band videos, a quiz and a look back at 2019-20.

The awards night comes as Riverside continues a busy series of lockdown musical activities for its members, part of which has seen them receive online masterclasses with some of the world's finest performers from the principal seats of the likes of **Black Dyke** and **Cory** bands. Meanwhile, players



**JULY** have been taking part in a series of musical challenges and virtual ensembles, as well as enjoying regular quizzes, and several will be performing in an online course delivered by the **National Youth Brass Band of Scotland**.

Among the award winners were baritone player **Rachel O'Connor** (left) who received the Clive Good Memorial Shield for most improved player in the Youth Band and trombone player **Hannah McInnes** (right) who was the inaugural recipient of the John Lee Millar Memorial Trophy for Training Band bandsperson of the year.

**Gregor Hewitt** (below) enjoyed a masterclass with **Tom Hutchinson** of Cory Band.





n Thursday 9 July the SBBA website published a feature on our junior brass musicians entitled *The future is bright as young stars begin to*

*shine:*

Judging by the number of young people learning and playing brass instruments in Scotland, it would appear that the future for our music genre is on a sound footing.

With over 50 training, children's, youth and school bands now thriving throughout the country – and more start-up



bands in the pipeline – we have some 1500 young musicians actively participating in our amateur hobby.

As well as our three **NYBBS** (National Youth Brass Band of Scotland) bands – Children's,

**Kilmarnock Concert Brass percussionist, 10 years old Katie Docherty won the prize for the youngest player on stage at the Scottish Championships in March.**



**Brothers Lewis and Aidan Miller, aged 11 and 13, are members of fourth section Stranraer Brass.**

Reserve and Senior – meeting up twice a year, at Easter and in the summer (when there are no COVID-19 restrictions in place) for residential courses at Strathallan School in Perthshire, we are now seeing more young people than ever becoming an integral part of senior bands.

What was particularly striking at the Scottish Championships in March (probably the last time most bands had got together to play before the lockdown was announced) was

the number of young faces there were on stage, ably and enthusiastically contributing to their own band's contest performance.

There can't be many Scottish bands with a larger proportion of junior players in its ranks than fourth section **Forfar Instrumental**.

And it was this band's front row cornet player, **Molly Crompton**, who probably sums up the feelings of most



**Percussionist Angus Crompton, aged 12, has his older sister, cornet player Molly, for company in Forfar Instrumental.**

**Iris Deane (10) has been playing with second section Selkirk Silver Band for a year now.**

young brass musicians when she says: "The band is like a second family to me. I love how we can always have fun and a laugh, but also learn a lot and improve all the time."



There's no doubt about it, the future of brass banding in Scotland remains bright just as long as we continue to have young and enthusiastic players like these progressing into the ranks of senior bands.

For the full feature and photographs, please visit the website at <https://www.sbba.org.uk/news/5885/the-future-is-bright-as-young-stars-begin-to-shine>

**S**t David's Brass released their first socially distanced video as a reflection of the mood which greeted the gradual emergence from the lockdown we had been in since March.

The band remarked on Facebook alongside their recording of Farrell Williams' *Happy*: "Please give us a like and a share to spread that happy feeling!"

You too can get that happy feeling by watching the video at <https://www.facebook.com/St.Davidsbrass/videos/316954306363905/>



**C**oalburn Silver Band has had financial support from South Lanarkshire Council's Renewable Energy Fund to help compensate for some of its lost income during the pandemic.

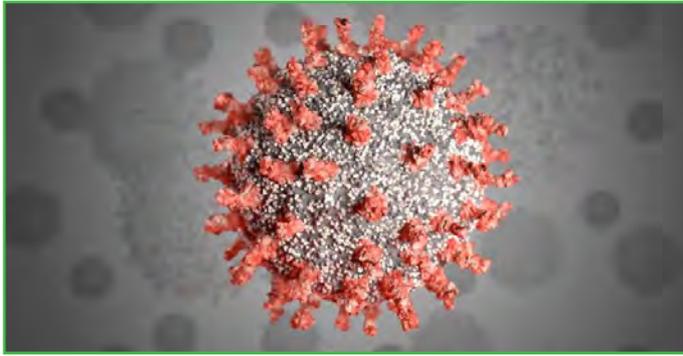


In addition to online musical activities, the band has organised numerous quizzes and has held an EGM, an AGM and committee meetings to continue the smooth running of the bands.

Coalburn's next concerts will be Disney themed and music has been issued to all bands to start preparing at home.

"The whole Coalburn brass band family extends our best wishes to all supporters and fellow bands throughout the UK during this unprecedented time and thank all frontline workers for their efforts against COVID-19," says committee member **Jenny Alexander**.

"We hope that we can resume rehearsals and perform once again for our audiences as soon as it is deemed safe to do so."



As the loosening of Coronavirus lockdown restrictions gathers pace all around us, SBBA has reiterated that its advice at the start of the pandemic remains the same for the time being – that the suspension of brass band rehearsals and engagements should remain in place until Scottish Government advice changes to allow public gatherings of numerous people in enclosed spaces without the requirements for physical distancing.

At the moment, the Scottish Government has entered Phase 3 of its plan to return to normality which will result in larger numbers of people moving around and coming together across a variety of settings and sectors, both indoors and

outdoors. However, as this will give the virus more opportunities to spread, it is recommending people follow FACTS:

Face coverings.

Avoid crowded places.

Clean hands regularly.

Two metre distance.

Self isolate and book a test if you have symptoms.

“While it pains me greatly to advise a continuation of a moratorium on face-to-face band get-togethers, the health and safety of our brass community is our overriding concern,” says SBBA president **Carrie Boax**.

“The Coronavirus is still with us. Ultimately though it is up to the bands themselves to make the decision, depending on local circumstances, as to when they return to regular rehearsals of any kind. As a national organisation, we are not in a position to issue instructions, only encouragement to our members to follow Government guidelines.”

SBBA is working with **Prof John Wallace** and a **Music**

**Education Partnership Group** (MEPG) Scotland advisory group on scientific research into the aerosol effect of playing a brass instrument.

“The question of air flow does seem to be important for the resumption of wind instrument teaching and performance, and the scale of flow is usually exaggerated by people with no experience of brass playing,” said John.

Cancellation of this year’s National Championships by Kapitol Promotions is indicative of the seriousness of the situation still facing banding.

“I’m totally devastated for those bands who have worked so hard to qualify for the finals, but it was inevitably the right decision to take,” Carrie comments. “Kapitol had no other choice in the current circumstances.”

She added: “Brass banding is about music making that is pleasurable for both players and audiences. All we at SBBA want is for us all to be able to return to our pastime in a calm and measured way that is safe for everyone concerned.”

As the rules governing social gatherings are relaxed, members of **Kilmarnock Concert Brass** took advantage of a sunny afternoon to get together in the garden of trombonist Lesley Herd for some sensibly distanced hymn tune playing.

