



Founded 1938

Where Are They Now?

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Marc Clarke

"I don't suppose I really had an option . . . Harold Newton, my grandpa, was a founder member of the band, and mum's cousins David and Mark (Newton), who both learned to play at Winterley, were also both fine players with Foden's Band. It was clear that Harold's eldest grandson (me) had to play too! Can't say I was a confident or willing learner, I certainly wasn't good and grandpa was a demanding teacher. I quickly learnt that it was better not to play at all than dare to put a bit in and it sound awful - especially when playing in a quartet.

"I think it was 1969 when I first blew a cornet, but sadly I can't remember too much of the first few years – I do remember though the early band rounds, largely as tremendously exciting rides, e.g. in the front of Warburton's cattle truck jammed between driver and grandpa (Oakhanger Band Round), and we trekked as far afield as Bradfield Road (Crewe), Sandbach Heath, and Silverdale to help promote their anniversaries.

"These Sunday morning trips helped me improve quickly as often the band were few in number, and holding down second cornet hymn tunes alone became my forte! Before grandpa rewrote the tunes on double sided card in permanent ink you dreaded a wet round for obvious reasons. Journeys to band rounds got even better soon after as Mike Shenton had a red Rover 2000 and I got to sit in the front – what more could a young lad want? I enjoyed Thursday evening practices too, especially those led by Cliff Barnett, they were good fun.

"After grandpa died in 1972, Cliff took me under his wing and he ensured I remained a band regular for ten years. A recurring highlight during that period were the refreshments during the Winterley rounds, e.g. sat at long trestle tables, munching away at some smashing fare at Mary Shenton's home in Newtons Lane. I vividly remember Remembrance Sundays, too, as I played (quaking in my boots and terrified by the responsibility) 'The Last Post' at Wheelock Cenotaph year after year, until I left for London and university in 1979.

"I occasionally returned to play a bit part in Band Sunday(s), or to listen to the amazing tales from Alan (Warburton) and Derek (Antrobus) as we strolled round Winterley and Haslington at Sunday School Anniversary, or Christmas time. Very happy days.

"Banding ended for me on graduation in 1982 as I moved to Hull. Married in 1983, Enid and I moved to Hedon (east of Hull) to take up teaching posts in Withernsea.

"In 1986 we relocated to the West Midlands, where we still live, and continue to impart knowledge (ha-ha) to the younger generation! Despite living 60 miles from Winterley we're regularly back home and are kept abreast of all band news by mum (Audrey), David (Newton) and Paul (Vickers). Very occasionally I have recently been spied struggling to put in a bit of "tops" during a band round.

"At our church in Kingswinford, Enid leads worship by playing the piano and I look after all things AV, sorting sound and vision each Sunday. Steadfastly I have hidden my cornet-playing light under a bushel since leaving Winterley,

despite often being asked by church and school, "Do you play anything?" I think if you ask anyone who's ever stood next to me whilst playing over the years, the answer might well be a resounding "no" anyway!

"One last thing. When did Haslington Boys Brigade Band play in the fourth section of the National Championships? I can't remember the year, but I do recollect playing a diddy (and dodgy) Repiano solo after much patient coaching from David "Bandmaster" Newton. We were drawn first out of 26 I think. Our soprano cornet player failed to turn up, but we didn't come last. The test piece was a horrid composition named "Blenheim", and many of my fellow Winterley Methodist players were involved that day too.

"It'll be great to meet so many familiar faces again during the 75th celebrations.'