

# The 1990s

## At a glance

The early 90s recession hangover, resulting from excessive 80s spending, slowly wears off by the mid-90s. After the sudden fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, rights and freedom pull focus for this decade.

Nelson Mandela is released and apartheid ends in South Africa. *The Native Title Act* for Aboriginal land rights is established. The *Good Friday Agreement* in Belfast is reached. These are all watershed moments for humanity.

Australia experiences its first national Sorry Day for the stolen generations, *Treaty* by Indigenous band Yothu Yindi makes the charts and Cathy Freeman wins gold in the Olympics in Canada carrying both the Australian and Aboriginal flag for her victory lap, televised worldwide.

Paul Keating becomes Prime Minister continuing on over a decade of Labor government and makes his mark with a push for a republic (and touching the Queen). A referendum is held but the status quo wins by 5% and the royals are retained for head of state.

In 1996 Liberals end a Labor run with John Howard the new Prime Minister who is to stay in power until the mid-2000s.

Australia joins the British and American forces in the Gulf War and later counters pro-Indonesian militia violence by leading intervention to help stabilise a newly independent East Timor.

Women enter military combat, become ordained and take on more leadership

positions. Joan Kirner is Australia's second and Victoria's first female premier and Dame Roma Mitchell becomes governor of South Australia, the first woman to hold a vice-regal office in Australia.

The ABC launches its twenty-four hour news radio service, and Australia is in the spotlight when Sydney wins the bid for the 2000 Olympics. *Babe*, *Strictly Ballroom*, *Muriel's Wedding* and *The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert* are international sensations.

We say goodbye to one and two cent coins and hello to the new face of telecommunications: mobile phones and the world wide web. This international e-comms connection is fast growing and the new millennium is celebrated with cautiousness due to widespread fears about a millennium Y2K bug jeopardising the internet's stability. By January 2000, these fears prove unfounded.

The University of Ballarat (UB) is created under a five-year sponsorship from Melbourne University, and Ballarat experiences a 90s multi-genre bands explosion at venues including The Camp, Grainery Lane and the Bridge Hotel, as one of the knock-ons from the extensive music for schools program through the 70s and 80s.

The population of Australia climbs from 17 million to over 19 million by 2000.

In Ballarat we see the most dramatic population change since the 1850s with 34,501 people in 1991, over doubling to 76,336 in a five-year period by 1996.

# The band in the 1990s



1997, Begonia Parade, BMCB are winners for Best Community Entry. Source: BMCB Archive

Ted Lewis continued on in his role as MD of the band until 1995.

## Ted hands over the baton

After 15 years as conductor of the Ballarat Memorial Concert Band, Ted Lewis has handed over his baton to Ballarat musician Brenda Beck.

Mr Lewis has been a member of the band since 1967 and although he is retiring as conductor, he said he would remain as a playing member — mostly trombone — and as secretary/treasurer.

He said the band had been a concert band for about 13 years and before that it was a brass band, starting as the Ballarat Soldiers Memorial Band in 1919.

Mr Lewis said he recently retired from teaching at Sebastopol, Mt Clear and Ballarat Secondary Colleges and with that change of lifestyle he decided it was time to step down and give someone else a go.

He is also the founder and conductor of the 15-year-old Sebaclear Band.

Ms Beck is a music major from Northern Michigan University in the USA and her principal instrument is the trumpet although she also plays bassoon and cello.

She has set up bands and was musical director in California, Michigan; Chiangmai, Thailand; Blackburn High School; Loreto College and Ballarat High School.



Musician Ted Lewis, left, hands over the conductorship of the Ballarat Memorial Concert Band to Brenda Beck and her assistant, year 12 student Martin Hemingway. Picture: LACHLAN BENCE

Ms Beck said Ballarat Memorial Concert Band provided a place for woodwind, brass, and percussion musicians to play, especially when they finished school.

"This is really a community organisation which fills a big niche for playing opportunity," Ms Beck said.

"We look at ourselves as a service to the community

because we will play for community functions as well as in competitions."