Although they have been keeping in touch regularly via Zoom, this was the first time the KCB musicians had actually been face to face with each other since their runner-up performance of *Neverland* at the Scottish Championships in March.



**R**obert Doherty spoke about some additional considerations, gained from his experience as a manufacturing technician in the chemicals industry, which endorsed SBBA's current stance in advising a continued suspension of band gatherings for the time being.

Robert, who is secretary of **Unison Kinneil** band and a tenor horn player of more than 50 years, pointed out that his views were personal and not an official band response.

On the subject of the so-called 'aerosol' effect of brass instruments, he said he had seen YouTube clips in which the airflow from the bell of an instrument doesn't even move a ping pong ball.

"My take is it's not the emission from the bell we need to be concerned about," he commented. "We should be thinking about the wider picture. As humans, we need to take in large volumes of air to make the instrument work and, in doing this, we inhale air from the



surrounding area which consists of air exhaled, not just from the instrument, but from the bodies of those sitting around us.

"This is a natural bodily function that we all need to survive and therefore social distancing is a primary mitigating factor in reducing the spread of the virus. In addition, there's the cross contamination from touching items in the band room like stands etc to consider whereby some kind of effective cleaning procedure would have to be adopted."

Robert admitted that he has been fortunate to be able to work through the pandemic although his way of operating has had to change quite considerably, through revised procedures and the wearing of additional PPE in the workplace.

He added: "Hopefully these points might be of interest to whoever maybe involved with the study into the current risk facing brass banding," he says. "I'm pretty sure others will have their own opinions on this subject."

Former SBBA executive committee member and **Penicuik Silver** bandsman **Jack Forrest**, who passed away on 3 July, just one day after his 92nd birthday, was Penicuik born and bred.

He left school to join his father working at the Valleyfield paper mill. Apart from a break for National Service in India, Jack remained at Valleyfield until he moved to Bartholomew's printing works in Edinburgh where he worked until his retirement.

In 1952, Jack married **Jean** in the North Kirk, Penicuik, and they raised a family of three sons, **Ian**, **Scott** and **Keith**. A keen hill walker, Jack would take the family on walks on the Pentland Hills after church – where he was a long time member – on a Sunday.

Jack had four loves in his life – Jean, his family, the North Kirk and banding – although not necessarily in that order! He first joined Penicuik Silver Band as a committee member in 1953 after attending many concerts and took up the tenor horn soon after.

His devotion to Penicuik Silver Band and banding in general is well known, serving the band as a player and for countless years as both secretary and treasurer. He also completed a stint on the SBBA executive and his family followed him into banding with his sons and grandchildren playing with the band.

He would regularly appear on stage after contests awaiting the results, including in 1975 in Motherwell when Penicuik won the 4th section title. A later notable celebration for Jack's 80th birthday included a massed bands concert



featuring players from across central Scotland which was held in the North Kirk in 2008.

He will be sadly missed by all at Penicuik and the Scottish band scene and our thoughts are with the family at this time.

Members of **Dumfries Town Band** have dipped their toe into virtual banding – with a really impressive video which not only features the players but also some stunning views of their home town.

What the band lack in numbers, they make up for in fun and enthusiasm as they perform *(Is This the Way to) Amarillo*.

The video was the brainchild of euphonium players **Paul Rafferty** and **Jordan Tweedie**. It was Paul's brother-in-law **Graham Silk** who applied his technical wizardry in putting the whole thing together.



Preparations for two SBBA learning events to celebrate the organisation's 125th anniversary year which were derailed when the Coronavirus hit our shores are back on the track, albeit in a more limited format.



The Learning Roadshows had been planned for the east and west of Scotland during June and September with the intention of reaching out to brass band musicians with useful workshop and information sessions.

Now the two events are being combined into a single, online experience which will be beamed into people's homes on Sunday 20 September.

"Unfortunately Covid-19 meant our original Roadshow idea could not go ahead as planned, so with support from Creative Scotland we are now putting together a Virtual Learning Roadshow," said SBBA education officer **John Boax**.

The Fife Festival of Music is the latest victim of the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic following the festival committee's announcement that it has cancelled its events for late 2020 and early 2021.

The festival's Funday in November and the main festival itself, due next February, will not be taking place due to the current situation regarding COVID-19.



Planning for the main January/February festival events takes 12 months and by mid-August all initial arrangements are usually in place. However, with so much uncertainty over so

## AUGUST

many aspects of life at the moment – with doubts over the long-term impact of social distancing, the behaviour of the virus itself, question marks over availability of venues and, in particular, the great pressures on schools and their work – the committee considered it inappropriate and impractical to pursue arrangements for February 2021.

“Everyone's safety is of paramount importance,” said **Graeme Wilson**, chair of the Fife Festival of Music. “It is with great regret and sadness that the committee has made this decision which will affect music-making, participation and fulfillment of the festival's purpose.”

Junior and senior members of **Newland Concert Brass** certainly don't let the dust settle during this Coronavirus pandemic. After posting a series of videos of players putting on virtual performances of their favourite music on their Facebook page, the band has now put up a 'Pass the Duster' challenge which looks to be great fun.



And another one bites the dust... due to COVID-19 the Borders Entertainment Contest (BEC), which was due to take place on Saturday 7 November, has been cancelled.



**Scott Renwick**, president of the Scottish Borders Brass Band Association, explained: "It is with great disappointment that SBBBA have taken the decision to cancel the Borders Entertainment Contest for this year.

"Obviously, COVID-19 has made it impossible to stage this event which was due to take place in the Buccleuch Centre, Langholm. Unfortunately the BEC has become another banding event/contest to suffer at the hands of this hard-hitting virus.

"Cancelling events may perhaps be seen an easy(ish) thing to do at the moment but not getting to play as a brass band, meet your fellow musicians, and practice and play with your pals is a much tougher situation."

The BEC is the only annual event/contest that SBBBA organise for senior bands. After taking Scottish Government recommendations into consideration, the association had no other choice than to cancel the event in order to safeguard everyone involved with staging and performing at the contest.

Three contributors have been unveiled for the Virtual Learning Roadshow event on 20 September – with more speakers to come:

- Author, performance coach and mental health advocate **Tabby Kerwin** will deliver a Zoom session on 'Mental Health in Brass Bands'
- Lancashire Music Service's **Helen Minshall** is producing a recorded session entitled 'Brass Beginnings', a guide to the early stages of brass playing and building a band
- **Jack Nissan** from Tinderbox Collective is planning a Zoom session on 'The use of Zoom for online teaching'.

The online concert by Scotland's young brass musicians was a stirring triumph of the enthusiasm and determination of youth over the adversity of the Coronavirus lockdown.

The 2020 **NYBBS** Virtual Performance – which replaced the traditional 'grand finale' to a week-long summer residential brass course at the Strathallan School in Perthshire which had to be cancelled due to COVID-19 – was broadcast on the SBBA YouTube channel at 3pm on Saturday 8 August.

