

## ABERYSTWYTH SILVER BAND

### THE BANDROOM

1926 – 2016

Previous to 1926 the town band relied on the use of a rehearsal room in the enclosed skating rink next to Capel y Morfa opposite the former town hall, now Ceredigion Library. It never was satisfactory and being in a residential area they suffered regular complaints following their rehearsals. The decision was made by the Aberystwyth Borough Council to build a new band hall on the perimeter of the town in Smithfield, an area well known previously for its many foundries, smithies and slaughterhouse. The benevolent Aberystwyth Borough town council, from its funds, built the current bandroom dedicating its use to the town band. Also funds were raised by the people of the town towards the purchase of a complete set of

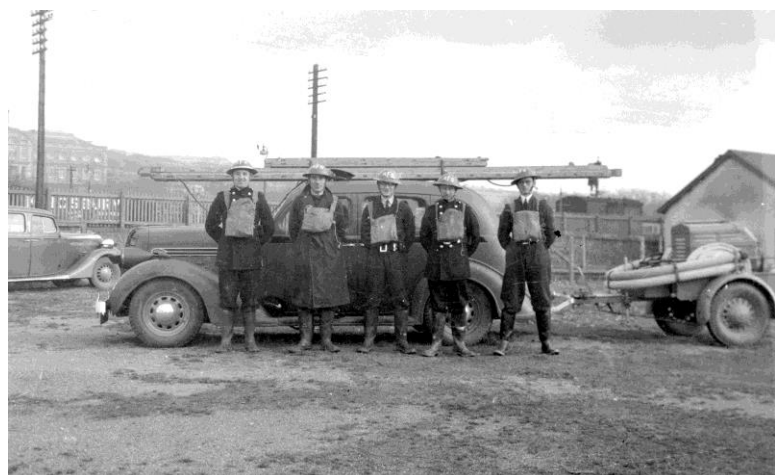


*Aberystwyth Silver band and officials outside the recently completed bandroom in 1926*

silver plated brass instruments and percussion for the players. With great ceremony, the dignitaries of the town posed with the band outside the entrance to the hall in that inaugural year of 1926. The band continued successfully as the Aberystwyth Silver band under the baton of Cornelius Campbell Richardes with the Honorary Conductor being the local bookshop keeper and Musician Jack Edwards. By the start of the Second World War in

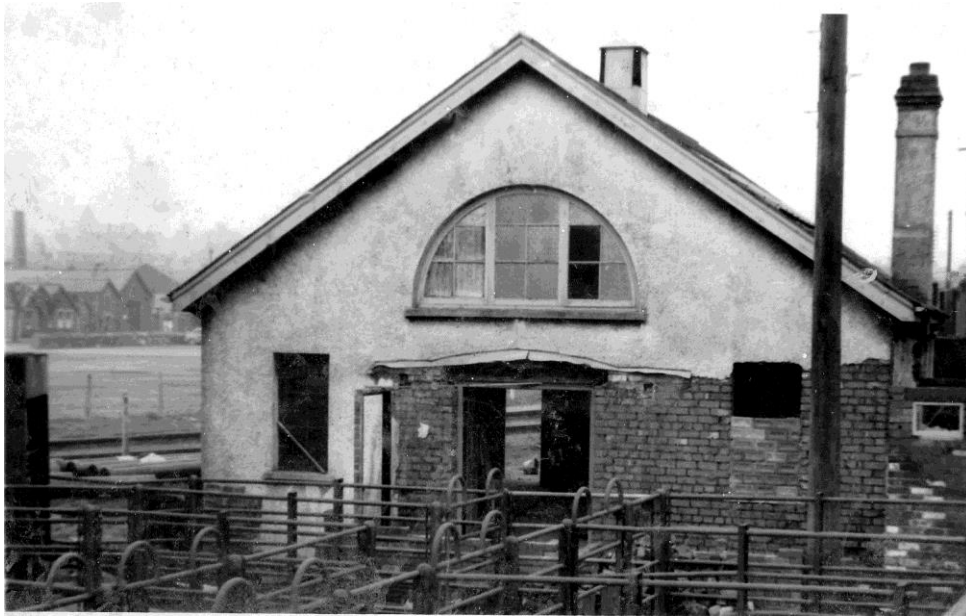
1939, many public buildings were requisitioned for the war effort. The band was disbanded and the instruments were stored under a tarpaulin in the town council yard behind the gas office, an area now being developed as the latest retail park in Park Avenue. The bandroom was then taken over by the Home guard and the auxiliary fire service until the cessation of hostilities in 1945.

The instruments were collected and the band



*Above: National Fire servicemen outside the bandroom during WWII*

reformed during the latter years of the 1940s when they reclaimed possession of their rehearsal room. Several players returned from active service and national service. The band was small but they loyally reinstated themselves as the town band and re-established themselves as the prime promenade bandstand entertainment. During the 1950s a cattle market was built next to the band hall entrance. During that decade several of the players took it on themselves to carry out improvements to the bandroom by building an entrance hall, a small toilet to the side and fit new steel framed windows that still survive today. New drainage pipes were laid by the band members who also dug the drainage ditches for the pipes to be laid in. The chimney stack that served a small coal fire was taken down as well. The bandroom survives there today becoming part of the retail development in the new millennium.



