



The 2000s

At a glance

The new millennium starts out on a positive note, buoyed by the economic and social uplift of the late 90s. Nova Peris-Kneebone, first Australian Indigenous Olympic gold medal winner, is the first Australian to carry the Olympic torch for the Sydney 2000 Olympics in Uluru. Unemployment rates drop and breakthroughs in science occur with the cloning of animals.

A new era of fear and control dawns. The 2001 attack on the World Trade Centre in New York creates shockwaves throughout the world. Australia joins the US and England in the War on Terror with Australian troops leaving for Afghanistan and then Iraq. Terrorist attacks occur in multiple locations including Kuta, Bali, in which car bomb explosions which kills eighty five Australians.

The 00s is also a decade when drought is declared and the southeast of Australia suffers with little rain for the whole decade, dubbed the 'millennium drought'. Bushfires abound – some of the worst in Australia's history.

John Howard introduces the GST (Goods and Services Tax), refuses to acknowledge the suffering of the Stolen Generations, and Norwegian boat Tampa rescues asylum seekers but is denied entry into Australian waters.

Tasmanian girl Mary marries Frederick, the Prince of Denmark. Reality TV shows become the rage and we experience unprecedented social communication change through platforms such as YouTube and Facebook.

Ballarat city population grows at over 1000 citizens per year, the Begonia Festival celebrates its fiftieth anniversary, and Ballarat City Council and Ballarat Grammar School cooperate to build the Wendouree Centre for Performing Arts, which creatively bridges private school and civic use.

Ballarat quickly becomes one of the fastest-growing regional towns in Australia.

2001	79,794
2006	85,196
2011	93,501



The band in the 2000s



2005, Band photo. Source: BMCB Archive

The memorial brass banding days of the twentieth century provided the band's rich heritage. Brenda Beck, who reintroduced the band to marching and built the concert band up in strength and ability, saw the band into the new millennium.

But what would characterise the new century? It is too soon to say; however, there are some clues.

Instrumentation broadened from brass to concert band, which began with the education reform of the 60s and 70s. Technological change started to impact the band by the 2010s (which will be explored in the next chapter).

Important new policies and awareness for social acceptance and inclusivity stemming from 60s and 70s social activism, including: gender balance, LGBTQIA acceptance and celebration, all abilities access and inclusion.

Being LGBTQI or A and playing in a brass band (or even just living your life) was not always easy. In 1995 the Rainbow Band was formed in Melbourne so that players could feel comfortable to be part of a concert band without fear of prejudice. The BMCB – having had Brenda at the helm for almost five years by 2000, supported by her partner Ann, with their two Thai daughters playing in the band – was in a strong position. Within the backdrop of a conservative town, BMCB was a community group well established for inclusivity thanks to the care and dedication of Brenda, Boon, Zoom and Ann. Just by being themselves, they were enacting cultural change within the band.



Boon's partial hearing and sight also contributed to how the band saw itself in terms of strengths and capabilities. Zoom and Boon inspired their bandmates with their humour, musical talents and incredible karate skills – both black belt fighters, no less.

At the end of 2000, Brenda decided to hand the baton over to spend more time with her family and her students but, as we have heard, continued as a fill-in player and occasional conductor for the BMCB.

Band President Steve Cunningham wrote about Brenda in the 2001 AGM:

Brenda is highly respected for her work and dedication to the band over the years and can be acknowledged as one of the principal builders of the band as we know it.

Before she left, Brenda and the band managed, through their fund-seeking efforts, to secure a dedicated band trailer for safe transport of their equipment for playouts. Funding was attained on the basis of the community engagement and contribution of the band. Steve Cunningham built the trailer. This was made possible by sponsorship from Ballarat City Council, Steego Pty Ltd, Techcast Australia, Robert Young Signs, Union Steel, Kilmartin Auto Sheet Material, and Go-Town Trailer Fittings.



Read the *Trailer Hits the Right Note* article, *The Courier*, 2000.

Playing for Her Majesty

The band did not miss out on playing for the Queen when she visited Ballarat in March 2000. This time it didn't rain, which was good because it was a very long wait!



Waiting for the Queen to arrive with Brenda (MD). Source: Pam Clark Archive

Before the change of MD, band members were honoured.

SEP 2000

Ballarat Memorial Concert Band awards, from left: Carolyn Rogers (encouragement award), Tom Cunningham (most improved), Neil Govan (band member of the year), Peg Glover (band supporter of the year) and Nerida Greenbank (director's choice)

BALLARAT NEWS

Concert band members honoured

The Ballarat Memorial Concert Band held its annual general meeting and award presentations recently.

These followed a concert which highlighted selections the band had performed at the recent ABODA Festival in Melbourne and some

new selections it had prepared for the Band Festival in Geelong.

The awards included life memberships to Ted Lewis and Pam Clark, plus certificates to long-term band members.

The Ballarat Memorial Concert

Band, under the directorship of Brenda Beck, rehearses every Wednesday (except during the school holidays) from 7.30pm - 9.30pm at Wilkinson Hall in Barkly St.

New members are always welcomed.

2000, 'Concert Band Members Honoured', September Ballarat News. Source: Pam Clark Archive

Gary White takes the lead

Gary White commenced as MD at the start of 2001.