The programme opened up with conductor and composer **Alan Fernie** introducing the **Children's band** playing *The Girl Who Sat on the Hill*, a traditional Norwegian tune arranged by Fredrick Schjelderup, and *Jim the Juiceman*, written and performed by **Andrea Crumlish** and **Katie Livingston** (below) in honour of the man who brought juice



to the band while at Strathallan.

The **Reserve**



**John Boax** conducts the **Reserve band** programme.

**band**, introduced and conducted by SBBA education officer **John Boax**, showed off their skills with *Starburst* by Dan Price and *The Spirit Within* by Ben Hollings.

For the **Senior band's** segment of the programme, SBBA had commissioned Alan Fernie to write their opener, a 'short and snappy' piece called *Ceòl* (Gaelic for music).

Conductor **Ian Porthouse** also put the band through their paces with W. Hogarth Lear's *Pell Mell* and *Hine e Hine*, the Maori lullaby arranged by Peter Graham.



The Senior band performing their segment under the baton of Ian Porthouse.

For a rousing conclusion to the 47-minute show, the three bands joined forces for a rendition of the popular march *Slaidburn* by William Rimmer, exuberantly conducted by that doyen of musical directors, **Richard Evans**.

The individual music parts for all three bands were recorded in isolation by the youngsters in their own homes and superbly merged, together with conversational snippets, into a single show by professional TV and film editor Clyde Wallbanks.



The combined Children's, Reserve and Senior bands bringing the concert to a rousing finish, conducted by **Richard Evans**.

Course organisers from SBBA had collaborated with tutors and conductors to engage the students in the preparation of the online concert for several weeks beforehand. To replace the traditional face-to-face tuition, a series of videos was prepared by the NYBBS conducting team for the SBBA YouTube channel, offering their encouragement, advice and musical expertise.

You can enjoy the full NYBBS concert at

<https://youtu.be/lke3GCBJyP4>

When tuba virtuoso **Les Neish** hit the high notes during an online brass workshop with **Galashiels Town Band** members, one of the younger players likened the sound to a duck quacking!

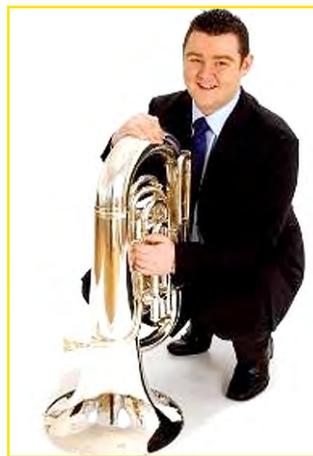


Everyone was so amused by the remark, including Les, that band chairman **Neal Wade** pencilled this little caricature drawing.

The workshop was the first of three to be arranged and facilitated by Borders brass tutor

and conductor **Stuart Black** for the region's musicians.

"Les has worked with the band before and is familiar to some of the younger players from **NYBBS**," said Neal. "For others this was a first opportunity to experience his enthusiasm, knowledge and sense of fun. The session was informal but nevertheless included some useful talk on the art of performance, coping with nerves and how best to prepare and practice."



Interspersed with Les's chat were several videos of his performances. "He also told workshop participants how he came to be a tuba player," Neal continued. "Unable to get any sound out of a trumpet, clearly extreme measures were needed and an old tuba was

found from which the young Les straightaway produced a sound that he and his teacher liked immediately."

Band members put questions to Les, ranging from how he keeps fit – something very important for any musician – to what was the highest note on the tuba, which when demonstrated particularly impressed some of the younger ones present, prompting the 'quack' comment.

Neal added: "All in all it was a very enjoyable, informative and, above all, inspiring evening, just the thing to get many of us to pick up our instruments again."

During the Coronavirus lockdown we have all been learning about how digital technology can help us stay connected, whether it's through Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Skype, WhatsApp or a variety of other online tools.

Now technological advances have caught up with SBBA's 200 Club. Instead of pulling names out of a hat to select the lucky winners, as has been the case until now, vice president



**Ann Murray** used a fascinating 'wheel of fortune' to chose the latest prize winners during a Zoom meeting of the SBBA executive committee.

The **wheelofnames.com** website enabled Ann to feed in the names of all 200 Club participants and, with a quick spin, it randomly pointed to the winner of the £200 first prize and then the two runners-up.

"The draw has traditionally been made during the NYBBS concert as the money raised annually by the 200 Club goes to support NYBBS students, especially in the form of bursaries to help with NYBBS fees," said Ann.

It costs £5 per month or £60 per year to join the 200 Club and 50 per cent of the income, as with all 200 Clubs, is given back to the members. If you are interested in signing up and helping our young brass musicians, email **NYBBS200@gmail.com**. Numbers are available, so get in touch – you too could be a winner in the next draw.

As they say, you have to be in it to win it!

The West of Scotland virtual entertainment contest on Sunday 30 August attracted a worldwide audience of over 5,000 viewers. And after counting the votes in an online poll, it emerged that **Kinneil's** performance was clearly the people's favourite.

A total of six bands took part in the competition, intent on keeping the spirit of the 2019 version of the event alive. As well as Kinneil, participating bands were **Coalburn Silver, Irvine & Dreghorn, Johnstone, Kingdom Brass** and **Newmilns & Galston**, each playing their own choice of a march and a film/TV theme.

The contest, available on the SBBA YouTube channel,



opened and closed with performances of *Singing in the Rain* (below) and *All that Jazz* by 15 members of a specially-formed WoS virtual band.

Kinneil's winning programme comprised the William Rimmer march *Cossack* followed by *Hawaii 5-0* which featured cornetist/conductor **Alan Ramsay** (right) playing a cornet riff while sitting in the back of his Ford Mustang in Florida!

Organiser **Lesley Crumlish** was delighted with the success of the event. "Achieving an audience of over 830 views on YouTube and 4,400 on Facebook was really pleasing. It was certainly far more people than we could ever have achieved with an actual live event in the Walker Hall in Troon!

"We had viewers from all over the world telling us who their favourite bands were and how much they had enjoyed the whole show."

Kinneil were clear winners of the contest with a 31 per cent share of the people's vote. Runners-up were Kingdom Brass and in third place were Irvine & Dreghorn.

After the latest retightening of the national rules on social gatherings to reverse the current rising numbers of Coronavirus infections – cutting down the number of people who can meet in groups to just six from only two households – the decision was inevitable: SBBA has reluctantly agreed to postpone November’s annual Scottish Festival of Brass.

The event, which traditionally takes place over two weekends, features the Scottish Open for championship bands, the Scottish Challenge for lower section bands and the Scottish Youth Brass Band Festival.

At a meeting of SBBA’s Events Committee via Zoom on 13 September, members took the difficult decision to defer what would have been the final major competition of the year.

“In a year in which COVID-19 has devastated so many lives in so many ways – personal, family, work, academic, social, sport and leisure – this postponement may not be a big deal to a lot of people, but it was to be the last big occasion in a calendar of events to mark our association’s 125th anniversary,” said SBBA president **Carrie Boax**.

