

Dalmellington Band



SENIOR CUP 2006

What a difference a year makes. Last May when we went to Blackpool to compete in the Senior Cup, we were hoping just to survive in the section as the bottom four Bands get relegated to the Senior Trophy. And survive we did – just.

This year it was a completely different story. Our aim was to get into the top 10 and considering our past two performances at this competition have seen us placed 14th in 2004 and 13th in 2005, this didn't seem to ambitious a goal. However, when the test-piece was announced and we had been allocated Philip Sparke's "Harmony Music", audible gasps were heard in the Bandroom from those who know the piece. It is quite possibly the hardest piece we have ever had to play and for a moment, a top 10 placing seemed to be disappearing over the horizon.

But this band hasn't shirked a challenge yet and hasn't enjoyed the success it has recently without working hard, so it was get the parts home and get stuck in.

As with the preparations for all our other contests lately, the piece came together pretty well even from the early stages. By the time last week had arrived we felt we were putting in a performance of the piece that might just make our top 10 target a reality.

When we arrived at Blackpool and checked in to our usual hotel, The Doric, we had a final rehearsal then relaxed in readiness for the following morning.

There were 20 Bands in our section and we drew No.8. On stage the Band seemed relaxed and although the start of our performance could have been a bit better, we settled and delivered a performance that had the sizeable audience clapping and cheering with enthusiasm.

Everyone played their part in a real team effort, but our three main soloists Eleanor Ferguson (Cornet) Chris Dale (Tenor Horn) and David McKellar (Euphonium) were quite outstanding. Add to this the musical brilliance from conductor Archie Hutchison and it all added up to a performance that earned us 5th place once the results were announced.

Although we were highly delighted to get 5th place, especially given the line up of quality Bands in our section, we couldn't help but think "what if we could only have been one place higher!" That would have earned us promotion to the Grand Shield, where you are really up against top notch Bands.

Nevertheless, we started out looking for the top 10 and ended up 5th. What a difference a year makes.