2001, Band photo, with new MD Gary White. Source: BMCB Archive



Gary had a different, more technically focused style to Brenda, to which the band adjusted – over time. Here's Gary's background from the BMCB AGM Program 2001:

Brief History of the Band's Musical Director

Gary White comes to us as an experienced Musical Director, with expertise in establishing Music Programs in several schools over many years. After having spent four years as Brass Teacher and Musical Director of Horsham High School Concert Band, a further four years at Williamstown High School in a similar capacity. He then moved to Melton to fill a vacancy that existed in the Wilson Park Secondary College's Music Department in 1991, working with another Ballarat musician, Ray Craven. When Ray moved to Ballarat in 1992, Gary became coordinator of both the Classroom and Instrumental Music programs at Wilson Park Secondary College.

In conjunction with the Shire of Melton, Gary announced his intention to develop a Music Program which had as part of that program, Primary, Secondary, Tertiary and Community Concert Bands; with the community band now known as 'The Shire of Melton Wind Symphony' and the Tertiary Band called 'Victoria University Symphonic Band'.

In March of 1994 the Wilson Park Secondary College Concert Band was invited to perform at Mowbray College. It was on this evening that interest was stimulated amongst the parents and students for the formation of a Mowbray College Concert Band; Gary was subsequently appointed the first Musical Director of the Mowbray Concert Band. In October of 1994 Gary was eventually appointed to the position of Director of Music at Mowbray College.

It was always Gary's aim to return to the country and to work in Ballarat. An opportunity to do this came through Mount Clear College, when they advertised a position for Head of Music in 1998. With his family, working and going to school in Ballarat, this was an opportunity to join them and to establish himself in the music life of Ballarat.

While in Horsham, Gary received the City of Horsham 'Young Australian of the Year Award' for services to music, both as a Player and President with the Horsham City Brass Band and the establishment of a music program at Horsham High School. He also received an Australian Day Award for 'Services to the Community' in Music while working in Melton.

Early memories of the Gary White era

Tanya Hale, active playing and committee member of BMCB at date of publication of this book, remembers her first experience of joining the band with Gary as MD. Like Bill Wilkinson's history from 20s to the 60s, Tanya's account of the band gives us valuable insight beyond time and place into what it felt like to be a member of the band during the 90s and 00s. We will be hearing more recollections from Tanya in the next two chapters. Here is her first:

It was a Wednesday evening in mid-February 2003 when I nervously approached Gary White, the Musical Director at the time, and told him that I wanted to join the band. Gary put me at ease, saying to me, You are by all means welcome; before directing me to the back row of the clarinet section. From that moment on, I found myself relaxing in the company of my fellow musicians while attempting music that was more challenging than the music I remembered from my school band days.

There is one particular moment from that first rehearsal that still gives me the giggles today: the moment when we put up our parts for a clarinet feature piece called *Clarinet Candy* and I found myself wondering why we clarinetists had surprisingly easy parts for a piece where it was supposed to be our time to shine. The penny dropped when we launched into the piece and heard the trumpet section playing the melody, because as it transpired, some cheeky monkey had swapped the trumpet parts with the clarinets!



We all had a good laugh at that prank, before the trumpet and clarinet parts were given back to their rightful owners and we continued on with the rehearsal. In the end, I was left with no doubt that I was in the best band for continuing on with my musical exploits after secondary school.

While my former school band conductor had suggested that I join the Memorial Band in February 2003, this wasn't the first time that this conductor had mentioned the Memorial Band to me because my school band and I were fortunate to undertake a workshop with the Memorial Band in November 2000. The band was under the musical directorship of Brenda Beck at the time, and it was thanks to this workshop that I came to learn that community band music is more challenging than school band music.

– Tanya Hale

Due to academic pressures of VCE, Tanya waited just over two years to finally join the band in 2003.

I took those first nervous steps to join the Memorial Band and came face-to-face with a whole new set of challenges. There was the realisation of how different community banding is to playing in a school band, what with paying yearly fees, playing challenging music and dealing with a tough-as-nails musical director who didn't hold back on his comments on the band's efforts to rehearse music for performances. There was the prospect of playing in an ensemble with people of various ages, with many people who were older than me, but the fact that the members of the band were so welcoming, as well as the fact that I could see a few familiar faces I remembered from my school banding years, was of great benefit to me.

Plus another noticeable difference between Memorial Band and my old school band was the number of performances that were scheduled to take place throughout the course of the year, as there were many more performances on the Memorial Band's schedule than there were on my school band's schedule.

At the time when I joined the Memorial Band, the band's performance schedule included fortnightly performances at the Trash and Trivia Market, with one such performance taking place four days after my first rehearsal! Gary told me at the end of that rehearsal that I didn't have to take part in that performance if I didn't want to, especially because it was so soon after I'd joined the band, but I decided to be brave and take part in the performance anyway. This turned out to be a decision I was glad to have made because while I was daunted about making my debut with the band so soon after joining it, I ended up enjoying the performance and getting excited about the gigs that were set to take place in the weeks to come.

Learning the differences between school and community banding hasn't been the only challenge I've overcome throughout my (as I write this) fifteen years and eight months with the Memorial Band thus far. In my early years with the band, I lived with my family in Creswick and faced the challenge of getting myself from Creswick to Ballarat for rehearsals and performances, which was difficult as I didn't drive and came to realise how expensive taxi fares were when traveling such long distances. This challenge was easily overcome by moving to Ballarat in 2006.