“But the overall winner was the contest itself and the fact that we had bands who were willing to put in an enormous amount of effort in making the event such a great success,” Lesley added.

“My thanks to everyone who participated and who helped to keep the spirit of the contest alive until next year.”

For any latecomers, you can still see the show on the SBBA YouTube channel at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6ByXxVLiOQ8>



**M**embers of the Scottish Borders Brass Band Association have brought a touch of The Blues Brothers to a charity fundraising performance of *Everybody Needs Somebody to Love*.

The music from the iconic blockbuster movie was chosen by the SBBBA committee and friends from workshop events as a way of showing heartfelt support to member bands during these difficult times.

“The video also provided the opportunity to support a local charity, the My Name’s 5 Doddie Foundation, a fantastic cause inspired by a Scottish rugby legend,” explained **Christine Calvert**, SBBBA contest secretary.

“A big thanks to **Josh Calvert** for pulling the whole thing together, editing the recording and setting up the Scottish Borders Brass Band YouTube channel which features videos from all the Borders association bands as well as our current Scottish Senior Youth Champions, the Scottish Borders Youth Brass Band.”

You can see the latest video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0-8r2V1ZYBA>

If you would like to support the charity, please use this link <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/sbbba>

Christine added: “Thank you for your support and hopefully our member bands will be able to meet up again soon.”

Current SBBBA member bands are **Galashiels Town Band, Hawick Saxhorn Band, Langholm Town Band, Jedforest Instrumental Band, Peebles Burgh Band, Selkirk Silver Band, St Ronan’s Silver Band** and **St Boswells Concert Band**.



**B**rass musicians up and down the country are champing at the bit to get back to playing together in rehearsals, public engagements and contests.

There was a real sadness when November's Scottish Festival of Brass – featuring the Scottish Open for championship bands, the Scottish Challenge for lower section bands and the Scottish Youth Brass Band Festival – had to be postponed, meaning that 2020 will probably come to an end without any live organised brass banding activities in Scotland since the Scottish Championships in March.

In this 125th anniversary year of the Scottish Brass Band Association, the planned calendar of events to mark the milestone has been decimated, along with highly anticipated fixtures like the Easter and summer courses for the **National Youth Brass Bands of Scotland** (NYBBS) young players.

Bands, too, have achieved anniversaries in 2020 – **Whitburn** and **Dunaskin Doon** are 150 years old,

**Kirkintilloch** is 130 years old and **Kilmarnock Concert Brass** has reached half a century – but they have been hampered in their celebrations to mark what should have been happy

occasions with their friends and fellow musicians.

**Charlie Farren**, chairman of Whitburn Band, summed up the feelings of the majority of brass players when he talked passionately on the BBC website

about what the lack of banding has been like during the Coronavirus lockdown.

“You are as close to the people at band as you are to your family,” he said. “To not be with them is incredibly difficult.

“We had a massive schedule planned for the entire year. Overnight, it was all gone and it has cost the band thousands of pounds.”

You can hear what he has to say in full at

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-54225613>



The tentacles of the virulent COVID-19 spread ever further into the brass band calendar as we are continually informed of new events falling foul of this Coronavirus pandemic.

Probably the most significant of these since the cancellation of the National Championships is the announcement by Kapitol Promotions that the Regional Championship qualifier contests that were scheduled for February/March 2021 have been called off – the latest victims of this seemingly never-ending infection.

At the request of – and following consultation with – all the regional associations, including SBBA, Kapitol has confirmed that next year’s qualifying events for the 2021 National Finals will not go ahead due to continuing uncertainty over COVID-19.

In a statement from Kapitol, director **Philip Morris** explained: “The world’s pandemic is causing continuing safety and other issues, including relating to the hire and

staffing of major venues. Therefore, on behalf of the organising bodies of the eight qualifying events, it is with regret that I am confirming that the 2021 qualifying events cannot go ahead.”

Kapitol Promotions also confirmed that the bands qualifying for the 2020 National Finals will be invited to compete in next year’s finals and that the test pieces selected for this year’s competition will be used.

As the qualifying event in Scotland is incorporated into the Scottish Championships alongside a youth event, education officer

**John Boax** is liaising with youth bands about potential alternatives which may be staged at a later date.

Speaking on behalf of the Scottish brass band community, SBBA president **Carrie Boax** relayed this message to Philip Morris: “Many thanks for the tireless work you and your team do behind the scenes. We all dream of the day it will be over and so look forward to the day we can get to the Albert Hall to hear live brass music again.”



Congratulations to **Whitburn Band** and **Lochgelly Band** on their success in the Cory Band Online Championships 2020.

The championships took the form of a virtual contest for brass bands, broadcast live on YouTube over four days in September. The competition featured 68 bands from across the world performing pre-recorded video programmes.

Whitburn came second in the championship section behind the American ensemble **Fountain City** while, in the second section, Lochgelly took first place.

Whitburn (below) were also thrilled at principal cornetist



**Chris Bradley** being awarded the Best Soloist prize and receiving the Best Section prize (basses).

You can watch their performance of *Hawaii Five-O*, cornet solo *First Light* and Toccata from *Suite Gothique* at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zrudkpDZnG0&t=14885s> (at

4:07:10 on the time counter).

Lochgelly's second section winning



programme comprised *El Es El Senor*, cornet solo *Share My Yoke* and *Balkan Dance*. You can watch their performance at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aGS7GsFnyEA> at 4:18:30.

The only other Scottish band to take part, Kingdom Brass, came ninth in the first section, playing *When Kingdom Comes* and *You'll Never Walk Alone* –

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3JCYA8pBxkl&list=RD3JCYA8pBxkl&start\\_radio=1&t=46](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3JCYA8pBxkl&list=RD3JCYA8pBxkl&start_radio=1&t=46) at 4:09:25.

S BBA's Learning Roadshow was originally planned as two live workshops – for the east and west of Scotland during June and September – with the intention of reaching out to brass band musicians with useful advice and information sessions. It was just one of a calendar of events during 2020 to celebrate the organisation's 125th anniversary year.



However, because of COVID-19, the two roadshows were combined into a single, online experience which, if you missed the original broadcast a couple of weeks ago, is now available to view on the SBBA YouTube channel.

Feedback to education officer **John Boax**, who coordinated the content and presentation of the Learning Roadshow, from several people after the event was that the sessions proved to be useful sources of learning and covered an excellent choice of themes.

You can find these topics by clicking on the following links:

• **James McGoldrick:** *Beginners Guide to Making a Virtual Band:* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2CLyXLI72Ng>

## OCTOBER

• **Les Neish:** *A Masterclass on Performance Techniques:*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Crd92Cg6e8M>

• **Tabby Kerwin:** *Mental Health in Brass Bands:*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8317ksj99Bk>

• **Helen Minshall:** *Youth Band Development from Scratch:*  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J9HnL7KD0aU>



If ever a cloud had a silver lining, then surely this must be it following the announcement that a key element of November's postponed Scottish Festival of Brass (SFoB) will be going ahead, albeit as an online event.