Ms Beck will be assisted by year 12 Ballarat High School student Martin Hemingway who successfully completed his Licentiate on alto saxophone, recently recorded the Glazounov Saxophone Concerto with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra and is currently studying his Licentiate on trombone.

Ms Beck said Martin would work with the band mainly as a student conductor to add to his achievements as he would like to go into conducting.

Ms Beck said the band held rehearsals each Wednesday at Wilkinson Hall in Barkly St from 7.30 pm and people wanting more information about the band could contact her on 346549.

2 May 1995, 'Ted hands over the baton', *The Courier*. Source: Brenda Beck Archive



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After he finished as bandmaster, Ted stayed on playing with the band for many years, took on responsibility of band president and filled in for Brenda on occasion when she was away.

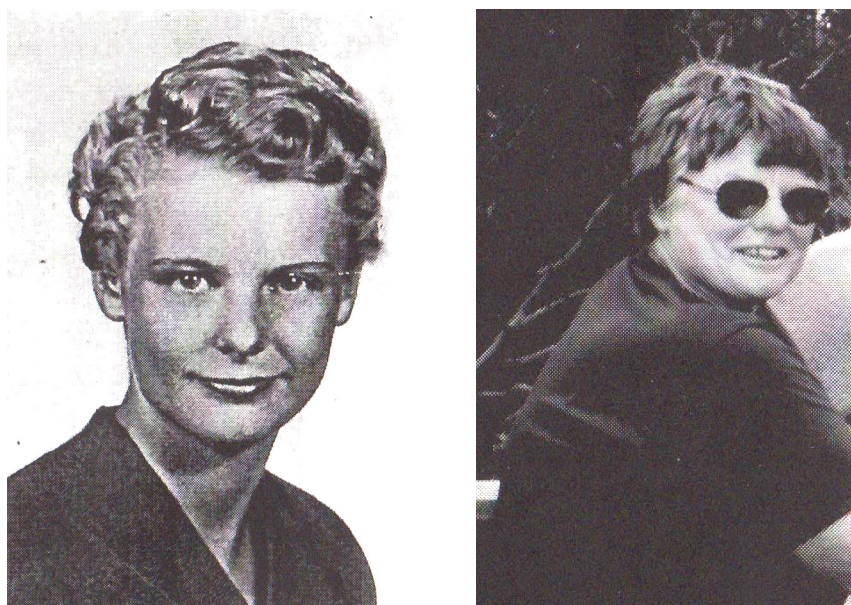
Being the initiator and MD of Sebaclear Band since 1979 (which started with students from Sebastopol Tech and Mount Clear College), by 1995 Ted had already contributed a great deal to Ballarat's musical life.

Stepping down from his role as MD coincided with Ted's retirement from teaching at Mt Clear, Ballarat Secondary College and Sebastopol Tech. It seems that he was ready to pass the baton on to the next generation of musical leaders.

## Brenda takes the baton

Brenda, who had been playing in Ballarat for some time in both the Soldiers' Band (in the 70s and early 80s) and the City Band with her daughters (assistant MD from 1989, MD from 92–93) had also been part of a critical influence on Australian banding.

But first a bit of background on this influential band leader.



Brenda Beck. Source: Brenda Beck Archive

Brenda hales from Michigan where temperatures can dip to twenty-five degrees Fahrenheit below zero. She grew up in a family that was no stranger to cutting holes through metre-thick ice to spear hunt fish and annual deer hunting trips.

Having played trumpet since she was eleven years old, Brenda went on to gain six years' high school band experience, became the Michigan State trumpet champion three times over and studied music theory and composition. She played solo trumpet in the University Band and Orchestra for three years and graduated with a Bachelor of Music Education from Northern Michigan University in 1961 – majoring in trumpet, minoring in bassoon and cello. Brenda also played trumpet and tenor saxophone in a dance band.



After teaching and conducting in America, Brenda's adventurous spirit and desire to escape the colds of Michigan motivated a move to Chiang Mai, Thailand. There she landed a job at Regina Coeli College which included leading a marching band.

Then she did something very unusual. She was asked to take an old elephant war song from the Thai Burma battle days, traditionally played on an oboe-like instrument (sounds like a bagpipe chanter) and arrange it for band. The war song sounded when the elephants charged in battle. Imagine the impact when Brenda's band marched in to the stadium at the Asian University Games, playing their national fight song. The arrangement was subsequently taken into Thai military and school bands.