– Tanya Hale

Tanya is not the only band member who has overcome traveling distances to participate. Remember Norm McWilliam, the founder of the band who used to ride his bike from Melbourne to play on the balcony at Lester's Boarding House on the weekends and Frank Wright who regularly cycled from Smeaton and back for band rehearsals nearly 100 years ago?



Yet again, a new uniform for the band

Even with Ted and Brenda's good work in building strong foundations for the BMCB, there was much to do when Gary arrived. Public liability for public events was bringing with it problems for community groups like the BMCB who relied on revenue from playouts to keep afloat. These new rules and regulations forced events organisers to pay for applications never before needed, which in turn reduced their capacity to pay bands.

At the same time, the bandroom (new in the 80s, not so new in the 90s, and definitely not new in the 00s) was no longer a popular drawcard for the community function bookings that Peg Glover had overseen for so many years.

The band decided to modernise their look to raise public image and perception to combat this dip in revenue. In order to lift their community profile, remain vital, relevant and firmly fixed in the public (and festival bookers') eyes, the band needed over \$11,000 for a uniform revamp. And the same amount again to keep their repertoire, percussion instruments, hall maintenance and refurbishment up-to-date.

To this end they sought high and low for funds to which the Rotary Club of Ballarat South Community Services responded with a generous \$11,500 toward their new uniform in May 2004.



Read the [Rotary club helps jazz up band's image](#) article, *The Courier*, May 2004.

Due to the very generous support of Rotary South we will never have to face another Ballarat Winter with little more than a shirt and vest to keep off the wind and rain. By the end of 2003 we will each be decked out in new jackets, ties and Akubra hats. Many thanks to Pam Clark for her tireless work in organising that.

– AGM 2003



2004, Band photo. Source: BMCB Archive

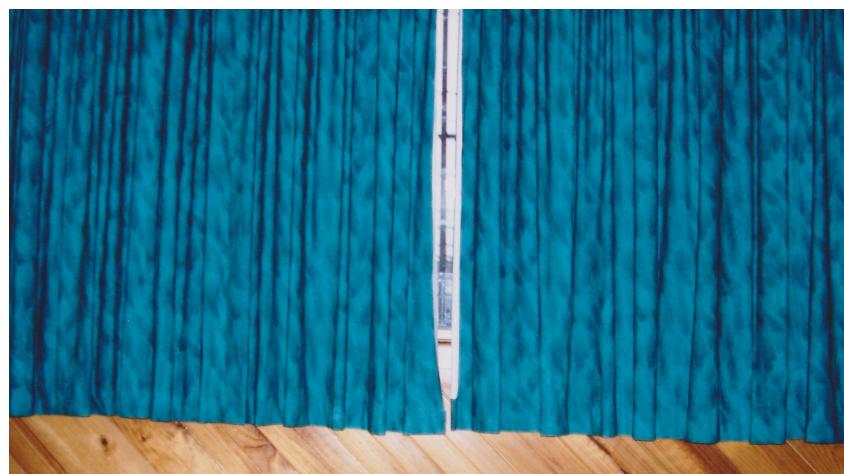


The bandroom was given a new lick of paint and refurbished with many hours of labour from band members including the MD. Even the damaged toilet walls were repaired.



Photos of bandroom being updated. L: Painting the Bandroom, Bec Moore and Gary White. R: The Cunninghams at a working bee (Steve Cunningham got the trailer done). Source: Pam Clark Archive

New curtains were made by Pam Clark with fabrics from Spotlight. The first curtains having been made by Ted Lewis' late first wife.



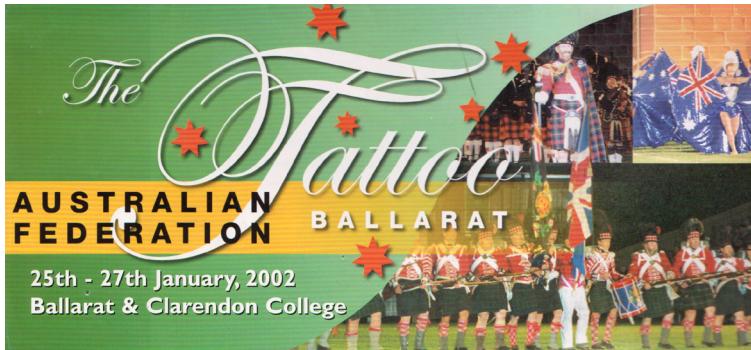
New curtains for the bandroom. Source: Pam Clark Archive



New opportunities and new repertoire

Along with all this activity, the band was very busy with new repertoire and new performance opportunities.

The band played the 2002 Federation Tattoo.



[View The Australian Federation Tattoo Ballarat program and certificate](#), held at Ballarat & Clarendon College, 25–27 January 2002.