The Scottish Virtual Youth Brass Band Festival will take place on Sunday 29 November.

The decision to stage the event was taken by the Scottish Brass Band Association after education officer **John Boax** had contacted all those youth bands who took part in last year's SFoB to ask if they were interested in participating in a virtual festival.

"The majority were in favour of doing something," said John. "The main issue for some was the technical expertise involved to achieve a virtual performance. However, I will offer support to those bands with the help of our technical expert **James McGoldrick** to overcome these difficulties."

Youth brass and percussion groups of any size are invited to take part in this virtual event. Entrants must play three contrasting items which must include a Scottish piece and there will be a mentor's evaluation of every band's performance.

Prizes will be awarded for the most entertaining programme and the best performance of the Scottish piece. Every group will receive a certificate of participation.



Flashback to last year: Celebrations by Campbelltown Brass Juniors.

**S**BBA extends a warm welcome to its latest member band. The **Edinburgh University Brass Band**, which was founded 15 years ago, is the first university band to join our organisation.

Membership of the EUBB, which has registered as a non-contesting band, is made up of mainly students, graduates and university staff. Following five successful years under the expert baton of conductor **Ondřej Soukup**, the band will be bringing a new musical director on board when rehearsals can resume.

A typical year's activities – when not affected by Coronavirus lockdown measures – include winter and spring concerts, travelling to the Whit Friday march contest, Christmas carolling and a social weekend away at which members spend their time being band geeks – holding *Brassed Off!* movie parties, card games and quizzes.

During the COVID-19 restrictions on social gatherings, the players stay connected through a Facebook page and group chat where members have

general discussions and also where the committee posts updates and information.

EUBB has completed several virtual video performances over the summer, including *Imperial March*, *Punchinello*, *Singing in the Rain* and *Floral Dance*, and these are available on the band's Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/EUBrassBand>

"At the moment the main focus of the band is keeping players connected more than keeping their lip in. Many players live in rented flats with thin walls and neighbours don't like them practising at home so, for the time being, we're concentrating on the social side of banding!" said **Eilidh MacLachlan** who plays baritone.





**Y**oung brass players from Africa and Scotland have come together to play as one in a moving tribute to the empowerment of young people from disadvantaged communities in Liberia, Rwanda and Uganda by helping them to learn valuable life skills through brass music education.

**Alan Fernie** is the musical director of **Loanhead Brass Roots** and **Newtongrange Junior Band** and also the composer in residence for Brass for Africa.

He has been the driving force behind a project to bring together young musicians from all three organisations

through the virtual performance of a new composition by him entitled *As One*. View the video at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2AGQqfnDLAA>

The music for *As One* will be available on the Brass for Africa website <https://www.brassforafrica.org/>

Brass for Africa has also been on the minds of players from Newland Senior and Junior Bands. They have just posted a virtual performance of Alan Fernie's *African Funk* on their Facebook page at

<https://www.facebook.com/194600341071/videos/266833261224494/>



Looking forward to next year, SBBA has announced that entry forms for the 2021 **NYBBS** (National Youth Brass Band of Scotland) summer course are now available.

The event, which will be taking place from Sunday 1 August to Saturday 7 August, is once again being held at the Strathallan School, Forgardenny, Perthshire PH2 9EG.

- Meanwhile, SBBA has updated its child protection policy so if you are using the old SBBA Child Protection Policy template, this should now be replaced using the new template (available on the website at <https://www.sbba.org.uk/news/5923/child-protection-policy-template-is-updated>).

As of July 2020, there is now an option to complete your PVG applications, for both existing and new members, online.

The guidance on which sections to complete still applies and any queries regarding the process should be directed to SBBA child protection officer **Caroline Farren** at [sbbacpo@gmail.com](mailto:sbbacpo@gmail.com)

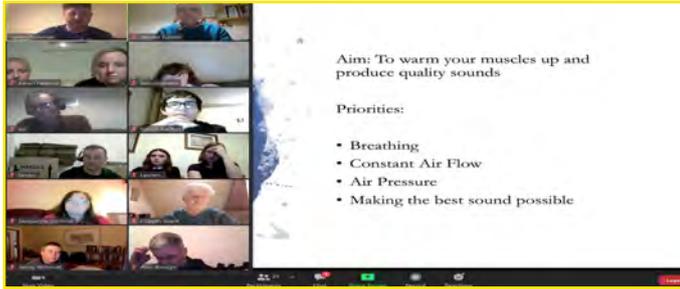
As members of **Bathgate Band** have been unable to play together during the Coronavirus pandemic, they have been taking part in weekly individual and team step challenges since August.

Now, throughout October, they've taken their exercise regime one step further by signing up for Radio Forth's Boogie in the Morning's '5k a Day' initiative to raise money for the Cash for Kids charity.

Twelve members of the band have joined in the fitness challenge and have already completed over 1020 kilometres – at least seven of them are on target to achieve the 5k every day by 31 October.

All funds raised will be used to help children that need it most across Edinburgh, the Lothians, Fife and Falkirk.

Updates on the Bathgate participants' progress each day can be found on the band's fundraising page at <https://www.cashforkidsgive.co.uk/campaign/boogie-in-the-mornings-5k-a-day-2020/fundraisers/bathgate-band/>



**N**ewland Concert Brass members have been preparing for when things get back to some form of normality.

On 27 October, players held their first 'Back To Band' zoom session with guest tutor **Gareth Bowman**, musical director of **Coalburn Silver Band**.

There was a superb turnout of 30 players for the online event. Newland's musical director **Simon Railton** and Junior Band conductor **Karen Heenan** also joined in for what was an informative and enjoyable session.

Band manager Karen said afterwards: "It was a fantastic workshop covering many aspects of playing, including lots of great advice for practising brass and percussion at home."

**T**alented percussionist **Daniel Fairley** has joined **Coalburn Silver Band's** percussion academy as tutor. Daniel, who graduated with a Bachelor of Music degree in Performance of Timpani and Percussion from the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland in 2018, has an extensive range experience as both a performer and tutor.

He has been drummer and percussionist with **Whitburn Band** and **the cooperation band** as well as a variety of ensembles including orchestras, jazz bands, musical theatre and pop groups. practice programmes for their performance appraisals.

As a result of COVID-19 restrictions, the percussion academy is currently rehearsing weekly via Zoom and is looking forward to resuming lessons in person at the band hall once it is safe to do so.



Like many other brass musicians throughout Scotland, **Lochgelly Band** would have been playing at their town's Service of Remembrance.

However, due to COVID-19 restrictions, this will not be possible this year, so instead they have put online a moving tribute to all the people who have given their lives in service of their country.

You can view their performance on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?reload=9&v=PciY1iH-owok>

The band plans to offer the recording to the local Legion for use in their own virtual events.