After a few years working in Asia, Brenda moved back home to the USA only to find diminished job opportunities due to a glut of teachers at the close of the Vietnam war. Australia, on the other hand, was advertising for educators. Brenda took the challenge and moved to Melbourne in 1972, teaching music and forming the band at Blackburn High School.

This is where Brenda's influence on Australian banding began.

When I arrived in Australia I was qualified in both science and music and they said, you'll be doing music. So I said 'Okay'.

I got a job at Blackburn High and there was no band there at all. I said 'We're going to have a band.' And they said, 'Salvation Army here we come'. So I really introduced the concert band to Australia.

– Brenda Beck

At the time, as we know, secondary school students were being taught woodwind as well as brass instruments. North American music teachers, with their concert band knowhow, who joined the Australian education forces during that time, affected what happened next.

As we have noted earlier in this history, woodwind combined with brass was traditional military band instrumentation. The brass band came out of the British formalisation of banding by the upper middle to upper classes who wanted to manufacture intentional recreation for the lower classes in the 1800s. This sprouted workers' bands at factories, collieries, mills and foundries. Banding competitions brought with them formal rules homogenising both instrumentation and number of instruments in each section. The same uniformity occurred when South Street started banding competitions in Australia in 1901.

Jeremy de Korte, VBL archivist and band history blogger explains the history of concert bands in this way:

The instrumentation is based upon military bands of which the British military had lots of bands around the turn of last century that included woodwinds. If there was one composer to bring the concert/wind band out of the military it would have to be Gustav Holst when he wrote his First Suite in Eb. His music was not based on the style of marches and other music that was currently played by military bands, but was completely original. It took a while for this to catch on in Australia as we were still heavily biased to brass bands. ABC Military Band was one of the first true military concert bands in Australia.





The concert band is not really that distinct from early military bands in terms of instrumentation, only in name. In the late 1960s and early 1970s there was this push to introduce school music programs into state schools on a wide scale and an amount of American music educators were recruited. Blackburn High was one of the first to introduce a concert band to the music program, alongside McKinnon High School and several others – they were known as music specialist high schools. So in a sense what was introduced was a band of British origins that was adapted by America and again adapted for Australia.

The first community concert bands started appearing in Victoria around this time as well. Southern Area Concert Band [Melbourne] celebrates its 50th anniversary in 2021 having started in 1971 – there are a few community concert bands older than this.

The reason the community bands became large very quickly is because it was recognised that school instrumental music students would need an extension activity so the first community concert bands started out as extensions of clusters of schools. Then the students got older so the bands transformed into community bands.

– Jeremy de Korte, VBL

When former Soldiers' Band member John Russell joined Wilf Dyason at Melbourne Boys High School in 1975 to lead the Military Cadet Band, they already had an eighty-member-strong concert band up and running. Bruce Worland, who became the Victorian schools music inspector was teaching music at Melbourne High at the time and ran an inter-school concert band. This was hosted at Melbourne Boys High School, just as Ted had started the inter-school stage band, Sebaclear, in 1979.

After introducing concert banding – American style – to Victoria through Blackburn High, Brenda moved to the central goldfields in 1974, having fallen in love with Ballarat on a weekend driving trip.

Brenda taught music and science at Loreto College and formed the Loreto College all-girls band in 1975. In 1978 Brenda conducted the Ladies State Band at the Sidney Myer Music Bowl. And in 1982–1984 she taught at Ballarat High School, reforming the High School Band, which won the State VBL Championships in 1984.

Brenda's influence was deepened when she revised the secondary instrumentation learning system at Ballarat High. Her program affected the strengthening and broadening of music development in young people in the 80s in Ballarat and beyond. All year seven students were engaged in trying all the instruments during their music lessons. Each student then elected their top three instruments, from which the teachers chose, based on each child's aptitude, the best one for them to learn. The method was so successful that it has been running ever since with only a few modifications and has been adopted by numerous other schools in Ballarat and Melbourne.