Source: Pam Clark Archive

By the middle of the decade, these are the sorts of events the band was playing:

EVENTS AND CONCERTS 2005

DATE	EVENT/CONCERT
26 TH JAN, 2005	AUSTRALIA DAY CONCERT
19 TH FEB, 2005	TSUNAMI CONCERT AT FOUNDERS HALL
18 TH FEB, 2005	TRASH & TREASURE MARKET
20 TH FEB, 2005	GOLD KING FESTIVAL
27 TH FEB, 2005	TRASH & TREASURE MARKET
07 TH MAR, 2005	APEX ART SHOW
12 TH MAR, 2005	BEGONIA FESTIVAL 'CONCERT' IN THE PARK
20 TH MAR, 2005	TRASH & TREASURE MARKET
3 RD APR, 2005	TRASH & TREASURE MARKET
17 TH APR, 2005	TRASH & TREASURE MARKET
25 TH APR, 2005	ANZAC DAY MARCH
29 TH MAY, 2005	WORKSHOP & COMBINED CONCERT WITH TASMANIA
17 TH JUN, 2005	HAMILTON COMPETITION
21 ST AUG, 2005	ACU OPEN DAY
31 ST AUG, 2005	AGM & CONCERT
11 TH SEPT, 2005	FESTIVAL OF THE BANDS (GEELONG)
23 RD SEPT, 2005	FOOTY TRIVIA NIGHT
18 TH OCT, 2005	OPEN REHEARSAL & INFORMATION ON EVENING
29 TH OCT, 2005	WENDOURREE UNITING CHURCH FAIR
3 RD DEC, 2005	ARRIVAL OF SANTA IN THE BRIDGE MALL
3 RD DEC, 2005	EUREKA FESTIVAL
13 TH DEC, 2005	CONCERT & CAROLS 'MELLODIES AND CHRISTMAS MEMORIES'
18 TH DEC, 2005	TRASH & TREASURE MARKET
24 TH DEC, 2005	CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT

COMMITTEE MEMBERS 2005 - 2006

PRESIDENT	DENIS PROLLIUS
VICE PRESIDENT	LEN ROBINSON
SECRETARY	KAREN VAN OORSCHOT
TREASURER	DAVID GRIGG
MUSICAL DIRECTOR	GARY WHITE
LIBRARIANS	JACQUELINE BRO
UNIFORM OFFICER	JANINE ROGERS
TRANSPORT COORDINATOR	PAM CLARK
PROPERTY OFFICER	DENIS PROLLIUS
PR OFFICER	DENIS PROLLIUS
HALL MANAGER	Laura THOMPSON
GENERAL COMMITTEE	ELIZABETH GRIGG
	CHARLOTTE WITHERS
	NERIDA GREENBANK

PAGE - 12 -



[Take a closer look at the 2005 events and concerts list in the 2005 Yearbook](#).

Source: Glover Archive

The band also played at many other events during this period including Arts in the Park and the reopening of the Ballarat to Ararat train line.



Tanya Hale recounts for us a stand-out moment in 2005:

There was a performance at the Hamilton Eisteddfod in 2005 that resulted in us winning our section, and I initially found the news hard to believe until I had a chance to hold the trophy we'd been given. Once I held the trophy, the news sunk in and I was over the moon about our achievement, winning our section with our first competitive performance in years!

– Tanya Hale



On the bus. Source: Pam Clark Archive

Another highlight of the decade was non-competitive performances. Tanya remembers several combined concerts leading up to 2005:

I remember concerts in 2003, 2004 and 2005 where we were fortunate to share the stage with other bands: the concerts in May 2003 and May 2004 with the Western Region Concert Band from Melbourne, the concert in September 2003 with the City of Ballarat Municipal Brass Band and the concert in May 2005 with a Tasmanian ensemble known as the Southern Districts Concert Band.



2005, Combined rehearsals with Western Region Concert Band,
photo collage, 2005 Yearbook. Source: Glover Archive

These concerts followed a program involving three brackets and two intervals, with the Memorial Band performing in the first bracket, the other band performing in the second bracket and both bands combining for a performance in the third bracket. While there was a whole lot of work that went into organising those concerts (I certainly can't imagine what it must have been like to sort out the parts for the pieces in the combined ensemble bracket of the Memorial Band –City Band concert!) I enjoyed those concerts and seeing other community bands take to the stage.

– Tanya Hale



Band President Steve Cunningham in his 2001 annual report wrote about the benefits of combined concerts and workshops:

The workshops throughout the year have given the participating bands the chance to explore different music and also the chance to share and compare with other bands so that new ideas and standards can be reviewed.

In the 2005 *Yearbook*, MD Gary White gives the musical director's report:

MUSICAL DIRECTOR'S REPORT - GARY WHITE -



In 2005 the band has been extremely busy, fulfilling a variety of performances commitments. As we have in the past we commenced the year in an extremely busy fashion completing performances at the usual festivals, markets and other community events. The winter months usually mean a slowing of our commitments and an opportunity to work on some new material before heading into the end of year flurry; this year has been no different.

The Band has been able to deliver some excellent performances, none more satisfying than on our journey to Hamilton for our highly successful but ever so short stage appearance and competition win. This only serves to prove that as a band we have a great deal of talent and if we make the most of these opportunities we can gain a great deal of personal satisfaction. I particularly liked our outstanding performance at the combined bands concert with the Tasmanian Band, again demonstrating what the possibilities are when we work together as a team. This year it has again been clearly proven that outdoor performances bring in much need cash however indoor performances allow our true skills to be shown and offer us the most personal satisfaction. One of my regrets is that we never made it to the National Championships at Easter and that we have not had more opportunities to play indoors, particularly at the refurbished mining exchange.

Our band Open Night and the re-launching of the Developmental Band proved to be a great success both socially and in attracting interested musicians from outside the band. The social activities like the pie nights, the trivia night and the bus trip to Hamilton have ensured that the year has not only been about musical performances but about enjoyment and connectedness. These types of activities can only aid the vital team aspect of our band and assist in our development as a successful group.