**NOVEMBER**

A wedding during Coronavirus restrictions on public gatherings is not one you would have out of choice, but for **Newland Concert Brass** cornet player **Matthew Campbell** it was better than having to wait indefinitely.

So he went ahead with his marriage to **Angela Davidson** – and, much to his surprise, a small group of players from his band and their musical director **Simon Railton** were at the ceremony to put on a virtual performance of Denis Wright's arrangement of *La Réjouissance* from Handel's *Music for the Royal Fireworks*.

Thanks go to **Keven Anderson** for putting the whole thing together and for playing percussion on the video which you can see on Newland's Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/194600341071/videos/795701287673947/>

Congratulations to both Matthew and Angela and best wishes for a long and happy future together from Newland and from SBBA!

**S**BBA is encouraged by the findings of a long-awaited report by the **Music Education Partnership Group** (Scotland) into the study of the ‘aerosol’ effects of playing a brass instrument.

The conclusion of the report states that the playing of brass instruments does not present a statistically significant added risk of viral transmission of COVID-19 on top of that already posed by gathering socially in both domestic and public settings when suitable mitigations are in place, according to the current available data.

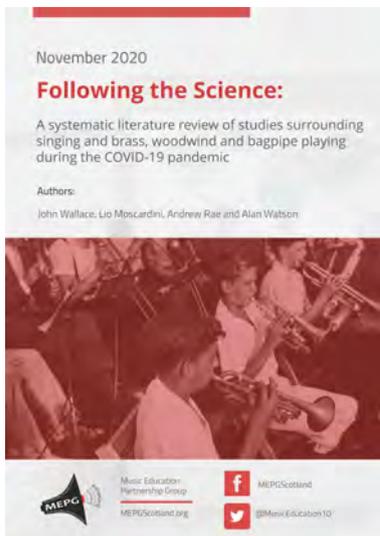
The 46-page report – entitled *Following the Science: A systematic literature review of studies surrounding singing and brass, woodwind and bagpipe playing during the COVID-19 pandemic* – is the culmination of six months of research by MEPG convenor **Prof John Wallace**, **Dr Lio Moscardini**, lecturer at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, **Andrew Rae**, data scientist and researcher from the Universities of Strathclyde and Glasgow, and **Dr Alan Watson**, reader in anatomy and neuroscience at Cardiff University.

“During the pandemic there has been a tendency, often through media exposure, to demonise certain musical activities such as singing, woodwind, brass and bagpipe playing as uniquely aerosol-producing human activities,” say the report authors. “That is simply wrong. We appear to have been led by subjective judgement rather than objective analysis of the data.

“Normal breathing and speaking also produce aerosols within the approximately 11,000 litres of air inhaled and exhaled by the average person each day. Moderate to strenuous exercise of any sort, loud speaking and shouting produce a greater number of aerosols.”

The report adds that measures to mitigate risks in teaching and performance spaces should comply with risk assessments based on the national public health guidelines that are in place at any one given time for adults, children and young people.

In the document there is a list of a range of music- and instrument-specific recommendations to help to prevent the spread of the virus.



Responding to the findings of the MEPG report, SBBA president **Carrie Boax** commented: "I do hope for all brass, woodwind and bagpipe players and singers, young and old alike, that the research will provide sufficient evidence for government advisers and health specialists to either reinforce or reconsider the current guidelines. In the meantime, we continue to encourage people to adhere to current government advice to ensure they stay safe and minimise risk at all times.

"Our thoughts are turning to the time of year when brass bands take centre stage carolling, performing Christmas concerts and raising much needed funds for themselves and charitable causes.

"Nevertheless, we must respect that we are still very much in the midst of a pandemic. People in our communities are still falling seriously ill or sadly even losing their battle with this terrible – and still somewhat unknown – disease."

Carrie added: "SBBA continues to support alternative methods of performance delivery using virtual experiences. Next week would have been the first of two major international contesting weekends for SBBA with our Scottish Festival of Brass and we are all feeling the sadness of not coming together in Perth this year.

"I stress, however, these days of contesting and performing will return and every bandsperson will feel the benefits of safely returning to banding as we used to know it once again – without the need for restrictions or considered measures being put in place."

The approaching Christmas period is that time of year when many bands go out onto the streets to play carols and earn enough money to see them through the next 12 months.

This year, because of the current Coronavirus limitations on social get-togethers, bands will not be able to do that. There are other ways, however, of spreading a little festive cheer in your communities:

- If you already have a CD of your band playing Christmas music, ask your local supermarket to play it over their speaker system and get them to display a sign requesting donations to a JustGiving.com account or similar online donation platform
- This method may also work with your local council playing your music over a town centre public address system
- Where regional restrictions permit, you could get a socially-distanced group of up to six players from two different households to record some Christmas carols outside for distribution on a CD to your local nursing and care homes

- Make a virtual recording of Christmas carols or seasonal music – or even a whole concert programme – and circulate the details of where the video can be found online to local care homes, hospitals and community organisations where you would normally play
- Open an account on the [easyfundraising.org.uk](https://www.easypfundraising.org.uk) website and make money every time friends, family and banding colleagues make an online purchase of Christmas (or other) gifts
- Get your local newspaper to run an article on how you would like to keep the Christmas spirit going musically and get them to publicise how or where people can access your music and ask for donations which are essential to ensure the band survives during these difficult times
- The traditional means of taking cash via a collection box or bucket is not recommended in order to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus. However, if this is the only way you can take money, make sure the coins and (plastic covered) notes are sprayed with disinfectant and left to stand for 24 hours before counting the cash.



**S** BBA president **Carrie Boax** took the opportunity to question **Fiona Hyslop**, Scottish Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Fair Work and Culture, live on television as part of a debate on the effects the Coronavirus restrictions are having on people's lives and livelihoods.

Carrie was appearing on BBC TV's *Debate Night* show alongside a cross-section of viewers from Ayrshire who were concerned about the way the current COVID-19 measures are impacting them professionally, personally, academically and socially.

Speaking as a parent, SBBA president and a teacher, she told Ms Hyslop that a Government response was urgently required on allowing amateur musicians to resume playing, especially in the wake of last weekend's publication of the

Music Education Partnership Group report into the aerosol effects of playing a brass instrument.

"At the moment there's no brass, woodwind, bagpipe playing or singing in schools," she said, expressing concern for the effect it was having on youngsters and the arts.

"When is this issue going to be looked at? We are really desperate for guidance and advice from yourselves."

However, it was at this point that debate host **Stephen Jardine** intervened and switched the discussion to the general topic of mental health and wellbeing without allowing Ms Hyslop to respond directly.