Heather George, former Soldiers' band member and first woodwind player in the band, took on part of Brenda's role at Ballarat High School after Brenda left due to ill health. Heather gives us an insight into how the program works:

This has been going for thirty five years, modified to run at night. You get the parents in and about eighty kids start up on individual instruments and three bands are formed. They play their instruments for a year and then they can choose to continue on if they wish. They get a feel for the



instrument. If they're good at something which is not their first choice, they have a shot with one of the teachers. They may be encouraged to try the instrument for which they showed the most aptitude. Most of the kids will learn something new. If they have been playing for a while, they may continue the instrument and be a mentor, if the teachers think they will benefit from helping others. So that program is still going which Brenda set.

– Heather George

Understanding how Brenda helped set up American-style concert bands in Australia, and how much she contributed to the development of brass and woodwind instrumental education in Ballarat, we can start to appreciate how much Brenda influenced the history of the Soldiers' Band and its transformation to the Ballarat Memorial Concert Band (BMCB) – long before she ever took on the role as MD.

During her musical directorship of the BMCB, Brenda's educational connections allowed her to draw former students and private students to the band giving it renewed energy and membership. This was important to the survival of the band at this time, because band numbers had once again become critically low by the time Brenda took it on. So just as Ted Lewis had built the concert band in the 80s from his pool of Sebastapol College and Mt Clear students, Brenda revitalised the band.

From a late 90s perspective, Brenda explains the value of the 80s change from brass to concert band for BMCB. She stated that it offers:

- more community members the opportunity to play in a community band and it coincided with the emergence of excellent school concert bands
- Ballarat woodwind musicians as well as brass and percussionists the opportunity to play in a musical setting
- many senior school students the chance to play in a quality group either not offered in their school or supplementing the school music program
- post secondary school musicians, including University of Ballarat and Aquinas students a high standard band to participate in

If you ask any early member of the Soldiers' Band, 'What is the biggest change that they have observed in the history of the Soldiers' Band?', the answer is unanimous: 'the change to concert band'.


Not many escaped Brenda's infectious concert band fervour, least of all her two daughters Zoom and Boon:

When I was teaching at Ballarat High School and Zoom and Boon came in, I said 'I need bass players, and you're it!!'. And so they both became bass players. That was around 1983/4.

– Brenda Beck

Brenda connected with and personally encouraged band members. She often did this through group letters to which she would add a personal note.





Dear Band Member, 18 Dec. '96


Thank you for your time and contribution to the Ballarat Memorial Band. We've had a lovely year. I want to wish you a very happy Christmas (may you get every little thing you wished for!) I also hope you have a healthy, fun-filled year in 1997. If you are able, it would be great if you can play in the band again next as a small part of your recreation.

The 3BA Carols by Candlelight program on Dec. 24 is a nice opportunity for our band to be heard by a large section of the public. I am very sorry I can't be there but I'm sure you can count on Ted to bring you through with flying colours. Try to be alert and organised. Please be at the sound shell in the Botanic Gardens at 7:00 pm for sound check.

As soon as I return we will get started with our summer program. The dates I can give you now are: Jan 22 + 29 Marching percussion rehearsal at the band room. Dave will contact you. The new equipment should be all in order by then - rehearsal 7-9 pm. Jan. 27, 7:30-9:30 pm, please all be there for the one rehearsal to prepare for the concert in Sturt St. for the Arts Festival which is at 11:00 AM on Feb. 5. We will have a committee meeting at 6:30 pm, Feb. 5, before the rehearsal. This rehearsal will be a marching rehearsal. Please have your lyres at this rehearsal. (Midwest have ordered some in if you would like to see if it fits your instrument and need to order.) We will have a couple of concerts in Feb/March, and march in the Begonia Parade, March 16. We hope to host Southern Area Concert Band that week end. We have lots of plans for '97 so please be careful over the holidays and return to us with new zest.

Sincerely, Brenda

P.S. Thanks for your lovely Christmas presents!  
P.P.S. Please memorise or learn very well Down by the Riverside and Dixieland Strut, + EMBLEM OF UNITY



Dear Pam,

Thanks for every thing you've done for the band in '96. The band looks fantastic when we play out - thanks to you. Have a nice Christmas and a good year in '97.