Many individuals have worked tirelessly to ensure that a wide variety of important functions have been successfully completed, thus ensuring that the band as a whole continues to be successful. My sincere thanks again go to Pam for undertaking to complete a whole range of odd jobs ranging from uniforms to fundraising, to Nerida for carrying out the other half of the odd jobs along with programs and flyer production, to Charlotte for the production of the Band's Newsletter and ensuring that everybody has remained informed about up-coming events and other important reminders. Finally to Karen (our secretary) who has demonstrated herself to be one of the most conscientious / team orientated band members we have. Without Karen's willingness to follow through on important tasks the band would not have enjoyed the same level of success it has this year. I would particularly like to acknowledge those band members who have consistently attended weekly rehearsals and our many performances this year and also to thank those who have taken the time to notify me when they are unable to attend rehearsals or performances.

As usual there are far too many people to mention individually but I would like to again thank, most whole-heartedly, those band members who have attended our performances and rehearsals on regular basis. I would also like to thank those players who have performed as soloists, those who have strived to increase their personal skill levels for the betterment of the band and those players who have listened carefully to my musical requests and then attempted to put them into practice, your support of the Band and me is greatly appreciated.

Thank You: Gary White, Musical Director

DEVELOPMENTAL BAND REPORT - LAURA THOMPSON -



The developmental band was formed at the end of 2002 and has been a part of the Ballarat Memorial Concert Band since that time, but due to unforeseen circumstances it was cancelled for some time at the beginning of 2005. The developmental band resumed on the 19th of October, 2005, under my direction. There are currently around 15 members who range from the ages of 8 upwards. As the newly appointed musical director for this band I am looking forward to developing the skills of the beginner musicians in a friendly and positive environment.

The band plays a range of music, from movie themes to marches, which both encourage and challenge the musicians in the group. It is my aim that in the next year the band will grow in size and will become an important part of the community, with members progressing to the senior band once they reach a suitable standard. I look forward to working with new and fresh talent and hope that I can be a positive attribute to this team of budding musicians.

2005, MD's report, Gary White, 2005 *Yearbook*. Source: Glover Archive



CENTRAL SQUARE 5TH DECEMBER 2002



AUSTRALIA DAY 26TH JANUARY 2003



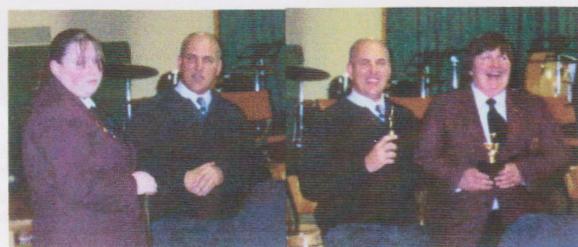
AGM 29TH AUGUST 2001



ANZAC DAY 25TH MARCH 2005



AGM 18TH AUGUST 2005



2001–2005, Events collage, 2005 Yearbook. Source: Glover Archive



Along with much hard work, the band had a lot of fun:



Trivia Night Collage, 2005 Yearbook. Source: Glover Archive

They even got up to a prank or two. This one was particularly memorable. One night when Gary was conducting, unbeknown to the other band members and the MD, James Robinson (possibly with the help of another band member or two) rigged a fishing line to one of the beams in the bandroom prior to rehearsal. James worked as cleaning assistant to Elizabeth Grigg on the hire and upkeep of the hall once Peg and Les retired in 2005. While James was sitting there playing in the trumpet section, with Gary in full swing conducting the band, he slowly lowered a lifelike hoax spider down towards the top of Gary's head.



Pam Clark remembers the moment she saw the arachnid about to crown their unknowing conductor: 'I started screaming because I could see this spider coming down! They just started laughing!!'



Band members at AGM dinner, James Robinson (far right), Bec Moore (centre), Melinda Robinson (right of centre). Source: Pam Clark Archive

Gary had planned to retire from his role as MD at the end of 2005 to spend more time with his family and concentrate on his new job. His retirement from music directorship was delayed for lack of a suitable replacement. The committee supported him by allowing him a reduced capacity workload during this period to enable him to attend to personal duties which sometimes fell on a Wednesday night.

The effect of Gary's change of job meant that he no longer had regular contact with young musicians, (senior school students at Mt Clear, and primary school students in the Mt Clear transition band). The once steady stream of potential new band members, no longer on tap.

Fundraising in the 2000s

As with any other decade, fundraising was paramount to the success of the band. Whether it be through council stipends and one-off grants, playouts, or inventive devices to raise funds while simultaneously lifting community spirits (or at least glucose levels). How did they fundraise oos style?

FUNDRAISING REPORT -NERIDA GREENBANK-



Trivia nights are a fun (and educational!) way of raising money and we held our 2nd annual AFL Grand Final Footy Theme Trivia Night on 23rd September. All attending were encouraged to wear their footy team colours (great to see all those Collingwood supporters!) and even the umpires were represented with one person, who confessed to not following a team, dressing as a Goal Umpire!

The lucky draw, silent auction (for footy team decorated pencil holders) and the toss a coin for the hamper were well supported as was the buy an answer – for those more trickier questions! Simon Marcollo was on the winning table but, unfortunately, Alice was relegated to another table. It's hoped that Simon shared some of his winnings with her! It was a rather profitable night for the band as we raised \$561.70. That will buy a few pieces of music.