In the hour-long programme, other members of the panel – **Annie Wells** MSP, Scottish Conservative Communities and Local Government spokesperson, **Anas Sarwar** MSP, Scottish Labour Constitution spokesperson, **Tom Kitchin**, chef and restaurateur, and **Paul McNamee**, editor of *The Big Issue* – fielded a range of questions from the online audience. *Debate Night* is available on BBC iPlayer at <https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/m000ppx9/debate-night-series-2-18112020>

The effects of the Coronavirus pandemic continue to spread ever further into next year with the news that the 2021 European Brass Band Championships and all connected events scheduled to take place in May have been cancelled.

In making the announcement, the European Brass Band Association explained that the decision had to be made now as the local organisers and the competing bands would have had to make financial commitments in the coming months in order to host the event or to compete.

Said **Ulf Rosenberg**, EBBA president: “It is important to underline that our first priority always is the health and safety of both the brass bands and wider communities.”

While EBBA appreciated the restrictions imposed by the different governments to combat the pandemic, they had the effect of putting the European brass band movement and wider cultural life on hold for the time being.

“We have been impressed by the preparations made by the local organisers in Malmö,” added Ulf. “The 2021 EBBC would have been a high-quality event, and we hope that we



will soon be in a position to enable Europe’s finest brass bands to compete in Malmö.”

**the cooperation band** was the only Scottish band scheduled to take part in the European Championships, having qualified by winning the Scottish Championships in Perth in March.

The band’s **Keith Johnstone** confirmed his sadness at the cancellation, but admitted: “It was the correct decision in this climate.”

He added: “At least we have a decision which is the safest option but for us, as a band, we’re disappointed that we won’t be able to take part in a great event.”

The Scottish Virtual Youth Brass Band Festival on 29 November provided a veritable feast of bright young talent showcasing their musical skills in a wide range of online presentations.

Twelve ensembles took to the virtual stage during the 100-minute broadcast on the SBBA YouTube channel, introduced by the familiar face and voice of **Alasdair Hutton**.

**Chris Bradley**, principal cornet of **Whitburn Band** and recently appointed Besson artist, gave feedback on each band's performance and commented at the end of the programme how heartened he was to listen to and see the enthusiasm and commitment of the young people taking part.

The online event was organised in the wake of the postponement of the Scottish Festival of Brass because of the current COVID-19 restrictions on public gatherings.

Bands participating in the festival were (in order of appearance) **Abbey Brass** from Jedburgh, **Coalburn Bronze**, **Loanhead Brass Roots**, **Penicuik Youth Band**, **King's Park Junior Brass**, **King's Park Youth Brass**,

**Whitburn Wee**, **Youth and Heartlands bands**, **Perth and Kinross Percussion Ensemble**, **Irvine & Dregghorn Youth Band**, **Kirkintilloch Youth Band**, **Stranraer Junior Brass** and **Riverside Youth Band**.

The Perth and Kinross Percussion Ensemble was chosen by Chris Bradley for having the most entertaining programme and, for the best performance of a Scottish piece, he opted for *The Jethart Snail* by **Alan Fernie**, played by Abbey Brass (pictured).

Each band received a certificate of participation and a £35 voucher to purchase music for their band from Just Music, supported by business owner **Nigel Durno**, Creative Scotland and SBBA.



To spread a little festive cheer in the run-up to Christmas, SBBA launched an Advent Calendar of Carols on its website, inviting bands to send in their virtual recordings of seasonal tunes to be posted daily from 1 December.

It turned out to be an overwhelming success and the response from bands from far and wide across Scotland was really encouraging.

Featuring a band a day – and more than that for the final few days – the website was a showcase of Christmas music by some of the country’s top outfits to individual solos, duets and quartets, reflecting the full range of musical skills and playing abilities.

It was a microcosm of banding in Scotland!

Starting with **Renfrew Burgh Band**, the Advent Calendar went on to showcase music from a **Newland Concert** quartet, young trombonist **Nathan** (pictured left), **Loanhead Brass**



**DECEMBER** Roots, Irvine & Dregghorn Youth, Hawick Saxhorn, Broxburn



& Livingston, Annan Town, Croy Silver, Brass Central Strathearn, Whitburn, Johnstone, Bon-Accord Silver, Galashiels Town (pictured above), Tullis Russell soloists, Dysart Colliery Silver, Lochgelly, the cooperation band, brothers Gregor and Robbie, Peebles Burgh Youth, Kirkintilloch, Dalkeith & Monktonhall, Dumfries Town, Langholm Town, Kilmarnock Concert, Coalburn Silver and

**Kinneil** (pictured right).



It was on Day 9 of our Advent Calendar that we featured **Croy Silver Band** playing *O Little Town of Bethlehem*. With their video, they sent this message which must have resonated with brass colleagues throughout Scotland:

*Earlier this year, 2020 looked like it was shaping up well for Croy Silver Band after coming home from Perth as third section champions. A couple of light rehearsals afterwards, members were saying to each other "See you in a few weeks when this is over".*

*Now, a very long nine months later, it has been a case of no rehearsals, no concerts, no Cheltenham!*

*The band has managed to maintain a presence at local events – although not in a live capacity, of course – taking part in the video replacement for the Croy Corpus Christi Procession by providing music from previous events and the principal cornet player was able to do The Last Post for Remembrance Sunday.*

*As a group, members have kept in touch as best as they can through video call get-togethers every two or three weeks for*

*anyone who wishes. The band's beginners' group is also meeting online every week for a bit of practice and some tuition, although it is very different from face-to-face sessions.*

*In what is definitely a first for Croy Silver Band, members decided to brave the strange new world of click-tracks, video recording and performing from home. Here's hoping everyone will enjoy the result of their efforts, O Little Town of Bethlehem which you can see and hear here at <https://youtu.be/elMtQKHKfl>*

*In the meantime, Croy wishes all fellow bands-people a very happy Christmas and shares the hope that 2021 will see a return to the hobby we all enjoy so very much.*



Members of **Clackmannan District Band** received an early Christmas present – in the form of a new band hall.

Due to Coronavirus restrictions and the fact that the existing rehearsal facilities are part of a shared premises with a dance studio, the band was given the opportunity to move into a sole use building. It was an offer from the landlord that was greeted with enthusiasm, especially as it was seen as a positive step in the future development of Clackmannan and its associated bands.

“The new band hall has a much larger rehearsal space with scope for a side seating area enabling us to use it to its fullest potential,” explained band president **Debbie Ross** (pictured with **James Twist**, committee member and youth band



representative, trying out the keys to their new band hall).

“There is scope for small family concerts for our youth and development band / ensemble and for open rehearsals. We shall be installing adaptable acoustics – by way of a pulley system roof boards and side curtains – to enable us to have a dry, dead sound for rehearsals or to open things up and make use of its lovely vaulted ceilings.”

A mass online sing- and play-along event is being organised to really get Scotland into the spirit of Christmas.

The **Music Education Partnership Group** (MEPG) has launched a ‘Symphony of a Thousand’ which will perform Mariah Carey’s *All I Want for Christmas is You* and is inviting vocalists and instrumentalists to take part.

The finished music video is to be broadcast on 17 December at a live online event.