Sincerely  
Brenda

1996, Letter from Brenda to the band with personal note. Source: Pam Clark

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By 1997 the band was going strong with people from their early teens to early seventies, including twenty-two senior school students, several VCE students (using the band for their ensemble requirement for assessment), twelve university students and twenty-three employed or retired adults.

## Bands exchange

Band exchanges can be very rewarding for all involved, bringing inspiration, social connection, new skills and helps bands to reach different audiences. When Southern Area Concert Band Melbourne member Cheryl Russell joined the BMCB in 1994, based on her connections, the BMCB was in for a treat:

In 1997 we hosted Southern Area and we played the next day in the Botanical Gardens on the Sunday at the Begonia Festival with the two bands combined.

– Cheryl Russell



1997, Southern Area Band at the Begonia Festival during band exchange hosted by BMCB. (L to R) Neil Govan, Lindsay George, Geoff Field (Southern Area Concert Band). Source: Cheryl Russell



Cheryl: 'In October 1999 we all went down to Southern Area and they hosted us and we played for the Kingston Council, Concert for the People.'

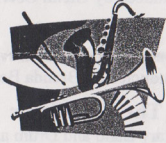
*Combined Bands Finale*

**Folk Song Suite**  
Third movement, "Folk Songs from Somerset"  
by Vaughn Williams  
Conducted by Tracy Videon

**A Disney Spectacular**  
A medley of Disney movie themes arranged by John Moss  
Conducted by Brenda Beck

**Crime Busters**  
A medley of some of your favourite "spy" music  
Arranged by Paul Jennings  
Conducted by Craig Seymour



*We trust that you have enjoyed this afternoon's concert  
and look forward to seeing you again at our 'Concert  
for the People' around the same time next year.*



If you would like further information on either of the bands,  
please feel free to call Darryn Wright on 9561 9275.

**The  
Southern Area  
Concert Band**

With our special guests

**The  
Ballarat Memorial  
Concert Band**


*present our second annual*

**'Concert For The People'**

Sunday October 17, 1999.  
Moorabbin Town Hall, 2:00PM

Proudly Sponsored by

**The City of Kingston**



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*Welcome*

to Southern Area Concert Band's second annual concert for the people  
of the City of Kingston. I would like to take this opportunity to extend a  
warm welcome to our special guests from Ballarat Memorial Concert  
Band and to thank all of those concerned for helping to bring this  
concert together. But most of all I would like to thank you, the people of  
Kingston, for your support.

Darryn Wright, President.

**PROGRAM**

**The Southern Area Concert Band**

**Eminence**  
A fanfare by Ralph Hultgren.  
Conducted by Craig Seymour.

**Irish Tune from County Derry**  
A traditional Irish tune,  
arranged by Percy Aldridge Grainger.  
Conducted by Craig Seymour.

**Cole Porter in Concert**  
A medley of Cole Porter favourites  
Conducted by Craig Seymour.

**Rhapsody On The Minstrel Boy**  
A rhapsody on a traditional tune,  
arranged by Robert Farnon  
Conducted by Craig Seymour

**Images**  
Based on the Welsh lullaby "Suo Gan",  
arranged by Robert Sheldon  
Conducted by Craig Seymour

*INTERVAL*

*There will be a 20 minute interval.*

**The Ballarat Memorial Concert Band**

**Summon the Heroes**  
Written by John Williams for the 1996 Olympic Games  
Conducted by Brenda Beck

**Concerto d'Amore**  
Written by Jacob de Haan in 1995  
Conducted by Brenda Beck

**The Hobbits**  
The last of five movements in the Symphony No. 1 for  
concert band by Johan de Meij  
Conducted by Zoom Beck

**Fortress**  
Written by Frank Ticheli  
Conducted by Glenn Colville

**Firebrand**  
A stately concert overture by David Gorham  
Conducted by Brenda Beck

**The Thunderer**  
Written for Military Band and Drum and Bugle Corps  
by John Phillip Sousa  
Conducted by Brenda Beck