Not only have the band members' brains been "stimulated" but those of us with a sweet tooth have also benefited. The selling of Cadbury chocolates was another good fundraising effort for the band with over \$900.00 raised. That's a lot of Freddo Frogs and Caramello Koalas!!!

We also did our bit for the community late last year with the "Bag It For The Salvos." The Salvation Army paid the band for each bag of pre-loved clothes that we donated which amounted to \$510.00

2005, Fundraising Report, Nerida Greenbank, 2005 Yearbook. Source: Glover Archive



In 2006, through tireless efforts, secretary Karen George secured an important \$3000 grant from the R.E. Ross Trust to fund the purchase of new music folders, music stands and percussion equipment.

My sincere congratulations go to Karen for her endless energy and love of the band and its members and for always going beyond the call of duty as Band Secretary.

– Gary White MD, 2006 AGM Program



Salvation Army Fundraiser with Pam Clark and Rebecca van Oorschot. Source: Pam Clark Archive

By 2007 the band had been awarded another grant of \$5000, this time from Telstra and The Ballarat Foundation, for the purchase of new music stands and trolley.

Without the enormous effort of members of the committee and families such as the Cunninghams, the Griggs and the Robinsons who did so much for the band and took on much of what the Grovers had done for so many years, the band would have struggled.

New venue for Ballarat

In 2007 Ballarat received a brand-new music venue in the Wendouree Centre for Performing Arts (WCPA). When it opened, Karen George organised a music extravaganza hosted by the BMCB. Among other tunes, they played the *Olympic Fanfare*.



View the 2007 WCPA program,
[A Showcase of Sound and Song.](#)

Source: Pam Clark Archive

THE BALLARAT MEMORIAL CONCERT BAND
Presents...



"A SHOWCASE
OF SOUND
AND SONG!"

Featuring Musical Performances From...

The Ballarat Memorial Concert Band
The Ballarat Light Opera Company
The Mini Monas
Quintessential Winds
Wiz Bang Orkestra
Brent Trotter

Saturday 5th May, 2007
Wendouree Centre for Performing Arts
7:00 pm



2007, Band photo. Source: BMCB Archive

Tooters and squeakers

The Developmental Band started in 2002. Phil Henderson conducted to take the burden from Gary White. It lulled at the beginning of 2005 only to be restarted under the guidance of Laura Thompson late in 2005. As is the way with every community band that ever enjoyed longevity, the junior band once again played a vital role in the future success of the band.



2004, Developmental Band photo. Source: BMCB Archive



Kath Chapman remembers developmental band from those years:

We played in the 'baby band' for years. It was attached to the Memorial Band. I joined because my kids were learning instruments through the transition band at Mt Clear so they had a program where the feeder school, grade five and six went and joined in. So they let my son join when he was in grade four, because he was so keen.

Some time after that we joined the Memorial Band developmental band and I decided that I'd learn a band instrument so that I could play with them. So that we could be a little band and practice together.

But then of course they've moved on and left me behind and I'm still playing!

– Kath Chapman

Kath was a regular member from late 2005 to 2016, and now plays with Haddon Band. She also remembers an event with BMB, which takes us back 100 years at least – only this happened in 2006.

Silent movie

The developmental band did this piece called *Silent Movie* and they had these really fast bits that were really difficult for us. There's a bit in the middle where there's a 'hoo-hoo' for a steam train and we made up this little story that fitted the music and we had to tie that sound effect in with when the train appeared. We needed a steam train, so we went to Maldon.

Because they were playing a piece called *Silent Movie*, they decided to make a silent movie!

Everyone got dressed up in period costume. David was the villain, I was the damsel in distress who got tied to the railway tracks by David who was a nasty nasty and then got rescued by Lindsay George (in the video they both look the same so that was very confusing!).

And then my son Brian who was very young at the time was chasing David through the bush and he went past three women in their period costume (one of whom was Sonia – the social worker who played the saxophone) and then David would rush past being a 'baddy', and then Brian would run after him with his truncheon and his policeman's hat.

You usually do the music to go with the *Silent Movie*, so we did the movie to go with the music!

And then we played it at Charlotte's church and every time we played it along to the movie projected on the big screen, we had to get to that point with the steam train when it went 'hoo-hoo' and we were too slow with our 'doodle-doodle-oots'. And there was this big effort to get us to speed up, and we were going as fast as we could. It didn't work so well if the steam train appeared and then the sound effects came later!

– Kath Chapman, bandie, mother, movie star!

But what happened to the developmental band after Laura restarted it?

Laura Thompson was always there, the conductor, and then Simon Marollo took over. Then numbers got so low in the senior band that they joined the bands together. It was decided that the 'tooters and squeakers' (which was the dev band's name at the time) were doing so well that they could join the band together. This was around 2010.

– Bec Paton



Laura had been assistant musical director in 2006 and 2007, having attended a one-week ABODA (Australian Band and Orchestra Directors' Association) conducting course in Melbourne to add to her skill base. This was handy in assisting Gary and filling in for him when he reduced his hours.

Before the junior and senior bands merged, a change of MD for the Senior Band occurred when Gary White took the opportunity to step down.

Zoom took up the baton in 2008

Zoom Beck was no stranger to banding, being Brenda's daughter and having played with the Soldier's Band as early as 1983 (see photo in the 1980s chapter). By the time she officially took up the baton, Zoom was an accomplished euphonium and percussion player, had attended the ABODA conducting clinics, played in bands and ensembles in Thailand and North America as well as undertaking study at Northern Michigan University. Unofficially, Zoom had filled in for Brenda during Brenda's musical directorship almost ten years earlier.