*Above: The former bandroom entrance being enlarged with the old cattle market in the foreground c.1957*



*Above: Glyn Richards, tuba player fitting a new window c.1957*



*Above: David Warrington, drummer loading bricks inside during improvements c, 1957*





*Above: David Warrington and Ken Pemberthy barrowing bricks c. 1957*



*Above: Donald Warrington digging drainage channels c. 1957*

The crescent shaped window survived into the 1980s when the new owners, Ceredigion County Council, decided to remove it and block the space up.

The Vale of Rheidol railway, although fenced off, ran in front of the bandroom from 1926 until Easter 1968. The band players had to access the bandroom along a path which led from Park Avenue alongside the main cattle market building. In the adjacent photograph we can see passengers



*Above: Two VOR trains in front of the bandroom and crew boarding a train that's preparing to depart for Devil's Bridge hauled by no. 8 Llewelyn. On the other side of the bandroom boundary wall was the*



*Above: A passenger steam train waiting to depart for Carmarthen in the early 1960s. The bandroom is on the left.*

platform formerly used by main line trains to Carmarthen which lasted until 1965 the year of its closure. That dedicated platform and track for southbound trains was taken over by the Vale of Rheidol railway soon after.



**Jack Marsden G Trombone, George Lewis, side drummer and William Lewis Eb Bass in their British Legion uniform outside the bandroom c. 1955. Photo courtesy of John Davies.**

WWII until 1956, their members proudly wearing their pseudo-military style blue uniform and cap. A junior size uniform was also provided for young players. The bandroom improvements were completed in the 1950s.

The town band was entitled '*The Aberystwyth British legion band*' after



**Above: Young band member Ivor Pemberthy wearing one of the junior uniforms c.1954**

**Below and right: During the 1960 Band Christmas party and twins Donald and David Warrington and Don's wife Gwen are seen in the new kitchen**





***Above: Learner classes became established by the band in the 1970s before the introduction of school brass tuition. They began under the leadership of Bandmasters Bill Dickie and Hywel Jones and continued under John R. Davies.***

The classes were a great success with several of the young players later becoming professional musicians.



For many years the interior of the bandroom changed little, at one point in the 1980s the original wooden flooring was replaced by a waterproofed concrete and tiled floor by the Ceredigion County Council following flooding. They took possession of the building from the defunct Aberystwyth borough corporation during the county reorganisation in the 1970s. In the 1990s the County also fitted a new roof and modern fascia bargeboards. In 2006 the developers of the car park and the Ystwyth retail park altered the entrance to the building from the east wall to the west and included a modern porch.



***Left: Helen Rudeforth is seen conducting one of her own compositions in 1976. Helen became a headmistress of a Birmingham secondary school following her university studies. Both Helen and her brother Peter were faithful members at that time.***





*Left: The celebrated Aberystwyth born trumpet player Ronnie Hughes joining in rehearsal in May 1981*

In 1985 the Middleton Band near Cork in Ireland visited the town for a musical weekend..



*Above: Members of both Aberystwyth and Middleton band outside the bandroom in 1985.*

*Below: Following a refurbishment the Cambrian News came to record the occasion in November 2001*

**Band all set to play on in refurbished home**

ABERYSTWYTH Silver Band celebrated the 75th anniversary of the building of its hall with a re-dedication ceremony, following its refurbishment. The building, which is in Somerfield's car park, has been used for rehearsals since 1926. Much of the refurbishment work was done by volunteers, principally from the Aberystwyth Lions. Prayers were said at the re-dedication ceremony by Envoy Jones of the Salvation Army, and band members were there with their instruments. The Silver Band's next performance will be at 7.30pm on Sunday 2 December at Holy Trinity Church, Aberystwyth, where they will appear in a concert with the university's Madrigal Singers.

ISSN 0968-3852  
 9 770968 385006  
 No. 9148



***Below: In 2006 during rehearsal with the Aberystwyth Silver Band, under the baton of the Musical Director Geraint Evans.***



***Below: Before the redevelopment of the car park and Bandroom entrance began, the band is seen on November 14<sup>th</sup> 2004 before the leading the annual Remembrance Day parade.***



***Below: Showing the new Entrance and porch, the band gathers for a photograph before marching off to lead the remembrance parade in November 2008.***



**Below: There have been many happy occasions taking place in the bandroom; one example on May 10<sup>th</sup> 2011 was the presentation of gifts and certificates by the Musical Director Geraint Evans to Tomos Wells and Harvey Hassan on the eve of their departure from the band to continue their studies in London.**

Incidentally, since the bandroom was built in 1926 there have been twenty six permanent Conductors of the Aberystwyth Silver Band to 2016.



Wishing the band and its bandroom further enjoyable success in the future.

Peter Henley September 5<sup>th</sup> 2016