1999, October program for concert in Kingston. Source: Pam Clark

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## Marching with Brenda



26 October 1997, The BMCB marching at the Olympic Journey Parade to celebrate the 2000 Olympics in Sydney. Source: Brenda Beck Archive

One of the biggest highlights of this decade occurred in 1997 when Brenda introduced marching back into the band. Here is the rationale that Brenda made for the move:

“There are several reasons for moving into marching as well as concert playing:

- 1) marching is fun
- 2) there is a great demand by festival organisers for marching bands
- 3) our marching band will represent Ballarat around the state to thousands of people in festival parades
- 4) festivals have funds to pay marching bands and we like to raise our money doing what we love doing best ... playing music for the enjoyment of the public.



Begonia Parade with banner made by Brent Rogers. Source: Pam Clark Archive



Neil Glover, band member since the 1970s, was still in the band when Brenda reintroduced marching in the 90s. He recalls:

Brenda got the band marching again, made it more showy all to get more public interest. A lot of the MDs miss that, you've got to have people interested.

– Neil Glover



1997, Anzac Day March. Source: Cheryl Russell Archive



■ **DRUMMING UP TWICE A STORM:** Cassandra Brown and grandfather George Horwood will lead the Ballarat Memorial marching band in a rare double event for Sunday's Begonia Festival Parade. We found them at practice beside Lake Wendouree with tri-tom player Dave Frith.

## Parade leadership a family affair

Cassandra Brown and George Horwood are turning the Ballarat Memorial Concert band around — literally.

As drum majors at Sunday's Begonia Festival parade, the granddaughter-granddad duo will tell the band when to start, stop, turn corners and more.

"I'll be the proudest grandfather in Ballarat," Mr Horwood said.

"I've done the Begonia Festival parade about 10 times now, but this will be Cassie's first as a drum major," he said.

He will use the same mace — a long piece of wood topped with a brass ornament — he used when he was sole drum major after 1974.

He has not held that role since 1983, when the band moved towards static concert-style performances and woodwind instruments. That was until Brenda Beck was appointed musical director. She aimed for a slower

Californian style tempo and got the band on its feet again.

"We decided to have a marching concert band, which is common (back home) in the USA," she said.

"It's unique to have two drum majors in a band — a lot of Australian bands are lucky to get one."

Cassandra's mace also has a story to tell.

Mr Horwood said the cedar used to make it was probably about 140 years old, as it had been salvaged from the mantelpiece of a Buninyong home in the 1940s. It was topped off with a bedhead and made into a mace only recently.

About 45 band members will be Sunday's Wendouree Pde event, which begins at 12.30 pm and disperses an hour later.

If you want to know more about Ballarat Memorial Marching Band, contact Ms Beck on 5334 6549.

Neil makes a good point, and it's timely to remember that social media was not a publicity arm the band could swing yet. It was not until 1999 that the first static webpage for the band was under construction. So, swinging actual arms became an effective way of gaining new members, attracting fans and spreading musical enjoyment.

Not only did introducing marching into the concert band give young band members new experiences, but Drum Major George Horwood who had been band president until 1983 when the brass band ceased marching, was able to rejoin the band and pass on his drum major knowledge.

'Parade Leadership a Family Affair', *The Courier*.  
Source: Pam Clark



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Pam Clark clearly remembers the extended, American style cadences that Brenda wrote for the band for their marches in the 90s.



BMCB marching at the Begonia Parade. Source: Pam Clark Archive

Marching was made accessible with finances from Ballarat City Council. This funded the instruments required for a marching concert band with American-style percussion. Band member Neil Govan looked after this and kept it in good order for many years.

## Elemental danger

If you are taking the band to the people, whether it be street marching or a seated outdoor concert, you take your chances with the natural elements. Playing outdoors necessitates precautions, but also provides opportunities to play in different settings and be part of large-scale community events.

In the following images, we see the band playing at the Begonia Festival. Two of the high school members of the band were practising for their debutant ball and apparently needed little encouragement from the band to practise their steps to the Irish Medley being played.



Botanical Gardens with Brenda. Source: Pam Clark Archive





Begonia Festival performance, student impromptu dancing. Source: Pam Clark Archive.