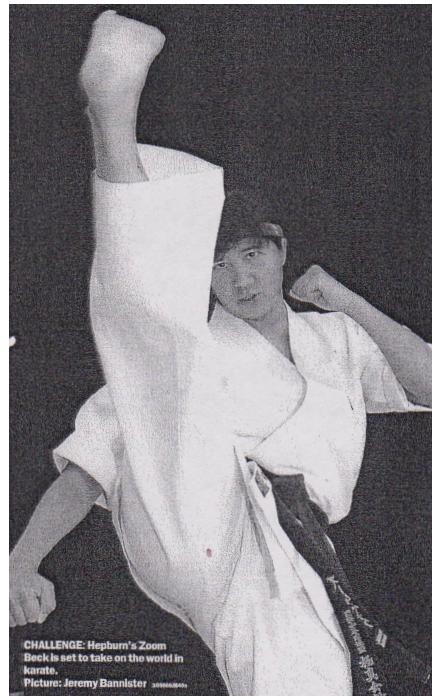
Not only was she accomplished in the bandroom, Zoom was working in her chosen profession as a primary school teacher and had already achieved high skill levels in the martial arts, Shinkyokushin Karate.

In 2003, Zoom and her sister Boon were two of only four competitors to have the honour of representing Australia in the Karate Expo at the International Women's Karate Tournament in Japan.

Kath Chapman remembers the performance at Relay for Life at Fed Uni 2008 when Zoom was Musical Director:

Zoom was conducting and it was one of those sultry days and we could see the storm coming across playing *Pirates of the Caribbean*. Just before that Zoom had said, 'I think we'll get one more in just before this hits' and we were watching. So we started playing and we got faster and faster and faster, and we did that finale so fast it went didlenden-didlenden-didlenden-bcshhhhhhhhhh and we didn't get to the end, everyone just ran!

– Kath Chapman



16 June 2005, Teacher will zoom to Japan, *The Courier*. Source: 2005 BMCB Yearbook



Read the [Teacher will zoom to Japan](#) article from *The Courier*, June 2005.



You can't have instruments in the rain, it was just this sudden downpour.

– Cheryl Russell

Imagine the sound of this scene as individuals 'peeled off' in a mad dash for cover, leaving the musical performance in a ragged exodus.

Part of the concert band's repertoire of performance skills is to be ready to quickly grab their music, music stands, instruments ... and run. Perhaps more so in Ballarat than most regional country towns in Australia.

We know from the previous chapter that it took four days for Nerida Greenbank to dry the band music after one inclement performance day, but you may not have heard Kevin Howell's electrifying story from the 1970s. It happened one sultry night, just on dusk at the annual Christmas Carols performance at the Ballarat Soundshell in North Gardens. Kevin was preparing to play *Mary's Boy Child* on the flugel horn.

I had just come back from the UK, I was in good form and this was lovely. I thought, ah, a guest artist at the carols and it was Ballarat Christmas Eve *and* ... the storm was coming. We knew it was coming and Helen, the accompanist, and I went down and the piano was at the front of the stage. It was always at the front of the stage because we had the choir behind us. So we went down there and I looked up and said, 'Alright let's get going because it's going to rain'. I had *just* started and there was this great big clap (it was being recorded on 3BA as well) this great clap of thunder and lightning and there was a bolt of lightning that went boosh down to [where I was playing] and I grabbed my music stand. we got to the end of it, we never repeated it, it was supposed to have a second verse, and we got to the end of it and that was it. It belted down.

So I never got to play the second verse! We had to get off the stage, we had to move!

– Kevin Howell



The rise and fall of marching

Marching continued to around 2007, but it was tricky without a leader with marching experience, like Brenda. Craig George led the band in preparing for the marches for a number of years after Brenda's departure, in the capacity of drum major. This, he said, was nerve-wracking for him at first, particularly preparing for the three performances at the 2002 Tattoo.

Eventually marching dropped off in about 2007 until well into the following decade. Just as in the 80s and early 90s, this precluded the band from contributing at their traditional events such as Anzac Day, the Begonia Festival, the Digger's March from Bakery Hill up to Eureka Stockade and Buninyong Gold King Festival.



February 18 2002, Photos of the band marching at the Buninyong Gold King Festival (top), *The Courier*. March 12 2002, The Begonia Festival Parade (bottom), *The Courier*, Begonia Festival. Source: Pam Clark Archive



We are fortunate to have an anecdotal history of marching with the Soldiers' Band from veteran band member Les Casey. This comes in the form of advice to the band, perhaps in the hopes that marching would not become a lost art:

MARCHING IS AN ART. BY LES CASEY

Marching in a Brass Band can be very hard work or very casual. If you cannot set your mind into neutral while marching, then marching and playing a instrument can be the hardest pleasure that you can have. In all Australian Bands each step is 30 inches (762 mm) long and each person is 2 steps in front of you and 2 steps beside you. A quick glance to the front corners of the band will keep you in line and if you have goose-stepped, a quick skip to get back into step. That's how it was when I first started marching back in the thirties.

I can remember when I was still at school; I took part in my first street march with the Soldiers Band. On Saint Patrick's Day the local Catholic schools held a procession in Sturt Street. I cannot remember why I got paid five shillings for my first march, but it was the first and the last time I ever received payment for playing in a band.