The ‘Symphony of a Thousand’ performance follows the success of a similar event during the summer when 1000 people played and sang *Hey Jude*.

**S**BBA announced that the Scottish Youth Solo and Ensemble Championships would be taking on a different format for 2021 because of the current situation surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic. Preliminary qualifying rounds and the final itself are being staged as virtual events to ensure compliance with any restrictions on social gatherings which may still be in place.

Individual area qualifier competitions are being replaced by two online regional events – one for entries from Fife, East and Northern Counties associations, with the second for entries from the West, South West and Borders.

As usual, there will be three age categories: 12 & under, 16 & under and 21 & under. Four qualifiers from each association in each of these three age categories will progress to the final on Saturday 13 March.

Entrants are requested to submit video recordings of their solos, with or without accompaniment, to education officer **John Boax** at [sbbaeducation@gmail.com](mailto:sbbaeducation@gmail.com) The adjudicators will review the entries over a two-week period after that date and the finalists will be confirmed on the day

of their regional competition.

The regional competitions and final will be broadcast on the SBBA YouTube channel and Facebook page on the dates specified.

SBBA vice president **Ann Murray**, who is co-organising the championships with John Boax, commented: “While it is not ideal holding these events as virtual experiences, it does give those entrants who would normally have difficulty travelling to their area competitions and the final the opportunity to take part.”

There will be no cost of entry to encourage as wide a participation as possible. The event is being made possible with the continued support of Creative Scotland.

**FOOTNOTE:** The deadline for entries was extended in light of the delayed return to schools after Christmas. All entries should now be submitted no later than 14 February 2021. The qualifier heats will now take place on 27 and 28 February, enabling the top four finalists from each area in each age group to either resubmit the same solo for the finals or record a new solo or version of the solo by 7 March.



Congratulations to 17 years old bass trombone player **Mark Gammon** who has received an unconditional offer to study on the Bachelor of Music degree course at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.

Mark, who plays with Inverclyde-based **Riverside Youth Band**, is currently a student at the Junior Conservatoire,

learning from **Alastair Sinclair**, bass trombone with the RSNO.

He was previously taught in Inverclyde by **Mark Good** and before that, in his early years, by **Andrew Digger**.

Mark has been a member of RYB for many years now and has also played with **Johnstone Band** and **Brass Sounds Inverclyde**. A former West of Scotland solo champion, he is currently signed with **Renfrew Burgh** as well as being a member of **NYBBS** and the **West of Scotland Schools Symphony Orchestra**.

Commenting on his former pupil's success, Mark Good said: "I am desperately proud of this young man, who has sought and embraced every opportunity to progress and is now looking forward to the experience of a lifetime.

"He has an infectious enthusiasm which shines through in his bass trombone playing but it is underpinned by the willingness and self-discipline required to succeed.

"It has been a pleasure to watch Mark develop into a fine musician and a confident young man."

The 2021 Fife Brass Band Festival is to be a virtual affair. It will take the form of an open online contest, open to all contesting bands, to be broadcast on the SBBA YouTube channel on Saturday 24 April.

There is no entry fee to this event and, although there will be no registration, it is anticipated participating bands will use guest players only if necessary.

Each band should submit a video not exceeding 10 minutes to contain an own choice programme and any compere-type announcements. It is stressed that a march should be included in the programme.

When making the videos, adherence to any current COVID restrictions and social distancing is strongly advised.

Entries will be broadcast in alphabetical order and will be assessed by an adjudicator who will award a prize for the best performance and also one for the most entertaining band.

All bands entering will be required to complete a parental consent form for players under 18 years of age to comply

## Fife Brass Band Festival

with SBBA's child protection guidelines. This form should be sent on receipt of entry.

Entry forms for the Fife Brass Band Festival should be returned to **Anne McInnes** at [anneanddonald@msn.com](mailto:anneanddonald@msn.com) by 1 March 2021.

Video entries should be sent to [fifebbf@gmail.com](mailto:fifebbf@gmail.com) by 5 April 2021.

Assistance in the making of videos can be found at [www.facebook.com/groups/audiovisualproduction/?multi\\_permaLinks=2838756956400261](https://www.facebook.com/groups/audiovisualproduction/?multi_permaLinks=2838756956400261) and in a *How to make a video* sheet supplied on request.

Enquiries regarding the contest should be made to Anne McInnes, 25 Fraser Place, Stirling FK9 5RE; email: [anneanddonald@msn.com](mailto:anneanddonald@msn.com); tel: 07845499981; website: <https://fifebbfestival.wixsite.com/fbbf>

**A**s 2020 draws to a close, increasingly severe COVID-19 restrictions are being put in place throughout the UK as a new strain of the Coronavirus is unleashed on the population.

The measures being put in place are not far short of the full lockdown endured during the early spread of the virus in March and April, resulting in slimmed down Christmas celebrations and a stay-at-home Hogmanay.

Looking to the future, however, the announcement of two newly approved vaccines is bringing hope that 2021 will be a much better year than the one just endured.

While many events for the coming year have already been cancelled, postponed or revised into virtual offerings, there is an enduring optimism that banding will eventually return to normal.

2020 has been a tough year on several fronts, but the end is now in sight.

We *will* meet again – and hopefully sooner rather than later!

This booklet is a summary of articles and news items that have been published on the SBBA website during 2020. It also includes individual contributions from various bands throughout Scotland.

During the year, SBBA has endeavoured to keep bands connected, not just with its own members but also with fellow brass musicians up and down the country.

This has been an extraordinary year for everyone and, as it is 125 years since the establishment of SBBA, it was one that we felt we should commemorate in print.

We are grateful for all the encouragement we have received in this venture, not least from our advertisers who we hope you will support as we emerge from this Coronavirus pandemic.

Why not make **[www.sbba.org.uk](http://www.sbba.org.uk)** your internet browser default home page?

## SBBA contacts

**President** 07769 260912  
Carrie Boax sbbapresident@gmail.com

**Vice President** 0779 9604125  
Ann Murray sbbavp@gmail.com

**Secretary** 0788 1920361  
Tom Allan sbbasecretary@gmail.com

**Treasurer** 07917 798655  
Julie Nicoll sbbatreasurer@gmail.com

**Education Officer** 07966 486088  
John Boax sbbaeducation@gmail.com

**Child Protection Officer**  
Caroline Farren sbbacpo@gmail.com

**Website Manager** 07771 867874  
Peter Fraser fraserp3@virginmedia.com

**PR and Publicity Officer** 07774 778872  
Nigel Martin sbbapr@gmail.com

**Social Media Editor**  
James McGoldrick sbbasocialmedia@gmail.com



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Band Association on reaching its 125th  
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**Mark Good**  
Editor, British Bandsman



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# That was 2020 that was!

Review of a year that shook the world

Published by the Scottish Brass Band Association to mark its 125th anniversary year. [www.sbba.org.uk](http://www.sbba.org.uk)