But the weather in Ballarat isn't always perfect for al fresco dancing.

### The perils of playing outdoors

Nerida Greenbank played with the band from Dec 1994 to c. May 2010, during which she was band librarian for about five years. Nerida tells the story of the day when nature called on her to go over and above her normal duties:

The band has played many times outdoors and it's great when the weather is nice – not too hot, not too cold and not too windy – but it's not much fun when the weather turns and it starts to rain! Now we know that rain and musical instruments are not a good combination but what about rain and sheet music? As the picture below shows, wet sheet music needs a lot of room to get dry!

– Nerida Greenbank



1998, Drying music at Nerida's house, after Botanic Gardens performance. Source: Nerida Greenbank



It took about four days to dry all the music in time for the next rehearsal.

You may have noticed by now that the band is sporting a flash new waistcoat at their playouts. The evolution of the uniform will be told in an upcoming chapter. The 90s uniform innovations occurred through the enormous contribution from Pam Clark who hand-made and supplied new waistcoats, tailor-made to order for each and every band member. Pam also made the music stand banners.



1996, Photo of band performing at South Street. Source: BMCB Archive



1996, Band portrait. Source: BMCB Archive





1997, University of Ballarat Graduation. The BMCB played at five ceremonies. Source: Cheryl Russell Archive

So, once again, thousands of man, woman and child hours went into making another decade of community banding – by and for the community. In 1999 the BMCB was awarded the Mars/3BA Community Award for their civic contribution.

Of course, this was another decade of fundraising activities to keep the band viable and mobile. Throughout the 80s, the hall itself was a big drawcard for creating extra funds by hiring it for special events. By the late 90s, it was no longer as new nor as popular. There was still a weekly rental of the hall to both the Ys Men and Sebaclear Band. Peg and Les continued to look after the hall on almost a daily basis. To augment the downturn in hall hire, band fundraising efforts in the 90s included: trivia night, lolly sales, sock sale, raffles, garage sale, Sunday market stalls and Trash and Trivia market stalls.

Along with marching, new percussion equipment, new uniform, university graduations, Arts in the Park performances and band exchanges with Southern Area Concert Band, what were the other banding performance highlights and unique activities of the late 90s? Brenda has summed them up for us in her musical director's report of 1999.



## **BMCB Musical Director's Report**

By Brenda Beck

I have conducted the Ballarat Memorial Concert Band for nearly five years. We have done some great performances over the years and I hope we can make the band even more attractive in the near future, with the help of our dedicated committee and band members.

Three things that make our band unique;

- 1) Our band can march, which is uncommon for concert bands in Australia but usual in Europe and in the U.S.
- 2) We represent ages 14 to 74yrs., from all walks of life. Our ages and positions in society have no meaning when we sit down to make music together. About 40 members of our band make a strong nucleus to which others can join, for the time they have in the Ballarat area or are available to be active members.
- 3) Our active and dedicated committee.



In the years that I have been Musical Director, I have truly enjoyed working with all the individual members. I respect every member for his/her contribution to the band, our committee is second to none, and I often feel humbled by the loyalty that some people have to the band. Together we have played in a wide variety of performances ranging from outdoor concerts including public appealing gigs of light music, to more competition oriented music, such as when we played in the "B Grade" section of the VBL Contests where we gained a second place. Since then, we have won the march section of the Royal South Street Competitions, but unfortunately this section has now been cancelled. Six bands from Melbourne's Western suburbs, Melton, and Geelong, together with us have formed a Concert Band Group, which now hosts our own Annual Music Festivals and Honours Band/Conducting Clinic. These festivals have been delightful, bringing the six bands together with constructive adjudication without competition.

Since forming our Marching Band three years ago, we have participated in a number of parades such as the Begonia Festival, RSL Anzac Day March, and the Australian Olympic Spirit Parade. As well as hosting the Bandarama Concerts, we have also continued to play for Ballarat's 3BA Carols by Candlelight (promoted by/broadcast on 3BA) held in the Botanic Gardens Sound Shell every Christmas eve.