St. Patrick's Day was a special day at the old Miners racecourse. The St. Patrick's Day Cup attracted horses from Melbourne and so a special train was organised to transport the horses. The horses were then walked to and from the Railway Station and the racecourse.

Gala Day was another yearly event when the Band played. The Band marched down Curtis Street (I could never understand why most marches started at the Coliseum building in Curtis St.) and along Peel Street to Bridge Street. In Bridge Street we always played flat out because it was like a tunnel leading into Sturt Street. We then readied our selves for the march up the Sturt Street hill. It was hard work, especially on hot days, keeping in mind that it was full uniform, no shirtsleeves like today's bands. Most marches finished at the City Oval (corner of Sturt and Pleasant Street), uphill most of the way and past **nine pubs**. As if that wasn't hard enough, the Fire Brigade marched also, but at night.

When the war started everything was thrown into chaos. Most of the young able men in the Soldiers Band belonged to the 8th Battalion Band, so our numbers dropped over night. We were lucky enough to have enough members from the first war and our junior band to enable us to carry on. There was a group of dedicated civilians, who gathered at the drill hall to play soldiers once a week, in case of an invasion. I don't know what they called themselves, but they didn't have any equipment, so the only thing they could do was march. The Soldiers Band was called upon to lead them in their weekly march up the street. One of these marches was the longest that I have played in. It started at the drill hall in Curtis St., up Sturt St. to Doveton St.; out along Skipton St. to Drummond St., back along Drummond St. to Sturt St., then back to the drill hall. Luckily we had a line of good drummers.

The band also played on Sunday nights at the Regent Theatre to raise money for the "war effort". Around this time I fronted up for service in the RAAF. On returning to the Soldiers Band, we had many and varied Band Masters and Drum Majors. South Street started again, so the band practised marching on ovals and on the tarmac at the Airforce station. The Band played at Maryborough every new years day. One year we were out on the oval doing counter marching and left and right turns to whistle commands, while cycle races were being held around the oval. When a new race started with a whistle, the band performed the perfect right turn and marched on. It wasn't till the music disappeared in the distance that the Drum Major still marching in his straight line turned around to see what was going on.

At the annual Fire Brigades competition, the brigades took a brass band with them for their "Torch Light" procession. The Soldiers Band was connected to the Ballarat Brigade and the City Band travelled with the City Brigade. These events were very spectacular with the bands and the brigades in uniform marching with lamps.

And so the band played on.

2002, 'Marching is an Art', Les Casey, AGM Program. Source: Pam Clark Archive



This is not the end of the marching stories for this decade. On 17 May 2009, then developmental band member Bec Paton came back from seeing something very unusual down the main street. She made this Facebook post the same day:

Just saw marching band, a bunch of men in armour, the Australian cricket team and a naked bloke marching down Lydiard Street Ballarat.

– Bec Paton

They were filming a Victoria Bitter commercial, 'complete with crews on cherry pickers and low-flying helicopters'. Downtown Ballarat was closed to traffic for the whole weekend.

Yes indeed, the band was to be part of a nationally televised advertising campaign. Read about it in *Remember when Ballarat went into lockdown for a beer commercial?*, *The Courier*, July 2016.

Surely Victoria Bitter would not be pleased to hear band members recollecting the time they did the C.U.B. ad – especially after they had put in a massive budget to make the Ballarat ad to combat the success of the Carlton Draught 'Big Ad'. We can only assume that the band spend way more time making music than drinking beer these days.

View the ad, *VB New Beer Advert: Best beer advert ever.*

Read more in *'Bitter' day a great ad for Ballarat as VB films commercial*, *The Courier*, May 2009.

Lindsay George

In 2006, Lindsay George hit the incredible milestone of sixty years dedicated to playing with the band.



Read more about Lindsay George in *Drum Roll for 60 Years*, *The Courier*, November 2006.

Neil Govan

In 2007, the band lost loved member Neil Govan.

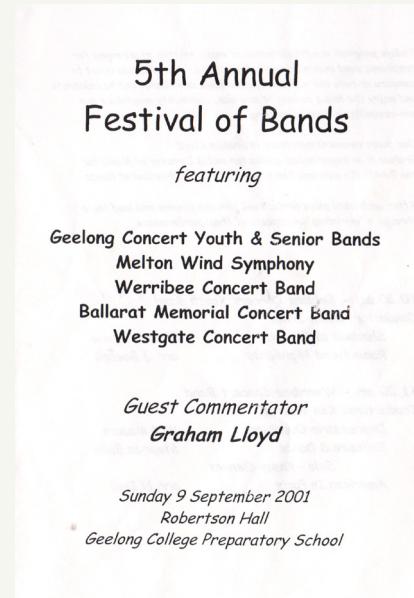


Read Neil Govan's obituary, *A life Filled with Music*, *The Courier*, 2007



DISCOVER MORE

See the archive concert programs from the mid-naughties. Find out what the Spices of the World concert entailed, why the Festival of Bands began in 1997 (and what it has and hasn't got to do with the VBL) and peruse the repertoire played at the collaborative concert band concerts with the Western Region Concert Band.



Take a closer look at the [Concert programs from the 2000s and Anzac Day Certificate of Appreciation](#).

Source: Pam Clark Archive and BMCB Archive



Hear the band performing at the [2007 Nationals in Kew](#) with commentary.