

Brass Roots

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Lent Term 2009

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FoCUBB Events:

- Annual Dinner - 2nd May 09

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Editorial by Di Brady

Here it is! My number 3. Roots is really beginning to take shape now with the first entry of *two* new, regular features; Tour Walks with David Pettit, and Rob's Record Review. As well as these 'old' boys we have an article from Kirsty Upham - fresher and tenor horn player in CUBB, and a review of the Annual Varsity Concert from concert manager Tim Napper.

Following tour 2009 last weekend (articles to come in next term's issue), I found myself heading to school (work) on Monday morning feeling rather exhausted to say the least. Monday is always a challenging day full of 13 year olds destroying my keyboards and playing that game where you point a drum at someone's head and hit it as hard as possible (I know we all played that one in our time!) However I suddenly realised that this Monday was 'literacy day' - oh yes, I can hear the groans from all you teachers out there! A day where I found myself having to teach the students how to write an editorial. From this experience I learned that I didn't actually know, and sadly the children learned nothing.

Enjoy!

Brass Roots

Varsity Concert Review 2009 by Tim Napper



Carrying on the fine tradition of Oxbridgian intercourse begun two years ago, this year's Varsity concert was arguably the best job CUBB have done this academic year (unless you count Caius MCR - the sound of suggestively-shaped balloons whizzing up to greet us on the balcony is still ringing in my ears). It was CUBB's turn to play the (ahem) gracious hosts this year, and we treated OUBB to the neo-gothic architectural delights of St. Giles Church. But aestheticism aside, we pretty much packed the place out. Big congratulations to Fiona for her clearly highly-successful ad campaign. The audience was treated to what I would say, all joking aside, was some of the best playing I've heard CUBB come out with in some time. Even the veritable (or is that venerable?) JC was heard to remark "Huh, that wasn't as awful as usual" at one point. He may well deny this possibly-libellous allegation, but the point still stands. 'Dark Side of the Moon', our big contesty show-piece I thought sounded amazing, and John Garbutt's rendition of 'Bass in the Ballroom' was an excellent bit of solo playing.

OUBB likewise gave a great account of themselves. Highlights included their epic offering of 'Night on a Bare Mountain' and a deeply-moving performance of 'Flower Duet' (which even elicited the - albeit slightly lewd - approval of Greg). I especially thought that both bands

sounded amazing with the addition of timps (this remark having nothing to do with the fact that Tom Cufflin, Stephen Lock and I had to haul the things from Jesus in a wheel barrow).

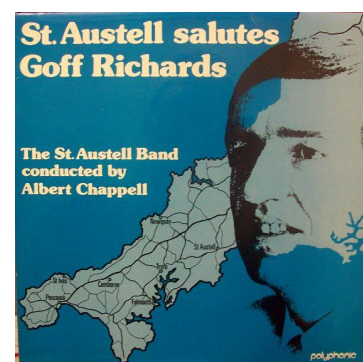
The post-concert curry rivalled last year in terms of joviality and consumption of alcoholic beverages. Hats off to OUBB's South African MD Duncan, who upon being pennied for the third time declared himself to be a republican and quite content to watch Her Majesty drown in a Kingfisher-y grave. Also to Neil for his genuine panic and crisis of identity upon discovering that his first name and Joe's surname were the same. The speeches were of their usual high standard of wit, lucidity and erudition, although sadly we were denied an Ashford special, curry-eating apparently taking precedence over public speaking.

From what I understand the revelries carried on well into the wee small hours, with one knot-loving member of the band smashing the CUBB record of 4.23am to smithereens by carrying on through to 8am egged on by members of OUBB. Overall, a great success, and big thanks to OUBB for being such great company and for braving the X5 (and the horrors of Bedford bus station) to be there. Until next year then...



Rob's Record Review by Rob Richards

The *Goffbox* (1982) was perhaps the ultimate vanity release from Brass Band messiah, Goff Richards. Consisting of 50 LPs packaged in a lurid pink latex box sealed with a bow of razor wire, the set was final proof of Goff's self-obsession and lack of quality control. However, the tome was not without its merits. Perhaps the greatest highlight was *I Am The Quaymaster*, an early 72 minute mix of what was to become the aquatic rhapsody, "Songs of the Quay." Artistic production values of the disc were of paramount importance, with the record's groove heavily condensed onto a single platter to maximise the murkiness of this brooding descent into the inner machinations of sailor boys.



The radio edit of "Songs of the Quay" appears on perhaps the second highlight of the *Goffbox*, *St Austell Salutes Goff Richards*, but unfortunately the power of the longer mix is lost and the edit sounds rushed in comparison. The album begins with a chunk of musique concrète, documenting the atmosphere whilst a Cornish township shows their respect to a brass band composer/arranger. This is quickly followed by "Stage Centre," perhaps a controversial choice of an opener considering it's Goff's first explicit musical statement of his opposition to Fairtrade products - not a popular opinion at the church fetes at which it's often played! However nobody can deny the harsh power of the piece especially when accompanied by mournful didgeridoos as in this recording.