In addition to these events, the band has tentatively agreed to perform on five different occasions in 2000, and a Summer Band Camp early in the year is planned. Clearly, all members enjoy playing our varied music styles and it is my hope that they resolve to continue making each ployout special. Most of all I appreciate the loyalty of our members and committee, and look forward to an even more active year in 2000 and beyond.

1999, BMCB Musical Director's Report. Source: Brenda Beck Archive





1999, Photo collage from 1999 Yearbook. Source: Brenda Beck Archive





The BMCB played backing and performed for the Ballarat 3BA Carols year on year during this period.

The Soundshell at the Ballarat Botanical Gardens provided a captivating setting for the Christmas Eve Carols By Candlelight program.



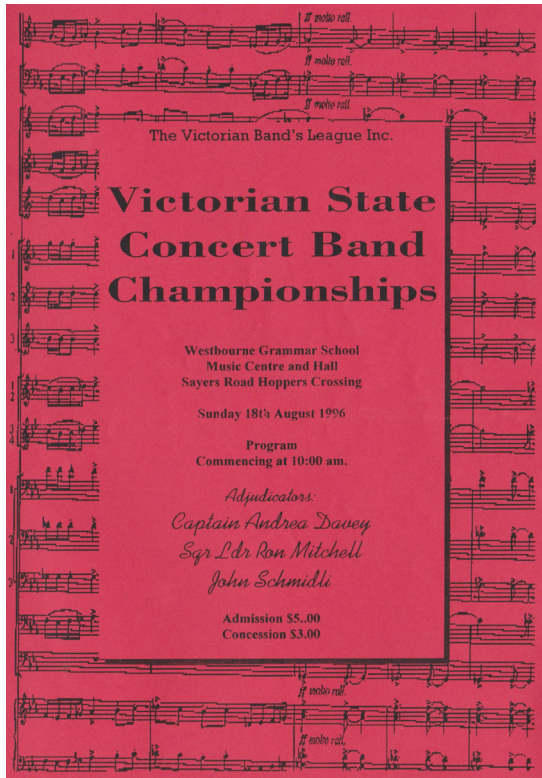
## 4000 at Carols by Candlelight

26 December 1998, '4000 at Carols by Candlelight', *The Courier*. Source: Brenda Beck Archive



1999, Carols by Candlelight band photo. Source: BMCB Archive

Take a peek at performance programs for the Victorian State Championships, Arts in the Park, Bandarama, Bandfest, and '95 leavers party, which was organised in honour of the band members who were leaving for university after having finished VCE during their band membership.



Take a look at the performance programs from the 1990s. Note the brief history of banding in Ballarat in the 1996 Bandarama program.

Source: Pam Clark Archive

Although Brenda continued on as MD only until the beginning of the new millennium, with her daughters still actively in the band, Brenda played with the band for special events and helped out when conductors were away.

Bec Paton's more recent experiences of Brenda's conductorship are testament to the skill and musical intelligence of this dynamic leader:

I've probably only had Brenda conduct me a couple of times and it was a long time ago and she scared me so much. Brenda's ear is amazing. It was when I had only just joined the band and she was up the front, she was a fill in conductor because the normal conductor wasn't there and we'd be playing and she would hear a wrong note a mile away and she'd say 'Second clarinets, this bar, wrong.' I thought, 'Oh my God, she knows everything.' It was like she had this little radar going on while she's up there listening to the whole band, watching the whole score. She would know every wrong note and she would pick you on it! (lol).

– Bec Paton, member since 2009

Read about the very first Bandarama in [Combined Music Delights](#), *The Courier*, 1996.





## DISCOVER MORE

The Ballarat music community was deeply saddened by the loss of their 'music elder' Ted Lewis, when he died in 2019.

Read about Ted's life in this 2019 tribute by *The Courier*, [Ballarat's musical world pays tribute to one of its elders, Ted Lewis](#).

Read an interview with Ted in [Ted's career of note has inspired many](#), *The Courier*, July 1999.



Hear Ted play in [Ted Lewis All-Stars – Dr Jazz](#), 2014 (Bob Franklin – keys, Lindsay George – drums, Alan Williamson – bass, Bob Pattie – trumpet, Ted Lewis – trombone and Barry Currie – reeds).