"Sweet Nightingale," a tonal poem about Rose West, has some superb counterpoint from the baritones but is occasionally let down by the cornets being shit. "Trailblaze" is what the casual fans come for and what they get is a bog standard reading of this cold war classic. "The Jaguar" (subtitled "Fairtrade: A Tax on the Middle Classes") brings to mind the more camp moments of *The 120 Days of Sodom* and it would take a hard-headed individual to not shed a tear during the peak of "May Dance," a radical reinterpretation of the Pavement mega-hit. Goff Richards hoped that listeners would embark on their own aural experience whilst listening to this record and I can confirm that anyone who hears it will be able to fully hear what they fully hear. Hosanna! 3/10

First Impressions of CUBB by Kirsty Upham

“I wish...I wish...I could just *cuddle* CUBB!” Chris is half-standing over a table in Caius college bar, one arm draped drunkenly around his chair, the other holding a brimming port glass aloft, and proclaiming his love for the band in sonorous tones. Several Caius students glance at us quizzically, before deciding they’re safer in ignorance. Chris raises the port glass high and brings it down on the table with a flourish - snapping the stem in two and sending the dark red liquid spilling across the table. There is a hasty removal of coats and bags, someone is dispatched to the bar for napkins, and all remaining port is subtly moved down to the other end of the table. Those who are still sober enough to care, cringe.



This is my second CUBB formal and my first taste of port, and the two will be forever inextricably linked in my memory (and, I fear, in my parents’: I managed to send my dad a text that night saying, “Hi, am on port!”) It’s also not the first time I’ve heard these sentiments from Chris: I first met him on the CUBB pub crawl, in the company of some of my fellow slightly apprehensive freshers. “The great thing about this band,” he told us, “is that there’s no one in it who I couldn’t sit down and have a great conversation with.” It doesn’t take long to discover that, while some of those conversations will contain more north/south banter than others, what he told us was true. I came from a school band who were closer than most people considered healthy, obsessively competitive and, I thought, impossible to replace; I’ve been immersed at once in a world of gin (the game, not the drink), arcane in-jokes (I have yet to comprehend the full significance of 4.23 am) and northern solidarity (Pie of the Day, anyone?) In a slightly more sober manner, and without inflicting mortal danger on any port glasses, I’d like to second Chris, and extend CUBB a (written, but no less meaningful) cuddle.

Tour Walks #1 - The Worcestershire Beacon with David Pettit

Pioneered: Tour 2005 - Malvern
Start point: Hostel near Hanley Swan
Distance: 14km
Ascent: 400m
Group: Ben Harvey, Peter Lumsdaine, David Pettit

Perhaps I should start by pointing out that I’m not entirely to blame for this one! It was Steve Houghton who suggested that it would be good to climb the Worcestershire Beacon for sunrise (not that he ever had any intention of coming along). As the band’s most obsessive climber of hills, I was, of course, unable to resist the opportunity for some impromptu hillwalking, with our hostel being less than five miles from the summit and the promise of expansive views over the Cotswolds, the Severn Valley and the Welsh Borders.

Messrs Harvey and Lumsdaine having been cajoled into accompanying me on this somewhat contrived expedition, we snatched an hour’s sleep before setting off from the hostel around 4am, drawing puzzled looks from the hard core of late-night band revellers in the common room. 4:23am came and went as we negotiated the largely-featureless B4208 by torchlight, and the streets of Great Malvern were unsurprisingly deserted. It was still pitch black as we left the town and embarked on the footpath to St Ann’s Well, which meant that local knowledge was required to deduce which gap in the trees and which featureless grassy slope comprised the correct paths. Unfortunately, none of us had the aforementioned local knowledge, and our route up the hillside was tortuous to say the least!

Eventually we reached a more clearly-defined path along the ridge of the Malvern Hills, and were able to relocate ourselves on the map. We therefore continued with more confidence towards the summit, the first hints of daylight by now illuminating our surroundings a little...which gave us a clearer view of the thick fog enveloping the ridge. An unnerving clicking noise emanating from the mist ahead briefly stopped us in our tracks until, after a cautious approach, closer inspection proved it to originate from an unusually noisy electric fence! We reached the summit a few minutes before sunrise, so we sat by the trig point to share a flask of coffee while we waited.



You think they look tired there? You should've seen them the next day: quite a special moment on the 'Tour 2005' DVD. (Coming soon!)

It soon became apparent that we were going to have to settle for mere circumstantial evidence that the sun had risen - the inside of the cloud had gradually brightened and the predicted time of sunrise had passed - so we admired the diagram on the summit viewfinder of what we should have been able to see, and then retraced our steps back down to Great Malvern, the electric fence being a lot less intimidating by daylight! The walk back along the road to the hostel passed quickly, thanks to such notable landmarks as the "Rob's Rolls" sandwich shop, "Sheep Centre" and Three Counties Showground, as well as a brief stop at a corner shop, from which we rewarded ourselves with bacon and eggs for breakfast!

Next time: Pen y Garn from Llywngwrl

Notices

Annual Dinner will take place on 2nd May at Wolfson College. Contact Greg Fedorenko (gf243) if you want to come. It will cost around £35.

That's all for now

Well that's it for this edition. If you would like to write an article, please email to me on dianabradley@gmail.com or contact me via Facebook. It can be anything at all as long as it is band related, obviously.

We look forward to hearing from you/seeing you soon. Here are those key email addresses again: John Garbutt: John@johngarbutt.com, Greg Fedorenko: gf243@cam.ac.uk, JC: jic23@cam.ac.uk

Thanks for reading...

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